

Our Children, Our Families Council

Summary of Re-entry Council

April 17, 2015

Goals of the Effort

The purpose of the Re-entry Council of the City & County of San Francisco is to coordinate local efforts to support adults exiting San Francisco County Jail, San Francisco juvenile justice out-of-home placements, the California Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation facilities, and the United States Federal Bureau of Prison facilities. The Council coordinates information sharing, planning, and engagement among all interested private and public stakeholders to the extent permissible under federal and state law.

The council's statutory duties include:

- 1) Identifying funding streams earmarked for services designed to serve individuals exiting the criminal justice system
- 2) Identify the needs of the Reentry Population
- 3) Indentify barriers to safe and successful reentry and propose ways to reduce the impact of the barriers
- 4) Provide an annual report regarding the duties listed above.

The council advises on the administration of a lot of re-entry dollars. Currently, the council is advising on how the city should use funds from the Justice Reinvestment Initiative, federal money based on three strategies to reduce the jail population:

- 1) Reforming bail
- 2) Reforming probation to be more evidence based in its work
- 3) Using decision point analysis to come up with an approach that doesn't just target African-Americans

Focal Population of the Effort

The focal population of the Re-entry Council is adults age 18 and older that are exiting the prison system.

Impact

The council makes recommendations to the mayor and board of supervisors with regard to families, livability, reuniting with kids, and social services for former inmates. They assess what happens when inmates leave prison -- Do they have access to shelters, transitional housing, medical care or food stamps? They also ensure leadership development opportunities are available for those being released.

The council's largest advocacy victory was the passing of the Fair Chance Ordinance for housing and employment. As a result of that ordinance, people looking for housing or employment can not be asked about their conviction history until they are about to receive an offer for housing or occupation.

The greatest strength of the group is its composition of department heads and formally incarcerated individuals.

Challenges

The Re-entry Council does not have much funding for meetings and staffing. Also, the council has five co-chairs, which can make leadership alignment difficult.

Origins of the Effort

From 2005 until 2008, two ad hoc reentry councils focused on different aspects of the reentry of people from prisons and jails: the Safe Communities Reentry Council (SCRC), co-chaired by Supervisor Ross Mirkarimi and Public Defender

Jeff Adachi, and the San Francisco Reentry Council (SFRC), co-chaired by District Attorney Kamala D. Harris and Sheriff Michael Hennessey.

In September 2008, these various efforts were unified with the formal creation of the Reentry Council for the City and County of San Francisco. The new Reentry Council was established by Ordinance 215-08, which was signed into law in September 2008, and amended in February 2009 by Ordinance 26-09 and in February 2011 by Ordinance 44-11. The first meeting of the Reentry Council was held on July 17, 2009.

Leading the Effort

Karen Shain staffs the effort and sits in the Adult Probation Department. Most of the support comes out of that office.

Members of the Effort

The Reentry Council is composed of 23 members. The membership includes 16 representatives of the following entities: the Office of the Mayor, the Public Defender's Office, the District Attorney's Office, the Sheriff's Department, the Adult Probation Department, the Board of Supervisors, Police Department, the Juvenile Probation Department, the Department of Economic and Workforce Development, the Human Services Agency, the Department of Public Health, the Department of Children, Youth, and Their Families, the Department of Child Support Services, the San Francisco Superior Court, the California Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation Division of Adult Parole Operations, and the United States Probation and Pretrial Services System.

Three Mayoral appointees and four individuals appointed by the Board of Supervisors make up the remaining seven seats on the Council. The appointees must be former inmates of the San Francisco County Jail, a California Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation facility, and/or a United States Bureau of Prison facility.

In addition to the 23 council members, dozens of individuals serve on three subcommittees, representing a range of individual and organizational stakeholders.

Current membership includes:

- Jeff Adachi, Office of the Public Defender
- George Gascon, Office of the District Attorney
- Edwin Lee, Mayor of San Francisco
- Ross Mirkarimi, Sheriff's Department
- Karen Fletcher, Adult Probation Department
- Joseph Calderon, Board Appointee
- Kimberli Courtney, Board Appointee
- Omorede Rico Hamilton, Mayoral Appointee
- Yador J. Harrell, Chief US Probation Officer
- Ernest Kirkwood, Board Appointee
- Dominique Leslie, Board Appointee
- Leslie Levitas, Mayoral Appointee
- Steve Lin, Division of Parole Operations
- Allen Nance, Juvenile Probation Department
- Trent Rhorer, Human Services Agency
- Jo Robinson, Department of Public Health
- Karen Roye, Department of Child Support Services
- Rhonda Simmons, Office of Economic and Workforce Development
- Maria Su, Department of Children, Youth and Their Families
- Gregory Suhr, Police Department
- Keenia Williams, Mayoral Appointee
- Karen Shain, Adult Probation Department

- Vacant, Superior Court

Structure of the Effort

The Council meets four times per year, and the subcommittees meet every two months. All members of the Re-entry Council are generally present for meetings.

Related Documents

More information, including meeting minutes of council and subcommittee meetings can be found at www.sfgov.org/reentry.