



Santa Clara County AB109 Public Safety Realignment Interim Evaluation

Executive Summary

In October 2011, California legislatively changed the supervision responsibility for a specific category of offender from the State to the County, known as Public Safety Realignment, or AB109. This legislative change impacted Counties on many levels, and resulted in the need for Counties to modify systems and protocols to accommodate a new offender population. Each County created an Implementation Plan that detailed strategies to address the AB109 population. The County of Santa Clara's Office of the County Executive contracted with Resource Development Associates (RDA) to conduct an Interim Evaluation of the County's progress toward executing objectives contained in their Implementation Plan during the time frame of October 1, 2011 through September 30, 2012. This Executive Summary is based on the findings and recommendations reported in the Interim Evaluation.

Objectives of Evaluation

The interim evaluation attempted to answer a specified set of research questions. The findings are organized into three key areas of analysis: Formative, Process, and Summative. The Formative section is intended to provide feedback on the degree to which the County was able to complete the steps identified as necessary in order to execute the Implementation Plan. The Process section offers an assessment of how closely County stakeholders were able to execute tasks as outlined in the Implementation Plan. Finally, the Summative section offers analysis of interim outcome measures related to recidivism and service provision.

Methodology

The evaluation team used a mixed methods approach to evaluate the implementation and interim outcomes of the County of Santa Clara's Public Safety Realignment program. The evaluation findings were derived from a combined review and analysis of departmental documentation, quantitative data from county data systems; and qualitative data from interviews with CCP partner agencies, service providers, and individuals eligible for supervision under AB109.

For the purposes of this report, recidivism data were analyzed based on "supervision/ post-release failures", which was defined as any post-release "failure" including: 1) arrests; 2) convictions; 3) violations; and 4) commitments (to jail, prison, or flash incarceration). This broad definition is intended to provide a picture of the overall potential for recidivism among the Public Safety Realignment population during this period as one of many indicators that might drive targeted supervision and programmatic strategies. Note that the outcomes reflected by this definition may over-estimate the



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actual potential for future recidivism, and it is assumed that future evaluation efforts will follow the soon-to-be adopted formal definition of recidivism.

Key Findings

Formative Evaluation

The Formative portion of this evaluation assesses the degree to which Santa Clara County has taken the steps necessary to implement its Public Safety Realignment program. This was done through an evaluation of departmental documentation gathered from the Office of the County Executive, the Probation Department, the Mental Health Department, and the Sheriff's Office.

Overall, the County of Santa Clara has successfully taken many of the steps necessary to execute its Implementation Plan for Public Safety Realignment. Fifteen (15) tasks were identified in the Implementation Plan, of which 53% have been met and 47% are currently in progress.

- The Superior Court of Santa Clara County met two of five tasks, with three currently in progress:
 - The Court has instituted a collaborative court system and utilizes the Parolee Reentry Court for offenders in need of monitored treatment and rehabilitative services.
 - Collaboration between the Court and Probation is documented, but collaboration among other departments is less evident.
 - While the Court has redesigned calendars to better serve defendants, its progress toward redesigning forms and other processes is less evident.
 - Judges have been assigned to preside over PRCS revocation hearings and probation violation hearings, no one has been assigned to preside over parole violation hearings.
- The Office of the District Attorney and the Office of the Public Defender have progressed toward completing the task assigned to them:
 - Progress has been made toward identifying roles and responsibilities of staff involved with PRCS and MS revocation cases, and the graduated sanctions model was in the process of being developed.
- The Probation Department has completed two of three tasks:
 - The Department has implemented an evidence-based supervision and service delivery model by adding two High Risk Offender Units.
 - The Department has developed a revocation process that identifies the underlying causes of revocation, and uses this process to enforce offender accountability through a graduated sanctions grid – however the graduated sanctions grid has yet to be formalized.
 - The Reentry Team has not been formally established; although the Multi-Agency Program (MAP) Team addresses some of the activities of the Reentry Team, there remain gaps in the system of reentry services defined by the Implementation Plan.
- The Sheriff's Office and Department of Correction have completed one of three tasks, with one currently in progress:



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- The Custody Alternative Supervision Program (CASP) was created.
- The Recruiting and Training Unit has been altered to consist of two separate units, one in the Department of Correction and one in the Sheriff's Office.
- It is unclear whether new guidelines for facility operations have been established.
- The Mental Health Department has completed their two tasks:
 - The Department implemented the Reentry Multi-Agency Program (MAP).
 - The Department has secured contracts with three local faith-based and community-based organizations.
- Community-Based Treatment Service Providers have progressed toward completing their one task:
 - It is unclear whether all Community-Based Treatment Service Providers are required to use evidence-based treatment models and practices, use is not consistent across all providers.

Process Evaluation

The Process section assesses the extent to which the County of Santa Clara's realignment activities have been implemented with fidelity to the Implementation Plan. The section includes a synthesized analysis of qualitative data from internal conversations and key informant interviews with staff from CCP Partner Agencies, Community-Based Service Providers, and individuals supervised under AB109. This analysis is intended to provide context for the facilitators for and barriers to execution of the activities proposed in the Implementation Plan.

- While the Reentry Team was not established, the MAP team is completing some of the activities initially designated as Reentry Team responsibilities.
- Pre- and post-release meetings with the AB109 population are not consistently occurring.
- The Reentry Resource Center has helped promote inter-agency collaboration and has helped facilitate and streamline linkages between reentry clients and services.
- Though graduated sanctions and incentives are used in a limited and informal way, use is not formalized or consistent when working with reentry clients.
- All CCP partner agencies are tracking some information on AB109 clients, but current data collection efforts do not capture many of the elements necessary for long-term evaluation.

Summative Evaluation

The Summative section assesses interim outcomes as a result of the County's Implementation Plan. The outcomes are based on quantitative data collected from partner agencies and community-based organizations that interact with the Realignment population. These data were used to illustrate short-term outcomes related to service provision and recidivism, defined for the purposes of this evaluation as all supervision/ post-release failures inclusive of new arrests, charges, and violations.

- Between October 2011 and September 2012, the total realignment population was 2,498 individuals. Of those 48% were classified as 1170(h), 44% as PRCS, and 8% as 1170(h) MS.

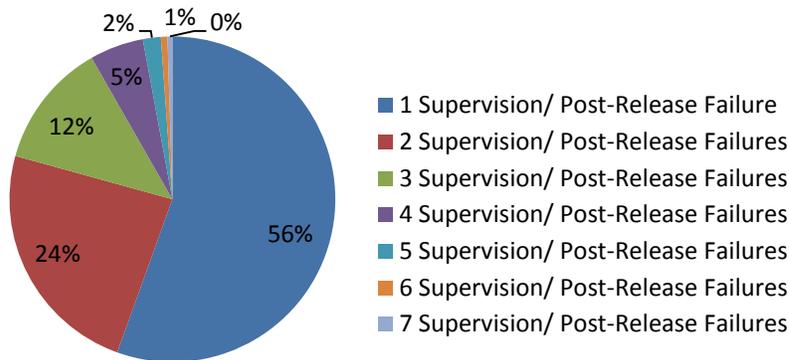


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- A greater percentage of PRCS offenders than 1170(h) MS offenders were identified as being high risk for re-offense as determined by CAIS.
- Overall, a greater percentage of PRCS offenders than 1170(h) and 1170(h) MS offenders committed more than one supervision/ post-release failure during the evaluation time period.
- Overall, the PRCS population had supervision/ post-release failures with higher offense levels than the 1170(h) and 1170(h) MS populations.
- Following the opening of the Reentry Resource Center in May 2012, referrals to and enrollment in post-custody services increased, suggesting that the increased coordination at the Reentry Center resulted in improved linkages between clients and services.

Public Safety Realignment Population with Supervision/ Post-Release Failures (n=563)



Source: CJIC Data Extraction, 1/7/13

Note: Supervision/ post-release failures representing <1% were removed from this chart

Emerging Themes

Communication and collaboration

- The Reentry Resource Center has significantly improved communication and collaboration between agencies working with the AB109 population.
- Cross-agency participation in the MAP team and different agencies represented at the Reentry Resource Center are largely responsible for increased communication and collaboration.
- The most commonly reported barriers were inconsistent levels of “buy-in” and participation in collaborative efforts by staff from other agencies, differences in opinion on what is best for the client, and difficulties sharing information due to different data/tracking systems and confidentiality.

Linking reentry clients to services

- Interviewees consistently reported that they can easily link reentry clients to services. Staff cited the Reentry Resource Center as a major factor in facilitating this process.
- Reentry clients reported feeling impressed and satisfied by the services available to them and the timeliness of the referral process; the quick turnaround instead of waiting for appointments



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and lengthy referral/eligibility processes helped them to feel cared for and hopeful for the future.

- Reentry clients also reported feeling comfortable going to their Probation Officers or Rehabilitation Officers when they needed a new or different type of service.
- Limitations on service capacity still restrict access for some reentry clients. Lack of sufficient housing was the most commonly cited deficiency, followed by employment.
- While staff felt that the Reentry Resource Center has improved linkages to services, some expressed frustration with client “no-shows”, difficulty tracking down clients, and the lack of a consistent way to track clients’ referrals to and enrollment in services across agencies.

Adjusting to the needs of the population

- Interviewees reported a wide range of changes in order to adjust to the needs of the AB109 population, including modifying or implementing new processes and tools, and hiring and training more staff.
- Staff across agencies reported flexibility and a willingness to adjust as the AB109 population reenters the community.
- Staff has demonstrated initiative in identifying unanticipated needs of AB109 clients and has often acted proactively to find solutions.

Change in culture and attitude

- Reentry clients both in-custody and in post-custody supervision recognized a noticeable change in attitude and approach in agency staff, reported feeling more supported by staff.
- Reentry clients report relationships with supervision and other staff is more positive and respectful than previously experienced, and that supervision staff are more forthcoming with information and opportunities for services.
- Reentry clients noted that the increased opportunities are met with an increase in expectations, and recognized that this supervision requires more initiative and follow through, higher levels of accountability, and often longer periods of supervision.
- Changes in culture and attitude are less clear among staff themselves, and particularly in interviewees’ views of staff from other departments; many reported inconsistencies in approach and levels of cooperation among staff from departments other than their own.

Conclusion and Recommendations

This section offers global observations that respond to the formative, process, and summative evaluation questions, and summarizes overall program strengths and challenges, lessons learned, and opportunities for program modification. Finally, it proposes recommendations about the type of long-term evaluation strategies appropriate for the County of Santa Clara.

Implementation Recommendations for Programmatic Fidelity

The following observations come from analysis of the key informant interviews with Partner Agency staff, Community-Based Organization staff, and interviews with the AB109 population.



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Reentry Team

- There is confusion around the roles and responsibilities of the MAP Team and its relationship to the Reentry Team.
- The pre- and post-release meetings with offenders returning to the community that are defined in the Implementation Team are not happening through the MAP Team.

Communication and Collaboration

- Improve communication and collaboration among the Partner Agencies as well as between the Partner Agencies and the Community-Based Organizations that serve the AB109 clients.
- Increase communication to clarify the purpose and capacity of different programs to improve the referral process and better connect clients to appropriate services.
- Better prepare Realignment population for supervision under AB109.

Recommendations for Program Implementation

The following observations come from analysis of the key informant interviews with Partner Agency staff, Community-Based Organization staff, and interviews with the AB109 population.

Evidence-Based Practices (EBPs)

- Improve use of EBPs across the Partner Agencies.
- Increase consistency of use of EBPs across Community-Based Organizations.

Improvements to Data Collection

Currently, there is no way to track clients across services received – from the Probation Department through to those provided by Community-Based Organizations. Such data would allow the County to draw more comprehensive observations about AB109 clients in terms of meeting needs and illuminating corrective areas systemically.

Probation Department

- Institute tracking protocols to document the point at which assessments are administered.
- Formalize the creation and tracking of case plans.
- Create a tracking protocol to document when AB109 clients are met with and reassessed after a flash incarceration or revocation.
- Formalize the use of a graduated sanctions grid and integrate it into decision-making.

Sheriff's Office/DOC

- Create a tracking protocol to document the number of AB109 clients referred and enrolled in in-custody services.

Mental Health

- Create a tracking protocol to document the number of AB109 clients served through programs.



DADS

- Create a tracking protocol to document the number of AB109 clients assessed and referred for services by service type so that future evaluation efforts are able to identify the types of service provided to each client.

Long-term Evaluation Strategies

As part of the interim evaluation, RDA surveyed the members of the CCP and Board of Supervisors to determine their priorities for evaluating the County’s Public Safety Realignment Program. The following priorities emerged:

Order of Importance by Average Score ↑

Evaluation Priority	Average Score	Median Score
Utility for Program Improvement	9.2	10
Reach to Target Population/Quantity of Services ¹	8.8	10
Sustainability	8.6	9
Staff/Organizational Capacity	8.6	9
Collaboration	8.4	9
Systems transformation	8.4	9
Attribution	8.0	8

These priorities indicate the need for both a process evaluation to continue to assess the extent to which the County’s Realignment Program has been implemented with fidelity to the Implementation Plan, and the expansion of the outcomes evaluation, which will examine the impact of Realignment programs in terms of both service completion and recidivism.

Need for Additional Programmatic Resources

- As a result of many AB109 offenders serving longer sentences in county jail – up to three years under the AB109 legislation – the County may want to consider increasing and diversifying the programmatic offerings within the jail to prevent those with longer sentences from cycling

¹ Reach to Target combines Quantity of Services evaluation priorities as they support similar objectives. The Resource Needs priority, although rated as the second highest is not called out separately since it is used as a factor to determine resource needs for each activity.



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through the same programs.

Raise Awareness of Shifting Jail Culture

- The County may consider strategic planning around the impact of former state prisoners on the culture of those who have more traditionally served their sentences in jails. The former state prisoners are reportedly bringing a more sophisticated, seasoned culture to the jail that includes shot-calling – a practice whereby high-ranking incarcerated gang members communicate directives to lower ranking gang members to carry out illegal, often violent activity on their behalf or on behalf of the gang. Raising awareness of these concerns, and developing strategies to combat the potential for a more organized jail population could help the County contend with any issues arising in the future.

Voices of the AB109 Population

In addition to measures of fidelity to the Implementation Plan, service provision, and recidivism, a key measure of success can be found in the experiences of those supervised under AB109. The following are excerpts from interviews with the AB109 population, which relay their impressions of how the County is serving them.

“I have a hard time even explaining about it sometimes, I’ve come such a long way. I kept saying ‘next time, next time.’ Through AB109... it’s just the beginning for me, at 42 years old, it’s my beginning.”

“The referral process has been excellent. They’ve been able to give me resources, access to programs – the support is tremendous.”

“This is the first time I’ve been able to feel open with my PO, not try to hide things. He listens to what I have to say. He’s not rude, he thinks you’re somebody, not nobody like before. I just like it all around. It’s great.”

“I feel more welcomed here, helped. I feel like...they reach out. I like it. Probation is harder, but that’s what I need... Here they’re not playing. I have no problem with it being harder.”

“Please continue with this program and help people like me because most of the time we don’t have the resources, because we think nobody that cares about us, but there are people who care about us. They don’t want me stuck, they want me to get better and better.”

“I was the first mental health patient through AB109. It was a good process, because they paid attention to me and my needs, because it’s through the system, and I didn’t have to access them myself. I didn’t have to make an appointment with a doc and wait 2 weeks, and they took me right away, they drove me down there right away and I got the medication I needed. If I wouldn’t have gotten my mental health issue addressed, and gotten my meds, I would still be using drugs to cover my symptoms.”

“I feel really hopeful, before I was really full of anxiety and I would cry every day, but the RCP class has changed my orientation. I already feel like I’m on the path for change, and that I’m ready to change.”

“Our teachers are very organized, they always have something good for us. I think we have the best teachers, and the best RO. She has a heart for everybody. You go in there depressed, and you come out feeling support, she gives you the strength. We always get what we need in here.”



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The Resource Development Associates evaluation team is grateful for the opportunity to work with the County of Santa Clara in this Interim Evaluation endeavor. Through working with staff across the many stakeholder agencies and organizations, the evaluation team was privileged to hear first-hand how the County is adapting to Public Safety Realignment. Overall, there is an exceptional level of committed individuals who not only take pride in the services they provide, but who are genuinely devoted to improving the work they do on behalf of those supervised as AB109 clients.