

County of Santa Clara


Office of the County Executive

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Date: November 5, 2020

To: Honorable Board of Supervisors
Jeffrey V. Smith, M.D., J.D., County Executive

From: Javier Aguirre, Director of Reentry Services 

Subject: Off-Agenda Report: Improving Community Awaiting Placement Supervision Program Services with Support of Community Workers

This report provides an update regarding the support of Community Workers to improve the outcomes of clients enrolled in the Community Awaiting Placement Supervision (CAPS) Program.

At its September 1, 2020 (Item No. 13) meeting, the Board of Supervisors approved a referral from Supervisor Ellenberg directing Administration to report to the Board with options to improve CAPS Program through additional means of client support such as increasing the number of community workers. This off-agenda report is to notify the Board the Administration's intent to allocate existing resources in the Office of Reentry Services (ORS) to fund at a minimum two extra help community worker positions to fully engage CAPS participants. If CAPS capacity remains low during COVID, these community workers will support clients accessing the Reentry Resource Center or other programs where they are equally needed to support clients.

ORS administers the CAPS program and identifies process improvements and service gaps. Having two specialized CAPS Probation Officers, for example, is one of the major successes of the CAPS process as they are skilled at locating and engaging this population to seek services. Similarly, ORS only has one Community Worker to engage the participants in custody, route them to services at release, and follow up with service providers on client's screenings, referrals and enrollments. This Community Worker is now staffing the client registration and triage team at the Reentry Resource Center while other ORS staff have been designated as Disaster Service Workers dispatched at multiple locations responding to COVID-19 efforts. The initial recommendation to add fulltime community workers was initially identified when the CAPS program had high caseloads and the CAPS jail releases were high. Housing enrollment and treatment engagement remains limited, and while the Office of Supportive Housing and Behavioral Health Services identify improvements, the CAPS program will look at increasing intrinsic motivations as an evidence-based practice with Community Worker support.

Board of Supervisors: Mike Wasserman, Cindy Chavez, Dave Cortese, Susan Ellenberg, S. Joseph Simitian
County Executive: Jeffrey V. Smith

With additional dedicated Community Workers, there would be more opportunity to engage CAPS clients post-release and to provide a greater array of support services to reentry clients in general. ORS is able to allocate existing resources in the ORS' budget to fund at a minimum two extra help Community Worker positions with lived experience to fully engage CAPS participants and provide them the full array of services required. The two Community Workers will support staff's efforts to improve the outcomes of the CAPS program by:

- Identifying and implementing avenues for position reinforcement such as establishing clear milestones, provide certificates and gift cards, graduation ceremonies, and other forms of recognition.
- Identifying other programs available in the community. There are many additional support programs available in the community. Providing linkage to these resources may help clients who do not feel comfortable in County programs seek support elsewhere, which in turn may help them maintain compliance with their court orders.
- Helping clients procure free phones and setting up email addresses so that contact is easier.
- Providing support to RRC staff for reentry clients in general – having more staff available to support clients during the day will help streamline the one-stop-shop model.

ORS plans to update the Board of Supervisors on the outcomes of the CAPS program and the additional support provided by Community Workers at the next Jail Reform Workshop, tentatively scheduled in March 2021.

cc: Miguel Marquez, Chief Operating Officer
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