

CAPITOL OFFICE  
STATE CAPITOL, ROOM 4062  
SACRAMENTO, CA 95814  
TEL (916) 651-4030  
FAX (916) 651-4930

DISTRICT OFFICE  
WALLIS ANNENBERG BUILDING  
700 STATE STREET, SUITE 113  
LOS ANGELES, CA 90037  
TEL (213) 745-6656  
FAX (213) 745-6722

SENATOR.KAMLAGER@SENATE.CA.GOV  
WWW.SENATE.CA.GOV/KAMLAGER

# California State Senate

SENATOR  
**SYDNEY K. KAMLAGER**  
THIRTIETH SENATE DISTRICT



COMMITTEES  
APPROPRIATION  
BUDGET & FISCAL REVIEW  
GOVERNMENTAL ORGANIZATION  
HUMAN SERVICES  
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RULES

SUBCOMMITTEES  
BUDGET & FISCAL REVIEW  
SUBCOMMITTEE NO.4 ON  
STATE ADMINISTRATION &  
GENERAL GOVERNMENT

May 6, 2021

The Honorable Nancy Skinner  
Chair, Senate Budget and Fiscal Review Committee  
State Capitol, Room 5019  
Sacramento, CA 95814

## **Re: Request for \$4.5 Million Over Two Years for New Earth Organization**

Dear Senator Skinner,

I respectfully ask that the Budget Committee and Budget Subcommittee No. 5 support an important request for additional funding for New Earth Organization. Serving over 800 people per year in Culver City and throughout Los Angeles County, New Earth is a community leader dedicated to providing the tools young people need to create lifelong success.

I am proud to champion this **two-year \$4.5 million proposal** to build out New Earth's infrastructure to better position the organization as one of the most effective and responsive community-based alternatives to address the needs for alternatives to detention, placement and incarceration. This budget allocation will also allow the organization to expand and improve the full array of wrap-around services and programs for system-involved and at-risk youth by building out a robust mental health department providing acute and individualized trauma care.

Located in the 30<sup>th</sup> Senate District, New Earth provides a host of transformative arts, educational and vocational programs for at-risk, foster care and probation youth. For over 15 years, their programs and services have helped to significantly reduce recidivism and incarceration among the most vulnerable young people. New Earth's mission is to empower juvenile justice and system-involved youth ages 13- 25 to transform their lives, move toward positive, healthier life choices and realize their full potential as contributing members of their community.

Founded in 2004, New Earth began its work by providing creative arts and mentorship programs to detained youth in probation camps throughout Los Angeles County. In 2013, they launched their transitional job program as an answer to the ongoing cycle of youth recidivism encountered among their students. Since then, they have been able to employ over 150 young people and provide relevant career and soft skills development training in the fields of technology and digital media.

In September 2015, they opened a “one-stop-shop” youth support center in Culver City to house all of their operations and programming. The New Earth Arts and Leadership Center represents a landmark achievement and helps to further strengthen their continuum of services. At their center, they provide a free high school education to youth upon release from incarceration as well as to any young person who has been expelled, suspended or is at risk for system involvement. This specialized high school program includes project-based learning and individualized learning plans to ensure that the special needs of our young people are properly addressed. Youth attend classes at the center, receive paid career training and can earn credits toward their high school diploma while they are working and/or receiving services

To further help youth successfully transition back into the community upon release, they also offer free wrap-around clinical services to meet clients’ range of needs in a safe, supportive environment. At the center, case managers work in cooperation with youth to develop individualized case plans and provide one-on-one counseling to ensure achievement of goals. A model for informed holistic rehabilitation, their array of onsite wrap-around services also includes therapy and mental health support, assistance with transportation, meals, housing placement and more.

As part of the local Youth Development effort in Los Angeles County, New Earth partners with the Culver City Police Department to divert youth ages 13-17 to their center in Culver City prior to arrest and enroll them immediately in programs and mental health support.

New Earth intends to use the state allocation to further strengthen and deepen the services they currently provide as well as to:

1. Develop a true mental health model that bolsters our clinical efforts – adding therapists and mental health professionals who are equipped to provide the in-depth trauma support needed for the youth we serve and their families as well as an evidence-based treatment model that deals with trauma and addiction and also supports families.
2. Build several emergency shelters and transitional living units for their youth who desperately need permanent housing.
3. Fund their reentry model and work with all youth in the probation camps and juvenile halls throughout Los Angeles County to ensure a smooth and successful transition back into the community with jobs, education, mental health support, housing and transportation available to them at New Earth upon release.
4. Continue to strengthen our diversion model with both the Culver City Police Department and the Culver City School District to keep vulnerable youth out of the court system while focusing on prevention and intervention.

Thank you for your consideration of this budget request. If you have any questions or concerns, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "Sydney Kamlager". The signature is written in a cursive style with a long horizontal line extending to the right from the end of the name.

SYDNEY KAMLAGER  
Senator, 30<sup>th</sup> District

SK:ba