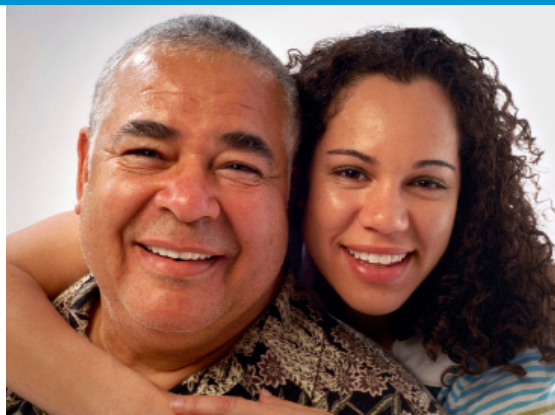


Santa Clara County Adult Reentry Strategic Plan Ready to Change: Promoting Safety and Health for the Whole Community Summary

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Summary

Reentry in Santa Clara County

David is a 32-year-old gay Latino man who was convicted of driving under the influence of alcohol. He has no criminal history, but made the mistake of driving home after his brother's wedding and was pulled over due to his erratic driving.

Michael is a 24-year-old white man who was convicted of drug sales and possession. He has a criminal history consisting of one minor juvenile conviction and a previous drug conviction as an adult; however, he successfully completed his probation and has not been convicted of any crime in the past three years.

Denise is a 45-year-old African American woman who became involved with the criminal justice system at the age of 14. She was a victim of child abuse and has a long criminal history. She has been incarcerated in the county jail five times and sent to prison five times.

David, Michael, and Denise have one thing in common: They have been incarcerated. However, they have varying risk levels and needs and will respond differently to programs designed to make their futures more positive.



Santa Clara County Reentry Network

On March 1, 2011, at the request of County Supervisor George Shirakawa, the board of supervisors established a cross-system reentry network to develop and implement a reentry plan for the county. The Santa Clara County Reentry Network (Reentry Network) is expected to identify comprehensive reentry and recidivism reduction strategies to elevate existing efforts, streamline processes to link inmates to effective in-custody and community-based programming, identify cost-saving methods, and prepare Santa Clara County for the realignment of parolees and low-level prisoners under AB109.

The Reentry Network, in turn, appointed a 23-member strategic planning team to develop the details of a plan for the county. This team included members from key agencies such as the Office of County Executive, the Department of Correction – Sheriff's Office, the Probation Department, the Department of Public Health, the Department of Mental Health's Homeless Initiative, the Office of the Public Defender, and the Office of the District Attorney, along with community-based organizations.

This plan creates a road map for future reentry work, including the formation of an ongoing reentry operation and procedures team that will oversee future reentry efforts as well as five county-wide workgroups that will build and evaluate housing, employment, education, behavioral health, and family support programs.

Representatives from county agencies, community-based organizations, and the community of formerly incarcerated individuals will comprise these workgroups. At least 20% of workgroup members will come from community-based organizations, and another 20% will represent the formerly incarcerated population.

Each workgroup will be responsible for collecting data, developing a data-driven strategic plan, identifying funding sources, developing pilot projects, evaluating the success of pilot projects, and using findings from these evaluations to further improve services. The strategic plans and evaluations will be reviewed by the reentry operations and procedures team to ensure no duplication exists and that the reentry network develops in a way that effectively reduces recidivism.

Developing the Most Effective Reentry Services

According to recent research, effective reentry efforts identify varying risk and need levels among prisoners and probationers; build a network of research-based, effective services that respond to the differences among prisoners and probationers; and individualize case plans based on assessment findings. This approach has been referred to as the Risk-Need-Responsivity Model.

Within Santa Clara County, the Department of Correction – Sheriff’s Office and the Probation Department have adopted the use of the Correctional Assessment Intervention System™ (CAIS), a validated risk and needs assessment system promoted by the National Council on Crime and Delinquency (NCCD). This instrument will allow the Sheriff’s Office and the Probation Department to differentiate between people who are at low, moderate, and high risk of committing crime and to target limited resources to the moderate- and high-risk individuals.

Reentry services will be provided within county jails and supply linkages to community-based services, allowing for a seamless service continuum.

In addition to responding to risk level, the Reentry Network will strive to offer services that respond to a wide range of needs and aspects of identity. The types of treatment, intervention, and services a formerly incarcerated individual receives should take into account personal experiences, identity, faith,

and culture. Services should address variations across ethnicity, age, gender, sexual orientation, beliefs, and readiness for change. With this in mind, it must be understood that no single approach will be effective in reducing recidivism. Rather, the Reentry Network will create a menu of services for case managers within the Sheriff’s Office and the Probation Department.

The Reentry Network will also aim to train service providers on the links between trauma and criminal justice involvement. Trauma results from an event or events that have caused lifelong psychological damage. These events include physical abuse, sexual abuse, loss, neglect, violence, terrorism, disasters, historical trauma, intergenerational trauma, or the witnessing of these acts. Some people are able to recover from traumatic life histories and live positive lives. However, for many people, traumatic life histories lead to juvenile delinquency, criminal activity as adults, substance abuse, post-traumatic stress disorder, hypervigilance, depression, poor self-rated health, and low self-esteem.

Timeline for Implementation

October 2012 to December 2012

The focus in the first three months is to identify a chairperson or co-chairs for each workgroup, recruit members to participate in workgroups, and establish a meeting schedule and structure for each workgroup.

January 2013 to May 2013

Each workgroup will conduct an asset/barrier/gap analysis of their need domain (housing, education, employment, family reunification and support, and health and well-being) to determine the priorities and appropriate plan based on their capabilities and competencies. In addition, the workgroup will develop a data collection plan targeting formerly incarcerated individuals at moderate and high risk of recidivating and will identify gaps in existing data that prevent outcome measurement. This will be done in collaboration with the data collection workgroup. The workgroups will review their findings and develop



an implementation plan for fiscal year 2013–2014 to present to the reentry operations and procedures team and the reentry governance team. The implementation plan will specify who performs what action, what the action is specifically, and the deadline for completion of each action. Only after a plan has been developed to address the various barriers to the policy and performance expectations and other goals should the group discuss possible projects to alleviate gaps in their system that may require additional federal, state, or local funding.

June 2013

The final reentry implementation plan for fiscal year 2013–2014 will be presented to the public safety and justice committee and the full board of supervisors for approval.

Fiscal Year 2013–2014

The implementation plan will be launched and progress will be tracked. By January 2014, the reentry operations and procedures team will report to the reentry governance team and public safety and justice committee on their progress and key milestones.

Fiscal Years 2014–2018

Existing programs/initiatives will be evaluated, improved, or defunded. The workgroups will continue to review existing data, identify target populations,

and develop new programs to expand the reentry network of services. On an annual basis, the reentry operations and procedures team will present their annual work plan for approval to the reentry governance team, public safety and justice committee, and board of supervisors.

Conclusion

The ultimate goal of the Santa Clara County Adult Reentry Strategic Plan is to significantly reduce recidivism rates by providing services, resources, and treatment opportunities that meet the needs of moderate- and high-risk formerly incarcerated individuals. This will not be an easy endeavor, but it is achievable. Many formerly incarcerated individuals have been able to break the cycle of recidivism and lead successful lives. However, the number of formerly incarcerated individuals who are able to break the cycle of recidivism will undoubtedly increase as a result of concerted efforts to address their needs within the criminal justice system and the individuals' communities.

Individuality is a human trait; therefore, formerly incarcerated individuals with the same risk levels will respond to interventions, treatment strategies, and services very differently. This is why it is so important to consider individual personalities, ethnicities, sexual orientations, genders, cultures, belief systems, etc., of formerly incarcerated individuals when seeking behavior change. Just as David, Michael, and Denise have extremely different backgrounds from each other, such is true for all formerly incarcerated individuals.

The criminal justice system in California has historically emphasized punishment over rehabilitation and reentry. These tactics have led to overcrowding, which is unsafe, costly, and causes undue stress on the families and communities disproportionately affected by incarceration rates. It is time for a more compassionate approach that considers and seeks to understand the factors that lead to incarceration on an individual basis.