

**Office of Youth and Community Restoration (OYCR)**  
Honorable Katherine Lucero

**Level**

Intermediate

**Track**

Juvenile/Legal

**CE**

CPA/BBS/BRN/CJER/MCLE

**Bio**

**Judge Katherine Lucero** (ret.) is Director of the Office of Youth and Community Restoration (OYCR) within the California Health and Human Service Agency where she is leading the Department of Juvenile Justice (DJJ) Realignment as required by Senate Bill 823. Prior to her appointment to this position, she was the Presiding Judge of the Juvenile Division for Santa Clara County Superior Court, where her responsibilities included presiding over the Juvenile Justice Dual Diagnosis County (which she founded in 2014) and the Santa Clara County Dually Involved Youth (DIY) Court. Director Lucero has focused on justice for children and families throughout her judicial career and brought the Educational Champion concept to Juvenile Justice in Santa Clara County, resulting in a robust Justice Ed program that prioritizes school engagement as a key resiliency marker. Over the past thirty years, she has served on numerous committees, panels, boards, councils and projects on behalf of the community, and has trained judges, child welfare professionals and juvenile justice stakeholders on various issues, including such topics as Collaborative and Trauma Informed Court Systems and the Disproportionate Impact of the Child Welfare System on Children of Color.

**Narrative**

This presentation will introduce the Office of Youth and Community Restoration (OYCR), the new office within the California State Health and Human Services Agency charged with being the statewide leader on health-based, trauma-informed, developmentally appropriate and culturally sensitive care of youth who have committed law violations. OYCR's Director, Judge Katherine Lucero, will explain the health-based underpinnings of the new statewide developmental approach to youth justice which has led to the closure of all state youth prisons and the return of all youth to local care. She will offer a legal and policy perspective on how recent brain science and research on adolescent development should inform the way we intervene with youth who commit law violations---including the youth who commit the most serious violations, including sexual abuse offenses. These interventions should both hold youth accountable and provide the healing opportunities that will enable them to become healthy, fulfilled adult members of society. Such developmentally appropriate treatment strategies ultimately result in safer communities and in more effective youth outcomes.

**Learning Objectives**

- Describe the Office of Youth and Community Restoration
- Identify three key features of the developmental approach to the care of court-involved youth
- Analyze two best practices to care for court-involved youth who commit sexual offenses and/or who have experienced trauma