

Process and Evaluation Workgroup

Meeting Minutes

July 2, 2025

In attendance:

- Rodney Brooks, Alameda County Public Defenders
- Bobby Evans, Full time Student, San Francisco State University
- Markos Gonzalez, Bay Area Community Services (BACS)
- Joey Mason, Alameda County Probation Department
- Celina Cuevas, Alameda County Probation Department
- Alex Garcia, Alameda County Probation Department
- Charles Turner, Alameda County Workforce Development Board
- Rezsín Gonzalez, Alameda County Probation Department
- Shawn Rowland, Our Road Prison Project
- Rick Wood, Rubicon Programs
- Doug Butler, The Alameda County Community Advisory Board
- Charlie Eddy, Urban Strategies Council
- Janene Grigsby, Alameda County Probation Department
- Darryl Stewart, Alameda County Supervisor Nate Miley's Office
- Jean Moses, The Justice Reinvestment Coalition

The meeting opened with a description of the responsibilities of the Process and Evaluation Workgroup and a presentation of the agenda items which addressed improving the Sheriff's clearance process.

The group reviewed the May meeting minutes.

Next, participants reviewed a document outlining how many people, including those with lived experience, were permitted to enter Santa Rita jail for a one day event.

Summary of the initial discussion:

- It was suggested that the Sheriff create an abbreviated clearance policy for one day events, and it was noted the Agency's was effective in responding to the requests of the organizers, prior to the one-day event.
- For individuals who were initially denied entry the Sheriff's staff asked for some additional documentation supporting the clearance request.
- The information provided about clearance for the one day event potentially shows the best efforts of the Sheriff's department.
- Many people did not fill out the application in a timely manner, highlighting the need to inform individuals of the timeline. It was good that the Sheriff utilized the appeal process.
- Six people with lived experience were cleared without appeal, some curiosity was expressed about the applications of the eleven people allowed to enter the jail after appeal.
- While it is great the Sheriff has an appeal process, most people with lived experience were granted entry upon appeal, a process which some individuals are hesitant to utilize.
- Would it be possible to submit the "appeal letter" in the initial process.
- The question was raised, what are the concerns the Sheriff staff have when allowing people with lived experience to enter the jail.
- It was noted the Sheriff screens people when entering the jail, the staff brings visitors through a metal detector, the facility is well staffed with law enforcement during events – so what is the threat?
- If all you know about someone is what crimes they committed, the current (initial) process does not ask what you have been doing since your conviction, so a bias by the Sheriff may be understandable. There needs to be an opportunity to present more of a "full picture" of the applicant. The application does not offer the opportunity to present information about the work the applicant does for their current CBO employer.
- Is it possible for the Sheriff to meet the individuals who will be coming into the facility regularly prior to submitting the clearance application.
- Is there a way to compare what happens in other jails and prisons outside of Alameda County?
- People who have lived experience are very familiar with the rules and don't want to go back to jail or prison.
- The question was raised, is there data showing a correlation between people with lived experience violating the rules when returning to a carceral setting to volunteer/work?

Next, the group brainstormed what information needs to be communicated to Sheriff's Deputies and what information needs to be communicated with community provider staff in the proposed training video.

Summary of the discussion:

- Prior to the meeting, Sheriff's staff expressed what they would like program staff to consider and understand about the process from their perspective:
 - It is good to know if the applicant cleared to enter another facility.
 - Applicants need to be honest and upfront.
 - Are CBO's interested in submitting the clearance request during the staff interview process.
- As far as submitting the clearance request during the interview process, this could be difficult if the applicant is initially denied and then wants to appeal.
- The question was raised, why does the Sheriff review the conviction history for such an extended amount of time?
- The Sheriff has easy access to a person's entire conviction history, so while being granted clearance may only require a review of a few years, an applicant might be considered deceptive for not disclosing a 20 year old conviction.
- The question was raised, what convictions are most concerning to Sheriff's Deputies; and what actions do they perceive as threatening?
- It is important to facilitate discussions between the Deputies and applicants.
- Applicants could simply attach police records to the application. Also, could the Sheriff let potential applicants know what convictions will result in a denial.
- A suggestion was made that "open and honest" can be a bit more general i.e. "...in the 70s and 80s I committed several crimes."
- It is debilitating for people with lived experience who want to make amends through community contributions to be told they can't because of their prior convictions.
- It may be helpful to educate folks that denials may be a "practice" and how to appropriately respond.
- This conversation has focused on prior convictions, but there are other reasons people are denied, such as prior associations – we need to address those issues.
- We may also want to look at data that measures the impact of people with lived experience entering Santa Rita Jail.

The group pivoted to discussing what Sheriff's Deputies need to know about people with lived experience who are applying for clearance.

Summary of the discussion:

- The Sheriff's need a more holistic view of the clearance applicants with prior convictions.
- Deputies need to understand that applicants with lived experience know the jail rules.
- People with lived experience who want to come into jail have a passion for giving back to the community.

- Applicants need to be able to express: what is my purpose, how long have I been doing this kind of work to support system involved individuals, what are my life aspirations?
- In some ways, we can move elements of the appeal process into the initial application.
- Can a revised process get Deputies to view the applicants as human, not as someone with a prior conviction.
- Deputies need to understand that applicants with lived experience have more to lose by breaking the rules while inside the jail when volunteering.
- How can we present this holistic information to Deputies without being overwhelming. Perhaps, the support letter can be submitted upfront.
- We need to find data to address the bias, that people with lived experience are the people who are more likely to break the rules.
- If we can't get the data from the Sheriff, perhaps we look at how we support people who have been denied entry. Second, can we investigate how to obtain police reports and assist people in the appeal process.

The meeting adjourned at 11:58