

Process and Evaluation Workgroup

Meeting Minutes

November 1, 2023

In attendance:

- **Rodney Brooks**, Alameda County Public Defenders Office
- **Janene Grigsby**, Alameda County Probation Department
- **Jason Sjoberg**, Alameda County District Attorney's Office
- **Roger Chung**, Restoring our Communities, Laney College
- **Charlie Eddy**, The Urban Strategies Council
- **Michelle Dew**, Center for Employment Opportunities
- **Jenica Wilson**, Alameda County Probation Department
- **Alex Garcia**, Alameda County Probation Department
- **Sherita Moeser**, Five Keys Charter School
- **Myeshia Haywood**, Five Keys Charter School
- **Jamaica Sowell**, ROOTS Community Health Center
- **Karen Chin**, Urban Strategies Council

The meeting opened with a review of the current Workgroup activities, and introductions of the meeting attendees. Next a summary was provided of the questions to be addressed at the meeting, focusing on how Alameda County has been assessing the work of their AB 109 contractors.

Attendees engaged in an open discussion around four questions:

- How can auxiliary funding (money to address issues not included in the original agreement) assist AB 109 contractors?
- It is difficult to know how many clients will be served by a particular vendor, what can be put in place to address the ambiguity of the capacity?
- Many contractors struggle compiling and submitting data, what changes can be made to assist in this area.
- What are some suggested solutions for the communication challenges between the vendors and the Probation Department?

Summary of the Discussion

How can auxiliary funding (money to address issues not included in the original agreement) assist AB 109 contractors?

- The funding could allow clients to purchase job interview attire, gift cards could be provided as incentives and/or for personal items.
- The additional funds could address transportation needs not currently covered in the contract.
- Meals on days when people are not coming to the vendor for services.
- The CORE does provide some of these services – the location where CORE is located can be “triggering” for some clients.
- Many of the contracts have barrier removal funds built in.
- The money going to clients can be seen as income, which they need to claim with the IRS and reduces their ability to collect other government benefits.
- Community colleges can use other funds to address these types of client needs. In addition, they were able to bill Probation the same amount each month (often personnel) and use other funding sources for additional client needs.
- Some organizations created a “community funds allocation” and then documented what they were providing for clients. The organization would pay first and then get reimbursed.
- Probation staff stated that moving forward, vendors can put the community fund in the budget, and list how they plan to use the revenue.
- Probation should provide a percentage of funding upfront once the contract is awarded.
- On construction contracts the county allocates 10% for overrides.
- Probation staff stated that they provide “indirect funds” that are 10% above the contract award figure. Contractors assume the 10% “indirect funds” are for administrative oversight. Contracts often state people not listed in providing direct services to clients must be billed under the indirect service funding allocation.
- Many of the contractors did not see the indirect funds as a way to pay for the additional cost of serving clients not covered in the contract.

It is difficult to know how many clients will be served by a particular vendor, what can be put in place to address the ambiguity of the capacity?

- Contractors know the amount of work it takes to serve clients. So, when CBO staff look at the RFP the funding often does not correlate with the number of clients expected to be served with best practices.
- In addition to the volume of clients expected to be served, many of the “Navigators” have lived experience, which can be more triggering when working with a high volume of clients creating additional issues.
- Some Probation contracts don’t dictate the number of clients served. The County General Services Agency will not allow Probation to share an expected budget. If a proposal exceeds

the amount of money Probation has projected is necessary to deliver the service, the bid is disqualified.

- Currently there is a contract to provide cognitive behavioral treatment which specifies the number of clients who are expected to be served however, that can make it difficult to meet the objective because of the mental health issues of the referred clients.
- Probation has engaged with the vendor about clients who may not be a good fit.
- In some instances when there are too many clients, organizations case manages them prior to the initial delivery of services.
- A question was raised whether services are being underutilized and if so, what can be done to improve that issue.
- Contractors are required to outreach in the community to attract clients.
- It is difficult to determine if contracts are over or underutilized.
- Even if an organization is doing outreach, the referral ultimately must come from/be approved by a Probation Officer. If there are not adequate referrals, the service will be underutilized.
- Clients also may terminate supervision before completing the program.
- There are a “handful” of Probation Officers making good referrals, yet service providers are responsible for calling the potential clients and trying to get them into the office. Over half of the clients will not return phone calls.
- There are numerous clients attributed to service providers even when the service provider has never contacted them.
- The number of referrals that come to organizations ebbs and flows.
- When asked, clients talk about their most immediate needs: housing and employment. Probation does not generally look at the referrals that are made by individual Probation Officers.
- Probation’s Coordinated Re-entry Services Program (CRSP) RFP is designed to build trust between Probation staff and clients and hopefully allow for a warm handoff to the service provider.
- Probation has funds dedicated to serve clients once they are off probation. Providers would not see these funds specifically outlined in their contracts, clients can just continue to receive services. Currently, many people receive shorter time on Probation than in previous years, a smaller number of the clients have had their probation terms shortened to one year due to AB 1950.
- A question was raised about inviting the Probation Supervisors to our meeting to discuss their referral process. Clients are not required to participate in services after a referral is made.
- Some service providers are thinking about developing a “feedback loop” to try to address some of the issues raised in this meeting.
- Probation has found the issue is not a lack of referrals, but the lack of “best fits.” Probation staff has developed training for Probation Officers to facilitate more appropriate referrals.

The group agreed to address the final two questions at the next meeting.

The meeting Adjourned at 7:39 PM