

*Solano County Probation FY24 Arts Programs for Justice-Involved Youth
OJJDP Program Proposal: Today's Future Sound*

a. Description of the Issue Target beneficiaries: Target beneficiaries of Solano County Probation (Probation)'s Therapeutic Beat Making (SCTBM) Arts Program are individuals (age 11-21) that are: a) justice-involved (deferred, on probation, arrested, charged, and/or adjudicated of a criminal offense, or are currently in detention); b) high risk for exposure to gun and gang violence; c) have mental health and/or substance use disorders; and/or d) need diversion and reentry programming and support. SCTBM will focus on strengthening collaborations between arts-based organization Today's Future Sound (TFS) and Probation to develop and implement effective culturally-relevant interventions that provide access to high-quality, therapeutic arts programs for justice-involved youth in Solano County. Services will include piloting two Therapeutic Beat Making (TBM) Workshops to promote personal development, reduce anxiety, and support justice-involved youths' capacity to initiate and motivate individual change. Services will be provided in two locations with two cohorts: 1) The Solano County Juvenile Detention Facility (JDF) serving youth in detention in **Fairfield, CA in Y1**; and 2) The Youth Achievement Center (YAC) in **Fairfield, CA in Y2**. Ran by probation, programs and services, from substance abuse and mental health services to education and resume-writing and interviewing skills, are offered at the YAC. It serves as a safe space where youth report for probation, receive services and explore strengths. Demographics of Target Areas and Target Beneficiaries: Solano County, population 453,491, is the state's 19th largest county (*Solano County Juvenile Justice Coordinating Council, 2022*) with 22 percent of residents under 18 (*Solano County Juvenile Justice Coordinating Council, 2022*). The County is *one of the nation's most racially diverse counties: 1) Over 50 percent of residents identify as people of color; 2) 29 percent of residents are Latinx, 17 percent Asian, and 14 percent are Black (U.S. Census, 2022a); 3) 30 percent speak a language other than English at home (Solano County Behavioral Health,*

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2019). The County has the highest percentage (35 percent) of families living below the California Self-Sufficiency Standard (SSS); the highest rate of people living below the federal poverty line (13 percent); and the highest percentage of children living in poverty of Bay Area counties (Solano County Behavioral Health, 2019). Solano also has California's highest rates of disconnected youth and children without secure parental employment (Solano County Behavioral Health, 2019). Exposure to poverty is linked to an increased likelihood of delinquency (Manhica et al., 2021). Research shows income inequality triggers crime (Dong et al., 2020). The 2016-20 averages of educational attainment show 63 percent of county residents do not have a college degree, 11 percent have less than a high school education, 24 percent have a high school diploma only, and 28 percent have some college but no degree (Solano County, 2021), and 36 percent of students are economically disadvantaged (Solano County Office of Education, n.d.). Younger and lower-educated workers faced more pandemic unemployment, comprising about half of countywide claims (Id.). Within the County there are seven jurisdictions in addition to its unincorporated rural areas: Vallejo, Benicia, Fairfield, Suisun City, Vacaville, Dixon, and Rio Vista. In Vallejo, with a disproportionate amount of the County's justice-involved youth, 15 percent of households (23 percent of children) live in poverty (International Associations of Chiefs of Police, n.d.), though CA's high cost of living means the federal poverty guideline underestimates that percentage. The alternative metric of the SSS pegs the minimum income needed in Vallejo at 3x the federal poverty for a family - 47 percent of Vallejo households fall below that (U.S. Census, 2022b). Vallejo's population is 28 percent Latinx, 25 percent Asian, and 19 percent Black (U.S. Census, 2022b). **Vallejo youth make up only five percent of the County population but account for over 40 percent of justice-involved youth between 2023-24. Fairfield juveniles represent 64 percent of justice-involved Countywide between**

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2023-24. Fairfield's population is 18 percent Latinx, 17 percent Asian, and 15 percent Black (U.S. Census, 2022c). Vacaville, population 101,918 (U.S. Census, 2022d). The crime rate in Vacaville is considerably higher than the national average across all communities in the U.S. from the largest to the smallest (Neighborhood Scout, n.d.). Vacaville's population has nearly 7% living below the poverty line. The violent crime rating in Vacaville is 15.5 and trending upwards in the last ten years: between 2015-2019, the murder rate increased by 300% (Neighborhood Scout, 2022). Reported violent crimes rose from 256 to 327 between 2015-2019 (Id.). The Vacaville crime rate rose by 29% between 2018 and 2019 (City Data, n.d.). Between 2015-2019, rapes more than doubled, from 20 to 47, and assaults rose from 136 to nearly 200 (Id.). Between 2020 and 2021, during the height of the pandemic, shootings increased 133%, and as of August 2022, were already set to surpass last year's numbers (Vacaville Police Department, 2022). In just one year, during the height of the pandemic, violent crimes rose over 5% (Id.). Further, firearm seizures increased by 32.6% between 2020 and 2021 (Id.). Murders across the nation spiked by 30% after the onset of the pandemic between 2020 and 2021 (Gramlich, 2021).

Need Area to Address 1: Gun Violence, Youth Trauma, Disproportionate Justice Involvement: Solano County's three largest cities (Vallejo, Fairfield and Vacaville) experience significant public safety risks and account for most juvenile arrests (Solano County Consolidated Annual Juvenile Justice Plan (CMJJP), 2024). According to the California Department of Justice Office 2022 crime statistics, **juvenile arrests represented 4.4 percent of all CA arrests, of which 5.4 percent were considered violent** (Id.). Youth entering the justice system today present complex needs and pose a higher risk to recidivate, requiring significant rehabilitation needs (CMJJP, 2024). Between 2023-24, there were **777 juvenile citations and arrests (both booked and unbooked), including 667 felony records**. Over 45 percent of the felony charges

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were against Black youth, and nearly 30 percent were Latinx (Probation, 2024). Of the 2023-24 arrests, **five were charges of murder and another 5 for attempted murder** (Id.). In 2022, the number of arrests also increased (to 622 from 443) while the percentage of youth diverted decreased to four percent (157 of 622) (CMJJP, 2023). These numbers are up from 2020 levels, which saw 157 juvenile felony arrests, over 43 percent of which were violent offenses. Of the arrested offenders in 2020, nearly 75 percent were male, 42 percent were Black and 36 percent Latinx, again vastly over-representing juveniles of color. Latinx and Black youth represented 55 percent of the County youth population, accounting for over 68 percent of all juvenile arrests in 2020. Latinx and Black youth made up 35 and 13 percent of the overall population, respectively (Kids Data, n.d.). The most common misdemeanor offenses for Solano juvenile arrests are assault and battery (CMJJP, 2015). On any given day, over 48,000 youth in the U.S. are detained away from home as a result of juvenile justice involvement (National Institute of Corrections, n.d.). In 2022, over 60 percent of juveniles arrested in California were referred to county juvenile probation departments (California Department of Justice, 2022). As of May 2024 - there are 36 youth in custody at Solano County's JDF, all male, **23 of which (or nearly 64 percent) are Black** - over-representing the population (Probation, 2024). The youngest is 14, and 11 of the 36 are age 16. For the period between 2023-24, there were 236 total intakes, with 222 total releases - **196 were male**, and 25 were female. Of the arrests, a disproportionate number of youth came from Fairfield (76), Vallejo (53), and Vacaville (50) police departments (Id.), 179 bookings were felonies (Id.). Over five percent of 7th graders in Solano County are involved in gang activity and 8.5 percent of non-traditional students (enrolled in alternative school programs for behavioral/attendance issues, expulsion, or those at risk of not graduating) consider themselves gang members (KidsData, 2020). Adolescent gang members are at high risk for

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poly-traumatization (i.e., experiencing two or more types of trauma), contributing to behavioral problems, delinquency or drug use, and mental health symptoms, i.e., posttraumatic stress disorder (PTSD) and depression (Nydegger et al., 2019). Untreated traumatic exposure in adolescent gang members often leads to poor behavioral/mental health outcomes (Id.). Associating with deviant peers and perceiving school as unsafe correlates with gang membership (Lenzi et al., 2014).

Adverse Childhood Experience (ACE) exposure in Solano County is higher than the state average (Kids Data, 2022). The state ACEs average for households with children experiencing 4+ ACEs is 17.7 percent, compared to 16 percent in Solano County, which also has an additional 20.6 percent of households with children experiencing 2 or more ACEs, totalling 38.3 of the population (Kids Data, 2022). ACEs have significant impacts on future violence victimization and perpetration, and lifelong health and opportunity outcomes (CDC, 2021) and ACEs increase the risk of youth recidivism (Yohros, 2022). In addition, mental health and substance abuse problems are associated with juvenile recidivism (Tolou-Shams et al., 2023). The rates of mental health issues and substance abuse increased in Solano County which did not meet the Healthy People 2020 Goals and Suggested Reductions for mood disorders (Solano Public Health, 2020). In 2020 - 44 percent increase in fatal drug-related overdoses in CA compared to 2019 (Id.).

How SCTBM Address Area of Need 1: When youth suffers trauma, they may experience mental health issues including PTSD and may begin emotional numbing - a psychological phenomenon that can help people cope with intense emotions. It can be a form of dissociation, a mental health condition that's not uncommon which can increase risk of recidivism (Vitopoulos et al., 2018). If there is lack of empathy for others, there will be no problem with causing distress or acting out against another person (Id.). Studies have shown music-therapy, including rap

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therapy, when stacked with other resources, may help at-risk youth better express their feelings, cope with possible trauma and obstacles, and decrease the emotional numbing while awakening their sensitivity concerning themselves and others (Id.). Youth can identify the association between personal lyric interpretation, their emotions, and risk behaviors (Id.). Service partner Today's Future Sound (TFS) has seen results in previous TBM workshops, as participants build healthy relationships, bonds, and improve communication skills that contribute to reducing youth violence, promoting investment in self and others, and contributing to community cohesion (Youth.gov, n.d.). The use of rhythmic regulation to calm the youths' stress responses (whether listening to or making beats) is a central feature of the models (Rodwin et al., 2022). The TBM model has been proven to support youth mental health, foster a sense of community, cultural relevance, social justice and empowerment (Travis et al., 2020).

Need Area to Address 2: Lack of Community Representation and Decision Making

Authority on Advisory Groups. Probation has two advisory groups to inform County activities and policies regarding juvenile justice reforms; however, neither group was formed to be inclusive of youth and families impacted by incarceration. In 2001, Solano County Probation, Public Defender, District Attorney, and Sheriff, Fairfield PD, Solano County Child Welfare Services, Solano County Superintendent of Schools, City and County Officials, and members of community based drug and alcohol programs formed the Solano County Juvenile Justice Coordinating Council (JJCC). Each year, the JJCC develops a Comprehensive Multi-agency Juvenile Justice Plan (CMJJP) that identifies resources and strategies for providing an effective continuum of responses for the prevention, intervention, supervision, treatment/regional out-of-home placement options for youth to reduce formal system-involvement. This annual process, and related document, reviews ongoing efforts toward meeting recommendations, goals

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and objectives, strategies deployed or planned, and summaries of spending plans. The JJCC was formed via legislation and includes primarily department heads at the system level. Although membership can change periodically to include additional representatives, the membership is statutorily defined and lacks meaningful direct community, youth and family voice. There is currently no formalized mechanism or pipeline for community members or system-impacted individuals to influence decision-making by the JJCC, and the JJCC does not have the capacity-- or data sharing authority needed-- to evaluate the effectiveness of programs in the community.

Recognizing these deficits, in 2023 the County created the JAG Steering Committee, a subcommittee of JJCC that consists primarily of community based organization leaders that serve a youth, justice-connected population. Membership of the Steering Committee was set by the requirements of the state grant that funds it. The Steering Committee is tasked with identifying needs, the full spectrum of available services, and existing barriers youth and families face in accessing these services. However, again, this Steering Committee, while more inclusive of youth serving organizations, lacks sufficient representation from youth and families with lived experience or who have been directly impacted by the criminal justice system.

How TFS Address Area of Need 2: TFS TBM workshops were developed to address a lack of culturally responsive, therapeutic, and social interventions for youth in schools, community settings, and for justice-involved youth. The TBM model teaches workshop leaders to create a container of safety, respect, and inclusion through a process of collaborative creation of community agreements and norms at the beginning of groups, starting with student input. The program has both academic and social-emotional benefits, using Hip Hop as a framework for teaching history, geography, digital literacy, cultural diplomacy and collaboration and gives youth experience using studio-quality equipment and real-world digital music production and

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media skills (Today's Future Sound, 2024). The National Center for Complementary and Integrative Health lists music therapy as one of the complementary and integrative health medicines and as an evidence-based practice with high potential for continued family sciences research (Jacobsen et al., 2022). Grounded in the healing power of Hip Hop, the goal of the TBM model is to uphold and honor the values of Peace, Love, Unity, and Having Fun, as established by the Universal Zulu Nation (a foundational cornerstone Hip Hop cultural organization) (Today's Future Sound, 2024). Incorporated into the TBM curriculum is information about the sociopolitical roots and history of Hip Hop, which is not taught in American or World History curricula in schools. This provides a vital and empowering cultural framework around the development of artistic skills. Recognizing that therapeutic alliance (relationship) is the number one predictor of positive outcomes across all modalities and interventions, the TBM workshops will foster a nurturing, culturally competent, and creative learning environment where youth feel safe to express themselves authentically and to be seen and heard as their unique selves.

Need Area to Address 3: Lack of Community Collaboration: In 2022, with the assistance of the JJCC and Probation staff, local stakeholders participated in focus groups to identify the current gaps/barriers in programming/services for justice connected youth and families. Focus groups included individuals from Probation in both facility and community settings, the JJCC, community-based organizations, Prevention Network, Child Welfare, Behavioral Health, education, law enforcement, court, advocacy groups, community members, the Juvenile Justice Commission, and justice-involved youth, and parents. Fourteen focus groups/interviews were held from 12/2021-2/2022. Participants were asked about strengths, challenges, and system gaps in the County Juvenile Justice Continuum, and queried on system improvement strategies. Focus groups, and resulting local asset mapping, identified that existing youth programs were still not

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working to implement a community based continuum of care approach because of five factors. Barriers to care vary from the individual to the system and are influenced by transportation, childcare, insurance, and income and disproportionately affect women, children, impoverished families, and those who identify as minorities.

(1) Programs are too compartmentalized, contributing to a lack of awareness of offerings by staff and families. Focus groups indicated that government and social service community-based organizations identified significant compartmentalization of information (CMJJP, 2022). The term “siloes” was used and is seen to contribute to a lack of awareness of current offerings, and in preventing information sharing between agencies (CMJJP, 2022). The most recent iteration of the Juvenile Justice Plan sets a goal of creating a comprehensive community map of resources for youth/child/family-serving agencies in the County that depicts services for Prevention, Early Intervention, Community Based Services and Supervision, Residential Services, and Secure Care_(CMJJP, 2024).

(2) There is an inequitable distribution of services and funding that failed to meet needs of County youth: Racial and Ethnic Disparities (RED), while being worked on, remain significant in the County (Id.). Further, the challenges of early identification of service and funding challenges exist as a participant said, “We are all fighting for the same dollars and when something is cut, it usually is a youth program” (CMJJP, 2022). It was also noted that system access challenges exist based upon geographic location in the County with some communities with greater access to a more varied menu of services for youth and families (Id.).

(3) Youth who remain in the system typically have intensive, complex needs requiring individualized interventions/services not available in any single program or location. Focus groups found that, although fewer young persons are in custody, youth who remain in the system

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typically have very intensive, complex needs which are time consuming and require more intensive or individualized interventions and services than what is currently available (CMJJP, 2022). Court systems aren't designed to address co-occurring mental health and substance abuse and individuals are at risk of “falling through the cracks” without case management to connect directly to resources, *especially in communities of color* (Humans Services Needs Assessment, 2019). Mental health services were identified as a system gap and unmet priority need in Solano (Id.). Studies show outreach, advocacy, and linking youth who were alcohol/drug users to a drop-in center vs. a crisis shelter to be effective (Slesnick et al., 2016).

4) County lacks consistent programs for early identification/support for at-risk youth and families, including community trauma and resulting mental illness where justice-involved families don't know exist (Id.). Participants also advocated for more sustainable prevention and early intervention services (Id.). These services assist youth and families to reduce the likelihood of future system-involvement (*Prevention and Early Intervention*, n.d.). While there is considerable collaboration between agencies, even County leaders voiced a desire to find ways to expand prevention and early intervention services and to remove barriers (e.g., requiring court involvement) of participation in services (CMJJP, 2022). Participants identified system gaps and/or options for youth: easily accessible neighborhood-based one-stop centers; reentry/transition services; services led by neighborhood leaders, persons with lived experience, and community supports with increased representation of demographics of system-involved youth; substance abuse education/treatment options; gender-response services; services for LGBTQ+ individuals; resources for families and youth experiencing unstable housing or homelessness; development of meaningful employment opportunities for youth; and home-based programs serving youth and families (CMJJP, 2022). Research shows direct early pre-arrest

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services address needs of young offenders & lowers recidivism (*Youth Involved With the Juvenile Justice System*, n.d.)

How TFS Address Area of Need 3: TBM Workshops will be incorporated into the Continuum of Care for justice-involved youth and focus on collaborative partnerships with external agencies to strengthen prevention and intervention services. By including culturally competent organizations like Today's Future Youth that incorporate and align with the core principles of the Positive Youth Development (PYD) model, Programming focuses on youth interests (music), via learning a new skill (beat-making). PYD "focuses on enhancing youth strengths, establishing engaging and supportive contexts, and providing opportunities for bi-directional, constructive youth context interactions" (Travis et al., 2020).

Hip Hop culture has been introduced substantively during the last two decades as a viable therapeutic tool (Travis et al., 2020), and reported as uniquely beneficial for engaging young people in mental health services (Travis et al., 2020). When engaging Hip Hop for therapeutic means, whether for health promotion or complex therapy, it is a dynamic, creative, culturally sensitive, regulating, and developmental means for finding common ground and creating rapport (Travis, 2020). It bridges creative and insight-oriented practices and embraces the ability to generate emotional responses through creating and analyzing music, including aesthetic emotions (i.e., appreciation [of qualities]), utilitarian emotions (i.e., functional, motivational, relevant to immediate well-being, goal-oriented), and epistemic emotions (i.e., gained knowledge, insight, awareness) (Travis et al., 2020).

b. Project Design and Implementation: Program will be centered on Hip Hop music to provide 20 participants with a sense of identity and belonging. SCTBM will include two cohorts each of 10 youth, one cohort per year, for a 12-week curriculum, meeting once a week for 1.5 hours.

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Goal is for each participant to receive 18 hours of instruction focused on creating music and hip hop that is shown to amplify student voices around feelings and the marginalized communities where many reside. Program includes 15 Lessons and cohort will create a class compilation albums with cover art conceived and designed by the students. A graphic designer will take the design concept to completion and produce a polished album cover which will be available to download from the music sharing platform along with the tracks. Y1 will consist of a six month planning phase to set up a Project Planning Council, finalize partner agreements and protocols, develop and administer safety protocols for JDF and YAC implementation, and ensure adequate marketing of programming. Y1 cohort will be implemented for youth in custody in the current music studio in JDF, with Y2 to occur for youth on probation (currently about 120) or touched by the system at the YAC music studio after a six-week evaluation period to review successes/challenges of cohort 1, followed by program adjustments. Program is designed to complement other services that youth receive at the YAC such as counseling, homework assistance, drug testing, and job search. In the TBM model, students work one-on-one and in small groups with music industry professionals dedicated to working with at-risk youth to compose their own music, make beats using digital software, learn the fundamentals of audio engineering, and produce an original album. Anchored by art, students are encouraged to forge connections with mentors/peers, developing positive self-images that onramp them into successful adulthood utilizing culturally relevant, trauma-informed arts education. Services will be provided by nonprofit Today's Future Sound (TFS), with three instructors leading students through the TBM Curriculum (described below), using the studio equipment at the JDF and YAC and the Ableton Push machines our instructors will provide for use during the workshops. Youth will build skills incrementally from the basics of music terms and the use of the machines

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through to using filters and effects to create unique tracks independently. Lessons progress according to the interests and abilities of the cohort. Sometimes instructions will dedicate additional time for participants to grasp more basic fundamentals while others may move more quickly through the program. Youth will be made aware of the program at JDF via JDF staff, JDF Seniors, and/or JDF Supervisors. Youth in the community will be made aware via their DPO. Referrals of youth to the program will come from these same identified staff.

Therapeutic Beat Making Curriculum	
Lessons start with a review of the Community Agreements & Ground Rules of 1) Respect for Others and the Equipment, 2) Constructive Feedback, and 3) Safety & Inclusion	
Lesson 1 & 2	Introduction to Beat Making <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Drum-programming & Melody ● Use of the Beat Machine ● Basic music terms ● Tempo ● Scales
Lesson 3	Chords and Chord Progression
Lesson 4 -6	Sampling (may be covered in up to 3 separate sessions) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Rhythm fundamentals ● Hip Hop history and cultural geography ● Introduction to media literacy and ethics of sampling and sharing ● Small group beat making practice ● Analog vs digital sound
Lesson 7	Song Structure <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Hip Hop vs Pop ● Practice following a chosen song structure
Lesson 8	Found Sound <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Making music from found items
Lesson 9	Beat Styles <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Exploration of style, genre, and sub-genres
Lesson 10	Quantization and Swing <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Video and audio examples ● Experimentation with beat “recipes”
Lesson 11 & 12	Filters and Effects

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Lesson 13	Mixing
Lesson 14	Side Chain Compression and Limiting
Lesson 15	Album Art and Performance ● Packaging and sharing a class album or individual tracks

SCTBM will have a three-to-one student-to-instructor ratio so youth receive personalized instruction time, as well as group practice and review lessons. SCTBM has experience accommodating mixed levels of experience in one classroom.

Therapeutic Beat Making (TBM) is a model, framework, and practice used by TFS and developed by Dr. Elliot Gann through years of research and therapeutic practice. It is grounded in Hip Hop and beat making culture, and informed by established and contemporary theories of mind. This includes Psychoanalytic/Psychodynamic principles (that our unconscious thoughts, fantasies, wishes, and anxieties drive our behavior (Bornstein, n.d.), Interpersonal Neurobiology (*Interpersonal Neurobiology - Dr. Dan Siegel, 2024*), Polyvagal Theory (relating to the role of the central vagal nerve in regulating emotions and relationships with our social and physical worlds (Porges, 2009), trauma research (Van der Kolk, 2005), Hip Hop Based Education and Pedagogy. TFS and TBM strategies consider how youth learn before, during, and after school, and across a range of developmental settings. Data suggests that informal interests and social identities rooted in hip hop music can connect youth to career pathways in “creative labor, high-capacity technological skills, civic-mindedness and critical media literacy that could also transcend the classroom” (Evans, 2020).

TBM also provides participants with Science, Technology, Engineering, Arts, & Math (STEAM) related outcomes. Youth who receive STEAM services have been shown to experience significantly lower rates of recidivism (Mathur, 2023). Hip-Hop music was created in inner city minority underserved neighborhoods plagued by poverty. Its strong influence in the Black

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community fosters a sense of identity and unity (economic hardships, discrimination, limited opportunities, community violence, and system involvement). Black community members turned to music, poetry, and dance to express themselves (Columbia School of Social Work, 2023). Hip Hop was selected to meet youth at an interest point for participants to help develop algebraic reasoning and pattern-based thinking and problem-solving, increase computer/technology and media literacy, and gain knowledge of music career pathways beyond being a music artist, such as sound design, live and studio (audio) engineering, and event production. There are also opportunities for students to record themselves and peers rapping/singing and engaging in audio engineering and mixing. The TBM model teaches workshop leaders to create a container of safety, respect, and inclusion through a process of collaborative creation of community agreements and norms at the beginning of groups, starting with student input. Program is known to advance rhythmic regulation to calm the youths' stress responses (whether listening to or making beats) and is a central feature of SCTBM TBM models. In addition to teaching and developing artistic skills, SCTBM is designed to achieve therapeutic impact and provide avenues for youth to effectively and intentionally express their truths in a healthy and socially adaptive manner. Youth participating in prior TFS TBM workshops have reported increased self-efficacy and self-esteem, increased emotional awareness and emotional regulation skills, increased frustration tolerance, and lowered feelings of anxiety and depression. Creating art can strengthen a youth's problem-solving skills, autonomy, sense of purpose, and social competence (OJJDP, 2016). Moreover, art can help encourage positive emotions and strength, allowing youths to view themselves as survivors and not as victims (OJJDP, 2016).

Goals, Objectives and Deliverables:

Goal 1: Reduce juvenile delinquency and high-risk behaviors of justice-involved youth by five

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percent through the development and implementation of TFS TBM Workshops.

Objective 1: Identify strategies to support promising, evidence-based approaches that advance the long-term well-being and success of youth and their families that include alternative methods such as arts-based therapies and programming.

Deliverable 1 - Convene a Project Planning Council for Six Meetings (minimum) for Six

Month Planning Period: Through requested funds, project will commence with establishment of a Project Planning Council (PC) to consist of Project Directors from Probation and TFS to create innovative solutions that advance equity and social justice and ensure proposed programming can be adapted to unique environments of Solano County's JDF and YAC. We envision the PC team consisting of up to four to increase for formal long-term access, and will make regular direct recommendations and influence system-level programming and policies for program implementation. In addition to Project Directors, PC members will include up to two system-impacted youth and/or family, or past TBM participants. Research shows that utilizing an Integrated Model centered on collaboration is most effective in reducing recidivism (Epperson et al., 2014). Providing diverse perspectives and experiences is proven to solidify shared visions, enhance service provision, and reduce recidivism. Justice-impacted youth and young adults often feel as if their thoughts, experiences, and perspectives are not heard or respected (*Youth Voice in Juvenile Justice Research*, n.d.). Additionally, youth and young adults often desire to use their experiences as a means to get involved and change the system, encouraging peers not to become justice-impacted (*Youth Voice in Juvenile Justice Research*, n.d.). Community expertise and lived experience is valuable and should be compensated (*Community Voice Is Expertise*, 2021).

Deliverable 2 - Develop and Finalize Project Plan and Collaborative Partnership with arts-based Resource, TFS: The PC will meet monthly for the first six months, then quarterly

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thereafter, to develop a final SCTBM Project Plan. These monthly planning sessions will give partner organizations an opportunity to learn about Solano County's JDF and YAC facilities, and prepare how to best implement programming for each cohort. The Action Plan will be completed by Month Six for accessing and delivering two 12-week cohorts of TBM Workshops. Final Action Plan will also include a mechanism for data sharing across Probation and partners, using the Probation Juvenile Data Project Plan as a foundation. The Project Plan will also include a marketing roadmap to raise community awareness about the planned cohort in Y2 to be available to justice-involved youth/families at the YAC. Project Plan will also include recurring, regular methods to solicit public feedback during further planning and implementation of the Project Plan, particularly feedback from JDF participants to inform future programming and YAC cohort. Project Plan will also include formal diversion opportunities through the Courts for future programming in addition to services available through the YAC.

Deliverable 3: Finalized collaborative partnership between Solano County Juvenile Detention Facility and arts-based resources to provide high-quality arts programs for justice involved youth. Project Plan will include a sustainability plan to include and expand arts-based programming for youth in custody at the JDF. Sustainability plan will include developing partnerships with other Continuum of Care partners to ensure programming is available for youth preparing for re-entry into the community, along with opportunities to continue TBM Workshops and other arts-based programming once released.

Deliverable 4: Deployment of two 12-week TBM workshops in two locations for justice involved youth. After finalization of the final Project Plan, TFS will deploy arts-based programming through TBM workshops, as described above.

Deliverable 5: Evaluation of services. Probation and TFS will complete an initial evaluation

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after completion of cohort 1 and meet with the PC to discuss achievements, milestones, challenges, and make necessary adjustments to programming for cohort 2, and future programming within JDF. A final evaluation will take place in Y2 and will inform additional sustainability planning.

Goal 2: Increased collaboration and coordination between services providers and Solano County probation, culminating in a holistic wraparound Continuum of Care and streamlined provision of services/resources for justice-involved youth and families.

Objective 1: Support Probation's Continuum of Care by incorporating arts-based programming for justice-involved youth and include culturally competent organizations in decision making.

Deliverable 1: Ongoing Engagement/Collaboration with Probation Continuum of Care Planning Council to create a Vision and Plan for Meaningful and Sustainable Integrated

Youth and Family Partnerships: The key to successfully maintaining an effective Continuum of Care Countywide and specifically in high need areas will be long-term sustained engagement with impacted youth and families. Probation and TFS will engage with Probation's Community Continuum Planning Council - an OJJDP-funded council - that will reverse and modify current systems planning and initiate a shift to a bottom-up approach that *meaningfully* incorporates input and ideas from system-impacted youth and families with lived experience. This council currently consists of at least 50 percent of members being system-impacted youth and families. This council consisting *primarily of youth and families* impacted by the County's criminal justice system and/or lack of prevention and intervention resources created the first of its kind in the County and the foundation for long-term inclusion. Both these members and the Project Planning Council's members' time is valued and compensated. Planning sessions will result in tangible recommendations for department/system-head consideration. Both councils will work to identify

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additional partnership opportunities in underrepresented geographic areas throughout the county.

Proposed Outcomes: Minimum 20 youth to receive access to TBM services with a minimum of 10 completing the entire curriculum. Minimum of six youth to attend six or more sessions.
Desired

OJJDP Priority Area 1A): Probation is seeking priority consideration under 1A as services will provide programming to underserved youth from all seven Solano County jurisdictions. Minority youth in the target areas are disproportionately impacted by arrests and youth detention. Nearly 80 percent of youth on Probation countywide are non-white: 43 percent Black (77 percent male), 28 percent Latinx. According to County 2022 youth arrest data, 56 of the 59 (94 percent) of youth arrested in Vallejo were non-White, 43 of which, (73 percent) were Black. However, service provision will also include the highest need and underserved communities of Vallejo and Fairfield. In Fairfield, 97 of 116 youth arrested, or 84 percent, were non-White - 48 of which were Black (41 percent) and 39 Hispanic (34 percent). Black and Hispanic youth are disproportionately overrepresented in the county justice system - average of 37 Black (27 percent) and 51 Hispanic (37 percent) youth in detention in 2022. Between 2023-2024, over 37 percent of youth arrested were Black, nearly 20 percent were Hispanic.

Vallejo, a historically marginalized city and community disproportionately impacted by inequity, crime, violence, and victimization. Vallejo is a mid-sized city of 124,000 residents in Solano County, CA, part of the northern area of the San Francisco Bay Area. Nearly 20 percent of Vallejo's population is Black and 39 percent Latino (US Census, 2022b). Based on the population, a Black person was over twice as likely and a Latinx person was almost four times as likely to be killed by police as a White person in Vallejo between 2013-2021 (Police Scorecard, n.d.). Vallejo is one of the poorest cities in the region: over 15 percent of households (22.6

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percent of children) live at/below federal poverty levels (US Census, 2022b). Vallejo's major crime rate is 581.40/10,000 - compared to the CA rate of 312.65/10,000 and County rate of 375.04/10,000. In 2021, over 60 percent of shooting victims were Black (VPD, 2023). Gun violence impacts Vallejo youth, with eight shooting victims in 2021 under the age of 18 and 47 victims between the ages of 18-29. A 2022-2023 Solano County Civil Grand Jury investigated and found that 911 calls for services to Vallejo had the longest wait and dispatch times in the county, with a lapse & delays between receipt of incoming calls & fulfillment (Solano County, 2023). Between 2023-2024, 21 percent of justice-involved youth in the County were Black, and 11 percent were Hispanic. These numbers are disproportionate, given Vallejo is **less than 10 percent of the County's population.**

SCTBM provides opportunities, support, and services that guide our youth towards positive life choices and change. To promote racial equity and diminish racial disparities early in the judicial process, SCTBM supports finding evidence-based restorative justice approaches, including music and rhythm-based therapies, that minimize and reduce justice involvement, address behavioral health needs, and preserve public safety through provision of trauma-informed services, conflict resolution and violence prevention programming directly to minority and marginalized populations within the County who are overrepresented in our justice system. Such programming is responsive to youth needs and more effective in preventing future crimes. This will allow youth to take responsibility for actions and repair harm to victim(s) and the community (OJJDP, n.d.). Homicide is the third leading cause of death for youth aged 10-24 and the leading cause of death for Black youth (CDC, 2024a). *Over 75 percent of youth in diversion in Solano County 2017-2022 were non-White* (Solano County Probation, 2022). While cumulatively, the population of Latinx and Black youth in Solano County represented 55 percent

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of the youth population, they accounted for over 68 percent of the total juvenile arrests in 2019 (CMJJP, 2022). *Black youth and young adults are at higher risk for the most physically harmful forms of violence (e.g., homicides, aggravated assaults) compared with White youth and young adults* (CDC, 2024b). While 14 percent of youth under 18 in the U.S. are Black, 42 percent of boys and 35 percent of girls in juvenile facilities are Black (Id.). Indirect exposure to gun violence is highest among Black, urban, male, and low-income youth (Mitchell et al., 2019). Gun violence disproportionately impacts racial minorities and is concentrated in under-resourced and racially segregated neighborhoods like our target areas (Edmund, 2022).

The Project Planning Council will ensure that concerns, challenges, and needs of vulnerable populations and protected classes of race, ethnicity, age, religion, gender identity, sexual orientation, or mental or physical disability have a voice and are represented in Center development. This will foster collaboration among organizations and promote equal access to justice. TFS will serve Solano County residents, of whom over 50 percent identify as people of color (U.S. Census, 2022a). TFS acknowledges and will remove barriers to opportunities for our target population through restorative practices and community violence intervention, with an overarching goal of *culturally competent services without punitive measures*. TFS, through robust partner engagement and strong community support, will provide opportunities/resources for communities disproportionately impacted by and overrepresented in the criminal justice system, and through youth and family partnership and engagement, ensure voices of impacted individuals and those with lived experience are heard and incorporated into service plans.

OJJDP Priority Area 1B): 100 percent of SCTBM budget (see budget and budget narrative) will be distributed to a culturally-specific organization Today's Future Sound (TFS) described below, whose primary focus is providing culturally specific, restorative services and

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innovative solutions such as Therapeutic Beat Making, to advance equity and social justice for historically underserved, underrepresented populations. TFS directly addresses a lack of culturally responsive educational, therapeutic, and social interventions for all ages through culturally-specific music for which they identify. TFS works with over 80 percent of minority and low-income youth. Culturally relevant strategies seek to address previous, less engaging and less efficient strategies for engaging Black and LatinX youth in mental health, health, and educational services within urban communities of color (Holden et al., 2014).

3) Capacities and Competencies: Staffing Plan and Partners: Please see attached resumes.

Services will be provided to the Solano County Probation Department in collaboration and partnership with Today's Future Sound (TFS), a non-profit community arts organization based in Oakland, California. TFS has over 14 years of Hip Hop Education and beat making programs for under-resourced youth in the Bay Area and now consists of a core team of eight staff running six weekly programs in schools and juvenile halls, as well as a team of nearly 100 part-time employees, volunteers, and sister-programs spread across five continents. The current vision of TFS is to connect Beatmakers and Hip Hop community from different geographical, linguistic, cultural, socioeconomic, and backgrounds, across multiple generations, and educate them about the importance of beat making and community events from an educational, mental health (Psychoeducation included), and social perspective. and partnership with TFS Project Manager Elliot Gann. As Project Manager, Gann will meet with the teaching staff before the workshops to review the curriculum, make adaptations as necessary based on the equipment and software available in the studios at the JDF and YAC, and to orient the team to the expectations, protocols, and procedures required for working with Solano County Probation Department. Gann will debrief every three weeks at minimum, with all team members or individually as needed to

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provide supervision and expert consultation. This will be an opportunity for the TFS team to discuss challenges and seek solutions and support. Concerns are generally resolved in the regular debriefing sessions with site staff or between Lead Instructors and site staff. Additional TFS staff includes Lead Teaching Artist **Elwin Williams**, and Co-Teaching Artists **Ken Davidson Laxamana (Lax)**, and **Hamza Alarbesh**. Williams is a TFS Project Coordinator, Lead Teaching Artist, producer, DJ, sound engineer, videographer, photographer, and touring artist who started working with Today's Future Sound in 2014. He teaches over 3,000 youth annually. As a Lead Instructor, he supervises program activities in and outside of the classroom, coordinating lesson plans with the other teaching artists, and serves as a point of contact for program logistics at the teaching sites. Williams has also worked with Youth After School Program Mentorship and Leadership and served as After School Director with FME After-School program. As Project Coordinator, Williams will be the primary contact between TFS teaching staff and Probation on scheduling/ logistical issues, and resolving concerns that arise during the workshops. Williams will communicate with Lax and Hamza during prep times to coordinate lesson plans, answer questions, and promote data collection and project documentation. Williams will meet with **Ken Davidson Laxamana** (aka Lax). Lax is a beat maker, finger drummer, and music producer with three years of experience teaching youth in the Therapeutic Beat Making (TBM) model. Lax is contracted to provide TBM workshops at Alameda TBM Workshops, Pilot Program Proposal, Today's Future Sound County Juvenile Hall, San Mateo Juvenile Hall, Ruidsdale Continuation High School, Life Academy, West Oakland Middle School "Beats4Lunch" Program, Hillcrest Elementary, Madison Middle School, and Aspire Triumph Academy in Oakland, CA. Prior to working with Today's Future Sound, Lax served in the US Army as an infantryman and serves as a US Army Reservist. He also studies Jiu-Jitsu and earned a silver medal in the Jiu-Jitsu World

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League. **Hamza Alarbesh** is a TFS teaching artist, completing training in 2023, working with youth at Rudsdale Life Academy, Life Academy, West Oakland Middle School, Hillcrest Elementary and Madison Middle School in Oakland, CA. Alarbesh came to Today's Future Sound as a volunteer, interested in supporting the mission of our organization to bring TBM workshops to youth who need it most. He has worked his way through the training program and worked as a Junior Instructor with Dr. Gann and Lax, and is now working independently with small groups of youth in our workshops with confidence. TFS has extensive experience working in juvenile detention settings and knows that scheduling, coordination, communication with probation department staff, troubleshooting issues such as securing teaching space, accommodating staffing shortages within probation departments, and negotiating program modifications or adaptations can take significant time outside of teaching and preparing lesson plans. In order to ensure that the program runs smoothly for our teaching staff, probation department staff, and for students, we incorporate project management time for Today's Future Sound Executive Director, Elliot Gann, Psy.D., to compensate for negotiating, coordinating, and supervising contracts and protocol, ensuring teaching staff complete required approvals and clearances. TFS works with over 100 schools. In 2017, the organization began its ongoing work in Alameda County Juvenile Hall, within the probation system. Also in 2017, Dr. Gann began volunteering in El Salvador with local artists to help launch an autonomous TBM-based program there. He established the first beat battle in El Salvador. Dr. Gann/TFS have done similar work in not only across the United States, but also in Canada, Peru, Colombia, Chile, Australia, New Zealand, Mexico, Denmark, England, South Africa (TEAMBeats Capetown with Emile YX? and the program Heal the Hood), France, Hong Kong, and virtually trained and launched an autonomous program in Barcelona, Spain. Project oversight (not grant-funded) will be provided

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by the Probation Services Manager at .10 FTE. This project is launch-ready upon award and has already received outside technical assistance from agencies like the Hayward Burns Institute and local partners, resulting in a solutions blueprint for a more fair, equitable, and community-based justice system. This blueprint, with recommendations from the PC, will guide the project.

Solano County Probation brings decades of experience working with the target population. In partnership with the DA's Office, Solano County Probation Department has operated a Felony Diversion Program since 2006 to front-load intensive intervention services to minors with felony arrests to divert them from the Juvenile Court System and future delinquency. The program supervisor and assigned staff prescreen youth with felony arrests, make recommendations and forward cases to the DA's office for expedited review. An individualized treatment plan is then developed with the youth and his/her family, and up to six months of services offered. Most program youth were referred for theft and drug related offenses. Solano County Probation incorporated strategies outlined in the 2017 CMJJP to continue guiding its full-service behavior change and positive youth development model based on Risk, Need, and Responsivity, placing an emphasis on matching criminogenic needs with treatment intervention/intensity (CMJJP, 2022). This concentrated focus has yielded positive results. In 2021: Probation diverted approximately four percent of juvenile arrests (52 of 1,244) (CMJJP, 2022). Probation uses the 40 Developmental Assets for Adolescents, as identified by the Search Institute, throughout programming. Developmental assets posits theoretically-based and research-grounded support for school success, reducing risk behaviors, and increasing socially-valued outcomes (The Search Institute, 2019). The more developmental assets youth experience, the less likely they are to engage in high risk behavior (The Search Institute, 2021). The program consistently sees success, as evidenced by being awarded one federal grants: FY23

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three state grants in 2022-2023: BSCC JAG, BSCC Mobile Probation Grant, and the California Youth Opioid Response grant. These and other awards require effective partner/subcontract management - the County has proven success in planning, establishing, and executing a contract management team. When working with contractors, Probation engages with following protocols:

- 1) Clear performance-based deliverables linked to receipt of funds;
- 2) Standard invoicing protocol for stable fund drawdown and accounting of contractor costs;
- 3) Monthly (at minimum) management meetings with contractor to ensure activities are on track;
- and 4) Identify funds (five-10 percent of total award) payable only upon completion of full scope of services.

More culturally-specific services are urgently needed to advance equity and provide a targeted intervention to system-involved youth charged with more serious offenses in an effort to reduce future delinquency and victimization, as well as further investments in early prevention and intervention of justice involvement programs for the whole family. The PC will follow the initial eight “start and support” steps in the OJJDP I-Guide on Diversion to establish a successful program to support court-involved youth who are found to be at greater risk for re-entering the juvenile or criminal justice systems, and experience negative educational and mental health life outcomes. Solano County Probation and community partners have demonstrated a willingness to critically examine and understand how services and outcomes can be improved. This is evidenced by inviting outside technical assistance from agencies such as the Hayward Burns Institute to examine RED issues in the County, and ultimately collaborate to create a more fair, equitable, and community-based justice solutions blueprint where Solano County partners come together to plan and implement emerging best practices. Information from this blueprint, as well as recommendations from the Solano County Community Corrections Partnership and the Foster Youth Educational Planning Team will help guide development and implementation. Other

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examples of the commitment to continuous improvement include the Quality Assurance program for the Probation staff and establishing in-house mental health services for youth at the Juvenile Detention Facility. Probation and TFS staff will receive training quarterly on positive youth development, trauma-informed care, evidence-informed practices, including TARGET and Question, Persuade, Refer (QPR) suicide prevention training, street outreach, combatting human trafficking/sexual exploitation, harm reduction, assessment and case management, worker safety, understanding the diversity and culture of life on the street, safe and ethical practices, and community resources for wellbeing and self-sufficiency.

4) Plan for Collecting the Data Required for Performance Measures: Probation utilizes the Youth Level of Service/Case Management Inventory (YLS-CMI), an evidence-based assessment tool used to identify and prioritize the risk factors and needs of each individual youth under supervision. Probation's "Need Principle" directs intervention resources to address mostly areas directly linked to criminal behavior. While probationers have a variety of needs, not all have an equal impact on their risk to reoffend. Primary criminogenic needs include: criminal personality; antisocial attitudes, values, and beliefs; criminal peers; family dysfunction; and low self-control. Secondary criminogenic needs include substance abuse disorder; low educational and vocational attainment; and low involvement in pro-social leisure activities. Although County focus group participants and stakeholders voiced a lack of data resources and capacity, Probation is working to improve in this area and the requested federal support will allow for reports to disaggregate data by demographics and concentrate on measuring positive youth outcomes (beyond recidivism) and inform the establishment of the comprehensive prevention and intervention Center. Probation recently started meetings on data reporting with its new case management system, e-Probation. eProbation is used to collect and maintain data such as client demographics,

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court cases, and supervision details. It is also used to collect and store assessment data, client program and service data, and to aid with numerous workflows and business processes. eProbation also includes a financial component to manage court ordered fines, fees, and restitution owed by clients. Data entered into the system is utilized for reporting and analysis. Probation has established monthly meetings to review existing reports and searches contained in eProbation; demonstrate how to run reports and explain outputs; record and measure programs, and evaluate assessment scores (CMJJP, 2022). Being able to disaggregate data by race, gender, ethnicity, age, and other factors will also ensure that the youth population is receiving cultural and gender responsive services that fit their needs. Youth outcomes can also be analyzed to determine disparities in program performance (for all types of programs including education). Probation will leverage ongoing evaluation efforts to measure program impact and Continuum coordination, and will also provide incentives for youth/family participants to participate in surveys (not covered by grant funds). SCTBM is committed to measuring results, including utilizing information on strategies gathered in planning, data collected from cohorts (following confidentiality processes), and analysis of youth outcomes and crime reduction. SCTBM staff and partners will review data on program outcomes, activities, spending, and other grant reporting/monitoring activities quarterly, at minimum. We will use progress discussions to drive decision-making in the development, implementation, and appraisal of effort. With the award, formal MOUs will be executed with partners to include data sharing agreements and referral protocol. Data, maintained using confidentiality protocols in a protected excel database, will be obtained from schools, police, service providers, justice partners, families, SCTBM partners and participants. Program Manager will provide staff coaching, oversight of the data and evaluation process, and budget management. Participant data will be tracked from all interventions.

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Outcome indicators will be collected annually, with quarterly progress reports. We will also collect qualitative data on the benefit of each training/education module, through an evaluative process with SCTBM participants to be developed by the evaluator. Solano County and partners will hold biannual community meetings on the program and work with community members, youth at JDF, youth and families seeking services at the YAC, law enforcement, school representatives, SCTBM participants who were not successful in the program, current participants, and graduates. The goal of these discussions is to make the program sustainable, improve the quality of life for all residents, and reduce and prevent crime. SCTBM, with core support for the County, will leverage formal operational practices to achieve sustainability.