

The BRAIN TRUST

Meeting Notes

Tuesday, November 12, 2019

4:30 pm - 5:30 pm

UTEP Health Sciences Center and School of Nursing Building

(Across from the UTEP Library)

1851 Wiggins Rd.

El Paso, TX 79968

3rd Floor, Room 384

Attendees:

Joshua Acevedo
Christina Alcantar
Sharon Butterworth
Maria Carrillo
Manuel Castruita
Gilbert Favela
Claudia Fuentes
Bea Giron
Ana Gonzalez
Dr. Hyejin Jung
Enrique Mata
Dr. Holly Mata
Olivia Narvaez
Guadalupe Quezada
Dr. Eden Robles

Representing:

Empower Change
NAMI
Mental Health Advocate
Centro de Salud Familiar La Fe
EPISD- Guidance and Counseling Services
Emergence Health Network
El Paso Center for Children
Emergence Health Network
El Paso Child Guidance Center
UTEP Social Work Department
Paso del Norte Health Foundation
UTEP School of Nursing/ HHDRC
EPISD
El Paso Child Guidance Center
Empower Change

I. Welcome, Introductions

- Maria Carrillo called the Brain Trust to order at 4:32 p.m.

II. Presentation on Jail Re-entry

Bea Giron, Reentry Program Manager –

El Paso County Community Services Department, Reentry Division

- El Paso County Re-Entry History
 - 2016 - Commissioners Court initiated Justice recidivism project
 - 2017 - Commissioners Court created re-entry program
 - 2018 - Hired experienced re-entry manager
 - 2018 - Began homeless and jail project
 - 2019 - Began jail veterans project
 - 2019 - Began coordinated entry for indigent clients in the jail
 - 2019 - Received updated pretrial and recidivism data
 - 2019 - Enhanced re-entry programming
 - 2019 - Jail Cells specifically designated for re-entry program
- The Correctional Populations in the United States, Bureau of Justice Statistics, at the end of 2016 reported that 2.1 million individuals were held in local jails or incarcerated in state or federal prisons. About 95 percent of the 2.1 million will be released and return to communities across the nation. These people have needs that, if unaddressed in prison and jail, may negatively impact their ability to live crime-free lives after release.
- The El Paso County Uniform Recidivism Measure Project Study was released on January 30, 2018. El Paso County led these efforts that began in 2013, based on interest and the initiative of criminal justice planners in Bexar, Dallas, El Paso, Harris, and Tarrant County. The study tracks three-year recidivism rates for jail releases and state populations supervised in the county from 2011 - 2015. Overall, recidivism in El Paso has remained largely static over the years.
- The El Paso County Pretrial System Assessment Study was completed on May 24, 2019. The study evaluates policies and trends as a continuation of the initial recidivism project study. It found that recidivism rates did not decline significantly for any of the participating counties, due to few initiatives in place targeting high risk populations released from jail. One of the findings was that defendants in 2018, facing a felony charge and released on PR Bond, spent an average of 24.7 days in jail before release.
- If an individual is kept in jail for 14 days or more, they will likely recidivate. If they have mental health or substance use needs, while they wait and no program in place, the chances of recidivism increase.
- There is a partnership in place between the El Paso County Sheriff's Office and the Community Services Department, Reentry Division. They are assisting individuals transition from incarceration to the community, with the goal of reducing recidivism. They seek to empower individuals incarcerated at the El Paso County Jail to be better than they were at the point of incarceration.
 - The program is a 60 to 90-day holistic, strength-based in-reach/outreach program. It is designed to provide reentry related services; care management, life skills classes, education, and groups inside these cell blocks.

- It develops capacity and partnerships in providing services to medium to high risk offenders that provide a successful transition back into the community, prevent recidivism, reduce crime, and improve public safety.
 - It consists of three jail cell blocks designated for Reentry Services. There is one female cell block and it has a capacity for 24 people. There are two male cell blocks with capacity for up to 48 people.
 - Care managers provide a system of care through care management services. Special officers provide support and security. Community provider volunteers deliver the daily classroom curriculum with support from the care manager and Special Officer.
- Project Chance has three phases – pre-release, transition, and post-release.
 - Pre-Release - A proactive Jail Reentry System is developed, conducive to offender change.
 - Transition – Individuals are assisted with reintegration back into the community and a break in service is eliminated.
 - Post-Release - Continuity of care is provided through supportive services in the community.
 - Project Chance also offers educational and vocational support, employment assistance, and housing assistance.

III. Adjourn

- Dr. Holly Mata adjourned the Brain Trust meeting at 5:31 p.m.

Next Meeting - The Brain Trust meets at 4:30 pm every 2nd Tuesday of the month. The next Brain Trust meeting is scheduled for 4:30 p.m., Tuesday, December 10th, 2019 in room 384 at the UTEP Health Sciences Center and School of Nursing Building.

Next Presenter:

Mission:

The Brain Trust is a collaborative network of community stakeholders committed to changing minds and attitudes about mental illness in El Paso County to improve mental and emotional well-being for the health of children, youth and adults.

Vision:

The Brain Trust Network envisions a community where mental and emotional well-being are fundamental to the quality and productivity of individuals, families, communities and nations, enabling people to experience life as meaningful and to be creative and active citizens (adapted from the World Health Organization's definition of mental health and mental well-being).

JAIL RE-ENTRY



*Bea Giron, Reentry Program Manager
Community Services Department, Reentry
Division*

EL PASO COUNTY RE-ENTRY HISTORY



- 2016 Commissioners Court initiated Justice recidivism project
- 2017 Commissioners Court created re-entry program
- 2018 Hired experienced re-entry manager
- 2018 Began homeless and jail project
- 2019 Began jail veterans project
- 2019 Began coordinated entry for indigent clients in the jail
- 2019 Received updated pretrial and recidivism data
- 2019 Enhanced re-entry programming
- 2019 Jail Cells specifically designated for re-entry program

OVERVIEW



According to the Correctional Populations in the United States, Bureau of Justice Statistics, at year-end 2016;

- 2.1 million individuals were incarcerated in state or federal prisons or held in local jails.
- Approximately 95 percent of those individuals will be released and return to communities across the nation.
- Have needs that, if unaddressed in prison and jail, may negatively impact their ability to live crime-free lives after release- impacting the safety of communities.

LOCAL RESEARCH



El Paso County Uniform Recidivism Measure Project Study-January 30,2018

- Began in 2013 based on interest and initiative of criminal justice planners in Bexar, Dallas, El Paso, Harris, and Tarrant County. (El Paso being a leader)
- Tracks three-year recidivism rates for jail releases and state populations supervised in the county from 2011 - 2015.
- Overall, recidivism in El Paso has remained largely static over the years.

LOCAL RESEARCH



The El Paso County Pretrial System Assessment Study-May 24,2019

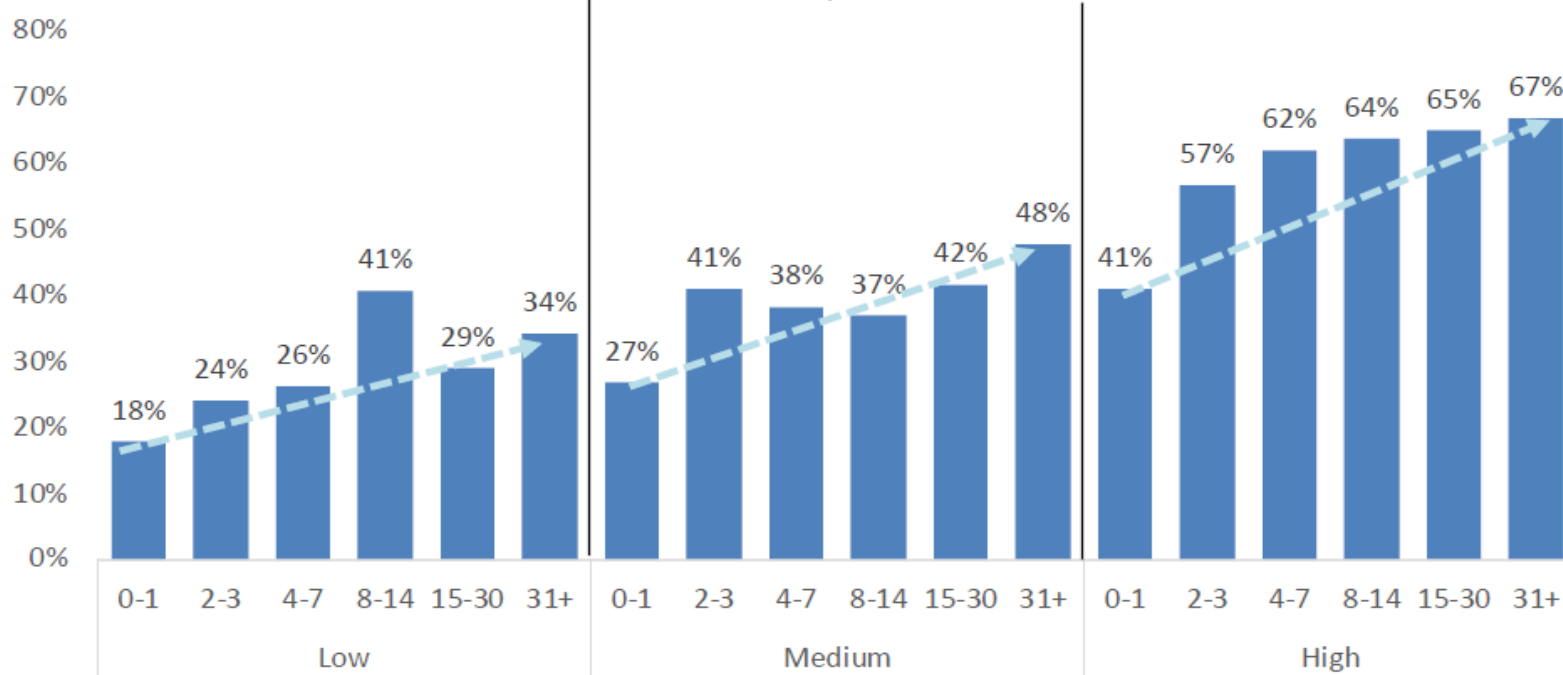
- Evaluated policies and trends as a continuation of the initial recidivism project study.
- Indicated that recidivism rates did not decline significantly for any of the participating counties due to few initiatives in place targeting high risk populations released from jail.
- Stated that defendants in 2018, facing a felony charge and released on PR Bond, spend an average of 24.7 days in jail before release.

EL PASO OUTCOMES VIA RISK LEVEL



Recidivism Increases the Longer Defendants Stayed in Jail Before Their Pre-adjudication Release at All Risk Levels

Figure 30: Three-Year Recidivism Rate by Risk and Length of Stay Prior to Bond Release, 2013



- Figure 30 shows the three year recidivism rate by risk level and length of day categories measure in days.

**Justice Center Research, 2018*



RE-ENTRY

MORE THAN RELEASE AND TRANSITION PLANNING:

- Evidence Based Programming
- Supportive Transition
- Assistance with Services/Benefit Enrollment
- Community In-Reach and After-Care
- Employment, Education, and Treatment Options
- Support of Safe Family Integrationn
- Instilling HOPE



PROJECT CHANCE

Jail Reentry Partnership

A Partnership between El Paso County Sheriff's Office and the Community Services Department, Reentry Division.

- Assisting individuals transition from incarceration to the community with the goal of reducing recidivism.
- With the intent to empower the men and women incarcerated at the El Paso County Jail to be better than they were at the point of incarceration.



PROJECT CHANCE

Program Design

- A 60-90-Day holistic strength-based in-reach/outreach program.
- Designed to provide reentry related services; care management, life skills classes, education, and groups inside these cell blocks.
- Develops capacity and partnerships in providing services to med-high risk offenders that provide a successful transition back into the community, prevent recidivism, reduce crime, and improve public safety.



PROJECT CHANCE

Composition

Consists of 3 Jail Cell Blocks Designated for Reentry Services

- A Female Cell Block- houses 24
- 2 Male Cell Blocks- houses 48
- A Care Manager, Special Officer, and a Community Volunteer
- Assistant Chief, Lieutenant, Sergeant, Program Manager



PROJECT CHANCE

Three Phase Approach

- **Phase I- Pre-Release:** Develops a proactive Jail Reentry System conducive to offender change.
- **Phase II-Transition:** Assists with reintegration back into the community and eliminates a break in service.
- **Phase III-Post-Release:** Provides continuity of care through supportive services in the community.

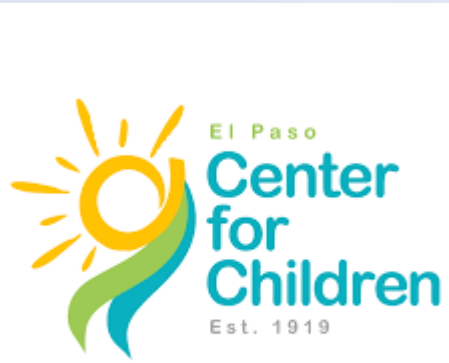


PROJECT CHANCE

Collaboration

- Care Managers will provide a system of care through care management services.
- Special Officers will provide support and security.
- Community Provider Volunteers will deliver the daily classroom curriculum and groups with Care Manager and Special Officer support.

COMMUNITY PARTNERS



Emergence Health Network





PROJECT CHANCE

Services Provided

- Monday through Friday, 8am- 4pm
- Free of charge to program participants
- Will be posted on the daily activity schedule
 - Life skills classes, to include, but not limited to: Abuse prevention, Vocational, Job Readiness, Money Management, Cultural Diversity, and Nutrition
 - Groups: Women's, Men's and Veteran's support groups
 - Individual Support: Care Management and Service Coordination, Recovery Coaches, Religious Services, Prevention Specialists



PROJECT CHANCE

Services Provided Cont'd

- **Educational/Vocational:** Mental Health First Aid, Inmate Health and Wellness, GED, Microsoft Word, Arts and Crafts, Pets Advancing Wellness (PAWS) program, Landscape program, Commissary, Laundry Services, Kitchen Crew
- **Employment Assistance:** Job placement development resources, portfolio development, resume writing, proper dress, interview technique training, employment counseling, mock job fairs and interviews on-site, educational programming referrals
- **Housing Assistance:** Projects for Assistance in Transition from Homelessness (PATH) program, Assessment through Homeless Management Information System (HMIS)

GOALS



ENHANCE JUSTICE REFORM

- Improve the individual
- Reduce recidivism rates
- Encourage effective reintegration
- Create a streamlined system of care
- Offer judges alternatives to incarceration
- Enhance and utilize community resources



SIMILAR JAIL REENTRY PROGRAMS

- Harris County Reentry Program in Houston Texas
(<https://www.harriscountycit.org/diversion/re-entry-service>)
- Allegheny County's Jail-Based Reentry Specialist Program, Pennsylvania (Rated Effective by CrimeSolutions.gov)
- Offender Re-Entry Transition Program, Winchester, Virginia
(Programs Recidivism rate is about 25%)



WORK IN PROGRESS

Next Steps

- Reallocation of Staff-Additional Staff
- Complete Community Provider Volunteer Background Checks
- Create and finalize MOU's
- Continued planning with Community Providers in delivery of services
- Implemented September 30, 2019



SUMMARY

Supporting Successful Transition

- Begins Inside-Identifying Barriers
- Creates an environment conducive to change
- Builds Care Teams-Care Management, Community Providers
- Conducts Risk/Needs Assessments
- Directs Connection to Community and Faith-based, peer to peer and support groups, and workshops
- Provides Essential Needs: Housing, ID, SS-card, Transportation, Birth certificates, Hygiene Kit, etc.

QUESTIONS?

