

CECP Chair/Community Engagement & Crime Prevention Subcommittee Meeting
Wednesday, July 12 4:00 PM
Kids Hope Alliance Multi-Purpose Room

Members Present: WC Gentry; Vicki Waytowich (zoom); Ellen Glasser; Derrick Mitchell; Jack Meeks; Director Joe Cowan; Rev. Barry Wright; Joanne Brooks; and Lolita Smith.

Subject Matter Experts Present: Debbie Verges (former Project Director for the Jacksonville Journey during Mayor Peyton's and Mayor Curry's Administrations); Dr. Saralyn Glass (CEO of the Kids Hope Alliance and an expert in birth to 18).

Lolita called the meeting to order at 4:03pm.

Lolita Smith called upon Chief Ruben Bryant to present:

Chief Ruben Bryant presented on recidivism and reentry. He has worked for JSO for 28 years:

- Chief of programs and transitional services
- Manages Jacksonville Reentry Center
- Receive inmates from county jail and prisons

Six months before release, Chief's Bryant's office receives a list of individuals ready for entry. A counselor reviews the list for eligibility via letter or call out to the facility. A meet and greet is held to discuss services. If accepted, the counselor will stay in contact via mail correspondence. Inmates are transported to JREC to meet counselor and felony registration. All services are on a volunteer basis. A risk assessment is given to determine needs for housing, food, transportation, clothing, driving license, birth certificate etc.

One month of housing can be paid for by JREC. Mental health and substance abuse eval and referrals are provided. The individual is followed for three months for successful reentry, sometime longer. An employability specialist is on sight to help with resume building or training needed to get a job.

The biggest need now is mental health support. We often provide housing for those with mental health and substance abuse issues for three months.

The employment specialist also specializes in helping to get the reentry population certifications for jobs. JREC also offers an evidence-based program called "Thinking For a Change – T4C) which is cognitive behavior training.

Most inmates are from state facilities. Not many come from the county jail due to first appearance bail out or short sentences. Those who are sentenced are offered T4C or K9 for Warrior's programs to train dogs in the county jail. However, there is really nothing available for the unsentenced.

There are staffing issues now. There is a need for dedicated individuals to do the job.

Lolita Smith explained before the next speaker there will be no public comments. The subcommittee is only being educated in certain areas.

Lolita Smith called upon Director Joe Cowan to present:

Director Joe Callan – Patrol and Enforcement

The Crisis Intervention Team (CIT) began in 1999/2000, it was designed to be a co-responder program:

- Every officer goes through a 40hr CIT training
- 100% of officers complete CIT training

In 2019, there was one officer interacting with homeless population or contacting individuals having mental health crisis.

In early 2020, through a grant, a civilian Licensed Mental Health Counselor was secured as a part of the program. At this point, three additional officers were added to the program with one clinician. Officers are currently in zones 1, 3, 4 (westside and southside). They are allowed to service other areas as well.

Through a grant process with MRHC (Mental Health Resource Center) to hire 6 clinicians.

In April 2022, 12 officers were secured and started their duties. MRHC also has grant positions for seven case managers.

The goal of the co-responder program is diversion. Their job is to look for ways to divert the person in crisis to appropriate programs that can provide needed services.

Here are a few stats for 2022 -2023 YTD:

- Total number of contacts 1524
- Expanded outreach contacts 473 (derived from calls outside of normal hours)
- Only 31 arrests for total contact/outreach numbers
- Only 179 were baker acted for total contact/outreach numbers
- 58 were diverted to another program
- 451 diverted due to baker act

We track diversion rates to determine how the program is working, which is currently 71%. We expect this to increase.

The rates are sometimes seasonal:

1st quarter diversion rate is 79% (Jan/holidays)

One issue with expanding the co-responder program to 24 hours a day is hiring a clinician for a midnight shift.

The Sherriff is requesting additional officers for next year. We're looking for the right people for the job and resources to help individuals and families.

Lolita Smith asks what kind of additional trainings there are for Co-Responders

Director Cowan responded co-responders received additional training via a national co-responder seminar. Half of the team attended the training annually.

Jack Meeks asks how many laws there in the state of Florida compelling people are to stay on medication.

Director Cowan stated he does not think laws exist to get people to stay on medication. Case managers are there to assist and follow up.

Derrick Mitchell asks if use of force data is tracked.

Director Cowan responded the program has only been around for one year. They are still working on ways to expand. We don't track use of force data.

Rev. Barry Wright asks if there is a grant designed to help or work with families of those with mental illness.

Director Cowan responded no, they do not. However, part of the co-responder's job is outreach to the families.

Ellen Glasser asks where does MHRC funding come from?

Director Joe Callan stated he does not know.

Lolita Smith called upon Dr. Vicki Waytowich to present:

Dr. Vicki Waytowich (attending by zoom) reported that JJAC wanted a robust diversion system of care. It would give the SAO a wider array of programs tailored to meet needs and refer more children. Our goal is to see youth have an to have an opportunity for diversion.

Creating this diversion system of care coming into one hub assessing and evaluating with an array of providers tailored to meet the needs of kids. Per the snapshot, arrest have gone from 1800 to almost 1900. One problem area was gathering some data from DJJ because they have not released 2022 – 2023, so we relied on internal data. This is only half of fiscal year (Jan. thru June), 57% of youth arrested in last six months were referred to diversion. This is to show that there has been an increase in the number of youths diverted. Originally diversion was only supposed to serve 125 youth for the year. This year we have already served 600 last year and 500 the year before. Out of the 500, over 40% were referred for felonies. Last year, out of 600, over 50% were referred from felonies. We are seeing we are getting more youth with higher level of charges, but also coming in with more intense mental health issues. Between 85% to 95% of youths coming in have mental health issues.

Dr. Vicki Waytowich discussed the ACES study that looks at youth with adverse childhood events (Abuse, divorce etc.). The study also includes violence, bullying and the environment which was not included in the past. She will send the ACES study to Debbie to be distributed.

Originally designed for 90 days, youth are staying on diversion longer than anticipated due to severe mental health issues and higher-level charges. We have a 95% success rate, but there are kids staying on diversion for six months. We're seeing a lot of youth coming into diversion, which is good. Diversion was intended to only carry case loads of 20, not 50 to 60 which can become challenging.

Lolita Smith asks if Vicky has any recommendations.

Dr. Waytowich stated the diversion program is working the way JJAC intended. The only issue is that capacity is not meeting demand.

Chairman Gentry asks Vicki if she needs more case managers.

Dr. Waytowich responded yes.

Dr. Grass stated Kids Hope Alliance Fund this program exclusively. What is needed is diversification of funding. What has been described has saved money in all these different places that are being funded the same, but all case loads are coming here, but are not seeing savings. The city is fully funding this program. To get more buy in it would be better if JSO or other sources could assist with funding

Lolita Smith called John Everett (KHA Director – Workforce Development) to present:

We work with the Mayor's Youth and Work Partnership addressing systemic gaps impacting disadvantage young adults.

Here's where gaps exist:

- Transitional support for young adult (18 – 24)
- No significant investment or cross sector process to address needs
- It impacts youth connected to juvenile justice systems

We try to strategically make significant investments in programs and systems, collaborations, and communications.

We have been able to come together to have discussions to figure out ways to address disconnected youth, then look at where investments are needed to keep youth connected to the workforce.

We have reached nonprofit programs that do work in this space. We have also reached out to school counselors to conduct focus groups. The ratios in DCPS for school counselors are 430 students to one student which means they cannot do an adequate job for career and college readiness.

We talked to employers, and they say youth do not have skills necessary for the workforce.

There is a lot of good work being done in silos. The role of the steering committee is to bring everyone together, get connected and do a better job with this population.

We're exploring everything from system alignment to funding opportunities to programming and we look at best practices. We are getting a lot of technical assistance as well.

Our recommendation is an additional investment in workforce development, career, and college readiness for this population. Advocate for childcare; apprenticeship; and policy changes.

Derrick Mitchell asked how we are going to determine who the targeted individuals are.

John Everett explained they will come from commitment programs, juvenile justice, drop out list from DCPS, and self-referrals. There are various outlets to find these students.

John Meeks asks what the five risks factors are.

John Everett stated the five factors are on page 4 of the handout.

Derrick Mitchell asks how soon the target population will be identified.

John Everett responded that the information would come in stages. It's a matter of how we build the capacity of existing programs. Disconnected and disengaged populations take a much longer time to build trust. They need time, investment, and resources.

Rev. Barry Wright explained that many parents don't understand or recognize silos.

John Everett responded we know there is a need for reading and literacy, but there need to be a focus on fathers to reengage parents and youth making sure there is an economical component, as well as skills to manage mental health and financial literacy.

The meeting was adjourned at 5:25pm.

