



Reentry Council
City and County of San Francisco

2023 Sunset Date Extension Request Report
Reentry Council of the City and County of San Francisco

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Introduction

Since June 2019, the Full Reentry Council has met approximately 15 times, enjoying robust regular attendance by its members, San Francisco residents, members of the formerly incarcerated community, and other stakeholders. The Reentry Council is proud to report that it has maintained quorum at all its meetings.

Six dynamic and committed co-chairs lead the Reentry Council: the Mayor's Office; the Adult Probation Department; the Sheriff's Department, and the Offices of the Public Defender, District Attorney, and one of the formerly incarcerated members. There is a total of 25 members inclusive of the co-chairs: A representative of the Board of Supervisors, the Juvenile Probation Department, the Police Department, the Department of Economic and Workforce Development, the Human Services Agency, the Department of Public Health, the Department of Child Support Services, the Department of Children, Youth, and Their Families, the Department of Homeless and Supportive Housing, the San Francisco Superior Court, the California Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation Division of Adult Parole Operations, the United States Probation and Pretrial Services System, and the agency which administers pretrial services within San Francisco. The Reentry Council is the only standing body in the city whose membership also includes seven formerly incarcerated individuals. In addition to the 25 standing members, the Reentry Council supports three vital subcommittees: the Legislation, Policy and Practices Subcommittee, the Direct Action Subcommittee, and the Women 1st Subcommittee.

The Reentry Council, with its broad reach into reentry policy and service matters, is the nucleus of adult criminal justice reform and coordination in San Francisco. Across the three subcommittees, there are eighty-seven (87) formal members. Other criminal justice stakeholders and members of the public regularly attend meetings to advance criminal justice and reentry reform. The Council operates closely with other ad-hoc and statutory bodies such as the California Community Correction Partnership, the Sentencing Commission, the Juvenile Justice Coordinating Council and the Collaborative Courts partnerships. Council co-chairs and members pursue independent criminal justice and reentry efforts, and the Reentry Council stands as the clearinghouse for this information, resulting in a reduction of duplication of efforts, and a optimization of support around significant reentry matters.

Over the past five years, the nation has been confronted with the profound effects of the Coronavirus pandemic. While various policy bodies faced a decrease in their operations and public involvement, the Reentry Council flourished. Except for the April 2020 meeting, which occurred just after the implementation of the shelter-in-place directive on March 20, 2020, all subsequent meetings of the Reentry Council were held regularly and attracted significant public attendance. The Reentry Council meetings often attracted a diverse audience of over 100 individuals, highlighting immense interest and active engagement with the Council and its work.

Changes to the Reentry Council and Its Subcommittees

At the January 28, 2021 meeting, the Reentry Council affirmed its commitment to addressing the unique needs and reentry barriers of formerly incarcerated women by unanimously voting to create the Women 1st Subcommittee, which was created to address policies, programs, and barriers to reentry specifically related to justice involved cis women, trans women, and gender

nonconforming individuals. Formerly incarcerated women have unique needs stemming from social, economic, and cultural factors. Considerations include gender-specific healthcare, trauma recovery, and childcare. They often shoulder family responsibilities and require stable housing and support for reuniting with their children. Employment and economic disparities, including gender-based discrimination, affect their job prospects. Housing instability, trauma, and mental health challenges are common. Community support is vital for successful reintegration. Addressing these needs through targeted policies and programs promotes their well-being and reentry.

Also at the January 28, 2021 meeting, Council members voted unanimously to repurpose the Direct Services Subcommittee to the Direct Action Subcommittee. This proposed change came out of the 2023 Reentry Council Retreat in which subcommittee members wanted to modify the focus of this subcommittee to focus on a GAPS Analysis of the programs and services they feel would benefit the reentry community and an annual calendar of reentry-related events. Additionally, the subcommittee will work in conjunction with the Legislation, Policy, and Practices Subcommittee on an initiative that will increase wages for frontline reentry services providers. In 2023, the Direct Action Subcommittee planned and hosted a Black History Month Reentry Event on February 23, 2023 and a Juneteenth Reentry Event on June 15, 2023 at the Community Assessment and Services Center (CASC) at 564 6th Street. Both events were well attended by over 100 reentry community members.

On December 8, 2020, the Board of Supervisors amended their Rules of Order, adding Rule 4.7.1 which declared that the President would read a Ramaytush (rah-my-toosh) Ohlone Land Acknowledgement after the Roll Call during Board of Supervisor Meetings. At the January 28, 2021 Reentry council Meeting, members voted to amend the Reentry Council Bylaws, by adding section 5 (f), which would read:

Following the Call to Order and Roll Call, the Chair shall read the following statement:
“The Reentry Council of the City and County of San Francisco acknowledges that we are on the unceded ancestral homeland of the Ramaytush Ohlone who are the original inhabitants of the San Francisco Peninsula. As the indigenous stewards of this land and in accordance with their traditions, the Ramaytush Ohlone have never ceded, lost, nor forgotten their responsibilities as the caretakers of this place, as well as for all peoples who reside in their traditional territory. As guests, we recognize that we benefit from living and working on their traditional homeland. We wish to pay our respects by acknowledging the Ancestors, Elders, and Relatives of the Ramaytush Ohlone community and by affirming their sovereign rights as First Peoples.”

The Ramaytush Ohlone Land acknowledgement is now read at the beginning of each Reentry Council meeting and each subcommittee meeting.

On April 21, 2023, Mayor Breed signed Ordinance 054-23, which amended the Administrative Code to add a seat to the Reentry Council, to be appointed by the Board of Supervisors, designated for a representative of the entity responsible for the administration of pretrial services involving alternatives to incarceration. This amendment created the 25th seat on the Reentry Council, which is currently held by the San Francisco Pretrial Diversion Project.

San Francisco Recovery Summit Workgroup

The majority of justice involved people have substance abuse issues that in some way led to the crimes they committed. Between Nov 2014 and Oct 2017, after the passing of Prop 47 - the Budget and Legislative Analyst's Office conducted an audit which included the Department of Public Health's jail health services – 84.5% of 49,096 booking events in the San Francisco County were for individuals with a history of substance use. This fact, in combination with the increasing overdose deaths in San Francisco, make recovery efforts within San Francisco of utmost importance when working for the successful reintegration of formerly incarcerated people.

In June 2018, in an effort to create a public forum to discuss addiction realities in the City, as well as celebrate the success of individuals in recovery, the first Annual Recovery Summit was launched. Out of the Recovery Summit, a workgroup formed to address the addiction crisis in San Francisco. In August 2019, the working group launched two surveys – one for former and current drug users in San Francisco, and the other for family members and loved ones impacted by drug use. From the 422 surveys completed by current and former drug users in San Francisco, the research group analyzed the data and developed a platform of recommendations they believed would improve the recovery efforts in San Francisco.

At the October 22, 2020 Reentry Council meeting, the Recovery Summit Working Group presented the results of data they collected and their platform of recommendations and asked the Council for their support so that these recommendations could then be presented before the Board of Supervisors. Their recommendations included:

- Expand Drug and Alcohol Treatment Options - Include Residential Abstinence Based Treatment Programs, Social Model/TC Treatment Programs, Faith Based and 12 Step Treatment Programs, Harm Reduction Strategies, Safe Consumption Sites.
- Extend Drug and Alcohol Treatment Stays - Treatment should not be bound by Drug Medi-Cal. San Franciscans should have access to drug and alcohol treatment programs ranging from 90 days to 1 year or more, based on the needs of the individual.
- Fund a Black-led Abstinence Based Treatment Program in the Bayview - To meet the culturally sensitive treatment needs of black people and people of color who live in the Bayview - provide treatment that is abstinence based in its approach to working with addicted and justice involved populations in SF.
- Specialized Residential Drug Treatment Programs for TAYA - Young people have different needs than adults. Drug treatment should be specialized to meet the needs of those ages 16-25.
- Include the Voice of People in Recovery - Ensure individuals in Recovery are at the table when the City is making policy decisions regarding Addiction, Recovery, and Treatment.
- Expand Paid Peer Specialists Opportunities - Train and Connect those in recovery with people working toward recovery. People who successfully complete treatment should have access to paid positions helping others struggling with addiction.
- Increase Awareness About Available Drug Treatment Services - Ensure individuals suffering from addiction can access real time information about treatment options.

The Reentry Council unanimously voted to support the recommendations. The Working Group presented the analysis of their data and their platform of recommendations at the February 11, 2021

regular meeting of the Board of Supervisors - Public Safety and Neighborhood Services Committee. At this meeting, there was a robust discussion between the Supervisors, the Working Group, and high-level members from the Department of Public Health. There was also substantial public comment.

From these efforts and the recommendations presented, the San Francisco Adult Probation designed and implemented the Positive Directions TRP Academy in partnership with Westside Community Services. The TRP Academy launched in August 2021 and is a culturally responsive, peer-led, abstinence-based, reentry therapeutic teaching community (TTC) and transitional housing program. The mutual self-help community has a recovery orientation, focusing on whole-person care and overall lifestyle changes, not simply abstinence from drug use. The TRP Academy infuses a strength-based approach into the program's culturally responsive guiding principles of Respect, Interdependence, and Accountability. The model supports peer-to-peer interaction and instruction, creates a sense of family, and fosters a support network that reaffirms prosocial values and behaviors. Program participants can stay in the program from six months to 30 months. The program has been very successful, maintaining a 90% occupancy rate. The successful exit rate is 39% and out of 396 random drug tests performed, only 30 (7.5%) have come back positive for drugs or alcohol.

Racial and Ethnic Disparities in the Criminal Justice System

As the African American population in San Francisco declines, the disparities faced by African Americans within the criminal justice system continue to escalate. The urgency to address racial and ethnic disparities in the criminal justice system cannot be overstated. However, it is not only within the criminal justice system that these disparities impact the reentry experience of BIPOC community members; they also have to navigate various other systems within San Francisco to reintegrate successfully.

During each Reentry Council meeting, members representing City Departments have an opportunity to discuss their efforts in addressing racial disparities within their departments and in the services provided to clients. This inclusive practice allows for robust discussions and mutual understanding among stakeholders, including those from the criminal justice system. By fostering collaboration and sharing insights into racial equity work across all represented City departments, the aim is to reduce racial disparities in all systems that influence the successful reentry of BIPOC community members.

Furthermore, incorporating racial equity updates as a standard agenda item allows the public to stay informed about the ongoing racial equity efforts within each department. This transparency provides an opportunity for public engagement and allows individuals to offer their perspectives through public comments on the work being shared. This inclusive approach aims to promote a collective effort in addressing racial disparities and creating a more equitable and just reentry experience for BIPOC community members.

Housing Needs of Justice Involved Adults

In March 2021, the Reentry Division of the San Francisco Adult Probation Department in partnership with the Direct Services Subcommittee initiated a comprehensive mixed methods research project. By addressing criminogenic needs and community factors, reentry systems of care

can empower formerly incarcerated individuals to overcome barriers and achieve their dreams. This project exemplified the power of collaboration between law enforcement, the community, and those impacted by the justice system.

The primary objective of this project was to gain insights into the housing requirements of justice-involved adults in San Francisco. To achieve this, a survey was designed and launched in both English and Spanish languages in October 2021. Respondents had the option to complete the survey either online or on paper. 284 justice involved adults in San Francisco successfully participated and completed the survey. The quantitative analysis of the data yielded several significant findings:

- 76% of respondents were unstably housed prior to their most recent incarceration
- 96% of respondents were unstably housed upon release from jail or prison
- 47% of respondents did not know where they were going to live upon release from jail or prison
- 73% of respondents were unstably housed at the time they completed the survey
- 34 % of respondents struggled with depression
- 25 % of respondents struggled with PTSD
- 24 % of respondents struggled with anxiety
- 74% of respondents reported a history of addiction
- 81% of respondents reported that drug/alcohol use played a role in their most recent incarceration
- The average length of time that respondents reported struggling with addiction was 16 years
- The average number of times respondents had been to jail was 10 times
- The average length of time respondents had been incarcerated during their life was 9.2 years
- The average number of times respondents had been to prison was 1.5 times

The analysis of the HNJA research found a statistically significant association between type of justice involvement and current living situation. While the sample of people Released Pretrial was small (n=23), 96% of respondents were currently unstably housed.

Justice Involvement	Unstably Housed	Stably Housed
Federal Probation	53%	47%
Formerly Incarcerated	62%	38%
Parole SF	69%	30%
Probation SF	80%	20%
Released Pretrial	96%	4%
Total	73%	27%

Additionally, over the course of more than a year, 87 justice involved adults took part in 12 focus groups. These focus groups were comprised of both men and women who had various justice involvement, including pretrial, San Francisco Adult Probation, Federal Probation, parole, or formerly incarcerated. The participants shared valuable insights into the challenges they faced during reentry and their endeavors to rebuild their lives and secure housing. They also provided feedback to enhance housing and other reentry-related services, offering valuable suggestions for improvement.

The most salient themes emerging from the focus groups were:

- **The Impact of Addiction** - Participants described harmful experiences related to drug use and addiction. This theme resonated across gender, age, race, and all types of justice involvement.
- **Financial Instability** – Participants described experiencing financial instability both prior to and after incarceration.
- **Reentry Planning and Hopelessness** - Participants reported the lack of reentry planning hindered their success and ability to transition from incarceration to the community. Participants also reported losing hope after repeated failed attempts to reintegrate successfully back into the community.

A number of recommendations came from this extensive research project:

- **Shared Goal to Address Housing Needs** - Tailoring housing solutions for justice involved individuals requires collaboration between stakeholders. A unified goal of promoting permanent exits from the justice system and securing housing can better support individuals in living healthy and productive lives.
- **Expand the Framework: Moving Beyond Housing First & Harm Reduction** - A one-size fits all approach is not working in San Francisco. By enlarging and enhancing the solution space, we create a continuum of temporary and permanent housing opportunities for those who are unstably housed.
- **Build a Recovery System of Care (RSC)** - A RSC is a coordinated network of community-based services that is person-centered and uses a strength-based approach to achieve freedom from addiction and improve health, wellness, and quality of life. The City should address substance use through a "system of care," which includes an array of resources and operates through multiple modalities. The RSC includes a range of opportunities from treatment on demand, therapeutic residences, and extended recovery (long-term transitional housing) to achieve a healthy, drug free life.
- **Fund a Stabilization Center** - San Francisco needs a 24/7 stabilization center where people can immediately have refuge from the streets. A 75-unit drug and alcohol free program would serve as an entry point into services.
- **Increase Financial Literacy** - To enhance housing stability, incorporate financial literacy, counseling, and coaching into reentry housing programs. Financial health is vital for justice involved adults to secure permanent housing and achieve self-sufficiency. Integrate credit building and savings initiatives along with financial education to ensure long-term success.

- **Bolster Transitional Housing** - Transitional housing is crucial for developing life skills needed for independence. Justice involved adults deserve access to tailored transitional housing, regardless of their monitoring or supervision type. Increasing bed capacity and allowing 1-3 year stays can aid in successful reentry. Graduates of transitional housing should be prioritized for permanent housing.

Subcommittees

As part of its formal structure, the Reentry Council operates subcommittees, ad-hoc bodies made up of city partners and community stakeholders who are all committed to criminal justice reform and strengthening systems and programs so that people exiting jails and prisons can successfully reintegrate into their communities.

Presently, the Reentry Council has three subcommittees that meet bi-monthly:

- Legislation, Policy and Practices Subcommittee
- Direct Action Subcommittee
- Women 1st Subcommittee

The Legislation, Policy and Practice Subcommittee is focused on assisting the Reentry Council in developing and supporting local laws, policy, and practices that help shape state and federal policy. Through the efforts of this subcommittee, the members have helped the Reentry council achieve four primary goals:

1. Reduce its reliance on incarceration
2. Facilitate the successful reentry of formerly incarcerated residents into the community
3. Remove barriers for individuals with criminal records, and
4. Reduce racial, ethnic, and socioeconomic disparities in the criminal justice system

Members of this subcommittee embrace inclusive and participatory review of local, state, and federal legislation, policy, and operational practices while providing equal consideration to community stakeholder's voices. Moreover, this subcommittee is responsible for addressing the most pressing legislation impacting the reentry community.

The Direct Action Subcommittee assists the Reentry Council in planning and hosting reentry related events for the community and identifying gaps in the programs or activities geared to servicing the incarcerated and formerly incarcerated community in the following six areas:

1. Housing
2. Employment
3. Education
4. Employment
5. Mental and Physical Health
6. Substance Abuse Recovery

The Women 1st Subcommittee assists the Reentry Council to provide support and advocacy for cisgender women, transgender women, and gender nonconforming individuals during their

reentry process from jail or prison. The subcommittee specifically concentrates on six key areas as they pertain to formerly incarcerated individuals who identify as cis women, transgender women, or gender nonconforming:

1. Housing for single, pregnant, and women with children
2. Family focused and trauma informed programs and services
3. Gender health issues and wellness
4. Mental health, substance use, and recovery, and
5. Employment disparities and opportunities to earn living wages
6. Programs and services specifically for transgender women

The subcommittees meet bi-monthly and are also well attended. Since the work of these groups is strategically elevated towards Reentry Council meetings, this subcommittee/Reentry Council structure reduces the gap between the public and policy makers and presents an opportunity for stakeholders to present concrete policy and service strategies to key decision makers in San Francisco's criminal justice system.

The Reentry Council and subcommittees are truly committed to strengthening public safety by improving systems, mitigating root drivers of crime, and expanding dynamic pathways for people from jails and prisons back into their communities. This report will conclude with highlights of some of the Reentry Council's past accomplishments.

Past Accomplishments

- Hosting a District Attorney Debate in 2019, ensuring that the questions posed addressed reducing racial disparities in the San Francisco criminal justice system, diverting people with mental health conditions from the criminal justice system, reducing reentry barriers, and increasing transparency within the District Attorney's Office.
- Participating in the annual Reentry Conference and Resource Fair hosted by the Restorative Justice Ministry of San Francisco Archdiocese
- Creating the Getting out and Staying out Guide of resources for San Francisco residents exiting jails and prisons
- Collaborating with local efforts to stop the building of a new jail
- Partnering with the Restorative Justice Ministry of San Francisco Archdiocese to host an annual Community Appreciation Dinner for the previously incarcerated community and their loved ones
- Collaborating with a grassroots movement to support the Tenderloin Stop Violence Community Events, and Tenderloin Police and Community Basketball League that stem from the Stop violence Community event
- Numerous register-to-vote campaigns for justice involved individuals
- Partnering with Treasurers Office and city partners to support legislation to remove cumbersome criminal justice system fines and fees
- Voting to abolish San Francisco gang injunctions and working with community stakeholders to get more than 80 individual's name removed for the existing injunctions
- Assisting with Governor Jerry Brown's Driver's License Amnesty program

Ordinance Amendment Recommendations

The recommended revisions to the Administrative Code, Section 5.1, as indicated in Attachment A include extending the Reentry Council's sunset date to June 30, 2029 and amending the report requirements to change the date that the bi-annual report is due.

Conclusion

In conclusion, the Reentry Council has had a remarkable past four years since the Council was reestablished. The Council is both a touch point and springboard for criminal justice reform and accountability. There is no collective board that has eighteen different city, state, and federal departments represented in addition to seven formerly incarcerated individuals to meet the needs of the incarcerated and formerly incarcerated community.

We urge you to vote in support of renewing the authorizing legislation, and look forward to continuing to make recommendations on reentry services, policy and operational issues in the coming years. If you have any questions or would like additional information about any of these efforts, please contact Reentry Policy Planner, Victoria Westbrook at victoria.westbrook@sfgov.org or (415) 930-2202.