

annual REPORT

July 1st, 2011

Introduction

The Jail Collaborative is a large and broad group of people, all working to improve public safety by building a better system of reentry for people coming out of the Allegheny County Jail. Early in 2010, we embarked on a planning process to learn about the problems at the root of a too-high rate of recidivism and approaches that would work. We spoke with over 300 people in the area, including family members, ex-offenders, and people from faith-based organizations. We looked at other cities for models. And we studied the research to look for the strongest evidence of which programs actually reduce criminality. From this we developed a three-year plan for reducing recidivism.

The first year of that plan ended on June 30, 2011. This report summarizes the progress made and the work that lies ahead. One thing that we can say with confidence is that this has been a year of significant improvements:

- Release from the Jail is now more predictable and gives far greater attention to preparing inmates for their return to the community.
- Families' telephone calls to the Jail for information are now being answered after hours.
- Twice as many people are now in rehabilitation programs in the Jail and in the community.
- A new Reentry Program, with a family support component, has begun to make a difference in the lives of ex-offenders and their families. Inmates who participate in treatment and programs while they are in jail—and the housing, employment, and treatment available to them when they get out of jail—are beginning to turn their lives around.

- The Collaborative has begun to document and evaluate its work, starting with a report on the “case review” process that identifies systems issues and that has led to changes in how criminal cases are scheduled and a major initiative in sharing information; and with the surveys of men and women as they exit the Jail.

In the second year of its plan, the Jail Collaborative will continue its commitment to providing men and women with a fresh start, adding several new initiatives.

This past year has been rewarding, but we must acknowledge that it has been difficult, too. Staff, service providers, and volunteers invested a great deal of their time in planning and in clarifying the path ahead, despite differences in perspective. We are grateful to all in the Collaborative for pressing on.

We also are grateful to the Allegheny County Jail Oversight Board for its support of inmate programs; and to the local funders who have contributed to the Jail Collaborative subfund of the Human Services Integration Fund, which is managed by The Pittsburgh Foundation. These grantmakers include the Birmingham Foundation, Buhl Foundation, FISA Foundation, The Heinz Endowments, Hillman Foundation, Massey Charitable Trust, McAuley Ministries, McCune Foundation, Richard King Mellon Foundation, Pittsburgh Child Guidance Foundation, The Pittsburgh Foundation, POISE Foundation, and Staunton Farm Foundation. We also thank these funders and The Grable Foundation and Robert Wood Johnson Foundation for their support of the project that helps children of the incarcerated and provides family support, and the Pittsburgh Child Guidance Foundation as the nominating funder; as well as the Eden Hall Foundation, for its early support of the reintegration project; Pittsburgh Social Venture Partners (PSVP) for its support of programs serving children of the incarcerated; the Pennsylvania Commission on Crime and Delinquency, which has supported several programs to improve reentry and systems; and the U.S. Department of Justice, which funds the Second Chance Act programs.

The significant changes that are outlined in this report were possible because of all of you.

Allegheny County Jail Collaborative

Progress and Next Steps

Allegheny County Jail Collaborative’s 2010-2013 plan chose three strategies for reducing recidivism: beginning a new reentry program, making systems changes, and developing alternatives to incarceration. For each of these strategies, this report summarizes the progress that has been made and the work for the 2011-2012 year.

STRATEGY 1: THE REENTRY PROGRAM

The Jail Collaborative launched a reentry program in 2010 to prepare more inmates for their return home and reintegration into society. This new program assesses the risks and needs of inmates, links them with education, treatment, family support and other services in the Jail and community, and prepares them for release in coordination with their families.

For years before the reentry program began, the Jail provided quality educational programs, behavioral health treatment, and work opportunities in the Jail. But fewer than 500 inmates per year were able to access these programs (of a total of the 18,000 men and women who spend more than 30 days in the Jail). The Jail Collaborative sought federal funds to magnify the impact of those services already proven to work and to invest in other reentry services that research had shown could cut recidivism. Local foundations and the state government have leveraged those federal funds and also allowed the Collaborative to serve the children and families of inmates and ex-offenders.

With this support, the Jail Collaborative has been able to double the number of people in the Jail who are enrolled in services as well as serve more ex-offenders and their families in the community—while ensuring that the process for selecting service providers is fair and open and that the services solicited are largely evidence-based.

KEY ELEMENTS OF THE REENTRY PROGRAM

The Reentry Program that is now in place has these core elements:

- 1. Risk and need assessment:** to target services. The Jail and Adult Probation identify the individuals who are at medium-high risk or reoffending and who meet other program criteria, and Allegheny Correctional Health Services (ACHS) conducts a comprehensive risk and need assessment for the subset of those individuals who are in the sentenced population and eligible for intensive service coordination through the Second Chance Act program.
- 2. Expanded services:** Because of grants and the reallocation of dollars collected through the inmate commissary fund, the reentry program has been able to contract with experienced community organizations that were selected through an RFP process. They began delivering services in October 2010 (with the reentry team starting in March 2010):
 - Service coordination through a reentry team. This service is for those inmates enrolled in the “Second Chance” aspect of reentry, which targets men and women serving a county sentence. This team provides service planning with the inmate and family, coordinates with probation and service providers in the Jail and in the community, and provides 12 months of support for the ex-offender and family. The team’s staff includes a reentry probation officer, reentry specialists, family support specialists, the ACHS staff who conduct the assessments, jail staff, and community-based providers of services.
 - Educational classes, including pre-GED, GED, and pre-apprenticeship training. These classes are provided by the Allegheny Intermediate Unit.
 - Family support, which includes parenting education and relationship classes as well as support for family reunification and child and family support. This effort is staffed by three family support specialists, a part-time family therapist, and a family-child engagement specialist. Family Services of Western Pennsylvania, Amachi Pittsburgh, Lydia’s Place/Renewal, and Justice Related Services of DHS are the collaborating partners.
 - Employment and training, which includes job skills development, resume preparation,

interview practice, job search, job placement, and culinary arts training, after release. Goodwill, Springboard Kitchens, and Urban League are the collaborating partners.

- Drug and alcohol treatment, provided in three-hour/day, group sessions. This treatment program is in addition to the treatment programs on specialized housing units in the Jail, and in ACHS's aftercare program that involves family members as well as former inmates in treatment. Allegheny Correctional Health Services provides this service.
 - Aftercare, which is an essential service to reinforce the gains made in drug and alcohol treatment. This is provided after release to individuals who participated in treatment when they were in the Jail. Mercy Behavioral Health and P.O.W.E.R. provide this service.
 - Cognitive Behavioral Treatment (CBT), which challenges the patterns of "criminal thinking" that some individuals have learned over the years. Mercy Behavioral Health provides this service.
 - Housing, which includes scattered-site apartments that have become available through the new housing pilot (funded by a special grant from a local foundation, continued through a federal housing grant, and operated by Goodwill); and—for those in the subset of the target population who are enrolled in Second Chance—first month's rent and other flexibility in meeting housing needs.
 - Mentoring by peers who were trained and by trained volunteers. Since funding for peer mentoring ended this year, it has been discontinued in Year 2. The HOPE Aftercare Mentoring Project continues through a grant funded by the Department of Justice.
3. **Establishment of the Reentry Center:** The Jail built a set of new classrooms and meeting rooms to accommodate this increased programming, adding 6,000 sq. ft. of space to the existing classrooms on Level One of the Jail.
 4. **Establishment of a Reentry Pod:** The Jail has relocated most of the participating male inmates onto one housing unit (Pod) on Level One, which has improved the ease of movement of individuals to classes. This pod is one of the locations of the structured living environment that will be developed this year. Females in the Jail who are in the reentry program also will be living in a structured living environment.
 5. **Work:** The Jail Collaborative aims to link jobs in the Jail with the reentry program so that work is a privilege earned after completion of educational or treatment goals. This will require changing the process for selecting and scheduling inmates for work as well as expanding the number of work opportunities so that more people develop skills that are useful in employment after release. The Jail took the first step in this direction by taking an inventory of the current jobs and by establishing a work-housing unit, also on Level One, as the pod for males who are working. The Jail is working to establish a female work-housing unit.

PLAN FOR YEAR 2

The key objectives for the Reentry Program for year two are as follows:

Convert the Reentry Pod into a true structured living environment. Crucial to maintaining this environment is housing fewer people on the pod, with an average of 60 inmates and a maximum of 75 inmates on the pod as the aim. This is a significant challenge, since the Jail population's continued high census has required it to maintain high numbers on all of its pods, including this one.

Add two other Program Pods that will be focused on treatment and reentry.

Develop additional work opportunities in the Jail; and develop new policies for the selection and scheduling of inmates who have the opportunity to work.

Develop an agreement with housing providers to open additional housing opportunities for individuals who successfully complete the reentry program.

Develop a regular report to the Courts on inmates' progress in the reentry program.

STRATEGY 2: CHANGING SYSTEMS

When the Jail Collaborative met with community members and providers early in 2010, they learned that the confusion in certain processes and lack of information were not only an inconvenience, they were undermining reentry. From how visits in the Jail are handled to the actual discharge process, the "systems" among the Jail, Courts, DHS, and Health Department needed to be improved.

During the past year, the Collaborative has focused its work on four of these issues: The discharge process; the information and referral process; contact visits; and the need to make the Jail Collaborative more accountable to the community.

DISCHARGE

The Collaborative has built and staffed a new center within the Jail that is making the process of release more predictable not only for those men and women who have participated in the reentry program, but for all who are discharged from the Jail. Making release from the Jail more organized, and ensuring it takes place during reasonable hours of the day and evening, means that no one leaves the Jail without their medications and appropriate clothing, and released inmates have a way home and other services needed.

The first step was to change a factor that was driving late-night releases from the Jail: the release instructions. The Jail had been compelled to release "forthwith" and so was releasing some men and women late at night and without enough notice to the various departments within the Jail or to the inmate and family. Judges have now changed their release orders to give 48 hours advance notice of release so that release can be planned.

That change, alone, was important, but so was the Jail's development of a physical discharge center, staffed by individuals responsible for working with staff, inmates, and their families to coordinate the flow of information, documents, and materials. The two full-time staff who coordinate the release process ensure that inmates have the following, prior to release:

- Medication and a completed Medical Assistance application, if appropriate
- Telephone access to contact their family members

- Information about housing and other community services
- Transportation assistance
- Clothing appropriate for the season

In March 2011, this new “Discharge Center” opened in the Jail on Level One. In four months, it has coordinated the release of over 2,500 people. This represents a majority of all releases; those not included are those who were released on bond; those released on weekends, when the Discharge Center is not staffed; and several men and women who bypassed the Center.

Information and referral

Because family members and providers said that they had difficulty finding information during key hours of the afternoon, evening, and on weekends, the Jail Collaborative contracted with Mental Health America (MHA) to staff an information and referral line in the Jail. MHA staffs the telephone line from 3 p.m. to 11 p.m. each weekday and throughout Saturday and Sunday. Since the service began, its staff have answered an average of 3,200 calls per month—calls that previously would have rung to no line or been forwarded to a voice mail.

VISITS

In developing its three-year plan, the Jail Collaborative agreed that increasing the number of visits to inmates—and making as many more of those “contact visits” instead of “window visits”—would benefit the operations of the Jail as well as reentry. Those jails with contact visits have fewer inmate misconducts, and one study in a Florida prison showed that those inmates who had more visits had a lower rate of recidivism. The Collaborative had a third important reason for working toward this goal: many children of the incarcerated do not get to see or touch their parents for months and the unintended harm to those children can be lasting.

The Jail Collaborative made some progress on visits during year one:

- A small number of families have been able to take part in “structured family contact visits,” which are a new type of visit at the County Jail, developed specifically for those men and women who are taking part in the family support program. Prior to the visit, inmates are coached in parenting techniques for alleviating the children’s stress and assisting in building parent-child relationships; and family members are supported and prepared for the visit by the family support staff, as well.
- These visits take place in the Contact Visiting Room on Level One of the Jail and are facilitated by one of the family support specialists and the part-time family therapist. Unlike most visits with inmates, which take place on either side of window glass, inmates who participate in these visits can get on the floor and play with their children, using age-appropriate toys. The Jail is modifying its policies to make these visits a regular part of its operations.
- The physical attributes of the Contact Visiting Room have improved. While the room already had child-friendly murals, the Jail has added space designed for older children and colorful rugs for children and parents to use for play. (One of these rugs features an array of faces used to describe emotion, another shows a friendly farm, and the other, city streets.) The Jail also has added wall-mounted games and other toys and games for older children.
- The family support specialists also coordinate weekly conference calls between inmates and

their families, to assist in reunification and in maintaining bonds with children. The family support specialists facilitate these discussions, helping family members address issues that are difficult to discuss, to plan for the future, and to instill positive parenting approaches.

Changing the number and type of visits has been one of the Collaborative's most challenging tasks. Further increasing the number of contact visits will require: addressing the staff coverage during the visits. Currently, the safety and security of any contact visit is assured by officers who are paid overtime, which is an important constraint on expanding the hours of visits; and completing policies and procedures for visits that take proper account of safety and security of the facility.

INCREASING ACCOUNTABILITY

One step toward greater accountability to the community is regular reporting. The annual meeting is one important ways of doing this. The Jail Collaborative also is looking at what participants in these programs have to say and suggest. For these "consumer surveys," it has contracted with Goodwill, which has collected information and suggestions from inmates and ex-offenders on the discharge process and on reentry and other inmate programs.

In addition, the first of several reports that document key changes in process was released in 2011. This report documents the "case reviews" led by the Jail Collaborative's Cabinet and the Criminal Justice Advisory Board. It highlighted the key problems with the flow of information and led to a Court-led initiative to schedule criminal cases in a different fashion.

PLAN FOR YEAR 2

- Fully implement the risk/needs assessment system designed this year, so that the limited resources we have for programs are delivered to those who need them most.
- Complete the process of adopting a jail policy for the Discharge Center and implement the full design of the center, including a mechanism for ensuring individuals leave the jail with proper clothing.
- Improve the data sharing/communications between County and Court computer systems, to reduce costs and improve public safety.
- Develop a new approach to booking in the Jail that will allow individuals who are arrested to make a call to ensure that their children are in proper care.
- Develop a database for keeping track of key information during discharge and release.
- Meet the national evaluation requirement and document additional processes, including the Discharge Center and family support.
- Increase the number of contact visits per month, institute data collection for the family support program (including counting the number of children who visit) and develop the processes and policies that will sustain the changes in number/approach to visits.
- Adjust the telephone system in the jail so that it reports: calls missed, calls that go to an automated attendant.

STRATEGY 3: DEVELOPING ALTERNATIVES TO JAIL

During 2010-2011, the County and Courts worked to determine the therapeutic alternatives to incarceration for individuals who are low-risk offenders at the pre-trial stage who do not have the resources to make bail, are low-risk offenders and have violated probation and require a sanction short of returning to jail, and those individuals who can best prepare for return to society through work release within a structured environment. The Jail and Courts selected these target groups and developed program requirements in the form of an RFP that will solicit services that include structured/secure housing, drug and alcohol treatment, family support, job placement, and work release.

PLAN FOR YEAR 2

The key objective for Alternatives to Jail for year two is to: Implement the new model of alternative housing.

NEW SERVICES	
Information and referral (March-May 2011)	24,663
Discharge center (March-June 2011)	2,252

NEW SERVICES: REENTRY PROGRAM	
Employment & training (Urban League, Goodwill, Springboard Kitchens)	339
Education (AIU)	238
Cognitive Behavioral Treatment (Mercy)	116
D&A (group intervention 12-15 hours/week for 12 weeks)	93
Aftercare (P.O.W.E.R., Mercy)	122
Family support (Family Services of Western PA, Amachi Pittsburgh, Lydia's Place, JRS)	160
Mentoring (Chaplain, Message Carriers)	179
Housing pilot (Goodwill; this program began this spring)	6
Service coordination (JRS; this figure is for 15 months)	161

OTHER COLLABORATIVE PROGRAMS (NOT NEW)	
Other JRS programs (e.g. Mental Health Court, Diversion from Jail)	1,983
ACHS treatment and community-based aftercare	663