

Dutchess County Special Populations Work Group Meeting

September 8, 2014

KEY AGENDA ITEMS AND INFORMATION:

The following was the agenda for the meetings:

Agenda

- Overview of some best practice jail programs
- Review of existing Dutchess County jail programs
- Discussion of potential core programming in the jail when the inmates return (January/February)

Other Items

Present: Ronald Knapp, Chair, City of POK Police Chief
Thomas Angell, Public Defender, Re-Entry Chair
Onaje Benjamin, DC Jail
Sam Bussell, Citizen
Gary Christensen, Consultant
Bill EckerdEckert, Dutchess County Mental Hygiene Jail Based Services
William Grady, District Attorney
John Heller, Dutchess County Office of Probation and Community Corrections
Margaret Hirst, DMH
Noel Knille, Commissioner, DCDPW
Martin Lynch, Project MORE
Steve Miccio, PEOPLE
Jenny Salimbene, Lexington
Tracy Stevens, BI
Mary Ellen Still, Director of Probation
Kevin Warwick, Consultant, ASA

Ron Knapp called the meeting to order at 8:05 a.m.

The focus of the September meeting was to discuss jail programming with an overview of several best practice programs from around the country. This included an initial summary from the Consultant, followed by a full discussion amongst the Committee regarding next steps.

Consultant Kevin Warwick began by outlining key points utilizing a PowerPoint presentation reviewing three different sized jails around the country, and the types of programming undertaken. Following the PowerPoint, a summary of the existing Dutchess County Jail programs was presented, with a discussion of potential core programming available in the jail for when the inmates return in January/February.

1. Sullivan County, New Hampshire

This facility is five years old, and consists of the main jail with secured beds, and a community corrections transition center where all the programming takes place. A risk-needs assessment is completed on each inmate upon entry to determine criminogenic needs and identify substance abuse issues. Interventions target the high risk-needs group, with five tracks in the program. The program has an excellent recidivism rate of approximately 19 % for high risk offenders.

2. Franklin County - TJC Intervention Elements

The Proxy is utilized for booking and classification, and the LS/RNR is completed on sentenced offenders. Their target population is those serving 60 days or more. The key programs for the identified high-risk population includes T4C, anger management, substance abuse treatment, education, Seeking Safety (men and women's programming), Start Now, vocational programs, job readiness, job and community placement, and case management. These are provided by local providers and jail staff working together. The original model in this County included only jail staff, but experience revealed it to be more successful utilizing local providers as well. Similar to Dutchess County, Franklin and Sullivan have a strong community presence. This is a newer program, so the data on recidivism is mostly preliminary at this time.

3. Kent County, Michigan

This County had an established programming in a re-entry setting, but due to budget constraints was forced to move programming back to the jail. the Proxy is utilized as well as assessing criminogenic need to get into the program, targeting mostly high-risk offenders. There is one unit with co-occurring and re-entry programs. Programming occurs in a small unit within the jail comprised of 1,500 beds. Participants receive 200 hours of CBT treatment while in this 70 - 90 day program. They have a strong community component with outreach based case management for up to one year. This includes a strong coordination with probation; there is now a probation officer on site. Their recidivism rates are low for their high target populations. There is also a separate chronic care unit for mental health treatment and substance abuse.

All of the Core Programs are specifically curriculum based. These include substance abuse education and counseling, cognitive thinking, Seeking Safety (women's programming), anger management, job readiness, family programming, stress management and wellness classes, co-occurring programs, and other transitional and aftercare programs. The chemical dependency and mental health classes are taught by master's level and some bachelor's level instructors. Some classes like Thinking For a Change can be taught by corrections officers as long as they complete the training for those with substance abuse issues. Participants are connected to drug rehabilitation programs as part of their post release.

Discussion:

Gary contributed that 20% of those at DCJ are sentenced. For those that are pre-sentence, there can be greater incentives offered to electively select programming. Tom suggested one way to do this in Dutchess County could be to have people plea, then go to programming, with sentencing later in the process. Mary Ellen added that this could also work for those violating probation. At DCJ the problem is that often inmates are in jail for four to five months before they receive an offer and can enter programming, and then opt for release instead. Incentives are easy to offer, but the programming is what

holds people and draws them in. Kevin noted that the actual flow to get in is different in varying communities, and the Committee will need to determine what works best in Dutchess County. Some people may need more services than others, and should be geared as such. Dutchess County's incarceration rate is low, with approximately 150 per 100,000 people.

Dutchess County Jail

The key programs and classes at DCJ include substance abuse group, anger management, employment readiness, domestic abuse, women's group, trauma group, creative writing, thresholds group, and individual counseling. They are not all curriculum based. Some concerns with present programming include not being driven by criminogenic risks/needs; programming that works around inmate work schedules (presently work program and program unit are same, and programs are not the priority); limited evidence-based programming; lack of coordination; and no designated core program. Also, there is no CBT component (MRT is used in some programs, so is the cost worth the reallocation of monies); and there is limited in-reach of providers working within the jail and community. The program unit at DCJ is also the transitions unit.

Discussion:

Gary suggested that he take a snapshot of the jail demographics based on the following criteria: gender, charge, sentence, status, risk to reoffend, jail classification, housing unit, and ethnicity. Gary will cross reference this with Bill Eller who will look through the records. Bill added they had previously reviewed data and looked at employment and education levels. It was noted that this may be helpful, but will not determine core programming. They will also not look at substance abuse as the goal is to identify higher risk-need candidates for programming

The Committee held a discussion on whether the committee meetings should be open or closed to the public. Sam Bussell said that it is currently a closed meeting and questioned how the information is shared with the public. Noel reported that the County Executive's office is planning to create a webpage that will include updates for the public. Kevin added that the focus of these meetings needs to be data driven and some of this data needs to be analyzed before it is released to the public. It was agreed that at this point these committee meetings would remain closed to the public, with information disseminated to the public via the webpage.

The Committee came to a consensus on the following:

- Program participation should be driven by risk and needs scores.
- The Transitions Units 22 for men and 23 for women should be the designated area to target programming.
- Inmates should be focused on programming while in the unit, not on full time institutional jobs.

The next meeting will focus on:

- The length of programming
- Core programing
- Use of evidence based curricula
- Process for flow into the unit

The meeting was adjourned at 11:25 am.