

# Process and Evaluation Workgroup

## Meeting Minutes

### August 7, 2024

In attendance:

- **Rodney Brooks**, Alameda County Public Defenders
- **Dr. Maisha Scott**, Building Opportunities for Self-Sufficiency
- **Jason Sjoberg**, Office of the Alameda County District Attorney
- **Karen Chin**, Urban Strategies Council
- **Janene Grigsby**, The Alameda County Probation Department
- **Jimisha Baker**, Bay Area Community Services (BACS)
- **Jovan Yglecias**, Bay Area Community Services (BACS)
- **Raymond Gistrab**, Bay Area Community Services (BACS)
- **Bishop George Matthews**, Fresh Start Academy, New Beginnings
- **Shawn Rowland**, Our Road Prison Project
- **Joshua Matthews**, Fresh Start Academy, New Beginnings
- **Mas Morimoto**, Office of the Alameda County District Attorney
- **Alex Garcia**, Alameda County Probation Department
- **Shanice Smith**, ROOTS Community Health
- **Steven Belowich**, Alameda County Probation Department
- **Janica Wilson**, Alameda County Probation Department
- **Rezzin Gonzalez**, Alameda County Probation Department

The meeting opened with an outline of the Process and Evaluation Workgroup's responsibilities. Next, the meeting attendees introduced themselves.

Attendees reviewed and approved the June and July meeting minutes. Next, an introduction was given about the topic to be discussed; the current feedback loop provided by Probation's contracted programs.

A summary of the conversation regarding the feedback from clients is below.

### **Bay Area Community Services (BACS) Presentation and Discussion:**

- BACS operates two of the largest interim housing programs in Oakland. The Henry Robinson, 137 beds. The organization also operates The Holland which is an 80 bed interim housing facility.
- Probation has a contract for 20 beds in each facility.
- The programs are tailored to each client's individual needs such as, mental health, physical health, substance use needs, etc. Most clients (outside of Probation) come to BACS through the Coordinated Re-entry System and are evaluated for eligibility for various housing services. Most clients qualify for city and/or county assistance for housing and employment.
- Many residents start by becoming "docs ready" obtaining vital documents such as their California ID, income verification, social security cards etc.
- Some clients are eligible for "rapid rehousing" in those instances, move in resources are provided once clients are in the new residence. Additional support may include, confirming clients are current on their lease payments and acting as a good neighbor and tenant.
- The BACS team also works on barrier removal to assist with housing sustainability, including connecting clients to additional housing benefits, primary care or other supports.
- **Question:** How do clients give feedback and how is it incorporated into your work?
- **Response:** The program administers the Alameda County Behavioral Health Survey twice a year. All the surveys are anonymous. The data is collected and aggregated by the Quality Improvement Team, then shared with the appropriate staff. In addition, there is an open door to provide real time feedback. Comment and feedback forms are available in all the public spaces. The Henry and The Holland have event report forms that are available throughout the facilities. In addition, there is a grievance and appeals process at each facility.
- **Question:** Is the feedback provided to Probation and if so, how?
- **Response:** Probation holds a monthly meeting, where providers can share feedback, and discuss challenges; the meeting serves as a unique opportunity for providers to share information.
- **Question:** Does BACS have a connection to the Reception Center at Sanat Rita Jail?
- **Response:** While this program is not connected to the Reception Center, BACS has forensic programs which are.
- **Question:** Can you talk about the coordinated re-entry process and how does it interface with probation referrals.
- **Response:** Coordinated Re-entry brings all the different resources into one space, instead of requiring clients to go to numerous locations to utilize the different services. When clients come to BACS, our staff explore their individual housing needs and reaches out to potential support networks, including family and friends. If that doesn't work, they move on to other assessments, including a crisis assessment, then they are placed on a list, and receive services based on their level of need. Clients next engage in a crisis assessment, and similarly receive services based on the level of need. As they move through one of the housing assisted portals,

staff will follow up and assist clients with completing the pre-requisites of the program. In addition, follow up case management services are provided once the client is housed.

- **Question:** What is the percentage of Probation clients eligible for permanent supportive rehousing?
- **Response:** Housing and Urban Development (HUD) funded transitional housing program clients are ineligible for permanent supportive housing. BACS staff have become skilled in identifying and utilizing other barrier removal services for those who are ineligible for permanent supportive housing; the staff is actively looking to change the current HUD rule. Permanently supportive housing is for “chronically homeless” individuals. Enrolling in transitional housing programs in most cases means that you are not chronically homeless.
- **Question:** Is BACS the only place to enter the Coordinated Re-entry system? Second, does not being unhoused the previous evening disqualify clients from transitional housing services?
- **Response:** BACS operates a few of the coordinated re-entry facilities, other organizations also run facilities where you can enter the system. Numerous factors are considered when determining if a client is chronically homeless, including where you slept the previous evening.

#### **Presentation about the Genesis Worship Center/Fresh Start Academy**

- Members of the Bishops’ congregation were leaving Oakland due to housing costs, the church started to build housing when the Probation Department suggested making the housing available to their clients. Genesis staff then secured the Community Capacity Grant, which helped them to build the organization and learn about doing business with Alameda County. The Bishop’s previous work with Men of Valor also helped to the prepare the Genesis staff to work with the probation population.
- Genesis has been contracting with Probation for approximately three years.
- The Fresh Start Academy is only for men. New Beginning House is only for male clients with a 290 (sex offense) conviction.
- Services offered in both facilities include:
  - Life Coaching.
  - Vocational and educational support.
  - Food vouchers, \$105 weekly.
  - Living quarters with new kitchen appliances.
  - Assistance in receiving medical and dental insurance.
  - Family reunification.
  - Permanent housing assistance – development of a plan 90 days before a client leaves the program.
- The program has been running at full capacity since February 2024 and uses SMART (Specific, Measurable, Attainable, Realistic and Timebound) goals.

- The organization uses a Salesforce based system to track and implement their SMART goals. The staff is also able to track a client's progress – and forward the report to Probation which may include conversations with clients. The detail allows the staff to tell probation the full story.
- The case management system also allows staff to “chat” with the clients.
- Clients in both facilities also have access to a gym.
- The program philosophy is that staff are “coaches” and clients are responsible for doing the work.
- There are seven clients who finished the program between December 2023 and July 2024, all obtained permanent housing. (The program takes 12-18 months to complete.) One person did not want to give his new housing address upon moving out, which is a program requirement; so, probation does not deem that he completed the program.
- The programs are drug free and harassment free environments.
- Clients need to work toward finding a job and accessing education while living in the facilities.
- Residents are not allowed in the rooms of other residents and are not allowed to have visitors.
- Genesis staff contacts a new client 24-48 hours after receiving a referral from probation. Initially the client is interviewed by phone, then in person. If the client is a fit, they are placed on a waiting list, or given a residence if there is an opening.
- Clinets are given a simple anonymous survey to collect feedback. Questions include:
  - Are my housing needs being met?
  - Am I satisfied with the services I am receiving?
  - Does the staff treat me with respect?
  - Do I feel safe?
  - Am I satisfied with my Case Manager?
  - Is my Case Manager concerned with my personal growth?
  - Have I established permanent housing?
  - Has this program prevented me from returning to jail?
  - Would I recommend the program to someone else?
- The program does not integrate religion, even though the church receives the funding. However, when the Bishop talks to clients, he does so from a position of compassion and draws from his pastoral experience.
- The case management system allows Genesis staff to keep detailed notes on which program goals are completed, not completed, and the reasons why, allowing for the creation of detailed reports about a client's progress. Goals are not just set by the staff; they are developed with the clients.
- The data is not shared with Probation, but the “program” will be fully implemented by the end of the month.

- **Question:** How does Probation select the clients they refer to you?
- **Response:** The Deputy Probation Officers visit our programs regularly to become familiar with them so they can make the most appropriate recommendations. Clients can also ask the Probation Officer to refer them to the program. Program capacity can be an issue, clients may be referred to a program that is not the first choice, if the need is great.
- **Question:** Bishop, can you talk a bit about your screening process.
- **Response:** We don't accept clients with violent convictions or active substance abuse challenges.
- **Question:** What happens if a client is deemed inappropriate for the program?
- **Response:** The contract does not require programs to accept Probation referrals. Sometimes a client is accepted if the Deputy Probation Office lobbies them. Probation asks contractors to provide a reason when a client is rejected from a program, which allows them to address the issue and make appropriate referrals for that client and others moving forward.
- **Question:** Is there a way to integrate the survey responses into the case management system.
- **Response:** Not yet, that is a great idea.
- **Question:** Are there any suggested changes to the survey questions?
- **Response:** Ask clients if any service they need is missing/they wish they had received from the program.
- **Question:** How did Probation come up with the goal of placing 75% of clients in permanent housing? This is challenging considering the population being served. Could the requirement be changed to focus on the clients who successfully graduate from the program?
- **Response:** You make a number of good points, one of the reasons we are having this conversation is we are not capturing a lot of information. Probation is also revamping the benchmarks for upcoming contracts. Current contracts implement a curve, after understanding the initial goals are unattainable. Contractors should not feel judged by the success of housing placement. The data we receive allows us to have a conversation moving forward. Probation staff understands the difficulty of securing housing in the Bay Area. The challenge is that the numbers are shared publicly and impacts contract awards in the future.

#### **Announcements:**

- The September meeting will not take place, Mr. Brooks will be out on medical leave.

The meeting adjourned at 11:59 PM.