Dear Stakeholder:

You have either expressed interest or been identified as someone who can provide value to the exciting project described below.

It is well established that lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender (LGBT) youth in the delinquency court system too often face discrimination, harassment, abuse, inappropriate services, and overly punitive responses.  The juvenile justice field is urgently in need of training, technical assistance, policy development, and hands on guidance to move stakeholders and institutions towards full implementation of LGBT cultural competency. LGBT cultural competency refers to the capacity of individuals, agencies and systems to respond equitably, respectfully and effectively to youth of all gender identities and sexual orientations in a manner that protects and preserves the dignity of each. Becoming culturally competent is a progression that involves moving beyond bias and simple tolerance of sexual orientation and gender identity towards embracing the principles of equal access and non-discriminatory treatment throughout the duration of the juvenile delinquency process.

The Equity Project is a collaborative initiative between Legal Services for Children, the National Juvenile Defender Center, and the National Center for Lesbian Rights aimed at ensuring that LGBT youth who are in the juvenile justice system are treated with dignity, respect and fairness.  The Project has entered a ***three-year partnership with Santa Clara County*** to provide hands-on guidance and support to build local capacity to sustain professional competency.  The work will include developing a detailed work plan, convening a local workgroup, developing a non-discrimination policy, conducting cross-disciplinary trainings, and providing technical assistance.

The next step in this collaboration involves convening a group of stakeholders to discuss the development of a workgroup.  We invite you to join us for this discussion on Thursday, June 21st at 3:30pm at the Social Services Auditorium located at 333 W. Julian St. This meeting will immediately follow the Juvenile Justice Systems Collaborative meeting. Should you have any questions, please feel free to contact Laura Garnette, Chief Probation Officer at laura.garnette@pro.sccgov.org or (408) 278-5900. We hope to see you there.

Sincerely,

Laura Garnette, Chief Probation Officer