

Contra Costa County Evaluation of AB 109 Programs



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Executive Summary

Introduction

In implementing Assembly Bill (AB) 109, or Public Safety Realignment, Contra Costa County, along with all California counties, ultimately hopes to see long-term impacts including improvements in recidivism rates, quality of life, and fiscal efficiency. In November 2013, Contra Costa County contracted with Resource Development Associates (RDA) to support the implementation and evaluation of the County's AB 109 efforts. This report builds on the first year's efforts by evaluating the implementation and preliminary outcomes of the County's contracted AB 109 service providers.¹

The current evaluation covered the period of time from July 1, 2013, when the AB 109 service contracts began, through September 30, 2014, prior to the implementation of the Reentry Network for Returning Citizens in East and Central County. In addition, Contra Costa County's AB 109 reentry programs and networks are still in the process of being developed and implemented. These findings are thus preliminary and are intended to help the County make data-driven decisions moving forward.

It is important to note that while some AB 109 services, such as housing assistance and employment, have very clear and measureable outcomes, services such as mentorship and family reunification often have intangible outcomes that are harder to document and measure. Further, while the focus of this report is primarily on the contracted community-based organizations (CBOs) themselves, because the CBOs operate as part of a larger County AB 109 reentry infrastructure, evaluating the CBOs necessarily involves an assessment of that infrastructure as well. Although we did not focus on collecting data from County departments for this report, we draw on the findings from the previous evaluation to support our understanding and evaluation of the County's AB 109 reentry infrastructure.

This report presents findings on strengths and challenges that were similar across programs, as well as strengths and challenges for each individual CBO. Findings highlight factors related to both the programs themselves, as well as to the

Evaluation Methods

The evaluation team collected a range of qualitative and quantitative data.

- Interviews and meetings with service providers;
- Focus groups with program participants, including current participants and individuals who enrolled in programs and subsequently discontinued participation;
- Quantitative data on client enrollment and service provision from service providers;
- AB 109 clients' risks and needs as assessed by the Probation Department using the CAIS (Correctional Assessment and Intervention System); and
- Data on referrals to CBOs and County departments from the Probation Department's electronic case management system.

¹ Given the time period of the evaluation, the evaluation includes the eight community-based organizations (CBOs) that were contracted to provide services beginning in Fiscal Year 2013-14. It does not include the additional organizations that were contracted beginning in Fiscal Year 2014-15.



county's broader AB 109 system of supervision and services. This approach is intended to give the County the information necessary to help improve service delivery and client outcomes by building on facilitators of success and helping to mitigate barriers.

There were a total of 1,103 AB 109 clients under the supervision of the Contra Costa County Probation Department at any point between July 1, 2013 and September 30, 2014, with 612 individuals beginning AB 109 supervision during this time period. Of the 1,103 individuals who were under AB 109 supervision at any point during this time, the Probation Department referred 455 individuals to a total of 799 services provided by AB 109-contracted CBOs. Because individuals were sometimes referred to the same service multiple times, there were a total of 922 referrals to CBOs made. Three hundred forty-seven (347) of the 455 probation clients who were referred to CBO services—or more than 76%—decided to engage, enrolling in a total of 561 services. Table 1 below presents an overview of the referrals to and enrollments in the CBOs included in this evaluation.

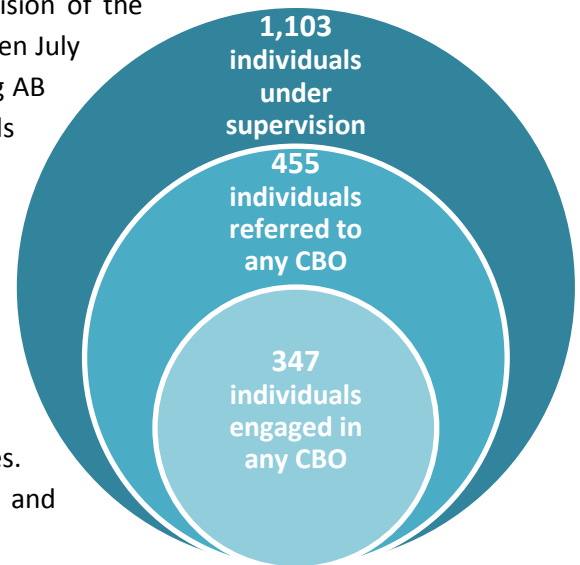


Table 1: Referrals and Enrollments by Provider

Referral Location	Individuals Referred ²	Enrolled
Bay Area Legal Aid	45	61 ³
Brighter Beginnings	<i>n/a</i>	80 ⁴
Center for Human Development	<i>n/a</i>	35
Goodwill Industries	136	77
Men and Women of Purpose	<i>n/a</i>	75
Mentoring ⁵	126	<i>n/a</i>
Reach ⁶	<i>n/a</i>	25
Rubicon	253	164
Shelter, Inc.	238	115
Total	799⁷	632⁸

² This is according to referral records extracted from the Probation Department's Access Database. Many CBOs reported different numbers of individuals referred than the Probation Department's database indicated.

³ The higher number of individuals enrolled than referred by Probation may be the result of referrals BayLegal receives directly from Rubicon as a subcontractor and from its collaborations with Goodwill and Shelter, Inc.

⁴ This number includes participants who were served prior to sentencing; participants may not have ultimately received an AB 109 sentence.

⁵ Prior to October 2014, referrals to mentoring programs, including Brighter Beginnings, Center for Human Development, and Men and Women of Purpose went to the County Office of Education (CCCOE). The CCCOE then referred clients to specific CBOs. We did not receive data from CCCOE for this evaluation detailing the number of referrals received by each CBO.

⁶ As of September 2014, Reach had yet to begin receiving direct referrals from the Probation Department. Service numbers include participants who were served prior to sentencing and as part of Reach's FY 2013-14 contract with the Sheriff's Office; participants may not have ultimately received an AB 109 sentence.



Key Findings

Looking across the services delivered by the eight service providers and the preliminary outcomes of the 347 AB 109 clients who chose to engage in services, a number of important trends emerge.

- Building a reentry infrastructure is still a work in progress. Various elements of this process are still evolving, including the referral process, roles and responsibilities of County and CBO partners, data collection systems, and CBO service delivery models.
- Housing and employment services are in high demand. Goodwill Industries, Rubicon, and Shelter, Inc. each have more service referrals than all mentoring programs combined. In addition, those programs appear to be successfully helping clients address their immediate housing and transitional employment needs. The extent to which that corresponds with long-term housing and employment stability remains to be seen, given limited availability of jobs and housing, as well as the other challenges many clients face.
- Programs appear to best support clients when they combine tangible benefits, such as housing, employment, or vocational certifications, with individualized case management and guidance.
- Limited pre-release access has hampered programs' ability to educate individuals about available services and promote post-release engagement.
- Clients expressed high-levels of satisfaction with services overall, with clients expressing varying levels of satisfaction with the different providers. Although the evaluation can quantify some of the tangible benefits achieved through the employment and housing programs, it is difficult to quantify or measure the impact of those providers who offer more intangible services such as mentoring or family reunification.
- Providers identified the referral process and unmet substance use needs as key barriers to successful service provision. While the referral process has improved, it continues to be challenging for a number of reasons including incorrect client contact information, varying provider capacity, a multiplicity of interrelated client needs, and more. These are elaborated on with greater detail in this report.

Program Strengths and Facilitators of Client Success

1. Program-level factors

Flexible program models

- Contracted providers have consistently adapted and modified their programs and services to better meet the needs of AB 109 clients.

Provision of material benefits

- Programs that provide material benefits such as housing and paid employment are directly meeting the basic needs of reentering individuals.

⁷ This number includes clients who were referred to multiple programs.

⁸ This number includes clients who enrolled in multiple programs.



Combination of structured services and individualized assistance

- Programs that are best able to target individuals' needs operate with a combination of formal activities—some of which use evidence-based models or curricula—and the flexibility to tailor services to individuals' circumstances.
- Programs that combine skill building and relationship building offer optimal support to clients, building clients' hard and soft skills while also providing guidance and motivation. Skill building and relationship building are both necessary program components—but alone may not be sufficient—in supporting participants' success.

Coordination and collaboration

- Several organizations described formal and informal arrangements with other CBOs, which allow them to coordinate service delivery, including formal subcontracts and co-location agreements and informal case conferencing.
- Programs that connect participants to multiple services and resources within their organization support client success by addressing multiple client barriers and providing various opportunities for participants to maintain engagement with the organization.

Data capacity

- Some programs have a high level of data capacity, including electronic case management systems, enabling them to accurately track referrals, enrollments, services provided, and client outcomes. These programs are also well-positioned to use data to inform program modifications.

Client satisfaction

- High client satisfaction levels indicate that clients find the available programs to be helpful.

2. AB 109 system level factors

Supportive approach to supervision and availability of services

- Contra Costa County is building an AB 109 reentry infrastructure that combines supportive supervision and the provision of services. Participants noted that their supportive relationships with their probation officers, in combination with the availability of supportive services, is a marked shift from past supervision experiences and is helping them reenter successfully.

Pre-release contact

- When the County system facilitates pre-release contact with programs in alignment with the Jail to Community model, providers are better positioned to engage participants and can address barriers to employment and housing more quickly.

Coordination of services

- The degree to which County and CBO providers coordinate and communicate about referrals allows the system to better prioritize and match individual needs with available services.
- Most programs reported that Probation's referrals have improved over time—including improved consistency of referrals from different probation officers and a better fit between referrals and



clients' needs—indicating that probation officers are developing greater knowledge about the available services.

- Many individuals receive services from multiple contracted providers. This may indicate that the County is making progress toward building an integrated reentry infrastructure, though at the same time it is important to note possible duplication of services.
- While the evaluation period did not officially include the time during which Reentry Network for Returning Citizens in East and Central County was implemented, some conversations with providers that occurred after October 1, 2014 elicited positive initial feedback in terms of the possibility of greater coordination of services.

Program Challenges and Barriers to Client Success

1. Program-level factors

Program startup

- Because programs spent considerable time and effort launching and refining services during the first contract year, many served fewer clients or for shorter durations than intended; in addition, they may not have achieved target client outcomes.

Program capacity

- Programs vary in their capacity to provide high quality services to the desired number of participants. Some programs reported that had the capacity to serve a greater number of clients. One reported receiving more referrals than they were contracted to provide. Some programs also struggled to consistently carry out their intended program activities.

Data capacity

- A number of programs demonstrated limited capacity to collect and report accurate data on their referrals, clients, and/or service delivery.

Program fit to range of client needs

- While it appears that the available community-based programs are well aligned with the needs of most individuals on AB 109 supervision, there are participants whose level of need is too high for the programs to serve them effectively. For example, it can be difficult to engage individuals with serious mental health issues or untreated substance abuse issues in employment, housing, or family reunification services. By contrast, some participants with greater education, skills, or social networks may feel less aligned with the services available.
- The need for immediate income to cover basic needs and housing costs can make participation in job training workshops difficult and can lead to gaps in time between release and obtaining stable housing.
- The majority of clients in all programs except for Reach are male; as a result, some programs may be less responsive to the needs of female clients, and some female clients may feel less



comfortable in some programs. Some participants also expressed a need for program support outside of normal business hours.

- In addition, program staff commented that some participants are simply not interested in receiving any services.

2. AB 109 system level factors

Service referrals

- While there have been improvements in the rate and timing of referrals, the number of referrals and the referral process itself continue to be major factors impacting service delivery to clients.
- It is not clear how all of the domains assessed by the Probation Department's Correctional Assessment and Intervention System (CAIS) tool align to specific service domains, making it difficult to determine how many individuals could have been referred to each different type of service.
- Clients' multiple and interdependent needs can make it challenging to know how to best prioritize and sequence service referral and delivery.
- Referrals do not always come with correct client contact information, impeding client engagement and follow-up.
- The referral process creates delays and bottlenecks. While the process allows Probation to track referrals and manage clients' cases, it leads to significant back and forth between programs and Probation, often delaying receipt of services.
- The Probation Department is still limited in its capacity to make pre-release referrals.

Timing and frequency of pre-release access

- Programs report that limitations in pre-release access, including the frequency of access, time of day, and/or length of time per visit, negatively affect their ability to engage participants in the critical time prior to reentry. Having the ability to develop those relationships while the client is still in custody benefits their short and long-term success.

Communication and coordination

- While communication and coordination appear to have improved over time, mechanisms for systematic and streamlined communication among CBOs and between CBOs and Probation are still evolving.
- Individuals on AB 109 supervision report receiving limited information about what it means to be under AB 109 supervision or the opportunities available to them.

Gaps in available services

- Housing assistance for AB 109 individuals remains very limited, as there is a limited availability of housing itself and current housing providers are over capacity.
- Transportation assistance came up as a frequent barrier to successfully engaging both with reentry programs as well as with potential and future employers.



3. Broader structural issues impacting the success of reentry programming

It is important to note that there are a number of factors beyond the County's control which nonetheless impact the success of AB 109 programs and the individuals served therein. Below we note some of the most commonly mentioned issues.

Housing and employment for individuals with felony convictions

- For clients with felony convictions or poor credit histories, the limited availability of both stable housing and competitive employment restricts long-term success. As a result, individuals often end up living in places that are not conducive to their recovery or successful reentry.

Access to government assistance

- Across the range of participants, unequal access to government assistance programs including public housing resources and the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP)/CalFresh for those convicted of drug sales, has served as a significant barrier for reentering individuals in being able to meet basic needs for food, clothing, and shelter.

Resolution of suspended driver's licenses

- Suspended driver's licenses for reentering individuals are a significant barrier to employment. While Homeless Court provides an opportunity to resolve a suspended driver's license, it can be difficult to access Homeless Court as the calendar can be backed up for many months.

Overall, program staff explained that individuals participating in pre-release programs often express hope and good intentions for their lives post release, but when immediate linkage to housing and other supports is not available, it can be difficult to stay afloat: *"Once they get out the system is not there to hold them, so they don't follow through."* When the AB 109 system cannot provide an immediate safety net upon release, individuals are more likely to fall into old habits.

Recommendations

1. Engage in a comprehensive planning process to improve overall system coordination

To date, Contra Costa County has engaged in a number of planning process related to AB 109, including the 2011/12 Public Safety Realignment Implementation Plan; the 2012 AB 109 Operational Plan; the 2013 East and Central County Network Plan; and the 2013 West County Reentry Resource Center Plan. While these efforts have been critical in helping the County begin to lay the groundwork necessary for an AB 109 reentry infrastructure, the development of a coordinated AB 109 system is a work in progress and several issues remain.

In order to develop a coordinated system, we recommend the County engage in a comprehensive planning process involving representatives from all County departments and community-based organizations involved in the AB 109 infrastructure. Specifically, the planning process should address the following issues.



A. Processes for triaging clients with multiple, overlapping needs

Last year's evaluation pointed to the need to ensure that clients' service referrals are adequately prioritized and sequenced, rather than given all at once. The evaluation found several challenges with prioritizing and sequencing referrals:

- **Identification and triage of referrals:** Because domains assessed via the CAIS tool do not all neatly align with service domains, there does not appear to be a clear process regarding how to translate CAIS results into service referrals. In addition, there does not appear to be a systematic approach to triaging services for individuals with a multiplicity of needs. It may be that the County should adopt a second brief tool, such as the GAINS Reentry Checklist (shared in the last report and included here as Appendix D), that can link client needs directly to service referrals, but there needs to be agreement around what tool to use, who should use it (Probation, the Network Field Ops and West County Data Administrator, both), and which referrals should stem from what needs.
- **Behavioral Health Services:** Behavioral health needs were identified as a key barrier to engagement in services; providers stressed that it is important to address individuals' substance abuse and/or mental health needs before they can engage in further services. According to CAIS results, approximately 70% of AB 109 clients have alcohol and/or drug abuse needs; in addition, the Chief Probation Officers of California (CPOC) and CDCR estimate that 20% of AB 109 clients have a diagnosed mental health need.⁹ As the referral process currently operates, Probation makes referrals to Behavioral Health Services (BHS) and Probation makes parallel referrals to CBOs and/or Network Field Ops, but there does not appear to be a comprehensive approach to coordinate these referrals. Recent plans for revising the referral process focus on the relationship between Probation and the Network and Reentry Center, without addressing the role of BHS.

B. Communication processes and information flow between the Sheriff's Office, Probation Department, and CBOs

There is an opportunity for improved coordination and communication among the players in the AB 109 system, including 1) among contracted providers; 2) between providers and the Probation Department; 3) between providers, The Probation Department, and Behavioral Health Services; and 4) between providers and the Sheriff's Office. This includes:

- **Communication protocols related to referrals:** One of the challenges with the current referral process is that there is a one-way communication system, with DPOs sending referrals but having no mechanism to follow up to find out if their clients followed through. Similarly, CBOs do not have a clear mechanism to follow up with DPOs to review the appropriateness of the referral, ask questions about the client, seek accurate contact information, etc. Because there is

⁹ <http://www.cpoc.org/assets/Realignment/issuebrief4.pdf>



not a streamlined process for communication between Probation, Behavioral Health, and CBOs, DPOs may not know whether or not their clients are following up to engage and, if not, why not.

- **Status change communication:** CBOs are not regularly updated when their clients return to custody. This can mean that they waste limited staff time trying to connect with clients and it means that they cannot work with Probation and/or the Sheriff's Office to understand why the individual was reincarcerated and try to help address the underlying issues. Limitations with the Sheriff's Office's Jail Management System, noted in the previous evaluation, may also limit the Sheriff's Office's ability to notify Probation about the reincarceration of AB 109 clients if those individuals come in on new charges.
- **Bottlenecks:** While routing all referrals through clients' DPOs is critical for tracking services in a unified place and for allowing POs oversight of their clients, it leads to significant bottlenecks and places undue burden on DPOs who may need to respond to referral requests from multiple CBOs for dozens of clients. Improved communication protocols could help address this issue, but it is also important to broaden the Probation Department's capacity to respond to referrals quickly. One possible option for alleviating the burden on DPOs and reducing this bottleneck is to establish referral coordination as an administrative responsibility in the Probation Department, rather than primarily as the domain of DPOs. If a person or people in administrative positions could receive and respond to referral requests from CBOs, confirm clients' AB 109 status, and record confirmed referrals, this could allow referrals to flow with fewer time delays and without requiring immediate response from DPOs, who may be out in the field and unable to respond.

C. Pre-release case planning and service receipt

The majority of AB 109-contracted service providers do participate in some amount of in-custody service provision; however, all report that this access is insufficient to do the amount of planning necessary to prepare individuals for release. At the same time, providing extensive pre-release access for a multiplicity of CBOs who provide a range of services can be burdensome for the Sheriff's Office, which needs to provide classroom and meeting space, ensure adequate staffing and security, conduct background checks, etc. Again, a coordinated planning process that brings together the Sheriff's Office, Probation, Behavioral Health Services, and CBOs could establish a comprehensive agreement around pre-release access and case planning. Moreover, improved communication, recommended above, could eliminate the need for all partners to engage in separate pre-release planning meetings and processes, instead establishing point people (or point agencies) to lead pre-release planning processes and communicate these plans to other partners.

D. Communication about AB 109 services

Clients, providers, and probation officers alike would benefit from greater knowledge of the available services.



2. Address critical need and service gaps

There are a number of unmet or difficult-to-meet needs to limit the ability of CBOs to adequately support AB 109 clients. Some of these issues are related to services, while others are more related to laws, regulations, employment and housing practices, and supply shortages that are broader than the AB 109 system itself.

A. Service gaps

Providing or augmenting the following services has the potential to reduce the barriers individuals face upon reentry and thereby increase the effectiveness of the AB 109-contracted programming.

- **Transportation assistance.** Both clients and providers noted challenges with transportation as a barrier to service receipt and to other facilitators of success, such as to work. During the prior evaluation period, the evaluation team observed DPOs disseminating transit cards to clients; however, the amount of transportation assistance available may not meet the level of need.
- **Food assistance.** A number of individuals indicated a need for food assistance, particularly individuals who cannot access CalFresh because of certain felony drug convictions. The County should consider short-term food assistance for these individuals. In addition, all AB 109 system partners should make better use of BayLegal's assistance appealing benefit denials by referring these clients to BayLegal services. The County should also ensure that relationships and referral processes are in place with the County's General Assistance administration and CalFresh.
- **Housing availability and funding.** Locating and retaining housing are both challenges for individuals with little to no income, poor credit histories, past evictions, and felony convictions. Moreover, Shelter, Inc., the primary housing service provider is the only CBO to report receiving more referrals than they can respond to. To help address this issue, the County should reallocate unspent housing funding to existing and/or new providers and consider allocating funds for more and/or longer transitional housing.
- **Access to Homeless Court and family law assistance.** Providers emphasized the magnitude of the issue of driver's license suspensions in impacting individuals' ability to obtain employment. While praising the Homeless Court as an avenue for resolving suspensions, they noted that there can be serious Ensure that partnerships and referral pathways are in place with the Family Law Facilitator program

B. Laws, regulations, employment and housing practices, and supply shortages

While employment and housing placement assistance offer critical support to individuals reentering the community, these programs can only go so far; the actual housing and employment options for the reentry population are severely limited. The County should enhance partnerships with employers and landlords/property managers to increase the availability of and access to employment and housing.

- **Availability of and access to competitive employment opportunities.** The County should create a formal partnership with the Workforce Development Board to help identify and link AB 109



individuals to employment opportunities. Further, creating opportunities for CBO staff and/or probation officers to connect directly with employers to provide character references for individuals they are working with and/or supervising. The County should also designate or partner with staff to train employers on

- **Availability of and access to housing.** The County should work with developers and other County offices to discuss options for more affordable, sober living housing options for formerly incarcerated individuals, including both transitional and stable housing. The County should designate or partner with staff to train landlords/property managers in fair housing practices and discrimination.¹⁰

3. Continue to enhance data collection and monitoring capacity

While some CBOs—including Rubicon, Shelter, Inc., and Bay Area Legal Aid—have a high level of data capacity and facility, other CBOs continue to struggle with data capacity. While this capacity will improve as organizations are trained in the ServicePoint system, it will be important to ensure that contracted providers are held to standards and that they receive the capacity development and technical assistance to get there. Either the ServicePoint administrator or the Network Coordinator should review CBO data entry on a monthly basis to ensure accurate and timely data entry. In addition, the County should designate a staff person to validate these data entries against quarterly reports to the CAO to ensure consistent data collection and reporting.

¹⁰ BayLegal is providing information at statewide meetings to discuss potential legislative proposals that might help mitigate barriers to permanent housing for individuals with criminal records. While this effort is ongoing, preliminary meetings have helped to narrow the focus to the expansion of fair housing protections and enforcement to this class of individuals.



Program-Level Findings

Bay Area Legal Aid

Funding Amount: \$80,000 (FY 2013-14); \$80,000 (FY 2014-15)

In Fiscal Year 2014-15, Contra Costa County contracted Bay Area Legal Aid ("BayLegal") to provide legal services for AB 109 clients and educate them about their rights and responsibilities. The legal services BayLegal provides include: obtaining or retaining housing, public benefits, and health care, financial and debt assistance, family law, and obtaining driver's licenses. The program provides post-release legal check-ups for each client to identify legal barriers that are able to be remediated, educates clients about early termination of probation, and assists with fines, and attorneys are also able to meet individually with clients in both jail and prison prior to their release. BayLegal has both formal and informal arrangements with other AB 109 service providers to provide referrals and co-located services, including as a formal subcontractor of Rubicon and in informal partnership with Goodwill.

Table 2: BayLegal Accomplishments, July 2013 - September 2014

Service Delivery	Client Outcomes
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 74 referrals received 61 unduplicated clients served 48% (n=29) received employment assistance 21% (n=13) received family law services 11% (n=7) received benefits assistance Less than 7% (n=4) received each of the following: housing, healthcare, assistance with financial matters, or miscellaneous assistance 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 31 clients received advice and counsel or brief services 26 cases were still pending at the time of data collection 4 clients received full representation; all had a favorable outcome

Strengths

Access to legal services

- Bay Area Legal Aid ("BayLegal") provides critical legal assistance along with referrals and linkages to other services to help reentry clients address the legal barriers to their successful reintegration into the community. Some examples of their work include appeals for housing and public benefits denials, driver's license reinstatement, as well as family and consumer debt issues.

Coordinated services

- Through co-location and coordination of services with other AB 109 CBOs, BayLegal is able to reach and assist more clients.
- The ability to educate clients about BayLegal's services can support clients in returning for services at a later point, even if they are not ready at the time of referral.



Improved program capacity

- BayLegal has improved their capacity to engage and follow-up with clients in a timely manner by leveraging the organization's intake coordinator, who schedules meetings for clients with the staff attorneys and follows up with the Probation Department to help track clients.

Data capacity

- BayLegal has a high level of data capacity, including an electronic case management system, enabling them to accurately track referrals, enrollments, services provided, and case outcomes.

Challenges

Continuous client care

- Though BayLegal's intake coordinator has helped in the area of client communication and follow-up, some staff noted that it can be a challenge to maintain timely communication with clients who can be non-responsive or communicate inconsistently due to other challenges they face.

Suitability of referrals

- Some of the referrals that BayLegal receives do not clearly align with the type of support the program provides. This appears to cut both ways, with BayLegal receiving a number of referrals for legal issues that BayLegal cannot help with, while receiving fewer referrals than expected for services they do provide. For example, some clients referred to BayLegal think that BayLegal is a housing provider, rather than a service that helps remove barriers to housing. Some clients come with family law issues in distant counties, where BayLegal does not operate. BayLegal staff expressed that the quality of referrals could be improved through a closer collaboration with Probation.
- Without regard to the quality of the referral, some clients have difficulty following through initially with a referral to BayLegal because their legal issues are secondary to their prevailing needs, including, for example, obtaining substance abuse treatment, mental health care, housing, and employment.

Pre-release activities

- BayLegal would like to enhance participation in a structured transition plan and have pre-release access to releasing AB 109 status probationers in a classroom or "workshop" format in order to educate potential clients about their rights and services BayLegal can and cannot provide (e.g., BayLegal attorneys work on civil legal matters, but not on criminal legal matters).



Brighter Beginnings

Funding Amount: \$54,505 (FY 2013-14); \$66,000 (FY 2014-15)

In Fiscal Year (FY) 2013-14 the County contracted with Brighter Beginnings, a family strengthening organization, to provide services as part of the mentoring collaborative coordinated by the Contra Costa County Office of Education (CCCOE). With a focus on leadership development, Brighter Beginnings' services under this contract included the development and implementation of the Re-Entry Academy for Leaders (REAL Curriculum). In FY 2014-15, the County contracted Brighter Beginnings to provide services in two capacities: 1) as an AB 109 direct service provider, and 2) as the main administrator and coordinator for the County's Mentoring and Family Reunification Program, taking over this role from the Office of Education. This report focuses on the organization's direct service contract only.

Table 3: Brighter Beginnings Accomplishments, July 2013 - September 2014

Service Delivery	Client Outcomes
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 80 participants served* 20 pre-release workshops held 12 participants received a certificate of completion (attended 7 or more sessions)* 2 AB 109 pre-release participants made post-release contact 4 AB 109 participants received a one-on-one coaching session 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 5 pre-release participants made a strategic life plan*

**This number includes participants who were served prior to sentencing; participants may not have ultimately received an AB 109 sentence.*

Strengths

Research-based and flexible curriculum

- The REAL curriculum draws on existing research-based programs, while also allowing for flexibility to best fit participants' needs.

Goal-setting and individualized support

- By helping pre-release program participants make a concrete plan for attaining their personal goals, Brighter Beginnings leads them toward greater stability post-release.
- In addition to leadership training and support, staff provide information and assistance to help individuals address barriers to reentry.
- The REAL curriculum incorporates elements of family and community strengthening, with the goal of broadening the program's impact.

Data capacity

- Brighter Beginnings has the capacity to record client information and outcomes through an electronic case management system in which staff record clients' intake, demographic, and data from the pre- and post-program surveys.



Challenges

Program alignment to AB 109 client needs

- Many individuals who attend Brighter Beginnings' REAL curriculum classes have not been sentenced, thus Brighter Beginnings has faced challenges in targeting its services to AB 109 individuals.
- Many AB 109 clients have a multiplicity of overlapping post-release needs, including housing, employment, substance abuse, and more. The need to address these issues has precluded most AB 109 clients from participating in Brighter Beginnings' leadership and entrepreneurialism training.

Timing and frequency of pre-release access

- The timing and frequency of pre-release access has limited Brighter Beginnings' ability to provide its curriculum consistently and has inhibited the continuity of services post release.
- Staff observed that because participants no longer receive time off their sentences for attending the group—as they did when presented through CCCOE—program attendance and consistency have decreased.

Post-release services and program continuity

- Delays in the coordination of post-release services have prevented Brighter Beginnings from expanding post-release REAL curriculum classes.
- Brighter Beginnings is working to refine its coaching model to allow for longer-term follow-up with individuals.
- Because Brighter Beginnings does not follow most REAL curriculum participants over time, it is not possible to assess the extent to which Brighter Beginnings' services have resulted in improved individual and family stability post release.



Center for Human Development

Funding Amount: \$51,204 (FY 2013-14); \$66,666 (FY 2014-15)

The Center for Human Development (CHD) operates the Community and Family Reunification Program (CFRP) for Contra Costa County's AB 109 Community Programs' Mentoring Program, providing reunification services to returning citizens, their families, and friends, in addition to providing community support throughout Contra Costa County. Services include large and small group pre-release presentations and workshops at West County Detention Facility and Marsh Creek Detention Facility. CHD also provides post-release large and small group presentations and workshops to returning citizens at partner agencies and other locations throughout the County.

In Fiscal Year (FY) 2014-15, the County contracted CHD to maintain 12 enrolled participants from the previous contract year in their reunification program, enroll 24 new participants, and provide 36 returning citizens with community and family conferencing under their five-stage reunification process. The contract also specified that the program recruit and train a minimum of five new volunteers to coach returning citizens, engaging a total of 12 continuing and new volunteers to provide 360 hours of reunification services, including two refresher trainings. The County also contracted CHD to provide reunification informational workshops to 15 agencies or groups. In FY 2013-14, CHD was part of the consortium of three mentoring organizations, which as a whole were contracted to provide services to 100 participants.

Table 4: Snapshot of CHD Accomplishments, July 2013 - September 2014

Service Delivery	Client Outcomes
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• 32 clients referred• 24 clients received an intake• Currently working with 9 participants	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• 21 completed Stage 1• 16 completed Stage 2• 7 completed Stage 3• 1 completed Stage 4

Strengths

Evidence-based and adaptive program model

- CHD has modeled their program on an evidence-based community mediation model, while at the same time making modifications to the model to better fit the needs of the reentry population.

Trusting relationships with skilled providers

- Skilled family reunification providers support successful reunification by fostering three-way trust between the program, returning citizens, and their families and loved ones. The trust that clients and families build in the process of reunification can help the clients stay on the right path through their reentry.



Consistent and organized services

- CHD's clients expressed satisfaction with the program's services and follow-through; with consistent follow-through from the staff, clients begin to build optimism for achieving reunification goals with the program.

Outreach and coordination

- CHD's outreach efforts, including their pre-release workshops, help them solicit reverse referrals from Probation.
- Due to more knowledgeable referrals from Probation and horizontal referrals from other CBOs, CHD staff report more beneficial, frequent, and consistent meetings with clients

Challenges

Family issues outside of clients' control

- CHD's program model is built on the expectation that clients and their families will engage in mediation, but clients' family members do not always have the interest or ability to participate in relationship building.

Program capacity

- While CHD has implemented a plan to recruit volunteer mediators and has been successful recruiting volunteers from faith, civic, and other social groups in the community, CHD has struggled to retain volunteers due to the intensive time commitment required for the services and volunteers' school or work demands. Compounding this challenge, CHD has only one paid staff person, which limits the program's capacity to serve the target number of clients and to expand their programs further into the community.
- With limited staff capacity, CHD demonstrated an ability to collect and report data on its referrals, clients, and service delivery, but would benefit from greater capacity to consistently update and utilize service data.

Service referrals and coordination

- CHD often has to wait for a formal probation referral before engaging with clients. These delays can slow down the reunification process.
- Many individuals have substance abuse and mental health needs; these issues can interfere with the reunification process if they are not addressed prior to enrollment.

Limited pre-release access

- CHD currently provides pre-release informational workshops about the program's services, but would like to be able to provide skill-building workshops around family conflict and reunification.



Goodwill

Funding Amount: \$600,000 (FY 2013-14); \$600,000 (FY 2014-15)

The Bridges to Work program of Goodwill Industries of the Greater East Bay (Goodwill) facilitates the County's Employment Support and Placement Services to provide employment support and placement services in Central County. Participants can engage in up to 90 days of transitional, paid employment at local Goodwill stores or other partner agencies, in addition to receiving job search assistance for competitive employment opportunities. Goodwill also serves as a service hub for other providers. In Fiscal Years 2013-14 and 2014-15 the program was contracted to serve up to 120 participants in Central County.

Table 5: Snapshot of Goodwill Accomplishments, July 2013 - September 2014

Service Delivery	Client Outcomes
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 136 clients referred (per probation) 76 clients served 45% (n=34) were contacted within 24 hours 95% (n=72) enrolled in transitional employment 95% (n=72) completed a job readiness workshop, surpassing the target of 70% 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 57% (n=43) obtained documents needed for employment 92% (n=70) created or updated a resume 84% (n=64) attained a job readiness vocational certificate, surpassing the target of 50% 7 clients enrolled in higher education 54% (n=41) completed transitional employment, under the target of 70% 32% (n=24) were placed in an unsubsidized job and/or educational opportunity <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Average of 150 days from referral to permanent job placement 75% retained employment after 30 days (target = 70%)* 46% retained employment after 60 days (target = 60%)* 38% retained after 90 days (target = 50%)*

**Some participants may not have passed the date for measurement at the time of data collection*

Strengths

Direct job creation

- Goodwill's Bridges to Work program provides almost immediate access to transitional employment for individuals upon release, which allows them to quickly begin addressing their basic needs while also building positive job skills and habits.

Program model that supports client engagement and skill development

- Bridges to Work allows clients to ease into the responsibilities of a work environment, with low barriers to entry, quick onboarding, flexible scheduling, and incentives for job readiness workshop attendance.
- Bridges to Work helps clients build job readiness through a combination of formal workshops and on-the-job coaching and guidance that addresses both vocational and interpersonal skills.
- Goodwill's program model includes case management, which offers a high level of staff availability to support clients during their times of need.



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- Once participants enroll with Goodwill, they can continue to access the supports and resources the program offers, which helps clients receive continuous support at every phase of their job development and search.
- Clients develop solid affiliations with the program and staff, and continue to reach out for support after graduating from the program.

Connections to permanent employment

- Goodwill staff actively increase the job opportunities available to AB 109 individuals by forming relationships with local employers.
- Individuals who come in with higher levels of job readiness can participate in Goodwill's job services with the goal of being placed outside of the Goodwill store.

Coordinated services

- Through co-location of services and referrals to other AB 109 and County service providers, Goodwill sustains a safety net of strong support for their clients, which helps participants address barriers to employment (e.g., food, transportation) and work toward greater stability.

Challenges

Program capacity

- Goodwill indicated a capacity to serve a greater number of clients than are being referred; at the same time, the Bridges to Work program experienced turnover in the program coordinator position and was without two of its key staff positions for most of the contract period.
- The program's capacity to accurately track and report on client referrals, enrollments, and services has been limited.

Program fit

- Though participants noted the staff's empathy and support, the pay is low compared to the cost of living in the Bay Area. The 90-day duration of transitional employment makes some participants nervous about what will happen after; however, they can be re-referred to Goodwill for another round of transitional employment.
- The transitional employment opportunities available to clients are limited to working in the Goodwill stores and a few other options, though Goodwill is making efforts to expand these options.
- Clients and probation officers feel pressure for individuals to begin making an income immediately after release; however, some individuals are not ready for enrollment because of mental health and/or substance abuse issues.

Pre-release access

- The ability to gain access to the jails to make pre-release presentations would help Goodwill inform potential participants about the services Goodwill offers, and would enable participants to begin securing documentation needed for employment.



Men and Women of Purpose

Funding Amount: \$55,000 (FY 2013-14); \$50,900 (FY 2014-15, Employment and Education Liaison); \$66,666 (Mentoring)

Men and Women of Purpose (MWP) has two CAO contracts for AB 109 services in Fiscal Year (FY) 2014-15. The first contracts MWP to provide employment and education liaison services for the County jail facilities, for which the program facilitates four employment and education workshops every month at the County's jails and works with Mentor/Navigators to assist the workshop participants with the documentation required to apply for employment, education, and other post-release activities. MWP is contracted to screen at least 40 participants per month to assess employment and education preparedness.

MWP is also contracted to provide pre- and post-release mentoring services for West County using the organization's evidence-based program Jail to Community model. The program provides one-on-one mentoring, as well as weekly mentoring groups that focus on employment and recovery. The contract specifies that the program recruit at least 50 volunteer mentors using the Insight Prison Project curriculum, but does not specify a target number of clients to be served. In FY 2013-14, MWP was part of the consortium of three mentoring organizations, which as a whole were contracted to provide services to 100 participants. MWP employs eight full- and part-time staff and counselors for its contracted services.

In FY 2013-14 and 2014-15 MWP was also contracted by the Sheriff's Office to provide a Jail to Community (JTC) Program to both AB 109 and non-AB 109 individuals, encompassing pre-release classes, individual counseling, the creation of a treatment plan and exit plan, and documentation assistance.

Table 6: Snapshot of MWP Accomplishments, July 2013 - September 2014

Service Delivery	Client Outcomes
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• 145 referrals requested by MWP• 92 referrals received from Probation (others pending)• 70 clients enrolled• 41 clients were matched with a mentor• 28 clients participated in group mentoring• Trained 43 mentors in the first two quarters of the contract year, on track to surpass the target of 50	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• 1 client was reported to have successful family reunification

Strengths

Jail to Community model

- The ability to have contact with individuals while still in custody enables MWP to provide clients with essential information about resources, as well as develop relationships that encourage clients to continue their engagement post release.



Individualized assistance and linkages

- Mentors work with clients to identify resources to meet their individual needs, and will physically transport and accompany clients to appointments to ensure they are linked to services.
- MWP supports coordinated service delivery to clients by working with Probation to send referrals to other AB 109 service providers, and by co-locating reentry specialists at Rubicon's Antioch office.

Trusting relationships with capable staff

- The development of close, trusting relationships between staff and participants provides participants with crucial emotional support, guidance, and hope that both keeps them engaged in services and supports them in keeping their behavior on track.
- Participants particularly called out the benefit of working with staff who have similar life experiences and personally understand what they are going through.
- MWP demonstrates strong staff capacity; MWP has adequate staff numbers and time to provide close, one-on-one assistance to clients. The program has also trained a number of new mentors.

Challenges

Service referrals and coordination

- MWP often has to wait for a formal probation referral before engaging with clients. These delays can slow down the client engagement process.
- Referrals do not always come with correct client contact information, impeding client engagement and follow-up.
- Many individuals have multiple, intersecting needs, including substance abuse, mental health, and employment, and housing. It can be difficult to engage and follow up with clients when their behavioral health needs have not been addressed.
- Some clients expressed frustration and discouragement with the pace at which their needs were being addressed; however, it is not clear the extent to which this relates to issues with MWP's service provision or to broader barriers in accessing housing, employment, and other county resources.

Pre-release access

- While the time allotted for individual meetings has improved over time, pre-release workshops can only serve a limited number of individuals, pre-release classes are over capacity. While the time allotted for individual meetings has improved over time, pre-release workshops can only serve a limited number of individuals and pre-release classes are over capacity.

Data capacity

- MWP's capacity to consistently track data about their clients and services has been somewhat limited; as such, it is difficult to document the concrete outcomes that MWP clients have achieved. MWP has received tablets and training in the ServicePoint electronic case management system through their current contract.



Reach

Funding Amount: \$53,500 (FY 2014-15)

Centering their program services on women, Reach Fellowship International (Reach) provides weekly workshops in West County Detention Facility (WCDF), in addition to pre- and post-release one-on-one case management. The program has two core staff people and also hires several clients as staff. Reach has three County contracts with the CAO, the Sheriff's Office, and the Probation Department.

Reach is one of the newer providers in the AB 109 network, and in the previous year only had contracts through the Sheriff's Office and Probation Department. In Fiscal Year (FY) 2014-15 the CAO contracted Reach to provide employment and education liaison services to female returning citizens in fulfillment of the County's Reentry Into The Community Program. Reach also acts as a lead information specialist for County jail facilities for the AB 109 program. The CAO contracted Reach to provide four workshops a month to introduce employment and educational opportunities to participants, to work with Mentor/Navigators to assist 50 incarcerated and returning citizens with obtaining the paperwork required for those opportunities, and to screen at least 10 participants each month for employment and educational preparedness.

Table 7: Snapshot of Reach Accomplishments, July 2013 - September 2014

Service Delivery	Client Outcomes
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 26 clients referred (pre-release)* 23 clients served (pre-release) 12 clients' families were served during client's incarceration 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 91% (n=21) had temporary housing within five days of release 65% (n=15) completed paperwork for employment or education documentation prior to release <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 4 clients began work or education within two months of release 9 clients achieved reduced sentences 6 clients achieved and maintained recovery at three-month follow-up 4 clients received positive child reunification outcomes

**This number includes participants who were served prior to sentencing and as part of Reach's FY 2013-14 contract with the Sheriff's Office; participants may not have ultimately received an AB 109 sentence.*

Strengths

Gender-responsive program model

- Reach designed its program to fill a gender-specific service gap in existing reentry programs.
- Reach's proprietary "Sistah-to-Sistah" model draws from successful practices in other sectors, such as team building approaches used in the corporate sector.

Targeting immediate needs

- In addition to efforts to link clients to housing within 72 hours of release, Reach is able to directly house up to eight women at a time and has hired several clients as paid staff.
- Staff collaborate and build relationships with other AB 109 CBOs and public sector agencies to provide solutions that address their clients' immediate housing and employment needs.



Combination of structured services and individualized assistance

- A combination of pre-designed workshops and the flexibility to tailor services to individuals' circumstances allows Reach to adapt its services to the needs of each client.

Combination of skill building and relationship building

- Reach combines an emphasis on skill building and developing close relationships with clients through which they provide guidance and support

Pre-release contact

- Workshops and meetings with women in jail enables the program to help the clients develop reentry plans and identify critical pathways to success.

Challenges

Service referrals

- During FY 2013-14, Reach's only AB 109 contract was with the Sheriff's Office; they therefore received no official AB 109 referrals from Probation.
- In FY 2014-15, Reach has received fewer referrals than anticipated from Probation, and as a result have been able to serve fewer female clients than expected.

Program capacity

- Because Reach, as a newer program, has considerable time and effort launching its services, some clients found the program to be disorganized and not at full capacity.
- Although Reach reported feeling underutilized, the program also struggled to consistently follow through with clients and provide promised services to clients; while participants emphasized their appreciation for the Reach program, they also noted that staff have not always been able to deliver on promises for certain resources or services, in particular housing.
- While Reach has hired several clients as staff for their Antioch and Richmond offices, some participants noted that Reach's supervising staff are not always available when clients show up at one of the offices. Staff also identified the need for more program volunteers to teach the Sistah-to-Sistah curriculum.
- Reach's capacity to accurately and consistently track data about their clients and services has been very limited. Reach has received a computer and training in the ServicePoint electronic case management system through their current contract.

Pre-release capacity

- Clients expressed that Reach's pre-release classes are difficult to access, as only 10 women from each module are able to attend.



Rubicon

Funding Amount: \$1,400,000 (FY 2013-14); \$1,400,000 (FY 2014-15)

Rubicon is contracted to provide employment support and placement services, integrated with other supports, to participants in East County and West County. Rubicon's program includes pre-release engagement; job readiness workshops; educational and vocational training; transitional employment; individualized career coaching; legal services; financial stability services; and domestic violence prevention and anger management. In order to provide a continuum of services, Rubicon partners with a number of other organizations through formal subcontracts, including vocational training partners, AB 109 providers, and other community-based organizations. The FY 2013-14 contract specified that Rubicon would serve up to 280 participants, including 160 in East County and 120 in West County. The FY 2014-15 contract slightly reduced these numbers, with a contract to serve up to 210 participants, including 120 from East County and 90 from West County. This year, Rubicon is not providing subsidized employment to participants but continues to provide transitional employment.

Table 8: Snapshot of Rubicon Accomplishments, July 2013 - September 2014

Service Delivery	Client Outcomes
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 362 clients referred 161 clients served 62% (n=100) engaged in career coaching/job search assistance 75 clients enrolled in Financial Services 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 36 clients removed barriers to employment 34 clients created or updated a resume 81% (n=63) of those who started the job readiness curriculum completed it, meeting the 80% target 41% (n=41) of clients who engaged in career coaching subsequently engaged in transitional work, vocational training, or subsidized employment, meeting the 40% target 32% (n=32) of clients who engaged in career coaching subsequently obtained competitive employment. It took an average of 99 days to obtain employment. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 81% retained employment for 30 days, meeting the 80% target 63% retained employment for 60 days, falling below the 70% target 15 clients successfully enrolled in benefits 2 clients enrolled in basic skills and GED prep classes

Strengths

Enhanced employability through training and certificates

- Rubicon's service model provides training and certifications that enhances participants' employability, while simultaneously addressing barriers to employment and providing opportunities for transitional employment to get participants back on their feet financially.

Combination of formal activities and individualized services

- Rubicon provides structured job readiness workshops, while also working individually with clients to identify and address their barriers.



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- Rubicon targets clients' skill development through both formal workshops and informal interactions, while the close and trusting relationship participants build with staff provides participants with crucial emotional support and guidance that helps them stay engaged and supports them in keeping their behavior on track. Rubicon also creates an open office atmosphere where clients can spend their free time and engage with staff.

Coordinated services

- Rubicon is able to facilitate participants' success by connecting them with multiple Rubicon services that address different needs. Staff from Rubicon also facilitate coordinated service delivery through formal subcontracts and informal communication with staff from other contracted organizations.

Strong data capacity

- Rubicon has a high level of data capacity, including an electronic case management system, enabling them to accurately track referrals, enrollments, services provided, and client outcomes.

Challenges

Client referrals and engagement

- Many individuals have multiple, intersecting needs, including substance abuse, mental health, and employment, and housing, which can make it difficult to prioritize and triage referrals. It is particularly challenging for Rubicon to engage clients who have unmet substance abuse and/or mental health needs.

Limited pre-release access

- Limited pre-release access limits the ability to connect with clients earlier and to educate potential clients about the services Rubicon can and cannot provide.

Program capacity

- As a result of the above factors, Rubicon has the capacity to serve a greater number of clients than the current number of referrals. At the same time, Rubicon's partner agencies that provide vocational training programs often have waiting lists.

Program fit

- Rubicon services may not be an ideal fit for clients with very high needs (e.g., with high substance abuse and mental health needs) as their program requires a high degree of commitment and functioning. While job readiness workshops may not be fitting for clients with a higher level of job skills or education, Rubicon is able to accelerate these participants into the job search phase by waiving the workshop requirement.
- Female clients reported that because most Rubicon clients are male, Rubicon's services may not feel as accessible or tailored to female clients.
- Several clients at other CBOs expressed that the need for immediate employment was a barrier to participating in Rubicon's job readiness workshops.



Shelter, Inc.

Funding Amount: \$500,000 (FY 2013-14); \$500,000 (FY 2014-15)

Shelter, Inc. operates the County's AB 109 Short and Long-term Housing Access Program. This program assists incarcerated and formerly incarcerated persons who are referred to them under the AB 109 Community Programs to secure and maintain stabilized residential accommodations. Shelter, Inc. provides a two-phased approach to clients seeking housing assistance. Before the program will refer a client to the Housing Services section, the staff conducts social service assessment/intake procedure to ensure the client will have success. The program places the majority of their clients into transitional housing situations (such as room or apartment shares) to allow them time to develop the resources for stable housing.

In Fiscal Year (FY) 2014-15, the County contracted Shelter, Inc. to initiate contact with 175 clients referred from Probation and provide eligibility screening for at least 70% (125) of those (down from 144 in FY 2013-14). Shelter, Inc. was contracted to provide case management services for at least 85% of the screened referrals; housing access assistance to at least 80% of the screened referrals; and housing placement assistance to at least 65% of those who received case management.

Table 9: Snapshot of Shelter, Inc. Accomplishments, July 2013 - September 2014

Service Delivery	Client Outcomes
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 230 clients referred 50% (n=115) were contacted and screened for eligibility, under the 70% target 84% (n=98) received housing access assistance, surpassing the 80% target 43% (n=50) received housing placement assistance, over the 40% target Changes across quarters in numbers referred/served Fidelity/evolution of program 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 43% (n=50) clients secured housing, meeting the 40% target <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Average of 22 days from referral to housing 30 clients were placed in master leased housing, under the target of 38 20 clients were placed in alternative housing (e.g., healthy living), under the target of 32 84% (n=42) retained housing at six-month follow-up, meeting the 80% target** 16% (n=8) had an unsuccessful program exit at six-month follow-up, meeting the target of less than 20%

Strengths

Housing linkage and financial support

- Shelter, Inc.—the only service provider that provided housing-related services during the evaluation time period—successfully links people with housing and supports their ability to stay housed through its financial assistance services.
- In addition to helping AB 109 clients find and obtain housing, Shelter, Inc.'s financial assistance helps participants retain their housing while they get on their feet after being released from prison or jail.



Case management support

- In addition to helping people secure housing, Shelter, Inc.'s case management model ensures participants are removing barriers and following through on their goals—assistance that goes beyond the realm of housing to address clients' other reentry-related needs.

Coordinated services

- Shelter, Inc. works closely with the Probation Department and with other CBOs to coordinate additional services for their clients.

Program modifications to meet client needs

- Shelter, Inc. has continually made efforts to adapt their program and service delivery to better meet clients' needs, including bringing its AB 109 program into greater alignment with the Housing First model

Challenges

Housing clients with criminal histories and no income

- Despite Shelter, Inc.'s adoption of a "Housing First" model, it can be challenging to find appropriate housing for clients who cannot immediately connect with employment or income.
- Many landlords do not want to rent to people with criminal histories.

Meeting client expectations with reality

- There is often a mismatch between clients' desire and the reality of what is available to them.

Service referrals and coordination

- Referrals do not always come with correct client contact information, impeding client engagement and follow-up.
- While the referral process allows Probation to track referrals and manage clients' cases, it leads to significant back and forth between programs and Probation, often delaying receipt of services.
- Many individuals have multiple, intersecting needs, including substance abuse, mental health, and employment, and housing, which can make it difficult to prioritize and triage referrals.
- The Probation Department is still limited in its capacity to make pre-release referrals.

Limited pre-release access

- Limited pre-release access limits the ability to start the housing process earlier and restricts Shelter, Inc.'s ability to educate potential clients about the services they can and cannot provide.