



*Fresh Lifelines for Youth*

# IMAGINE 2030 REFRESH

**A STRATEGIC VISION FOR YOUTH JUSTICE IN CALIFORNIA AND BEYOND  
SEPTEMBER 2021**

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## ABOUT THIS VERSION OF THE PLAN

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The original Imagine 2030 plan grew out of a new vision statement for FLY written in the fall of 2018. Based on that vision, we set a goal to equip 30,000 more juvenile-justice and at-risk youth to transform their lives, and strengthen services for marginalized youth in California and beyond by 2030.

We began working on the plan to meet that goal, which became known as Imagine 2030. The [first plan description](#) was finished in the fall of 2019. In late 2020, members of FLY’s executive team participated in the [Nonprofit Resiliency Initiative](#) (NRI) pilot conducted by the [Bridgespan Group](#). This became a chance to pressure-test whether the plan still articulated a viable pathway for sustainability and growth given the many changing conditions and uncertainties of 2020.

The exercise reaffirmed the plan’s viability while providing the space to update certain parts of the plan to reflect changes in pacing and priorities based on new opportunities and challenges. As a record of their work and resulting insights, they published the [Imagine 2030 Scenario Playbook](#) in February 2021.

This current “Refresh” of Imagine 2030 builds upon the work of the NRI pilot. It defines further changing conditions within and around FLY and any adjustments that these changes require. It also takes into account what we have already accomplished as we near the end of Phase 1. Lastly, it will serve as a primer for conversations on how to update phases 2 and 3 based on learnings from phase 1.

# WHY FLY, WHY NOW?

*At FLY, we interrupt the pipeline to prison and support youth on the path to healthy, free, and productive lives.*

One of the greatest threats to the well-being of this country's youth is the **pipeline to prison**. This pipeline from initial contact with the juvenile justice system to incarceration in adult prisons is fed by harsh policies and practices by schools, law enforcement, and other systems that disproportionately punish and push out youth of color, LGBTQ/gender-nonconforming/trans youth, disabled youth, and youth experiencing other forms of marginalization.

In the U.S. we arrest almost 2,000 young people a day and Black youth are more than four times as likely to be detained or committed in juvenile facilities as white youth. California incarcerates more youth than any other state per capita; here the Black/white disparity in detention is nine times. This injustice is also expensive; in some parts of the San Francisco Bay Area we now spend as much as half a million dollars to lock up one youth for a single year.

Founded in 2000, [Fresh Lifelines for Youth](#) (FLY) is an award-winning nonprofit serving Bay Area young people ages 11 to 25 who are currently, formerly, or at risk of **justice system involvement**. Approximately 90% of FLY's young people are youth of color; all are in at least one of the groups that are unfairly over-represented in the justice system.

To date, FLY has supported more than 30,000 young people to exit the pipeline to prison. We serve, support, and partner with youth so they can not only transform their own lives but also improve their communities and change the systems that impact them and others like them.

While the number of youth experiencing incarceration has decreased significantly in recent decades, **our young people continue to be at greater risk of violence and incarceration**. Therefore, we're committed to leveraging our success to date, our strong reputation, and our sphere of influence to serve more youth and communities and to effect lasting changes in the justice system in California and beyond.



# FROM VISION TO STRATEGY

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Imagine 2030 grew out of work on a new vision statement for FLY written in 2018. Based on that vision, we then set an ambitious goal for FLY's impact on our direct service clients as well as other young people impacted by the justice system in California and beyond.

## FLY's Vision

FLY envisions a country where all youth grow up valued and supported, and the pipeline to prison is replaced with meaningful opportunities for them to live healthy, free, and productive lives that make stronger, safer, and more vibrant communities for us all.

## FLY's Goal for Justice by 2030

By 2030, through partnering with young people, communities, and systems, FLY will help dismantle California's pipeline to prison, equip 30,000 juvenile-justice and at-risk youth to transform their lives, and strengthen services for marginalized youth in California and beyond.

## Pathways to Success

Based on our vision and goal, we outlined four strategies for growth, which we call pathways to success. Each pathway has a unique set of approaches that FLY will employ throughout the plan period. We note that there are interdependent and reinforcing relationships among the pathways. Success in each depends upon and accelerates success for the others. Additional details of each pathway are described later in the document.

### Pathway 1: Evidence Building

*Developing Organizational Muscle and Agility*

### Pathway 2: Expansion of Services

*Paving the Path to Leadership Through Community Responsiveness*

### Pathway 3: Systems Change

*Dismantling the Pipeline and Building On-Ramps to Youth Leadership*

### Pathway 4: Elevating the Field

*Sharing the Knowledge and the Magic through the Lifeline Institute*

# A THREE-PHASED APPROACH

We've outlined three phases between the first fiscal year of the plan, FY20, and the end of FY30, when we hope to have realized our goal.

## **Phase 1: July 1, 2019 to June 30, 2022**

### *Stronger Infrastructure and Poised for Growth*

By June 30, 2022, FLY will have adaptively weathered the storm of COVID-19 and seized the increased momentum for racial justice to lay the foundation for growth, evolution, and preparedness for Phase 2. This progress will be demonstrated by targeted and responsive programmatic presence in our three counties of operation and having identified a viable pathway to expansion to a fourth county; having developed an adaptive and innovative evidence building strategy that continues to inform growth; having built the infrastructure and credibility to establish FLY as a statewide system change leader; and having determined whether or not the Lifeline Institute is a sustainable business model that helps advance the mission and vision of FLY.

## **Phase 2: July 1, 2022 to June 30, 2026**

### *Statewide Presence and Geographic Expansion*

FLY will have established our direct service work as a critical community resource in all counties where we are present. All programs will be operational across four California counties where they meet community needs, and we will have identified a viable pathway for expansion to a fifth county. FLY leadership and youth will actively influence local juvenile justice policy and practice, and play important roles in coalitions involved in state policymaking and grassroots advocacy. The Lifeline Institute will be established and FLY's evidence-building capabilities will inform not only our program evaluation and innovation but also our work in the Institute and in FLY's systems change efforts.

## **Phase 3: July 1, 2026 to June 30, 2030**

### *Justice for 30,000 and Counting*

FLY will have completed expansion to a fifth county and reached our goal to divert 30,000 young people out of the pipeline to prison. Our systems change work will level up to include positions for FLY leadership and youth on state policy-making and oversight bodies. We will have begun developing a national presence by continuing to build bodies of evidence that support key reforms to the justice systems, and through developing the Lifeline Institute into a nationwide resource for juvenile justice and youth service providers.



# PHASE 1 MILESTONES

Each growth strategy will have a set of operational milestones for each Phase of Imagine 2030. This document focuses only on the milestones of Phase 1. Phase 2 milestones will be fully developed by July 2022, taking into consideration changing conditions that affect our work and progress on Phase 1 milestones.



## PATHWAY 1: EVIDENCE BUILDING

*Developing Organizational Muscle and Agility*

FLY will develop the organizational muscle to be able to adopt a rapid cycle learning approach to evidence building, continuous quality improvement, and strategic growth initiatives. This work will inform our growth in the other three pathways.

### Approaches

- We will be both innovative and evidence-informed as we develop new models of service.
- Our learning and evaluation efforts will also support partners and affiliates to provide continuous quality improvement and demonstration of impact.
- We will produce white papers, position papers, policy and/or research briefs, and case studies that contribute to the larger body of evidence and practice.

### Milestones

- Evaluation findings that can be used to influence stakeholders to engage with FLY to provide support and services, and to inform our systems change and technical assistance initiatives
- Internal infrastructure that supports ongoing evaluation and learning work for continuous quality improvement
- Clarity on which of FLY's programs and/or strategies are viable for expansion into additional counties and under what conditions

## **PATHWAY 2: EXPANSION OF SERVICES**

*Paving the Path to Leadership Through Community Responsiveness*

FLY will be deeply present in its current three counties through direct service and systems change work that responds to community needs. We will also expand our services to a fourth county in California.

### **Approaches**

- In the counties in which we're already present, we'll evaluate which programs should be launched and sustained in the community based on needs, how our competencies can fulfill those needs, and program efficacy.
- A new county will be selected based on factors such as financial sustainability; efficient program delivery; talent availability; community interest; where the need is great (or the size of the gap between need and existing solutions); and where local leadership is progressive, effective, and aligned with FLY's values. We are mindful that expanding services will require continuous analysis of which young people our programs are most effective for.

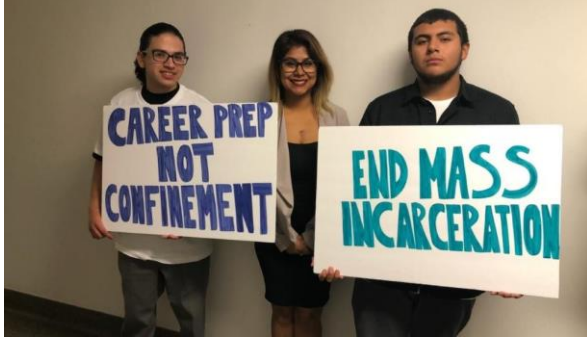
### **Milestones**

- Three or more fully scaled and codified programs in each county that serve FLY's target population (or serve 20% of youth on probation) and produce measurable, reliable results
- A fully established community presence that includes key system and community partnerships that increase FLY's access to kids and funds, and enhance our ability to influence policies and practices that impact youth in the systems
- Selection of a fourth jurisdiction for which we are confident we can secure funding and launch in Phase 2.



## PATHWAY 3: SYSTEMS CHANGE

*Dismantling the Pipeline and Building On-Ramps to Youth Leadership*



FLY will support juvenile justice reform statewide. We will be both responsive and preemptive in our support of good policy, good practice, and elevating youth voice to effect change.

### Approaches

- FLY will elevate youth voice in efforts to reform system policies and practices. We will also support youth leaders as they work to influence systems decision-making, form partnerships with local and statewide justice system leaders, and spur innovation.
- FLY leadership and youth will continue to serve on local bodies to effect change in juvenile justice agencies.
- FLY's proximity to justice and education system decision-makers gives us opportunities to advocate for youth. We will take a stand on issues through letters of support and op-eds, joining coalitions of groups involved in justice reform, and speaking at public events and events sponsored by community and system partners.

### Milestones

- Documentation of FLY's local reform efforts including practices, guidelines for engagement, staffing structure, training, and resources needed
- A statewide systems reform platform clearly identifying FLY's role, partners, and most powerful spheres of influence to effect change at the local and statewide levels
- A plan to ensure youth voice plays a critical role in local and statewide systems change efforts



## PATHWAY 4: ELEVATING THE FIELD

*Sharing the Knowledge and the Magic Through the Lifeline Institute*

FLY will strengthen services for marginalized youth in California and beyond through the launch of the Lifeline Institute, an innovation hub that will codify and share FLY's principles of practice refined over 20+ years by offering capacity-building services, entering into strategic partnerships, and through publications, presentations, and participation in convenings.

### Approaches

- FLY will partner with other nonprofits or government agencies to provide technical support to launch and replicate FLY program models in other communities through formal affiliate relationships.
- FLY's community capacity building efforts will include trainings on service delivery competencies such as rapport- and skill-building, volunteer management, and youth-centered approaches; it will also include coaching on how to design/adapt program models for their communities such as mentoring for system-involved youth, legal education, and youth advisory councils.
- FLY will engage in publishing, presentations, and convenings that demonstrate FLY's thought leadership and promote local, state, and national conversations about what is possible for youth justice and nonprofit leadership.

### Milestones

- A completed feasibility study, including piloting at least one service strategy to an external

client, and the decision as to whether the Institute stays a part of FLY's strategy

- A multi-year plan that outlines the level and extent of FLY's investment in the Institute, criteria for engagements, and organizational and funding structure required to complete the work
- A menu of training and technical assistance offerings that leverages FLY's strengths and expertise while minimizing risk to the brand



# FLY'S COMMITMENTS

In developing the first version of Imagine 2030, we identified three major commitments that inform every aspect of our work. They continue to guide our work and will play a key role in the success of this plan.



## Youth Voice

FLY's core programs are based on the ideas of youth who were incarcerated and wanted to prevent other youth from having the same fate. We remain committed to supporting our young people to use their voices, talents, and resilience to spark change for them, their communities, and the systems that impact them.



## Community Partnership

We partner with the communities we serve in order to be part of a solution that's bigger than us. And we are continuing to partner with agencies and systems to effect large-scale change while holding those systems and ourselves accountable to greater impact.



## Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion

At FLY, we embrace a diversity of identities, beliefs, thoughts, and experiences. We commit to creating a strong organizational culture of equity and inclusion in order to better serve our youth and our communities. We also commit to identifying the root causes of inequity in the education and justice systems and to helping transform those systems to be more effective, humane, and just.