

County of Santa Clara County Counsel

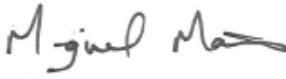


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Prepared by: Susan Swain
Senior Lead Deputy County Counsel
Reviewed by: Lori E. Pegg
Assistant County Counsel

DATE: June 21, 2011

TO: Board of Supervisors

FROM: 
Miguel Marquez
County Counsel

SUBJECT: Adoption of Resolution Establishing a Re-Entry Network

RECOMMENDED ACTION

Adopt Resolution establishing a Re-Entry Network to reduce recidivism and promote public safety by linking inmates and ex-offenders to effective services in order to transition inmates into society and assist them in being self-sufficient. (Roll Call Vote)

FISCAL IMPLICATIONS

General Fund support is provided through the Center for Leadership and Transformation for guiding the development of the inmate re-entry process. Ongoing coordination support for the Network is funded through existing resources in the Office of Supervisor Shirakawa with the Office of the Sheriff. Justice Assistance Grant funding supports staff resources from the County Executive - Office of Women's Policy. A federal Second Chance Act grant specifically for planning support is currently under development and will be submitted at the end of June.

REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATION

On March 1, 2011, the Board of Supervisors directed the Administration, the Office of the Sheriff and the Department of Correction to return to the Board of Supervisors with a plan for establishing a cross-system Re-Entry Network to direct a comprehensive re-entry and recidivism reduction strategy to leverage existing efforts, streamline processes to link

inmates to effective in-custody community-based programming, identify cost saving methods and prepare the County and its partners for the State realignment of parolees and low-level offenders.

The Department of Correction and the Office of the Sheriff convened a meeting with representatives from Supervisor Shirakawa's Office, the Probation Department, the Office of the County Executive, Custody Health, Mental Health, and three community-based organizations, with the goal of developing a re-entry plan.

On May 4, 2011, the Acting Chief of Correction reported to the Public Safety and Justice Committee on the above discussion, including a one-year, two-phase proposal that was developed as a result of these discussions. The first phase is proposed to start July 1, 2011 and end on December 31, 2011. The Center for Leadership and Transformation (CLT) will be used in this phase to build the mechanism for the re-entry process in the County jail system to link the Probation Department, Department of Correction, other County departments such as Mental Health, Custody Health, and Public Health, as well as community partners for the development of effective inmate re-entry plans.

The Re-Entry Network will be convened, if approved, to identify existing re-entry efforts, prepare for grant funding by prioritizing efforts and inmate populations, improve existing after-care programs for juvenile probationers, and plan for impacts of State realignment of parolees and low-level offenders. In essence, the Network will be the Santa Clara County clearinghouse for all inmate recidivism reduction strategies.

The second phase will be determined depending on the outcomes of the first phase. The goal of the second phase is to use a Recidivism Study due to be released in November 2011 to further refine the Re-Entry Network work plan and to align inmate programming with re-entry plans. The County will embark on a re-entry pilot program in the County jail system based on the outcomes of the re-entry process developed through the CLT and identified funding. Additionally, a pilot program within the Department of Correction, for instance, could focus on populations that are small such as the women's population at the Elmwood campus and a small number of gang-impacted men at the Main Jail.

The attached resolution establishing a Re-Entry Network, if adopted, will help to maximize the County's ability to coordinate all the re-entry programs of different justice departments within the County, as well as the work of community partners, to ensure efficiencies are achieved, grants are maximized, and that the best evidence-based practices are instituted across the justice system, its partner agencies and community-based organizations.

The Re-Entry Network shall have a Governance Team with voting authority. The Chair of the Re-Entry Network may name additional non-voting members to the Re-Entry Network to ensure a full discussion and participation by stakeholders.

BACKGROUND

In June 2009, the Department of Correction was awarded \$49,730 in American Recovery and Reinvestment Act funding, in addition to Justice Assistance Grant funding, to conduct a recidivism study. The County contracted with Huskey & Associates to conduct a two-year recidivism study with the objective of evaluating the effectiveness of current programming offered to inmates, including calculating the recidivism rate of those inmates participating in programming versus those inmates who did not.

Huskey & Associates, working in conjunction with the University of Cincinnati Center for Criminal Justice Research, has released their preliminary findings in a report, "Preliminary Recidivism Study and Evidence-Based Analysis." The report states that high-risk offenders should be provided with evidence-based programming based on the risk factors most likely to lead to criminal activity. Evidence-based programming involves, in essence, determining which programming is the most effective based on the best available research. Currently, the County does not have an assessment tool to identify the needs of inmates in connection with re-entry programming. Establishing such a tool will lead to more effective programming.

In light of the preliminary findings and the lack of coordination among departments with respect to applying for grants or determining programming, the Re-Entry Network was brought to the Board for consideration.

CONSEQUENCES OF NEGATIVE ACTION

The Re-Entry Network will not be established and programming to improve recidivism rates will not be coordinated across County systems and with community partners.

STEPS FOLLOWING APPROVAL

Memberships to the Re-Entry Network will be processed and the first meeting of the Re-Entry Network will be scheduled.

ATTACHMENTS

- Resolution Establishing Re-Entry Network