
Responding to Chronic Homelessness Project Profile

Focus on: **Prevention: Discharge Planning**

Project Choice
Oakland, CA

Activity Description

Why: The City of Oakland and Alameda County are among the most densely populated and poverty-impacted urban areas in California. Crime rates are extremely high among both adult and juvenile populations. Oakland has the highest rate of violent crimes of any of the nine California cities with populations exceeding 300,000. Serious and violent crimes in Oakland disproportionately impact individuals under age 30 – this group accounted for half of known homicide suspects and 60% of homicide victims in 2000 and in 2001, 73% of homicide suspects and 61% of victims were ages 14-30. The majority of Oakland parolees are at high risk of recidivism. Many ex-offenders have “burned their bridges” with their families, have little or no social support and become homeless upon release.

What: A program to fill the service gaps to returning ex-offenders through re-entry planning, service provision prior to parole, post-release services for young (14-29 year old) male offenders incarcerated at the California Department of Corrections and Youth Authority facilities nearest to Oakland (San Quentin State Prison, two CDC community reentry center and CYA's northern California Youth Correctional Center in Stockton).

Partners:

- City of Oakland
- Oakland Police Department
- Oakland Community Action Agency
- Oakland Private Industry Council
- Oakland Workforce Investment Board
- Alameda County Probation Department
- Alameda County Behavioral Health
- California Department of Corrections
- California Youth Authority
- California Youth Authority Parole
- California Parole, Police and Corrections Team
- California Employment Development Department
- San Quentin State Prison
- Building Opportunities for Self Sufficiency
- Allied Fellowship
- Allen Temple Baptist Church
- Walden House
- West Oakland Youth Opportunity Program
- Various education institutions

Significant Program Design Features:

- Comprehensive assessment to inform a LifePlan prescribing intensive services and supervision bridging the institutional, transitional and long-term support phases
- A multi-disciplinary team approach to reentry planning and support
- Dedicated caseworkers called “coaches” with small caseloads who begin to work with ex-offenders prior to release and serve as “parole agent extenders” post-release
- Parole agencies and coaches brokering services through a network of public, private and faith-based service providers to meet ex-offenders’ multiple and varied needs
- Graduated incentives and sanctions to encourage parolee success and a step-down to less intensive supervision over time
- Availability of continued support after parole has ended

Phase I – Services While Institutionalized

- Comprehensive assessment at least 12 months prior to release, reassessments 30-90 days pre-release
- Educational, vocational, behavioral health, victim awareness, reentry preparation
- Initiate case management 6-12 months pre-release

Phase II – Transition

- Intensive supervision and support, including periodic re-evaluations of supervision level and service needs
- Educational services (basic academic, remedial, special education) including tutoring and mentoring
- Vocational, college and career counseling
- Vocational training
- Job placement
- On-the-job support geared toward job retention
- Substance abuse treatment and prevention services
- Mental health counseling and support, including life skills, anger management training
- Housing support
- Community service and restitution

Phase III – Long Term Support

- Lower intensity supervision and case management, including periodic re-evaluations of supervision/service needs
- Education and vocational training
- Job placement and employment support
- Substance abuse and mental health services
- Housing support
- Restitution

Selected Funding Sources

- U.S. Department of Justice, Office of Justice Programs, Serious and Violent Offender Initiative Grant
- U.S. Department of Labor grant
- Oakland Community Action Agency
- City of Oakland
- Welfare-to-Work local allocation

Outcomes

There is a national evaluation being conducted of projects receiving Serious and Violent Offender Initiative Grants. Data collection consists of four in-person interviews with offenders. Baseline interviews are being conducted in about 150 prisons and juvenile detention facilities across the country. These interviews, which began in July 2004 and will continue through November 2005, are conducted approximately one month prior to release. Follow-up interviews are conducted at three, nine, and fifteen months following release. The follow-up interviews are conducted in the community or, for those re-incarcerated, in prison or jail (if possible). Drug tests (oral swab) are being conducted at the three- and fifteen-month interviews. Administrative data will also be collected for the impact evaluation.

Places Where Similar Work is Underway

Los Angeles: Going Home LA