

Reentry Council

City & County of San Francisco

(San Francisco Administrative Code 5.1)

MINUTES

Tuesday, September 29, 2009
10:00 a.m.-12:00 p.m.
Auditorium
State Building
455 Golden Gate Avenue
San Francisco, CA 94102

Members Present: Public Defender Jeff Adachi, Steve Arcelona, Chief Patrick Boyd, Mary Campbell, Joaquin Diaz de Leon, Glenn Eagleson, Tommy Escarcega, Armel Farnsworth, Barbara Garcia, Chief Yador Harrell, District Attorney Kamala D. Harris (arrived after Agenda II.), Sheriff Michael Hennessey, Gerald Miller, Captain Al Pardini, Karen Roye, the Hon. Kevin Ryan, Chief William Siffermann, Eddy Zheng.

Members Absent: ShaMauda Bishop, Hon. James McBride, Duriel Gilmore.

I. Call to Order and Roll Call

The meeting was called to order at 10:08 am by Sheriff Hennessey, who welcomed everyone to the meeting of the Reentry Council, and introduced the four Council Co-Chairs; Roll Call established that a quorum was present.

II. Review and Adoption of Meeting Minutes of July 17, 2009

Sheriff Hennessey invited committee members to review minutes from previous Reentry Council meeting, and then entertained motion to adopt minutes. Chief Siffermann moved to adopt the minutes, Mr. Arcelona seconded the motion, and the minutes were adopted by unanimous vote.

III. Update on Subcommittee Meetings Proceedings & Interest

Jessica Flintoft, Council Staff, provided overview of preliminary interest and participation in five subcommittees. The Reentry Council established five subcommittees at its July 2009 meeting, and each of the five subcommittees has convened once since then. The subcommittee meetings enjoyed high participation to date, with more than 100 people participating, with individual subcommittee meetings averaging approximately 20 participants. Co-Chairs and staff are working together to finalize membership and size of subcommittees on an ongoing basis. Each initial subcommittee meeting was led by Reentry Council staff and conducted according to a standard structure, such that each subcommittee discussed its primary topic in terms of four main categories corresponding with charge of Reentry Council: Needs, Barriers, Existing Programs, and Funding Sources. Jessica explained the format and its outcomes for each of the five subcommittees, and an overview of the topics covered by each subcommittee:

- Subcommittee on Civil Rights & Civic Engagement of Formerly Incarcerated People

Conversation on voting rights; obtaining government-issued identification; lifetime collateral consequences of criminal records; civic participation and engagement of formerly incarcerated people in community and government.

- Subcommittee on Self-Sufficiency of Currently & Formerly Incarcerated Individuals
Conversation on education; employment (including training, placement, local capacity for hiring); access to and eligibility for public benefits; personal development and advocacy skills.
- Subcommittee on Health & Well Being of Currently & Formerly Incarcerated Individuals
Conversation on housing; physical health, including preventive primary care and medications; behavioral health, including inpatient and outpatient services; and well being, including volunteerism and other community relationships that may prevent recidivism.
- Subcommittee on Welfare & Safety of Families, Victims & Communities
Conversation on children and families of people who are currently or formerly incarcerated, including the quality of contact during incarceration, issues of custody/reunification, access to support services, benefits and housing; victims of returning offenders, including notification of release, restorative justice programs; communities to which people are returning.
- Subcommittee on Community Justice & Alternatives to Incarceration (9/18/09)
Conversation on collaborative courts and diversion; sentencing and early release; probation and parole.

Mr. Miller asked whether the number of subcommittees and subcommittee topic areas was sufficient. Jessica responded that five subcommittees, meeting bimonthly, would be ideal because subcommittees, like the full Reentry Council, will be subject to quorum requirements (once their permanent membership is determined), and current staffing resources make administering more frequent meetings a challenge.

Ms. Roye thanked the Reentry Council staff for their efforts in organizing subcommittees. She asked for further detail on how subcommittees were surveyed. Jessica explained that, while no actual survey was taken of subcommittee participants, the format of each subcommittee's first meeting included the opportunity for small group discussions, which were segmented along lines of four dimensions of each issue (needs, barriers, programs and funding sources).

Following up, Ms. Garcia asked for an opportunity to sit down with staff to try to do a gap analysis in each of these areas. Jessica affirmed that this was the intention, and noted that Agenda Item 6 would present some more detail about the process to develop this analysis.

Mr. Arcelona noted that overlap between subcommittees may be inevitable, and asked what was being done to address that overlap. Jessica explained that there are two ways that staff can help to address redundancy: at least in this first round of subcommittee meetings, because each meeting was facilitated by staff and organized along a standard format, staff was able to prevent significant overlapping of discussion areas. In the future, whether or not staff facilitates meetings, staff will be present at all subcommittee meetings, and able to advise subcommittee members as to what topics are being addressed by other subcommittees.

Public Defender Adachi complimented Council and Staff on the impressive turnout for the first round of subcommittee meetings and asked Ms. Flintoft to describe attendees in terms of the

communities, perspectives, departments and organizations that have been represented, as well as which of these have been under-represented. Further, he asked where there might be areas for improvement in terms of outreach for specific communities or interest groups. Ms. Flintoft offered to send the full list of subcommittee attendees with their given affiliations. She also named several of the departments and community-based organizations that had participated, acknowledging that more outreach could be done in terms of victim's rights organizations, and noted room for improvement in terms of active participation by San Francisco Police Department and from housing partners, including both DPH and HSA. Also, while some community groups and neighborhood associations have been involved, Ms. Flintoft acknowledged that outreach in neighborhoods and communities could be improved.

Public Comment:

An unidentified member of the public asked for specific information on which committee addresses mental health needs. Jessica noted that the Health and Well Being subcommittee is the subcommittee that most directly addresses such needs.

Javarre Wilson of the Black Coalition on AIDS, who said he missed all of the subcommittee meetings but wished to be considered for permanent membership, asked how his interest could be noted. Jessica noted that Mr. Wilson was not the only one in this position, and noted that she had spoken with him and with others who wished to be considered. She explained that the names of interested individuals have been collected and will be included along with the names of people who did attend subcommittee meetings as the co-chairs proceed with the process of appointing permanent members to the subcommittees. Sheriff Hennessey reiterated that no formal appointments to subcommittees have yet been made, and added that one question yet to be decided dealt with the size of the formal subcommittees, which requires balancing the desire to appoint as many interested parties as possible with mindfulness of quorum requirements to which subcommittees are subject. Mr. Farnsworth added that, while permanent appointments will be limited, nobody will be excluded from participating in subcommittee meetings, which are all open to the public.

Tomiquia Moss asked how the subcommittees' work will be considered and combined with the Council's efforts given that the subcommittees will be meeting bimonthly. Jessica explained that the relationship between the subcommittees and the Council is a work in progress and that, while the full Council meets three times each year, that does not limit Council members' participation to those meetings alone. As Council members' staff participate in subcommittee work, the lines of communication between both bodies will be kept open. Ms. Roye added that because the full Council will review and approve the final Council report (based on subcommittee work), the Council will necessarily be aware of all the efforts of the subcommittees. Mr. Zheng expressed his belief that good communication between the subcommittees and the full council will be critical and should remain a point of focus. Sheriff Hennessey explained that the subcommittees may make any type of recommendation, whether for new programs, for ending current programs, or for new legislation, among other things, but that those recommendations, even if accepted by the Council, are not necessarily binding. Sheriff Hennessey suggested that the Council should pick and choose the recommendations it makes. Mr. Zheng discussed the importance of being aware of all funding options for any recommended programs or legislation before making such recommendations, and Ms. Roye noticed Council members' active participation not only at Council meetings, but also in the time between meetings.

IV. Proposed Process to Appoint Reentry Council Representative to WiCAC

Sheriff Hennessey acknowledged that the Council's representative to WiCAC has been Shirley Melnicoe, retiring executive director of Northern California Service League, and extends invitation to public to attend her retirement celebration, scheduled for Wednesday September 30. He introduced Mr. Eagleson of the SF Office of Economic & Workforce Development to provide background on this agenda item. He provided an overview of the WiCAC, including the U.S. Department of Labor's requirement that cities create a policy body (Workforce Investment Board) to oversee its Workforce Systems. In San Francisco, this body is the WISF, and it comprises membership in the percentages required by the federal legislation, with representation from business, labor, justice, and others. San Francisco Ordinance 0270-07 has created the Workforce Investment Community Advisory Committee (WiCAC) as an advisory committee to the workforce board, with members drawn from the staff and/or board members of 501(c)3 organizations as well as appointees from the Board of Supervisors, the Transition Aged Taskforce, the Homeless Coordinating Board and the Reentry Council. A process for selecting and appointing a representative from the Council has not been established. Ms. Flintoft presented the staff's three-step proposal for the process to determine an appointee from the Council, including a deadline of Friday, January 8, 2010, by which time all interested staff and/or board members of 501(c)3 organizations should email reentry.council@sfgov.org to express their interest and include their name, title, organization and contact information along with a brief description of their relevant experience and skills and a brief description of their ability to make regular reports to the Council and its subcommittees, as requested. Staff would then circulate this information, and all interested individuals whose information was received by the deadline would then appear before the Council at the January 26, 2010 meeting to answer any questions of Council members. After this, the Council would appoint a representative to the WiCAC. Mr. Eagleson reiterated that candidates for the appointment should be staff and/or board members of their particular organization.

Sheriff Hennessey called for a motion to accept the proposed process. Mr. Farnsworth moved to accept, the motion was seconded by Public Defender Adachi, and approved unanimously.

V. Presentation on San Francisco Reentry Services and Programs by the National Council on Crime and Delinquency

Carolina Guzman of the National Council on Crime and Delinquency presented the findings of research conducted with funding from a grant that was awarded prior to the formation of the Reentry Council, through the San Francisco Safe Communities Reentry Council. The PowerPoint slides used in her presentation were included in the distributed information to members of the Council and the public in attendance, as part of Agenda Item V. She began by reviewing the purpose of the Reentry Council as stated in its founding legislative language. She then explained that the NCCD's assessment addresses the requirement of the Council to "provide accurate and comprehensive information about programs that serve the reentry population." She noted that the goals of the NCCD's research were to compile information about current programs and services in place that have an impact on the reentering population, whether they are intended specifically for this population or not, and to identify and develop processes for collecting information on target populations, services and capacities for development of a "program model matrix." Methodology included informant interviews with key staff from participating agencies

about reported services followed by analysis of those interviews to highlight common themes, which were validated by two independent research associates at NCCD. The identified themes were included as the sixth slide in the presentation.

Ms. Guzman explained that defining the reentry population is complicated by the reality of the many possible ways that individuals navigate through the criminal justice system (mapped on Slide 10). Because of the widely varying needs that individuals in the system have, NCCD identified a commensurate need for centralized, shared information between agencies and departments (for example, with regard to individuals' medical treatments and medication and other information that may be needlessly duplicated). Slide 13 identified gaps and overlaps in reported services. In particular, housing and employment services are identified as gaps, whereas screening and assessment services and mental health and substance abuse services are areas of at least some overlap provided by multiple agencies. Some of the challenges identified by the NCCD include the development of a formal mental health discharge plan with direct linkage to community providers; strengthening family support for individuals; establishing transitional housing units; augmenting gender-responsive models; and addressing employability at the regional level, Bay Area-wide. NCCD identified areas of opportunity, or things that respondents agreed would be positive, including a focus on common goals, information sharing, continuity of care, coordinated case management, shared assessment tools, relevant outcome measures and the establishment of an inter-departmental planning process.

Ms. Garcia asked about the connection between health issues and the physical health component of the research. Ms. Guzman affirmed that these connections and questions are important as we move forward.

DA Harris expressed the need to educate young parents in parenting skills with the goal of ending cycles of criminal behavior and incarceration. She asked what was learned about young parents' needs for such education and skills training. Ms. Guzman acknowledged that several departments reported working with this target group. She noted that challenges include continuing services to young parents once they are out of the system, and emphasized that continuity of care between departments and then, subsequently, back in the community, is a key challenge. DA Harris also noted that slide 14 in the presentation did not include the family track as a challenge, adding that there is a known lack of community services available, and therefore family issues should have been included. Ms. Guzman agreed.

Mr. Miller noted the lack of community-based organizations included in the survey, and Ms. Guzman explained that the study deliberately focused solely on the 14 departments encompassed by the Reentry Council. Ms. Flintoft reiterated that the limited scope of this project was intentional, and said that subsequent research may look at CBOs and other organizations. Ms. Escarcega asked whether there is any participatory research that looks at individuals currently in the system. Ms. Guzman acknowledged that such research programs do exist, and that this information will be shared with the Reentry Council.

Mr. Boyd asked about the survey's capacity to do qualitative assessment of the ability of providers to do thorough service provision. Ms. Guzman responded that the survey was qualitative and exploratory, and in that sense it brought a lot out about the need for better coordination between services, even where many service providers do exist. Probation officers, for instance, don't always have systematic methods for identifying available services for their clients, and instead base their referrals on personal experience and personal contacts. Ms.

Guzman said that the question of how this can be standardized and expanded is an example of the level of detail in the survey. Sheriff Hennessey asked whether this presentation marked the end of NCCD's contract on this topic, and Ms. Guzman said it did.

Mr. Eagleson noted as a challenge to meeting the employment needs of the reentering population the reality of a relatively low demand for jobs that do not require specialized skills or training in San Francisco. Ms. Guzman noted that the NCCD's interviews yielded a gap in job preparedness skills training, and agreed that the number of available jobs represents another challenge.

Mr. Zheng noted that slide 9, which mapped the many paths in the criminal justice system, did not include individuals who are subsequently deported, and did not specifically highlight recidivating individuals. He also adds that, despite challenging economic conditions, there are still employment opportunities for formerly incarcerated individuals, and suggests that reentry programs are most effective when they begin at the beginning of incarceration.

Chief Harrell asked if the research suggested the need for a universal definition of the reentry population. Ms. Guzman said that a universal definition for the entire reentry population may not necessarily achieve the objectives of the Council, because of the wide array of individuals and circumstances it would encompass. She said that a continuum of definitions may be more useful, especially from the research perspective.

Mr. Farnsworth said that outreach should start inside prisons, but it also has to start with families and young parents, in order to end cycles. He said that education is a key to ending these cycles, and that it poses a significant barrier to successful reentry. He suggested that better information, more easily accessible, would be a critical component of any outreach.

Ms. Campbell offered her own personal experience with regard to the parenting education that is offered in prisons, and noted Friends Outside as one organization that offers classes to parents in prison. She noted that one challenge she observed was that, although she was able to take parenting classes, women had very little contact with their children due to the remote location of the state prisons, and that the contact that she did have was complicated emotionally and logistically. She said that it is a challenge for incarcerated parents to maintain close connections with their children, even if they are served by good parenting classes and other resources. She reiterated importance of formerly incarcerated expertise on the Reentry Council.

Public Defender Adachi asked Ms. Guzman for three suggested actions stemming from the findings. He also asked for Ms. Guzman's opinion on what would be useful to obtain in any future research efforts, especially noting the lack of quantitative information about who needs services. For suggested actions to be taken, Ms. Guzman noted that the subcommittees that have already begun meeting constitute one important step, as just by convening they improve common understandings and common interests. The specific dialogues that take place in the subcommittees constitute a second recommended action. A third goal identified by Ms. Guzman was to identify and profile target groups who are being helped, but she acknowledged that we may not be ready to do this yet because we may not have adequately defined successful outcomes, especially considering that successful outcomes vary from person to person. Intermediately, dialogue that leads to a better understanding of the population may be another important next-step action.

Public Comment:

Sharon Darcy from Chico, California shared that she was here to learn about the Reentry Council because they would like to create one in Chico. She spoke about the importance of having expungement services available, and asked how it was incorporated into the Council. Sheriff Hennessey responded that expungement is a topic included in at least one subcommittee's discussions and forthcoming recommendations.

Anthony Jenkins shared his experience as a formerly incarcerated individual, and expressed concern about a lack of educational services in prison, even compared with services that used to be offered in federal prisons.

Yvette Smith of Centerforce noted that family reunification was not mentioned in the presentation, and added that Centerforce does provide services at San Quentin State Prison, including parenting classes. She asked what government agencies also do that sort of work. Ms. Guzman explained that NCCD's study was not intended to include organizations like Centerforce, and thanked Ms. Smith for bringing their efforts to her attention.

Kim Clark thanked previous speakers and asked whether there could be educational opportunities for prisoners who already have a GED to extend their education while incarcerated. Sheriff Hennessey said that both San Francisco State University and San Francisco City College do have programs specifically for formerly incarcerated individuals. Mr. Farnsworth added that tuition for those programs can be entirely covered through a private foundation in San Francisco. In response to a question about educational opportunities outside of San Francisco and California, Sheriff Hennessey said that the subcommittees can review current offerings and review the possibility of expansion.

Santos Kia shared the difficulty he had identifying available resources, noting that his parole officer was not able to provide much assistance in this regard. He added that he concurred with previous comments describing the challenges to maintaining family relationships that face incarcerated individuals. He further expressed a need for medical treatment and employment opportunities for reentering individuals. Mr. Farnsworth addressed comments by encouraging attendance at one of the weekly PACT meetings, which are designed to help coordinate available services to recently paroled individuals. He further recommended the Transitions program for parolees seeking medical care.

Ms. Escarcega thanked all formerly incarcerated individuals who have spoken for sharing their experiences, and offered to meet personally with anyone interested.

Richard Jimenez from Walden House suggested that CBOs should consider their strengths and weaknesses as well as think about collaborative partnerships with other organizations as they seek to meet the needs of returning individuals. He hoped that subcommittees would think about strategies when it comes time to lobby elected officials for funding or legislation.

Mark Thomas asked about statistics on the number of individuals reentering in San Francisco, as well as current recidivism rate information. Sheriff Hennessey responded that San Francisco's recidivism rate is high, and noted that more than 50% of those released from County Jail returning within the first 12 months. Public Defender Adachi encouraged people to visit <http://sfreentry.com> for an assessment including both probationers and parolees.

Sheriff Hennessey thanked Ms. Guzman for her report and concluded the agenda item.

VI. Proposed Process and Timeline for Development of At Least Annual Reports Presentation

Jessica Flintoft reviewed the requirements involved in the report, which is included in the duties outlined in SF Administrative Code 5.1-4. As an advisory body to the Mayor and Board of Supervisors, the Council is required to report on four categories at least annually: Identifying funding streams; identifying programs; identifying unmet needs of reentry population; identifying barriers to successful reentry in local, state and federal law.

Ms. Roye suggested going through the city controller's office to get a complete understanding of funding that is already available and already utilized.

Mr. Zheng asked how the Council would go about writing grants for any identified funding. Ms. Flintoft responded that staff will write the at-least-annual report, which will include identified funding sources, but subsequent steps have not yet been identified.

Regarding identifying programs, Ms. Garcia confirmed that once again the controller is a good resource to simplify this effort.

Mr. Farnsworth suggested that the process should capture cost-per-unit considerations in addition to outcomes.

Sheriff Hennessey asked if staff would produce the draft report, and Jessica Flintoft stated that the first half of the draft report is planned for distribution at the Council's January meeting, while the second half of the draft report is planned for the Council's Spring meeting.

Regarding unmet needs, Ms. Roye suggested that the members and attendees of the subcommittees can serve as a resource for information because of the wide range of experiences that they represent.

Jessica Flintoft then outlined the planned staff processes for collecting information, including a "secondary" process that will encompass a literature review, summary review of relevant needs assessment, review of reported outcomes of current programs or services, partial review of available funding sources, and research into statutory and regulatory barriers to reentry. The "primary" research would include a survey of current programs serving the reentry population with assessment in terms of funding, programs, and needs. It would also include 3-5 focus groups of formerly incarcerated individuals, in order to identify individual-level information regarding both needs and barriers. Jessica Flintoft suggested that a second round of subcommittee meetings begin in October, and that subcommittees would then have an opportunity to discuss focus group and survey questions.

Mr. Zheng asked if at least one focus group could be conducted inside a jail or prison, and Jessica agreed.

Ms. Roye moved that the proposed process and timeline be approved, Chief Siffermann seconded, and the process was unanimously approved.

VII. Public Comment on items not listed on Agenda

Allyson West from the California Reentry Program, invited Council members and the public to CRP's resource fair at San Quentin State Prison on October 23rd.

VIII. Council members' comments, questions, and requests for future agenda items

Mr. Diaz de Leon asked which departments represented on the Council could be expected to be involved in the subcommittees' work. Sheriff Hennessey reiterated that departmental affiliations at the subcommittee level will become clearer once the membership of each subcommittee has been determined, which will be done in the next few weeks. He also said that it is possible that subcommittee representatives will be reporting directly to the Council at the next meeting. Jessica Flintoft encouraged all of the departments represented on the Council to be represented on at least one subcommittee. Ms. Garcia added that she and Mr. Arcelona would work to ensure that representatives from HSA and DPH are in attendance at the appropriate subcommittees.

Public Defender Adachi acknowledged the Reentry film and photography exhibit on September 22nd at the Public Library, and expressed his desire for events like that to continue, as they are a good way to bring new people into the conversation around reentry. Mr. Farnsworth asked whether there was a Reentry Summit planned for this year. Ms. Flintoft responded that no summit was planned for this year, but that there may be one planned for fall 2010.

Mr. Zheng suggested that conversations around reentry often neglect to address the needs of the lifer population, noting that such long-term incarceration raises larger questions around the expense of incarceration versus the potential value of releasing reformed individuals to serve their communities. Once released, he also noted that returning individuals face a lack of peer support, and suggested peer sponsors, along with publicizing stories of individuals' successful reentry into their communities. He also asked about recent changes in policy at San Quentin in terms of the lifer population, and the impact that those changes may have on programs and services.

Mr. Miller noted that the notion of a San Francisco Reentry Court had been raised in a subcommittee and expressed a desire for that topic to be discussed further.

Chief Boyd asked for schedule details on upcoming Council meetings, it was confirmed that the next meeting is scheduled for January 26, 2010 at the Public Library, while the subsequent meeting is tentatively set for April 20, 2010 10:00am-12:00pm, location to be determined.

Ms. Escarcega raised the issue of prisoner voting rights, and asked about a process for getting the Council to consider a resolution on the issue. She provided detail about get out the jail vote efforts. Sheriff Hennessey asked for clarification about what specific issue it is that Ms. Escarcega would like the Reentry Council to consider. Ms. Escarcega requested a resolution from this Council. Sheriff Hennessey offered to work with Ms. Escarcega and staff to develop a resolution to consider at the next Reentry Council meeting. Ms. Roye suggested that Ms. Escarcega provide a presentation on the topic as well as some background materials and documentation so that Council members can reach an informed position before considering a resolution. Ms. Escarcega thanked her for the suggestion.

IX. Adjournment

Sheriff Hennessey entertained motion to adjourn. Motion to adjourn is made and seconded, approved unanimously at 12:07p.m.