



COUNTY OF SAN MATEO
Inter-Departmental Correspondence
Sheriff's Office



DATE: September 7, 2012

TO: Honorable Board of Supervisors
FROM: Greg Munks, Sheriff
SUBJECT: Jail Programming Strategic Plan Update

RECOMMENDATION:

Accept this report-back regarding the update of the Sheriff Jail Programming Project

BACKGROUND:

After completing the County's Public Safety Realignment (AB 109) Local Implementation Plan, which emphasized the use of evidence-based practices to reduce the cycles of recidivism in the Realigned population, the San Mateo County Sheriff's Office hired Resource Development Associates (RDA) to work with the Sheriff's Office and the multidisciplinary Jail Programming Committee to develop recommendations for in-custody programs and services to better enable inmates to successfully reenter the community. The ultimate goal of this work is to implement a comprehensive array of programs and services that can meet the in-custody and post-release needs of local inmates and ensure the ongoing safety of all County residents.

Toward this end, RDA has engaged the Sheriff's Jail Programming Committee, conducted site visits to other California counties, interviewed current and former inmates, researched best practices in jail programming, and assessed San Mateo County's current jail programming. Supervisors Tissier and Jacobs Gibson, the sponsors of the Jail Programming Project, have offered critical insights and guidance to RDA and the Sheriff's Office.

DISCUSSION:

Expanding the Continuum of In-Custody Services and Programming

In anticipation of the construction of the replacement jail facility and in recognition of the need to expand the continuum of services and programming offered in San Mateo County's existing adult correctional facilities, RDA has worked with the Sheriff's Office to map current inmate programs and services and to assess these services in relation to established best practices. RDA developed a process flow map to show how inmates move through the facility, from booking to release, and to identify opportunities to enhance programming and services for all inmates. RDA has also worked with the Sheriff's Office to assess how the inmate population and their service needs will change over the next 3-5 years because of Public Safety Realignment.

In addition to resulting in more sentences being served locally, Realignment is significantly increasing the average length of stay of county inmates, requiring more long-term and phased programming. Despite this shift, however, the majority of jail inmates will continue to be in jail for relatively short lengths of stay, requiring the Sheriff's Office to develop a mix of programs and services to meet the need of both short and long-term inmates. RDA has been assisting in the process of identifying ways to respond to these needs through a mix of programs and services.

RDA's research has revealed that best practices in inmates programming requires a mix of three discrete program types: (1) reformative, (2) activity-based, and (3) re-integrative or re-entry-based. Other best practices include integrating inmate programs into general correctional operations, especially assessment and housing assignment, and assessing inmates for risk and need to ensure they receive appropriate programming and at the right dosage. Tying housing to programming also enables facilities to place inmates with similar programmatic needs and interests together to increase program effectiveness, efficiency, and facility security. By reviewing best practices, RDA has established benchmarks for the ideal service delivery system. RDA is now helping the Sheriff's Office develop a strategic plan for inmate programming to guide San Mateo County toward this ideal service delivery model.

Creating a Plan for an Expanded Continuum of Programs and Services

After assessing the activities and processes within the existing facilities, RDA identified gaps in programming and is in the process of developing a 3-Year Strategic Plan summarizing recommendations and new opportunities for meeting the needs of the inmate population. To do this, RDA facilitated meetings with and engaged diverse stakeholders, including:

Sheriff's Jail Programming Committee. The Sheriff's Office Jail Programming Committee was designed to review the array of programming currently being provided at the adult correctional facilities and offer recommendations for enhancements, modifications, and additions to those programs and services delivered to our inmate population. RDA facilitated a half-day workshop with the Committee and has worked with 5 sub-committees to offer more targeted recommendations across the following domains: case management and systems navigation; health and behavioral health; vocational; educational; and reentry and socialization.

Interviews and Focus Groups with Inmates and Ex-Offenders. RDA interviewed over 30 current San Mateo County inmates across the men and women's facilities and led focus groups with men and women who were formerly incarcerated in San Mateo County. During these discussions, RDA identified service needs and service gaps in the inmate population, which has informed RDA's gap analysis and planning efforts.

Site Visits to Other Counties. RDA visited adult correctional facilities in Santa Cruz, Contra Costa, and Alameda Counties, and researched the facilities in Western Massachusetts, to identify bold and innovative approaches to inmate programming that San Mateo may wish to consider.

Programs offered by neighboring counties include The More Opportunities for Mom (MOMs) Program, Dads Acquiring and Developing Skills (DADs) Program, and Family-Inclusive Case Management, which incorporate family reunification efforts into reform and reentry programming.

Participation in Jail Planning Workshops: RDA participated in two workshops with the Jail Planning Unit to offer recommendations on physical space and design needs that will be useful for programming opportunities. These recommendations will be particularly important when developing the blueprints for the replacement facility and creating a “living-learning” environment for inmates.

In closing, by the end of the project, the RDA Team will prepare a comprehensive strategic plan that recommends an inmate program and service delivery system for San Mateo County’s adult correctional facilities. This plan will include a process flow of jail-based, alternative custody, and reentry services; needs and risk assessment instruments for assessing inmates’ program and service needs; recommendations for possible reform, activity-based programs arrays, and reintegration, including phased programs and curricula, measurable objectives of success of the system, and funding recommendations.

