

Jail Collaborative

ALLEGHENY COUNTY



2016–2019 Strategic Plan



MISSION

The mission of the Allegheny County Jail Collaborative is to reduce recidivism among people involved in the criminal justice system in Allegheny County, thereby improving public safety through system change and implementation of evidence-based practices.

THE JAIL COLLABORATIVE WILL REDUCE RECIDIVISM BY:

1. Ensuring high-quality, **evidence-based programs for people at a higher risk** of re-offending.
2. Making the **transition to the community effective for each person leaving the jail**.
3. **Reducing barriers to employment, transportation, healthcare and housing** for formerly incarcerated people by developing a policy platform and advocating through its members and supporters.
4. Developing and implementing a **comprehensive plan for diverting, treating and supporting people with behavioral health issues**, including those with co-occurring substance use disorders.

BACKGROUND

The Jail Collaborative is a group of government agencies, nonprofit organizations, volunteers and community members that first came together in 2000 to improve the transition of people returning to the community after leaving the Allegheny County Jail. Since its inception, the Jail Collaborative has made system improvements and implemented innovative programming to ensure that individuals leaving the Allegheny County Jail will not return to the criminal justice system.

The Jail Collaborative has focused its efforts and resources on both system changes that impact every individual in the Allegheny County Jail and targeted programs that direct services to the individuals at the highest risk of recidivating. A key piece of the Jail Collaborative's work has been the creation of a Reentry Program that targets individuals who have been sentenced to serve time at the Allegheny County Jail and then receive probation, and whose risk and needs

assessment indicates that they are at a medium to high risk of re-offending. Reentry Program participants typically live on a specialized Reentry Pod while incarcerated, and work with a Jail Services Coordinator who supports them in completing a service plan to address their greatest needs. During the period of transition and release from jail, program participants are assigned a Reentry Probation Office, and a subset of program participants receive service coordination from a Community Service Coordinator (CSC) who supports them for seven months post-release. These professionals help program participants to meet their basic needs, reunite with their families and continue with treatment or services that began during incarceration.

While the Reentry Program only serves a subset of the population in the jail, the Jail Collaborative also funds programming that serves the broader population of people currently or formerly incarcerated in the jail. It is also important to note that the Jail Collaborative strategically funds evidence-based services that complement pre-existing programming in the jail and the community. In addition to the Jail Collaborative-funded services listed below, the jail also offers AA/NA, batterer intervention programs (BIP), creative writing, drug and alcohol education, drug and alcohol program pods, HOPE pod, HOPE mentoring and job training.

The community services listed below are accessed through the Community Resource Centers (CRCs), which are run by the Adult Probation Office. Individuals in the community are also referred to a variety of community-based resources.

Jail Collaborative Services, 2013–2016

SERVICES IN THE JAIL	AVERAGE # SERVED PER YEAR	COMMUNITY SERVICES AND SUPERVISION	AVERAGE # SERVED PER YEAR
Cognitive Behavioral Therapy (CBT)	295	Batterer intervention program (BIP)	428
Cognitive Behavioral Therapy — Maintenance group	108	Cognitive Behavioral Therapy aftercare	429
Drug and alcohol outpatient	79	Drug and alcohol assessment	1,425
GED track classes	330	GED	73
Pre-vocational classes	367	Housing services	59
Family support	319	Job Placement	344
Vocational training	36	Vocational Training	36
		Transportation	142

REENTRY SPECIFIC	AVERAGE # SERVED PER YEAR
Service Coordination	204

Due to varying data quality, some different time periods are used to calculate average served per year.

WHAT WE HAVE ACHIEVED

This strategic plan is the third created by the Jail Collaborative, and is designed to serve as a blueprint for reducing recidivism. Over the past three years, the Jail Collaborative has implemented a number of strategies to reduce recidivism, and has expanded quality assurance work to ensure that these strategies are successful. From 2013 through 2016, the Jail Collaborative achieved the following results:

- **Formalized the Reentry Program:** The Jail Collaborative streamlined the program by creating the CSC position to work with both Reentry Program participants and their families, and tracked program outcomes through the Jail Collaborative Application. The Jail Collaborative also expanded evidence-based programming for Reentry participants, including post-release Cognitive Behavioral Therapy and vocational training.
- **Expanded programming on the pods:** Since women in the jail do not have access to the Reentry pod, a female program pod was created to provide programming and service coordination to women. Programming was also expanded throughout the jail with the introduction of tablets, which individuals on certain housing pods can use to access education programs and tutorials on parenting, financial literacy, employment and substance use issues. From July 2015 through May 2016, 2,152 user accounts were created to utilize the tablets, and 8,761 certificates were earned for completion of programming on the tablets.
- **Improved continuity of care for people with a dual diagnosis:** Through a federal Bureau of Justice Assistance grant, the Jail Collaborative has been able to provide pre- and post-release service coordination and integrated treatment to medium- to high-risk individuals with co-occurring disorders.
- **Served more individuals at Community Resource Centers (CRCs):** A third CRC was opened in the Mon Valley to provide human services to individuals on probation. In 2015, nearly 3,000 individuals were referred to the CRCs for services.
- **Quality Assurance:** The Jail Collaborative took a number of steps to ensure that program outcomes were being met, including tracking all services in an online application and implementing pay-for-performance contracts.

During this period, the Jail Collaborative also received the final report on a formal evaluation completed by the Urban Institute's Justice Policy Center. The evaluation found strong evidence that participation in the Reentry Program reduces recidivism. For the group of Reentry participants who received case management, the likelihood of re-arrest decreased by 24 percentage points. This finding suggests that while significant work remains, the Jail Collaborative is making strides in reducing recidivism.

WHAT WILL FURTHER REDUCE RECIDIVISM?

When deciding which recidivism reduction strategies to pursue for the 2016–2019 strategic plan, the Jail Collaborative consulted the literature about evidence-based practices, reviewed its existing services and held forums to gather community input.

The Washington State Institute for Public Policy provides an overview of well-researched, evidence-based correctional policies and their likely cost and benefit to taxpayers if implemented. Its 2015 report shows which policies are likely to reduce crime and save money. The table below lists programs in order of the largest to smallest net benefit of the program. Note that most of the studies have been conducted with prison populations, and their application to jails may be limited.

PROGRAM NAME	NET BENEFIT
Employment & job training assistance during incarceration	\$34,282
Electronic monitoring (probation)	\$26,529
Offender Re-entry Community Safety Program (dangerously mentally ill offenders)	\$22,673
Therapeutic communities for offenders with co-occurring disorders	\$22,047
Correctional education (basic or post-secondary) in prison	\$20,539
Day reporting centers	\$18,802
Vocational education in prison	\$18,277
Drug Offender Sentencing Alternative (for drug offenders)	\$18,223
Mental health courts	\$15,764
Electronic monitoring (parole)	\$15,329
Outpatient/non-intensive drug treatment (incarceration)	\$14,030
Swift & certain sanctions for offenders on community supervision	\$13,935
Inpatient/intensive outpatient drug treatment (incarceration)	\$13,693
Sex offender treatment in the community	\$12,665
Risk Need & Responsivity supervision (for high- and moderate-risk offenders)	\$12,045
Therapeutic communities for chemically dependent offenders (community)	\$9,958
Cognitive behavioral treatment (for high- and moderate-risk offenders)	\$9,925
Case management: swift & certain/graduated sanctions for substance abusing offenders	\$9,214
Drug Offender Sentencing Alternative (for property offenders)	\$8,903
Drug courts	\$8,013
Jail diversion programs for offenders with mental illness (post-arrest programs)	\$8,007
Employment & job training assistance in the community	\$7,915
Work release	\$5,736
Correctional industries in prison	\$4,905
Therapeutic communities for chemically dependent offenders (incarceration)	\$4,839
Outpatient/non-intensive drug treatment (community)	\$3,791
Sex offender treatment during incarceration	\$3,563
Restorative justice conferencing	\$3,236
Intensive supervision (surveillance & treatment)	\$3,209
Inpatient/intensive outpatient drug treatment (community)	\$192

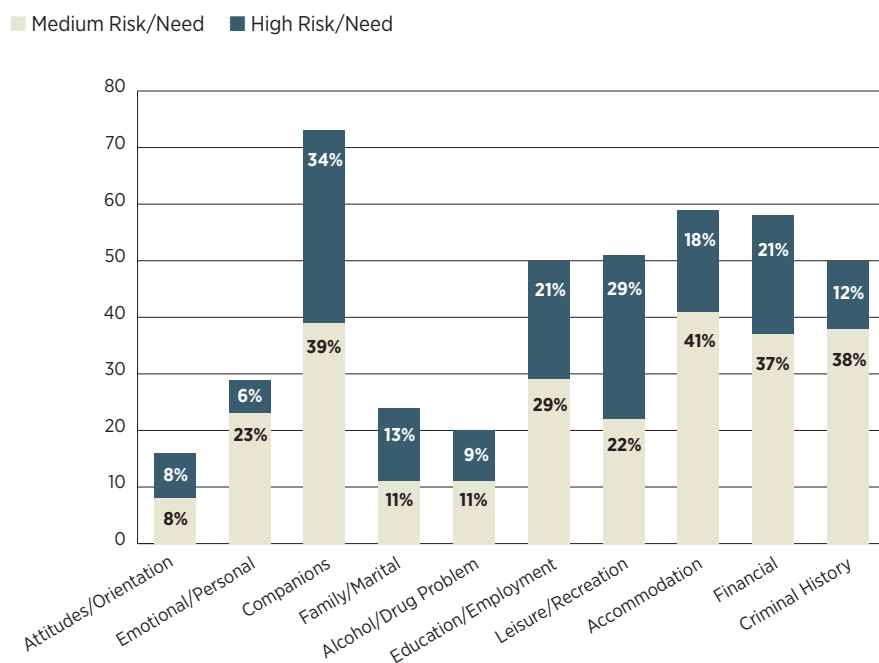
SOURCE: Washington State Institute for Public Policy (2015)

Between October and December 2015, the Jail Collaborative held a series of forums to learn directly from individuals who have been involved with the Allegheny County Jail about how to reduce recidivism. The Jail Collaborative heard from over 100 individuals who have been incarcerated in the Allegheny County Jail, have had family members incarcerated or who work directly with this population. Through the forums, these individuals identified the most pressing needs for people being released from the jail, as well as strategies to meet these needs. The greatest needs that emerged in all of the forums were:

- Access to housing
- Access to living wage jobs
- Individualized support

The severity of these needs are also reflected in the results of the validated risk and needs assessments that are administered by the Probation Office. Nearly three out of four people on probation had a medium to high need related to their companions, highlighting the need for positive personal support systems. Over half of the people assessed had medium or high needs related to their housing, and half had significant needs related to their education or employment. In response to these identified needs, some of the strategies developed for this plan involve strengthening inter-agency partnerships to more effectively connect people to existing resources.

FIGURE 1: Percent of People with Medium or High Risk/Needs by Need Area, Assessed Oct. 1, 2014 through Sept. 30, 2015 (N = 2,832)



SOURCE: Adult Probation Case Management System (APCMS)

The Jail Collaborative will continue to implement evidence-based programming that meets the highest needs of people coming out of the Allegheny County Jail. The implementation of new strategies is directed by the Jail Collaborative cabinet, which is composed of county agency directors, the Allegheny County Jail warden and the President Judge. An Operations Committee is responsible for overseeing the day-to-day functioning of the Jail Collaborative, and the Collaborative membership works at the program and individual levels to deliver services. The Jail Collaborative will carry out its strategies for 2016–2019 through this internal leadership structure, as well as through increased partnership with the Jail Oversight Board. The nine-member board provides a key accountability role for the jail, and the Jail Collaborative will maintain regular communication with the Jail Oversight Board to make sure that the two bodies are sharing information and working in concert.

STRATEGIES FOR 2016–2019

1. Ensure high quality, evidence-based programs for people at a higher risk of re-offending.

As noted above, the Reentry Program has been a main focus of prior strategic plans in order to direct evidence-based programming and support to those who are at a medium or high risk of recidivating.

Objective 1: The Jail Collaborative will continue to operate an effective Reentry Program.

Description: A comprehensive and specific quality assurance plan will be implemented to ensure that the quality of the Reentry Program is measured and documented. In addition to ensuring the quality of the program, and to remain a leader in the field, the Jail Collaborative will also stay up-to-date with the most recent research and innovative ideas.

Objective 2: The Jail Collaborative will develop and implement a plan of using alternative housing as a step down from jail to the community where Reentry participants can look for work and permanent housing.

Description: Currently, some Reentry Program participants are able to move to alternative housing sites before returning fully to the community, but it is not a uniform part of the Reentry Program. Alternative housing sites are work release programs in which individuals are able to go out during the day to work or obtain training while remaining under the custody of the jail. Work release programs and halfway houses have been found to reduce recidivism,¹ and ensuring that all Reentry Program participants are able to access alternative housing will help to further prepare Reentry participants for release.

1 Duwe, G. (2014a), "An Outcome Evaluation of a Prison Work Release Program: Estimating Its Effects on Recidivism, Employment and Cost Avoidance." *Criminal Justice Policy Review*, Mar. 11, 2014: 1–24.
Duwe, G. (2014b), "An Outcome Evaluation of a Prison Work Release Program: Estimating Its Effects on Recidivism, Employment and Cost Avoidance." St. Paul, MN: Minnesota Department of Corrections.

Objective 3: The Reentry Program will expand partnerships with organizations that can provide resources to support people in the jail and post-release (e.g., housing authorities, Workforce Investment Board).

Description: Meeting basic needs remains a challenge for many leaving the jail, and can stand in the way of Reentry participants successfully reintegrating into society. The Jail Collaborative will actively work to leverage existing resources for housing and employment, and connect them to the Reentry Program to ensure that needs will be met without duplicating existing community services.

2. Make transition to the community effective for each person leaving the jail. During the community forums, people who have formerly been incarcerated frequently report that the period directly after release was the most difficult, in which people without immediate support often quickly went back to what originally landed them in jail. With the Reentry Program in place to support the medium- to high-risk sentenced population, the Jail Collaborative also wants to improve the transition to the community for every person who is leaving the jail.

Objective 1: The Jail Collaborative will map the process to properly orient everyone in the jail to a successful community release, beginning early in their detention.

Description: The creation of the Discharge and Release Center in 2011 significantly improved the process of release from the jail by making sure that people are not released in the middle of the night, and are able to make a phone call and receive a bus ticket before leaving the jail. Despite the improvements, many people still leave the jail without any plan for where they will go next. The Jail Collaborative will assess the current discharge process to identify ways to further improve release from the jail.

Objective 2: The Jail Collaborative will organize the resources to support effective discharge and transition to the community, through agency partnerships, volunteer assistance and community support.

Description: The Jail Collaborative will engage with community organizations and volunteers able to provide needed resources in the community, and then focus on the ways that connection to these resources can begin in the jail, well before release.

Objective 3: The Jail Collaborative will coordinate probation, the discharge center, physical and behavioral health providers, and other services with the discharge and release process.

Description: Continuity between the jail and community systems is vital to successful release. Programs that connect incarcerated people with medical care or health insurance have been found to contribute to recidivism reductions,² yet continuity of care between the Allegheny County Jail and the community remains a challenge. By coordinating the discharge center with healthcare navigators, physical and behavioral health providers, and probation, there can be a more efficient process of transitioning people from services in the jail to care in the community.

² Patel, K.; Boutwell, A.; Brockmann, B. W.; and Rich, J. D. (2014), "Integrating Correctional And Community Health Care For Formerly Incarcerated People Who Are Eligible For Medicaid," *Health Affairs* (Project Hope), 33(3), 468–473. <http://doi.org/10.1377/hlthaff.2013.1164>

3. Reduce barriers for formerly incarcerated people. Once people leave the jail they continue to face legal restrictions and carry the stigma associated with committing a crime. The Legal Action Center ranked Pennsylvania 47th best in legal barriers to reentry, due to the laws that restrict the ability of people with criminal convictions to gain employment, regain their driver's licenses, or obtain certain licenses and certifications.³

³ Legal Action Center (2009), *After Prison: Roadblocks to Reentry*. http://lac.org/roadblocks-to-reentry/upload/reportcards/38_Image_Pennsylvania%20final.pdf

Objective 1: The Jail Collaborative will research policies that impact people with criminal records, with a focus on employment, housing, driver's licenses and Medicaid termination during incarceration, and develop a policy platform that can be used to educate legislators, community members and business leaders.

Description: As leaders and practitioners in the criminal justice system, the Jail Collaborative is well-poised to educate others about the challenges confronting people leaving jail, and the effect that they can have on recidivism. By developing a policy platform and coordinating with existing advocacy efforts, the Jail Collaborative will help to reduce barriers to successful reintegration.

Objective 2: The Jail Collaborative will examine the hiring practices of Jail Collaborative members, and promote change where necessary.

Description: As an example to other employers, Jail Collaborative members will look at their own practices of hiring people with criminal records, and move toward awarding contracts to agencies that are willing to hire people with criminal records.

4. Develop a comprehensive plan for diversion, treatment and support for people with behavioral health issues. There is a growing national consensus that too many people with mental illness are in the criminal justice system — nationally in 2007 there were two million jail bookings of people with serious mental illness. New research has shed light on the complexity of the issue, showing that mental illness is often not the only reason that people commit crimes.⁴ Considering the growing body of research and the fact that Allegheny County was chosen as a site for the national Stepping Up Initiative to reduce the number of people with mental illness in jail, this is the right time for the Jail Collaborative to work on the issue.

⁴ Pope, L.G., et al. (2016) *First-Episode Incarceration: Creating a Recovery-Informed Framework for Integrated Mental Health and Criminal Justice Responses*. New York: Vera Institute of Justice.

Objective 1: The Jail Collaborative will have an external evaluation of mental health issues throughout the entire criminal justice system.

Description: A full evaluation of how people with mental illness interact with the criminal justice system at each sequential intercept will offer a new perspective about areas for improvement. Following the evaluation, the Jail Collaborative will implement recommendations with the goal of diverting people with mental health issues from the jail, reducing the time that people spend in jail awaiting treatment, improving mental health treatment for individuals in the criminal justice system, and providing the least restrictive settings possible for treatment.

Objective 2: The Jail Collaborative will implement Medication Assisted Treatment and overdose prevention in the jail.

Description: From 2008 through 2014, there were 211 people who had an incarceration and release from jail in the year prior to death. The largest number of overdose deaths (54 of 211, or 26%) occurred during the first 30-day period following jail release and more than half (109 of 211, or 52%) occurred during the first 90 days.

Objective 3: The Jail Collaborative will assess the impact of current programs and continue those that are effective.

Description: The Jail Collaborative has been implementing two grants that address mental illness in the criminal justice system, one that identifies and directly assists frequent users of the jail, mental health and homeless systems, and another that supports individuals with co-occurring disorders. The Jail Collaborative will measure the impact of these existing programs to determine their value in reducing recidivism.