



PALM BEACH COUNTY'S PUBLIC SAFETY DEPARTMENT
PBC Reentry Task Force's [Subcommittee Name]

April 28, 2021

WebEx Virtual Meeting

Summary Meeting Minutes

Members & Guests Present:

Adam Davis, PBC Library
Alan Johnson, State Attorney's Office: 15th Judicial Circuit
Alia Spencer, Palm Beach State College
Armando Fana, City of West Palm Beach
Arnia Perpignand, Florida Department of Corrections
Ashley Houliham, Supervisor of Elections Office
Bert Winkler, Criminal Justice Commission
Calli Cain, Florida Atlantic University
Calvin Sloan, Florida Atlantic University
Charisse Van Biesen, Southeast Florida Behavioral Health Network
Charles Vercillo, Community member
Craig Spatara, GEO Group
Darren Romelus, Palm Beach County Commissioners Office
Dhiny Mercedes, CareerSource
Dr. Angela Bess, PBC School District
Emily McBay, Gulfstream Goodwill Industries
Fernando De Cardenas, Gulfstream Goodwill Industries
Gregory Starling Florida Department of Juvenile Justice: 15th Judicial Circuit
Jackson,
Jeanette Marshall, Healthier Neighbors
Jeffery Dana Gillen, 15th Judicial Circuit
Jennifer Loyless, Office of the Public Defender's Office
Joey Nieves, The Lord's Place
Judge Kathleen Kroll, 15th Judicial Circuit
Julia Dattolo, CareerSource Palm Beach County
Justin Kunzelman, Rebel Recovery Florida Inc.
Laura Contrera, Gulfstream Goodwill Industries
Laura Waterman, Gulfstream Goodwill Industries
Linda Porter, Gulfstream Goodwill Industries
Lynn Trimble, Choice to Change
Marcia Bahia, PBSO
Mark Ferrante, Policy Practice and Systems Change/America Institutes for Research
Mark Schneider, League of Women Voters
Marsha Martino, National alliance on Mental Illness: PBC Chapter
Mary Fabricatore, Gulfstream Goodwill Industries
Meredith Powers-Lupo, Veteran's Administration
Michael Morrell, Gulfstream Goodwill Industries
Negaysha Walcott, Gulfstream Goodwill Industries

Nikole Konieczny, Palm Beach State College
Orie Bullard, The City of Riviera Beach Reentry Center
Oswald Newbold, The City of Riviera Beach Reentry Center
Pamela Maldonado, League of Women Voters
Peter Noel, Alpha & Omega House
Rishma Holt, Community member
Romona La Roche, African American Research Library
Rosalind Murray, Criminal Justice Commission
Shahzia Jackson, PBSO
Shirlon St. Amour, Florida Department of Juvenile Justice
Sue Welch, Community member
Sylvia Whiting, Community member
Tamara Starks, PBSO
Tyrus McCloud, Prison Fellowship
Vanessa Klein, Gulfstream Goodwill Industries
Wenfred Dorsey, The Lord's Place
William Freeman, The City of Riviera Beach Reentry Center

Public Safety Department Staff Present:

Arlene Griffiths, PBC Public Safety Department
Chenise Bonilla, PBC Public Safety Department
Jessica Hidalgo, PBC Public Safety Department
Nicole Bishop, PBC Public Safety Department
Randi Taylor, PBC Public Safety Department
Sarah Sanchez, PBC Public Safety Department
Stephanie Sejnoha, PBC Public Safety Department

Members Absent:

Ann Berner, Southeast Florida Behavioral Health Network
Barbara Cheives, Converge & Associates Consulting
Carey Haughwout, Office of the Public Defenders: 15th Judicial Circuit
Cassandra Atkin-Plunk, Florida Atlantic University
Diana Stanley, The Lord's Place
Elisa Cramer, Florida Department of Children and Families
Geeta Loach-Jacobson, PBC Youth Services Department
Jeff Gillen, 15th Judicial Circuit
Joe Speicher, South County Mental Health Center
John Cohen, League of Cities
Kevin Jones, West Palm Beach Mayor's Office
Michelle Johns, Florida Department of Corrections
Patricia Berry, Salvation Army
Robert Graham, True Fast Ministries
Serena Marlow, Florida Department of Corrections
Steven Spaulding, Legal Aid Society of Palm Beach County
Alton Taylor, Drug Abuse Foundation

- I. Welcome, Opening Comments, and Introductions –**, Vice Chair, Chief Gregory Starling, Department of Juvenile Justice
Members and guests signed in the chat box in lieu of roll call.
Thank you.

Special welcome was extended to Circuit Judge Jeffrey Gillen who now represents the judges, and Judge Laura Johnson recognized for her contributions Task Force and continued service to Palm Beach County.

- II. Approval and/or Additions to the Preliminary Agenda**, Agenda was unanimously approved.
- III. Approval and/or Corrections to the 1. 27.2021 Meeting Minutes**, Minutes were unanimously approved after correction to the date reflecting previous minutes as January 2021 instead of January 2020.
- IV. New Advisory Member**, Kim Raynor, Outreach and communications Manager, Counsel, Supervisor of Elections Office (EOC) - Ms. Raynor has been with EOC since 2017 working on the efficacy on the core values, integrity, accountability and service introduced herself along with General Counselor Ashley Houlihan. The EOC has been working with other agencies, particularly around the restoration of voting rights for returning residents, and the Task Force welcomes their participation.
- V. FDC Sago Palm Reentry Center- Introduction and Updates**, Serena Marlow, Assistant Warden, Ms. Marlow. In the absence of newly appointed Assistant, Ms. Griffiths gave a brief update on Sago, noting that Sago Palm is now allowing case managers to visit their clients the facilities. She also added that Moral Recognition Therapy (MRT), a cognitive behavioral intervention, is now offered to residents at Sago.

VI. Reentry Program Office Updates, *Chenise Bonilla, PBC Public Safety Department, Ms. Bonilla* provide the following program update: Palm Beach County reentry staff completed 27 funder reports for FDC, FDLE, DOJ as well as for the county, and noted that the eKPI is included in the agenda packet. Six (6) public meetings were held during this quarter; Hosted and participated in 12 Second Chance Month events with a social media presence that resulted in 14 posts on Facebook and 476 “likes” on Instagram, and 63 Inspirational letters created and distributed to incarcerated individuals and returning residents. Kudos to Ms. Waterman for participating in all of the month’s events. Ms. Bonilla also thanked Lynn Trimble for her contribution and for hosting a prosocial activity, Randi Taylor and Shirlon St. Amour for taking the lead in the inspirational letters shared with the youth as well as presenting and hosting four trade presentations. Also recognized the County’s Public Affairs team in particular Channel 20 for social media and other marketing strategies for reentry services. Also thanks to Talmedge, Sylvester, William and Oswald for telling their personal stories and to members of the planning committee for an inspiring month. She commented on the feedback received including the need for community education on reentry, more collaboration, using more human language (for example returning residents instead of ex-offender), and if returning residents should be allowed to readjust or recondition for three to six months after release before service is provided. FDC contract period has moved from 9 to 12 months. Additional, members presented to all of the Housing Authorities, as well as the City of West Palm Beach Mayor’s Village Initiative- Reentry Pillar; Participated in a Bureau of Justice Assistance Florida Grantee’s Peer Sharing which included Perris from Ft Myers and Broward County, and also completed a two-pager for the FL Department of Juvenile Justice to consider placing youth in local facility.

VII. Subcommittee Updates

- Youth Reentry Subcommittee, *The Honorable Kathleen Kroll, 15th Judicial Circuit, and Geeta Loach-Jacobson, PBC Youth Services Department, Ms. Loach-Jacobson* provided a brief update, highlighting the four objectives; 1) Strengthen pre-release engagement, especially at local residential commitment facilities - Currently working on starting reentry services and engagement at the time of disposition, cultivating an advocacy team of providers that support youth through the continuum of commitment, and creating accountability and effectiveness; 2) To better coordinate youth-based initiatives to streamline processes and ensure youth and families have access to available resources, and will be providing recommendations on the gaps and services on how we can make sure they are accessing the needed services. Regarding Objectives 3 and 4, they are currently in negotiations with DJJ on how to reform the commitment placement process and to place youth closer to home. Ms. Loach-Jacobson mentioned that they are hoping their will be a pilot program to help house most of the committed palm beach youth in one place (Palm Beach Youth Academy). Mr. Starling added that they are brainstorming when it comes to transitional planning as it related to the recidivism, they are around 42% for the most recent report here in Palm beach County. The aim is to improve the outcome for Juvenile and make it lower as it relates to recidivism. Mr. Starling also added that as the department they have a major reentry plan, to at least collective the same objective that will certainly make a difference with the kids that they have or are going to programs, or in treatment. Also stated that they have better outcomes for the kids who are on parole with DOC. Judge Kroll added that that she strongly hopes and believes for reentry that the ticket is the community, and with the kids being sent away it makes it very difficult to create that community for them, so that they are surrounded with the support that they need to continue to be productive citizens.

- Housing Subcommittee, *Armando Fana, City of West Palm Beach, and Peter Noel, Alpha & Omega House*, Mr. Fana provided a brief update highlighting the four objectives that are focused on increasing the amount of housing opportunities and shelter for the individuals who are being released. He remarked that over half of the folks reentering are homeless and presents a big challenge, and currently looking at all the housing authorities and other partners to help in this effort. Members recently met with the local housing authorities and discussed, among other issues, the possibility of loosening some of the criteria for the individuals returning from incarceration. Also looking at opportunities that may come around with the additional funding that is available, vouchers are being put out by HUD that are targeting specific populations, some of which can be utilized for individuals who are reentering. They also discussed how to utilize some of the funds that are coming down for COVID relief. This is an opportunity to provide rental assistance, deposit assistance and in some cases providing permanent housing, and could possibly be utilized by reentry participants. Mr. Fana will report back next meeting with the progress at the next meeting.

- Sexual Offenses Subcommittee, *Meredith Powers-Lupo, West Palm Beach Veterans Affairs*, Ms. Powers-Lupo reported that the Subcommittee continues to work on the objectives with short and long term goals. She shared her excitement of the new and refreshed membership additions from the Public Defender's Office and Judge Gillen, The Subcommittee objectives are to increase awareness about barriers for people convicted of a sexual offense, encourage city municipalities to align city ordinance with county ordinance regarding residency restrictions, develop programs and locate resources specifically for people convicted of a sexual offense, and support judicial authority to remove elderly and disabled individuals from the sex registry, in order to allow for more assisted living opportunities. She along with Dr. Atkin-Plunk provided an update on the CoSA grant, noting that it is ahead of schedule in terms of recruiting volunteers and participants. This Second Chance Act grant was made possible through The Lord's Place in partnership with Gulfstream Goodwill, and the Riviera Beach Reentry Center implementing the CoSA model in Palm Beach County. The aim is to serve 60 individuals through a randomized control trial, but automatically include any individual with a sexual offense that is interested. Other individuals who are considered high risk will be randomized. Dr. Bess commended the work that Ms. Powers-Lupo and the team have accomplished.

- Employment, Training, & Education Subcommittee, *Dhiny Mercedes, CareerSource* - Ms Jessica Hidalgo gave a brief update, commenting on FAU's undertaking of the reentry evaluation lead by Dr. Atkin-Plunk to be completed in the next few years, which has started with gathering feedback from this and other subcommittees. Ms. Hidalgo thanked Ms. Nikole Konieczny from Palm Beach State College for the addition of new subcommittee member, Mandy Long from The Club at Ibis expressing her excitement for a member from the work force that will provide valuable guidance towards the goals. She reported that the education and training opportunities workgroup lead by Ms. St. Amour facilitated the two-day trade training in September, and has been hosting them at the Detention Center for juveniles throughout the month of April. The work group plans to create additional resources such as videos on soft skills as well as working with the case managers so that the individual can access employment resources from their home. Mr. Mercedes added a brief update on CareerSource and the progress at Sago Palm saying that the Florida Hires program started with four highly motivated participants. He is excited for the opportunities to access WIOA dollars, as well as setting up participants

resumes on Employ Florida. Ms. Dattolo commended Mr Mercedes on the work he is doing in reentry, and advised that CareerSource now has three additional career counselors on the reentry team.

- Data & Evaluation Subcommittee, *Jennifer Loyless, Public Defender's Office, and Cristina Lucier, The Lord's Place*, Ms. Lucier provided a brief update commenting also on Dr. Atkin-Plunk's and her team's selection to complete a comprehensive evaluation of reentry for Palm Beach County. This entails the data capacity currently exists in Palm Beach County related to reentry and where there needs to be improvement. The objectives are to create an improved data framework, create quality assurance measures, processes, and reports for ensuring appropriate, timely, and accurate data entry by funded agencies. 3. Create ongoing "dashboard" reports through RENEW to assess agreed upon outcome measures, assist in ongoing data analysis to adjust the delivery of programming to obtain new funding, and respond to subcommittee requests, and to ultimately complete an evaluation of reentry programming and services in PBC.

- Sustainability Subcommittee, *Diana Stanley, The Lord's Place, and Tamara Starks, Palm Beach Sheriff's Office* – In the absence of Chair Stanley, Ms. Bonilla highlighted the three objectives: 1) Identify funding sources to sustain current reentry services and develop enhancements - Continuous communication with PBC's Legislative Affairs team to see how much of the state appropriation that will be allocated to adult reentry taking place; 2) Raise awareness about reentry barriers and successes among policy makers, community leaders, private sector, and the media - Second Chance Month was to help raise awareness, press release as well as a media clips presented; 3) Implement and evaluate innovative programs that reduce recidivism – FAU currently doing so, and will be highlighted in Dr. Atkin-Plunk's update

VIII. FAU Reentry Evaluation and Innovations in Reentry Initiative's (IRI) Two-Year Outcome Report, Dr. Cassandra Atkin-Plunk, Florida Atlantic University - Ms. Atkin-Plunk reported that Palm Beach County received a BJA funded grant in 2017 to provide transitional employment coupled with cognitive behavioral intervention, using a randomized control trial, to individuals returning from incarceration to the community. With this program the three services providers, Gulfstream Goodwill, The Lord' Place, and Riviera Beach Reentry Center provides different transitional employment opportunities to individuals in the treatment group, while individuals in the controlled group receives treatment as usual. During the two year period 463 individuals were newly enrolled into RESTORE, and of those individuals, 161 were referred to randomization for the program, 84 were randomized into the treatment group, and 77 into the control group. In order to become eligible, they have to score moderate to high risk on the LSIR. In year one, (pre COVID) 93 individuals were referred to the program, year two (pre COVID) 22 were referred, and year three (post COVID) 46 referred. Gulfstream Goodwill's transitional program has individuals working in the retail store or the warehouse, however, due to COVID both were shut down. Individuals were still receiving employment consultant services as well as MRT. In Mid-May of 2020 the retail store and warehouse slowly re-opened. Riviera Beach Reentry Center program which is construction base, continued the employment during COVID. March of 2020 the MRT classes were suspended, April 2020 case managers began to telecommute, August 2020 the case managers resume in-person services. Dr. Atkin-Plunk shared the participants demographic characteristics, as well as treatment hours received, to highlight the program enrollment status at two years. She also provided information on recidivism rates for

participants enrolled for at least 6, 12, and 18 months, as well as employment rates, and employment descriptions for those employed.

Ms. Bonilla applauded Craig Spatara who applied for this grant in 2016, Jessica Hidalgo as the Program Coordinator, Nicole Bishop for securing sustainable funds for this model with state and county Ad valorem funds, and importantly, the service providers for pushing through and providing services during the pandemic. Mr. Nieves remarked about taking MRT classes and using the 12 step booklet that individuals go through while incarcerated, which takes them back to their childhood into adulthood, so that they can see how and where they went wrong in the past, and how they can move forward, saying it's all about the perspective of having those morals on getting out of incarceration.

IX. Additional Member and Guest Comments

- Ms. Waterman expressed gratitude to Palm Beach County staff during Second Chance Month, noting all the effort put into creating the posts and videos on the county's website and other platforms.
- Ms. Griffiths also highlighted the success stories of individuals that were shared throughout the month, and the positive feedback received.
- Ms. La Roche from the African American Research Library in Burwood County spoke about educational programming available.
- Mr. Nieves announced The Lord's Place virtual panel for Criminal Justice reform, featuring returning residents.
- Pictures of Second Chance Month events were shared.