

Background

Probation is responsible for both the “Mandatory Supervision” and “Post Release Community Supervision” of those sentenced under the new 2011 Assembly Bill 109 (AB 109) guidelines. As part of these new forms of supervision, the County has entered into various agreements to fund both internal (County based) and external (community based) services for those under such supervision.

Even prior to creation of AB 109 supervision, Probation used the Correctional Assessment and Intervention System (CAIS) to assist the creation of a supervision plan by assessing an individual’s risk of recidivism and identify their criminogenic needs. These needs are considered in relation to the 8 well established factors of recidivism.¹ Individuals are routinely reassessed, and this reassessment is done more frequently on those whose previous scores indicate higher levels of risk. Use of the CAIS in this fashion has continued with the AB 109 population.

The AB 109 program, however, has been designed to be more robust than simply addressing recidivism. As such, and in alignment with the County’s Reentry Strategic and Operational Plans, the AB 109 program also seeks to achieve reintegration of individuals into the community. While many of the services for those on AB 109 supervision are provided to address an individual’s criminogenic needs (as indicated by the CAIS), others are designed to remove barriers to successful community reintegration.

Under the current AB 109 program structure, when a CAIS assessment is conducted by Probation, individuals are concurrently screened for the existence of barriers to reintegration. Probation will then make referrals directly to contracted service providers to address criminogenic needs, reduce recidivism risk, and remove barriers to community reintegration. These referrals are then administered through the pushing of pre-assigned buttons in Probation’s custom Microsoft Access database. Because Probation is the only organization with access to this database, each time a referral is generated it must be routed through an individual’s assigned Deputy Probation Officer (DPO) to ensure data about the referral is captured by the database.

Data stored about each referral in Probation’s database is limited to information that exists at the time the referral was made.² Any information about the referral after it is sent out to a service provider would need to be obtained from DPO case notes, or data in the control of a specific service provider.

Systemic Changes

Recently, in furtherance of the County’s reentry goals, agreements have been reached to develop a Network System of Services to serve the reentry population in the east and central regions of the County, and a Reentry Resource Center in the west. These developments also brought along the addition of new services and providers. They have also created the present opportunity to assess the adequacy of Probation’s current service referral system.

¹ The factors are: Antisocial behaviors, antisocial personality, antisocial cognition, antisocial associates, familial conflict, low levels of school and work performance, substance abuse, and lack of prosocial leisure activities.

² This includes: who made the referral, whom the referral was made for, when it occurred, and who the referral was made to. Specifically, the database is not currently being used to house any follow-up information about these referrals.

REENTRY RESOURCE CENTER

The Reentry Resource Center (Center) will offer a traditional “first-stop” services model directly targeted at the needs of the reentry population in West Contra Costa County. Although the precise location has not yet been finalized, this centralized service access point will most likely be in the city of Richmond. Consistent with the collective impact service delivery model, services will come from a variety of service providers with many of the services being provided onsite at the Center, and a host of others provided offsite at partner organizations. The central backbone organization will provide the support and coordination needed to ensure effective service delivery. The County has contracted with Rubicon Programs to fill this necessary backbone role.

Because the Center is still the early stages of development, it is too early to definitively determine which organizations will partner with the Center to provide services. However, at a minimum the Center expects to develop formalized relationships with each of the current AB 109 service providers in the region.

NETWORK SYSTEM OF SERVICES

The Network System of Services (Network) intends to change the way in which reentry services are accessed and delivered in the East and Central regions of the County. Key to this shift will be three (3) Field Operations Coordinators whose activities are over-seen by the Network Manager. Collectively, these four positions form the Network Team. Each of the Field Operations Coordinators will have their main offices in the police departments of the regional cities with the largest reentry population – Antioch, Pittsburg, and Concord. Individuals will also be able to access the Network’s services through “No Wrong Door” (NWD) sites strategically located throughout the region. Each Field Operations Coordinator’s service area will include at least two NWD sites.

A key component of the Network will be the Mentor/Navigator program. This will consist of volunteers who will not only act as peer mentors for individuals, but under the supervision of the Field Operations Coordinators they will also assist individuals as they attempt to navigate and access the Network’s services. Training for the Mentor/Navigators will, in part, come from both the Dialogue for Peaceful Change and Insight Prison Project curriculums.³ Additionally, the new service of Employment and Education Liaison has been added to assist incarcerated men and women in their efforts to gather required employment and education related documentation (i.e. transcripts, identification cards, social security cards, etc.). This service will be provided both in-custody and after an individual’s release.⁴

The Network will also include services from new service providers. As one of the new service providers, Reach Fellowship International will providing the aforementioned Employment and Education Liaison services for women. Additional housing services will be provided by New Life Dream Center in the eastern region of the County. In addition to the employment services already offered, the Network will also provide automotive and auto body training through Prepare My Sheep and a Leadership and Entrepreneurship training program through a partnership between Brighter Beginnings⁵ and JFK University.

³ Some Mentor Navigators have already gone through the DPC training. The IPP trainings are set to occur quarterly.

⁴ Some of the services of the Employment and Education Liaisons are provided to the entire County. The services may be functionally limited to the Network region of the County at this time since there is no identified entity to retain documents for individuals in W. County at this time.

⁵ Brighter Beginnings is not a new partner of the County’s AB 109 program, but this partnership with JFK is.

The New Assessment and Referral System

Several meetings have taken place to discuss how the Network will be integrated with the current AB 109 supervision program. What quickly became clear is that with the addition of new services and service providers, Probation would need to review the current referral process to ensure its compatibility with these changes. Internal meetings culminated in a larger inter-organizational meeting with representatives from the County Administrator, Probation, Reentry Resource Center, and Network System of Services. During the meeting it was determined that a more sophisticated referral system needed to be implemented to address prevailing concerns with the current system.

REFERRAL CONSIDERATIONS

The following considerations for any newly implemented referral system were expressed:

Probation

- Desire to remain close to the referral process
- The DPO remains informed of all referrals made
- A system that is simple for the DPO to participate in
- No substantial increase in demands on Probation staff

County Administrator

- Any changes in the system do not degrade the quality of collected data

Networked System of Services

- The Network has access to everyone on AB 109 Supervision
- Interagency referrals allowed

Reentry Resource Center

- Any decision to refer individuals to one program over another that provides services of a similar type (i.e. employment or housing) is made by someone with specialized knowledge
- The Center's addition to the referral system be envisioned as a catch-all for times when a needed service is not provided by existing contracted service providers

BUTTON CHANGES

Presently, a DPO makes a referral to a service provider through the use of "buttons" in Probation's custom database. The buttons on the database can be seen in the figure below.



The addition of the Network and the Center to the County's reentry system require changes to the existing button structure and functions. The following changes to the current button structure will need to be made:

1. New buttons labeled for each of the Field Operations Coordinators in Antioch, Pittsburg, and Concord will need to be added
 - a. Each button will facilitate a referral to the appropriate Network Field Operations Coordinator, and should be included in every referral for the Central and East regions of the County.
 - b. This button will also serve to give individuals access to the Network's Mentor/Navigator program
2. Two (2) new buttons for the specialty services of the Network and Center

- a. Specialty services are services that exist outside the traditional referral streams
 - i. For the Network, these will specifically act as a flag to the Network Team for referrals to Prepare My Sheep, New Life Dream Center, and JFK University
 - ii. For the Center, this button will act as a catch-all where no other button exists for a needed service
3. Two new buttons should be added for employment/education liaison services
 - a. These buttons will initiate employment related documentation services for either men (M) or women (W)
4. Mentoring should be changed so it is identified with Mentoring in West County
 - a. This signifies that the Mentoring (without navigators) is specifically for West County at this time.
5. A button for Family Reunification will need to be added

While these are the changes to the actual structure of the buttons themselves, the details concerning the actual functioning of the button once pressed will need to be worked out between Probation and the Network Team.

PROCESS

In developing the actual referral process, care was taken to address as many of the considerations outlined above. The process outlined here is simply a shell and will require the development and implementation of numerous additional components to operate effectively. It was the goal of this document to give a common understanding to the ultimate structure and intents of the newly refined referral process, and enough substance to ensure the major features of the process could be put in place. While the referral processes of the Center and the Network are not identical, both are able to be implemented in a way that will not be completely foreign to users of the prior system.

West County Reentry Resource Center

As indicated above, the Reentry Resource Center will largely work within the current Probation referral system. When a DPO is unable to refer an individual to a needed service, they will be able to make a referral to the Center (as a catch-all) by hitting the designated button. Should changes to this process need to be made once the Center officially opens its doors for business, updates to this procedure should be considered at that time.

Network System of Services

Due to its more virtual dimensions, the referral procedure for the Network will be a bit more intricate. This system is largely controlled by three (3) overarching principles:

1. Probation will be continuously informed about an individual's involvement with the service providers of the Network.
2. There is an expectation that the Field Operations Coordinators (through the Mentor/Navigators) will be actively working with every person on AB 109 supervision in the region.
3. The Network Team will largely be the ones tasked with managing the allocation of the limited slots attributable to the Specialty Services.

In addition to being guided by the principles above, the Network Team will be developing a series of internal protocols that will not only facilitate the identification of candidates for the Specialty Services, but also the ability to accomplish interagency referrals. Once notified of an individual's utilization of the

Network's services, the Network Team will then further facilitate an individual's participation in the Network by providing necessary assessments, storing and disseminating confidential employment or education related documentation, offering triage services for those in crisis, tracking individuals and the services delivered to them within the Network, and communication of pertinent information back to Probation.

Early assessments by the DPO⁶

When a DPO is able to contact a person while still incarcerated, this individual is able to better benefit from the earlier access to service delivery and the impactful effects of the jail to community model. Under the new system, the Employment and Education Liaisons offer the opportunity to reap the benefits of these early contacts by ensuring that upon release, an individual has the documentation required to begin a fruitful job search, successful application for public benefits, or pursuit of their educational goals.

To help facilitate this process, a series of questions should be added to those a DPO currently asks an incarcerated individual (i.e. Do you have government issued ID? Your social security card? Birth certificate?) to determine the need for the services of the Employment and Education Liaison. If it is determined these services are needed, a referral for document services should be made using the appropriate button based on the gender⁷ of the individual.

AB 109 participant entry into the Network

Under the current Network setup, it is possible for individuals to begin receiving services while still incarcerated (services including Document Assistance, Family Reunification, and Mentoring). In some instances such individuals may not have yet been visited by a DPO. Should the Network Team learn that services have been provided in jail, they will communicate with Probation to verify the individual's AB 109 status prior to then referring an individual to additional service providers. Once verified, the individual may continue to access the services of the Network.

In most situations, however, the initial referral for services should originate from Probation. In this situation, the DPO should hit the proper buttons relating to services needed and also hit the proper button based on the location of residency (or expected location upon release from jail) of the individual. Every person in the East and Central regions of the County should have the location button hit on the initial referral. This button will serve to give individuals access to the all-important mentor/navigator feature of the Network, and to also make the Network Team aware of the individual's utilization of the Network. From here it is expected that the Network Team will then make contact with the individual and help to facilitate this person's participation in the Network.

Individuals who are already receiving services in the Network's region, but not yet directly affiliated with the Network Team are free to continue receiving services without interruption. But once a DPO initiates a new referral for services for such an individual, this referral should also include the use of the proper location button so that the Network Team will be made aware of the individual's utilization of the Networked System of Services. Alternately, a service provider may determine that an individual would benefit from the Mentor/Navigator functions of the Network, or decide to utilize the new interagency referral capabilities of the Network. In either situation, the Network Team will then become informed of

⁶ Although listed under the Network, this adjustment to the current protocol should be implemented county-wide.

⁷ This determination of the appropriate button should be based on the Sheriff's gender classification since the contact by the service provider will be made while the person is in custody.

the individual's utilization of the Network, and proceed to make contact with the individual and begin to facilitate the individual's participation in the Network.

Field Ops referral system

One of the most innovative features of the Network system is the ability to make referrals directly to the participating agencies. This change has been sought out to not only speed up service delivery times, but to also better integrate the services of the Network by increasing the communication and flow of information between agencies. With this change, a service provider can initiate a referral for a needed service by contacting the local Field Operations Coordinator who will then facilitate the referral to the requisite service provider.

To achieve this increase in efficiency, "official" referrals from Probation are allowed to lag behind the delivery of a service. Thus, when one service provider wants to refer an individual to a second service provider, they can do so by first making the Network Team aware of the individual's service need. The Network Team will then work with Probation, and if the inclusion of the additional service to the individual's service plan is warranted, a referral will be made directly to the necessary service provider by the Network Team. Probation will then have the ability to send out an "official" request for services (via the traditional button method) at a later time – even days later. This "official" referral will help to ensure the referral data is properly captured in Probation's database, and that future reports or supervision decisions made by Probation are all well-informed.

New service providers

Generally, the DPO will attempt to make a referral based on the particular need of an individual. In this sense, the DPO will usually not attempt to determine the specific service to be given from a broader category of services. For example, when the determination is made that a person needs legal services, a referral will be made using the button, and the type of legal service needed will be determined by the service provider. In the past, this made the most sense because one service provider provided all of the services in a particular service area. With the addition of new Network service providers for both housing and employment, this is no longer the case. There is, however, limited space in each of these new services, so referrals into any of them must be done judiciously.

The new services available in the Network region are the automotive trainings of Prepare My Sheep, and three phase leadership/entrepreneur trainings of Brighter Beginnings and JFK University. To properly manage the quality and quantity of referrals into these programs, a DPO will not generally directly refer a person into these specialty services. Instead, they would identify the person as needing employment assistance and press the appropriate button. Should an informed DPO become aware of information that makes them believe a person is an ideal candidate for one of these specialty services, in addition to pressing the employment button, they would also press the Network Special Services button to ensure this referral is flagged. The DPO should include pertinent information in the referral email detailing which specialty program the DPO wants the person considered for, and what merits this special consideration.

Because the Network will be working with everyone on AB 109 supervision in the region, becoming aware that a person has been referred to employment should trigger an internal screening process to evaluate the individual's fitness for one of the employment related specialty programs. Where a person is found to be an ideal candidate for one of these programs, it will be the responsibility of the Network Team to then facilitate and navigate this individual to this particular service. If and when an individual is

navigated to an employment related specialty service, the Network Team should then make Probation aware this service is being delivered in lieu of the traditional employment program.

For housing, the new provider is New Life Dream Center. This process will work identically to that of employment. While Probation can bring a housing referral to the attention of the Network Team, generally it will be up to the internal protocols of the Network to identify ideal candidates for the New Life Dream Center. However, once an individual is accepted into this program, Probation should be informed of this development by Network Team.

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