

Process and Evaluation Workgroup

Meeting Minutes

April 5, 2024

In attendance:

- **Rodney Brooks**, Alameda County Public Defenders
- **Rick Wood**, Rubicon Programs, Center of Re-Entry Excellence (CORE)
- **Jason Sjoberg**, Office of the Alameda County District Attorney
- **Karen Chin**, Urban Strategies Council
- **Janene Grigsby**, The Alameda County Probation Department
- **Shawn Rowland**, Our Road Prison Project
- **Charlie Eddy**, Urban Strategies Council
- **Rezsín Gonzalez**, Alameda County Probation Department
- **Pat Mims**, Rubicon Programs, Center of Re-Entry Excellence (CORE)
- **L.J. Jennings**, Chief Executive Officer, Oakland Dream Center
- **Ayana Cruz**, Building Opportunities for Self-Sufficiency (BOSS)
- **Jenica Wilson**, Alameda County Probation Department
- **Darryl Stewart**, Office of Alameda County Supervisor Nate Miley
- **Alex Garcia**, Alameda County Probation Department

The meeting opened with an outline of the Process and Evaluation Workgroup's responsibilities and an introduction of the topic to be discussed, the current feedback loop probation contracted programs provide for AB 109 clients. Next, the meeting attendees introduced themselves. After introductions, people in attendance reviewed and approved the minutes.

Representatives from the AB 109 service providers in attendance provided a summary of their current programs; the avenues for feedback; and plans to modify and/or enhance the current feedback loop. A summary of the discussion is listed below.

Discussion of the Current Programs and Opportunities for Feedback

- BOSS has a Wellness, Empowerment and Resiliency Campus and a Trauma Recovery Center – both in East Oakland providing services for our AB 109 clients. The goal is to provide a multidisciplinary approach to community healing, including pre-employment and employment

training; transitional work opportunities; career fairs; case management; transitional housing; behavioral health, assistance including trauma recovery; and housing including housing for women with children. The organization also allows other community partners to use their space for meetings.

- BOSS asks their clients to fill out an anonymous survey after reaching their 30 and 90 day benchmarks. The organization has plans to ask clients to fill out an anonymous survey after the completion of specific programming.
- **Question:** Do you do anything other than surveys to obtain feedback from clients i.e. focus groups? Second, what is the percentage of participants who fill out the survey? **Answer:** A “guesstimate” is 70% of clients fill out surveys. Second, we don’t do focus groups, that is a good suggestion. It was suggested and BOSS staff agreed to bring accurate information about the percentage of participants who complete their surveys to a future meeting.
- The Kingdom Builders Transitional Housing Center also known as “The Dream Center” is a 100 bed male only facility which houses AB 109 clients as well as people returning from state prison. The facility provides wrap around services, employment services, focus groups, access to case managers and housing coordinators. Seventy six percent of clients obtain permanent housing and eighty six percent gain employment.
- The CEO regularly checks in with staff to inquire about the quality of services being provided and that information is reviewed at staff meetings. Suggestions for changes are also made in the group sessions attended by clients.
- To date we haven’t been required, nor have we provided a report to Probation documenting client feedback and there is no mechanism to do so.
- **Question:** How do you provide services differently for clients who served a short period of time incarcerated (AB 109 clients) and clients who have served a longer sentence. **Answer:** We don’t do anything specifically different, but we do encourage individuals who have spent more time in the system to mentor those who have spent less time incarcerated. It was suggested that if the Dream Center provided surveys to clients, it seems that the organization would uncover some very positive and useful information. Many “graduates” from the program come back to say thanks for the assistance. Approximately, 60% of staff are former clients. Every December the organization hosts “Dream Center Sunday” allowing current and former clients to come share stories about their current struggles and progress.
- The Center of RE-Entry Excellence (CORE) is a one stop hub for re-entry programs in Oakland with a satellite facility in Hayward. The Center utilizes a collective impact model allowing service providers to come to one facility and talk with potential clients about their programs.

Currently, the services fall into eight domains: legal services, public benefits, family services, financial planning, education, training, employment assistance and housing assistance. The organization is a service coordinator, (not a direct service provider) a significant design change from the prior program located at 400 Broadway.

- CORE employs the “staying connected” program, allowing staff to communicate with AB 109 clients while still incarcerated, to understand the services needed prior to release. This process led to CORE providing transportation for clients upon release.
- CORE staff also attends focus groups run by Probation. In addition, the organization has a suggestion box, which has been somewhat underutilized to date. Finally, CORE hosts a series of events, which allows them to collect client feedback.
- **Question:** The prior iterations of the program were rigid and did not mesh with the lifestyles of clients. How does the CORE address this issue? **Answer:** This is an entirely new model, once you are a member of CORE you are always a member. If you don’t utilize the services over a 30 day period, you will be considered inactive. As a client you are reactivated the next time you enter the facility. A question about accessibility was raised. The organization provides various types of transportation to the facility via their van, Uber or public transportation.
- In addition to the connection with CBO’s the CORE offers showers, hot meals and clothes for people returning to the community. The program is “human centered design” the goal is for the facility to be a safe place where individuals who utilize the service dictate the environment.
- Probation coordinates a series of roundtables at the CORE which allows for some feedback about the services provided.
- Probation has numerous feedback loops, clients can submit comments on the Probation website, through the Re-Entry Services Coordinators and/or by interaction with Probation staff at live meetings. The updated language in contracts being developed has a quality control feedback loop.
- The question was raised, how is Probation data quantified and evaluated. The data team does this and shares the info with the contractors. Seeing the entire picture is helpful, including the anecdotal data, which can often show trends and themes.
- Where the data is coming from and how it is collected dictates how it is used. Some questions allow additional comments after the “yes or no” answers. Some of the surveys allow the information to be graphed.

- There seems to be no continuity of questions asked of providers across the board, in addition to allowing for specific questions based on the individual programs. There does not seem to be a uniform way information is provided to Probation. CORE meets monthly with Probation's data team to discuss the findings. However, there is not a defined way to collect the information, specifically the client feedback data. CORE does collect a comprehensive amount of client data.
- Probation has committed to sharing a list of the different ways feedback flows to the department. Having people who are not probation staff facilitate the focus groups may allow for more reliable honest feedback.
- The offering of gift cards for probation clients who come to focus groups needs to happen as often as possible.
- It was asked if there is a way to categorize the data collected, isolating the "program hoppers" to provide insight about how the services are working for people. Talking with people who are no longer on probation can also be helpful, since they wouldn't fear negative impacts for being honest.
- Moving forward, we may want to ask Rubicon if they have suggestions about what data is the most useful since they collect so much. Probation has talked to Rubicon about what data they are looking for/feel is the most useful. It was agreed to continue to invite other providers to attend future meetings to talk about feedback in addition to hearing from probation about the data they collect and how it is used.
- Are the data requirements for Rubicon being required of the contractors moving forward? Rubicon's ability to collect data is helpful to Probation because their current system is extremely limited. Rubicon has gone above and beyond what has been asked. Some of the new contracts will have increased data requirements. When providing feedback, some clients stated they felt demoralized by the programs, (none of the programs represented at the meeting were identified as having this issue) which is something Probation is addressing. Probation staff realizes that smaller organizations are compromised in their ability to collect and analyze information, but the department has a need to have essential client data. Probation has also agreed to share some of the contract language with this Workgroup in the future.
- Is there a possibility for contractors to speak to each other in the same language? Probation is working on developing a public facing dashboard. Probation requests that contracted providers have a data person on staff, which they will subsidize.
- There was a suggestion that the various county departments share information about what they are learning from their contractors.

The meeting adjourned at 11:40