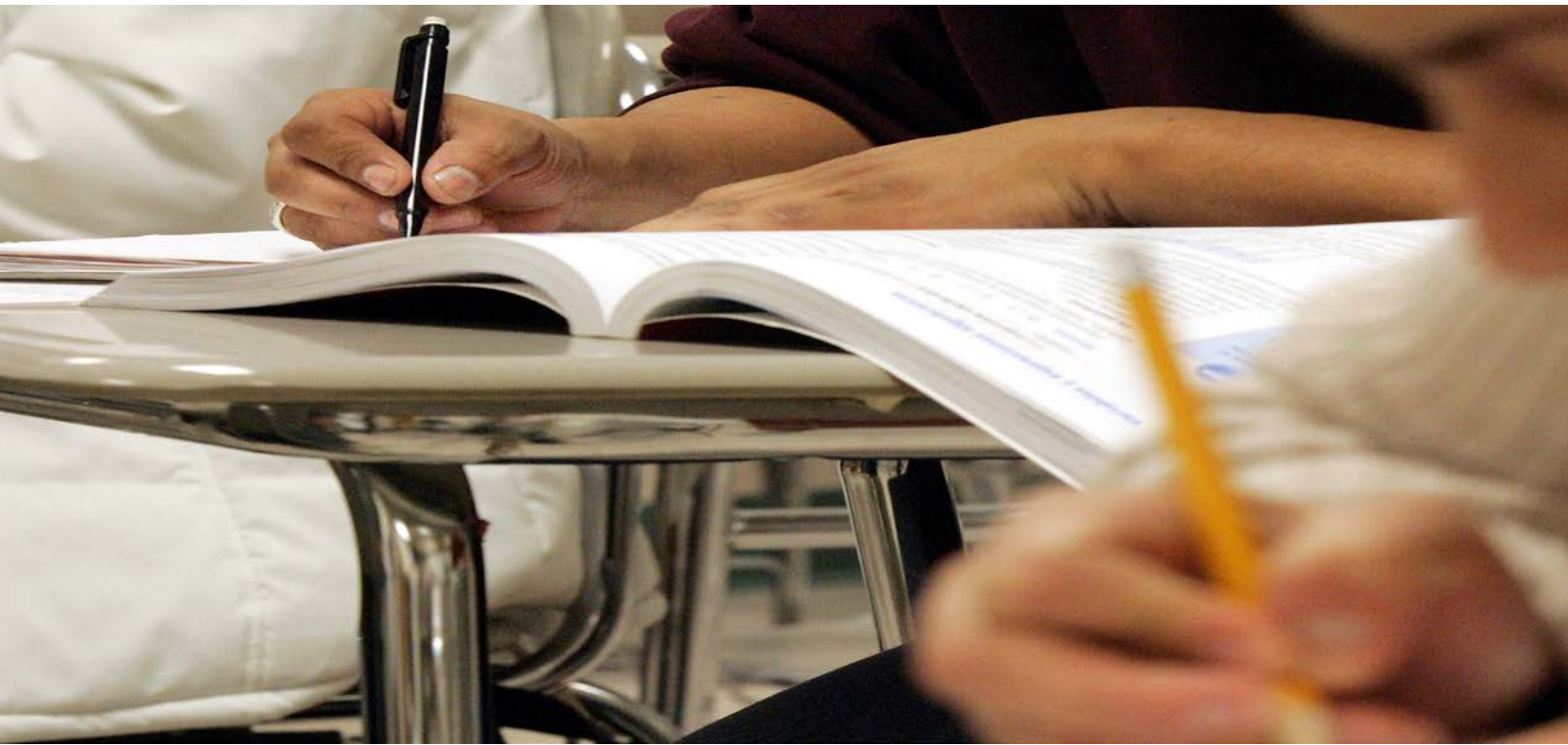




RESEARCH REPORT

Transition from Jail to Community (TJC) Initiative

Implementation Success and Challenges in Fresno County, California

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Glossary

AB 109—California’s Public Safety Realignment Act

CCP—Community Corrections Partnership

CJCC—Criminal Justice Coordinating Council and

FCSO—Fresno County Sheriff’s Office

MS inmates—Mandatory Supervision inmates

ONG—Offender Need Guide

NIC—National Institute of Corrections

Proxy—Proxy Triage Risk Screener

SERI—Sierra Education Research Institute

TA—Technical assistance

T4C—Thinking for a Change

Urban—Urban Institute

VPRAI—Virginia Pretrial Risk Assessment Instrument

Introduction

Nearly 12 million individuals enter the nation's approximately 3,100 jails each year (Minton and Golinelli 2014). With 60 percent of the jail population turning over each week, roughly the same number return to their respective communities. Many will recidivate (Roman et al. 2006; Uchida et al. 2009). This is not surprising given the many challenges faced by jail inmates: high rates of substance abuse and dependence (Karberg and James 2005), mental health issues (James and Glaze 2006), poor physical health (Maruschak 2006), low levels of educational attainment (Wolf Harlow 2003), and a high incidence of homelessness (Greenberg and Rosenheck 2008).

In order to assist local jurisdictions with facilitating successful reintegration from jail, the National Institute of Corrections (NIC) partnered with the Urban Institute (Urban) in 2007 to launch the Transition from Jail to Community (TJC) Initiative. The purpose of the TJC Initiative is to address the specific reentry challenges associated with transition from jail. During Phase 1 of the initiative, the NIC/Urban national TJC team, which also included Alternative Solutions Associates Inc., Corrections Partners Inc., and John Jay College of Criminal Justice, developed a comprehensive model to transform the jail transition process and ultimately enhance both the success of individuals returning to the community from jail and public safety in communities throughout the United States. More comprehensive than a discrete program, the TJC model is directed at long-term systems change and emphasizes a collaborative, community-based approach.

After designing the model, the national TJC team provided technical assistance (TA) to facilitate model implementation in six learning sites: Davidson County, TN; Denver, CO; Douglas County, KS; Kent County, MI; La Crosse County, WI; and Orange County, CA. A process and systems change evaluation in the six Phase 1 sites found that TJC model implementation was associated with significant, positive systems change (Buck Willison et al., 2012). Six additional Phase 2 learning sites, including Fresno County, joined the TJC Initiative in the fall of 2012, as well as two California jurisdictions receiving TJC technical assistance to assist them with managing the policy changes associated with Public Safety Realignment in that state (see box 1).

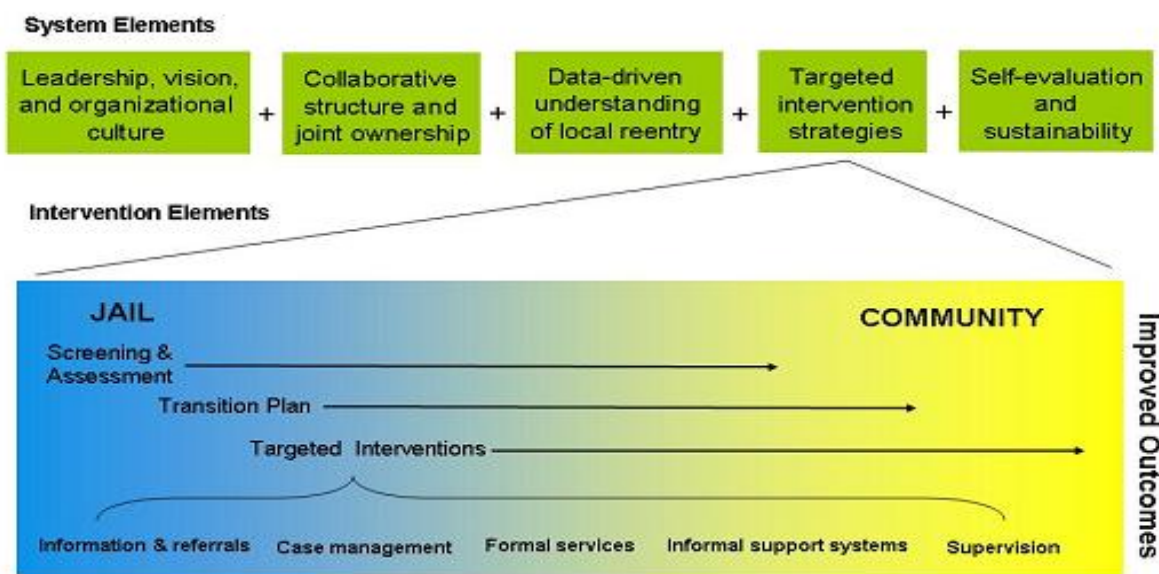
The TJC Model and Technical Assistance Approach

The TJC model is intended to allow jurisdictions to achieve two goals: (1) improve public safety by reducing the threat of harm to persons and property by individuals released from local jails to their home communities; and (2) increase successful reintegration outcomes – from employment retention and sobriety to reduced homelessness and improved health and family connectedness – for these individuals. Further, the model is

intended to be sufficiently adaptable that it can be implemented in any of the 2,860 jail jurisdictions in the United States (Stephan and Walsh 2011), despite how greatly they vary in terms of size, resources, and priorities. The TJC model, depicted in Figure 1, contains both system level elements, at which strategic and systems change work occurs, and an intervention level, at which work with individual clients occurs.

FIGURE 1

TJC Model



TJC is a systems change initiative, rather than a discrete program. It represents an integrated approach spanning organizational boundaries to deliver needed information, services, and case management to people released from jail. Boundary-spanning collaborative partnerships are necessary because transition from jail to the community is neither the sole responsibility of the jail nor of the community. Accordingly, effective transition strategies rely on collaboration among jail- and community-based partners and joint ownership of the problems associated with jail transition and their solutions. The NIC/Urban team was committed to the TJC model and implementation approach being consistent with evidence-based practice regarding effective reentry, inclusive of both the types of interventions that needed to be available (e.g. cognitive-behavioral programming) and the structure of the overall intervention continuum (e.g. basing it on risk and need factors determined through application of valid risk/needs assessment instruments). The five elements of the TJC model are:

- *Leadership, Vision, and Organizational Culture.* The development of an effective jail transition strategy requires the active involvement of key decision-makers to set expectations, to identify important issues, to articulate a clear vision of success, and to engage staff and other stakeholders in the effort.
- *Collaborative Structure and Joint Ownership.* The jail and its community partners must hold joint responsibility for successful transition. A structure for the TJC work should facilitate collaboration and allow for meaningful joint planning and decision-making.
- *Data-Driven Understanding of Local Reentry.* In a data-driven approach to reentry, collection of objective, empirical data and regular analysis of those data inform and drive decision-making and policy formation.
- *Targeted Intervention Strategies.* Targeted intervention strategies comprise the basic building blocks for effective jail transition. Targeting of program interventions should be based on information about an individual's risk of reoffending and criminogenic needs, information that is gathered through screening and assessment. Intervention delivery should also be guided and coordinated through case planning.
- *Self-Evaluation and Sustainability.* Self-evaluation involves the use of data to guide operations, monitor progress, and inform decision-making about changes or improvements that may need to be made to the initiative. Sustainability involves the use of strategies and mechanisms to ensure that the progress of the initiative is sustained over time despite changes in leadership, policy, funding, and staffing.

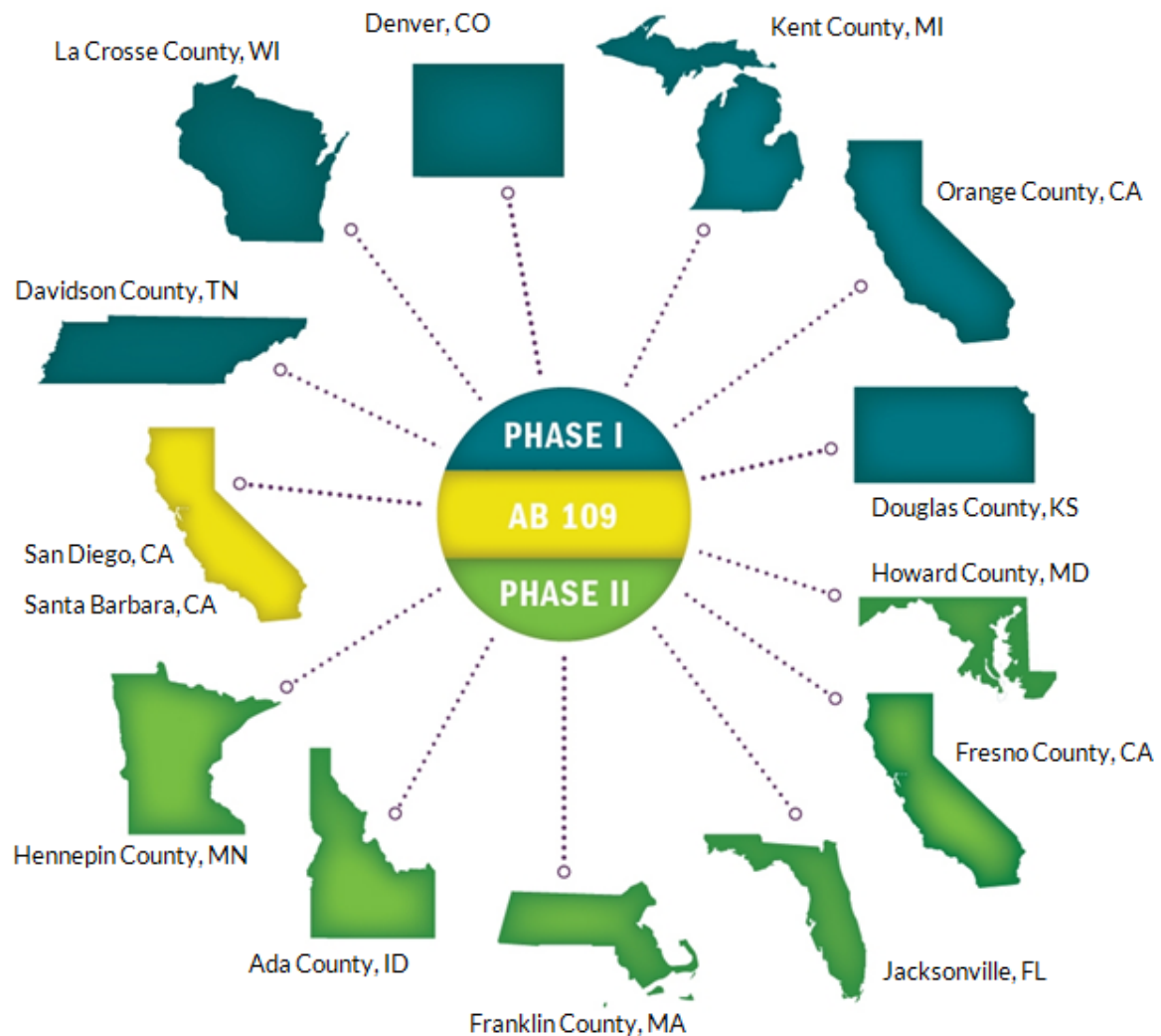
In order to test whether the model was in fact adaptable to different local contexts and to understand the shape model implementation could take in different jurisdictions with different priorities and capacities, the NIC/Urban TJC national team provided 14 TJC learning sites with multi-year technical assistance around model implementation (see Figure 2). Phase 2 TJC learning sites, including Fresno County, received intensive technical assistance supporting model implementation over the course of two and half years, starting in September 2012 and continuing through June 2015. The TJC technical assistance included an analysis of gaps in reentry practice relative to the TJC model, a facilitated strategic planning process, training in areas such as delivery of evidence-based programming, development of a process for performance measurement, and sustainability planning.

This report details the TJC implementation experience in Fresno, California. It discusses the development of the TJC strategy there, the policy and practice changes associated with its implementation, and the factors

that facilitated or impeded successful TJC model implementation. TJC technical assistance to the sites was structured around the five model elements. Given the interrelated nature of the elements, this report discusses implementation of some of the model elements in combined chapters. Chapter 2 discusses the structural, strategic, and collaborative aspects of TJC implementation, covering the Leadership, Vision, and Organizational Culture components and Collaborative Structure and Joint Ownership model elements. Chapter 3 covers the Targeted Intervention Strategies component of the model, including practices employed to bring about behavior change at the client level. Chapter 4 discusses the implementation of the Self-Evaluation and Sustainability component of the model, building the foundation for maintaining and expanding the TJC work. As TJC is designed to be a data-driven approach, work relative to the Data-Driven Understanding of Reentry model element is interwoven with all the other model elements, and is therefore integrated into each report chapter.

FIGURE 2

TJC Learning Sites



Phase 1 TA Period, Denver and Douglas County: September 2008 through February 2012

Phase 1 TA Period, remaining sites: September 2009 through February 2012

Phase 2 TA Period: September 2012 through June 2015

AB 109 (Realignment) TA Period: December 2012 through June 2015

Data Sources

This report draws on multiple sources of information collected in support of the implementation and systems change evaluation work undertaken by the Urban Institute:

- Documentation of TJC TA provision, including call notes and on-site observation of reentry operations.
- Data collected for the core TJC performance measures as well as any other data analysis conducted to inform TJC strategy development and implementation.
- Review of locally developed reentry materials such as procedural guidelines, program documents, and policy manuals.
- Two waves of Fresno County TJC stakeholder survey data. This brief online survey measured stakeholder perceptions of system functioning specific to collaboration, resource and information-sharing, interagency cooperation and trust, organizational culture, and the quality and availability of services available to individuals who transition from jail to the community. It was designed to detect and measure system-level change.
 - » Wave 1, conducted in spring 2013 with 33 respondents representing 33 agencies throughout the Fresno County criminal justice system and community.
 - » Wave 2, conducted in fall 2014 with 27 respondents representing 27 agencies throughout the Fresno County criminal justice system and community.
- Semi-structured interviews with Fresno County stakeholders (e.g., the TJC coordinator, jail administrator and/or sheriff, members of the site's reentry council, jail staff and staff from key partner agencies) to capture the site's implementation experiences and document the progress of TJC implementation, the development and evolution of the site's local reentry strategies including the range of activities pursued, and critical lessons learned. Discussion topics included the individual's involvement in the initiative, reflections on the pace and progress of implementation, impressions about core elements of the model, anticipated challenges, and technical assistance needs. Two rounds of stakeholder phone interviews were conducted, the first in later spring 2013 and the second in fall 2014, with up to eight stakeholders from within Fresno's core team.

Taken together, the data sources and evaluation activities paint a rich portrait of Fresno County's implementation experiences, strategies, challenges, and progress.

Fresno County Jail Transition at Baseline

Fresno County is the tenth largest county in California, with a population of nearly 1 million.¹ The Jail Division of the Fresno County Sheriff's Office (FCSO) operates three jail facilities, all of which are located in downtown Fresno. In 2011, the jail facilities had a maximum capacity of 2,427 beds, with an additional 1,051 beds that could be made operational with sufficient county funding for staffing. In 2011, Fresno County had about 40,000 jail bookings (representing about 24,000 unique individuals), and the average daily population of the jail facilities was 1,923 inmates. Most inmates (77 percent) were pretrial detainees.² Fresno County faces high levels of poverty, with 29 percent of the county's population living in poverty,³ and high levels of crime, with the third highest adult felony arrest rate and fifth highest per capita number of reported Part I crimes among California's 58 counties.⁴

In October 2011, Fresno, along with all other California counties, was subject to the far-reaching changes of California's Public Safety Realignment Act (AB 109), which shifted responsibility for incarceration and postrelease supervision of individuals without current or prior serious or violent felony convictions from the California Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation to local counties (see Box 1). As a result, Fresno County had to assume responsibility for the incarceration and community supervision of significant new populations. In 2012, Realignment resulted in 1,149 releases from prison to supervision by Fresno County probation, and 828 local sentences to jail that would have been served in prison previously.⁵

FCSO had been subject to the requirements of a federal consent decree addressing jail crowding since 1993, under which inmates were required to be released if the jail or any housing unit therein was operating at or above 90 percent of its capacity. The FCSO employed a process for determining which inmates would be released pursuant to the consent decree based on criteria such as felony/misdemeanant status, pretrial/sentenced status, and length of stay. Crowding was most acute in the housing units holding higher-security inmates. In addition to these legal requirements, the jurisdiction had also experienced significant budgetary constraints and the closing of floors of the jail due to lack of funding for staffing in the months preceding the beginning of the TJC initiative. The releases pursuant to the Sheriff's release policy were a consistent source of tension among justice system stakeholders, and several efforts to address jail crowding in the past had failed to resolve the situation.

BOX 1

Public Safety Realignment

In April 2011, California Governor Jerry Brown signed the Public Safety Realignment Act, also known as AB109, into law. The Act, intended to reduce the population of the state prison system to a level required by a three-judge federal panel, shifted responsibility for many offenders from the state to county criminal justice systems.

Key provisions of Public Safety Realignment included:

- *County sentences for certain felony offenses.* Felons convicted of most non-serious, non-violent, and non-sex crimes (as defined by the California Penal Code) would serve their term of incarceration in local jail rather than state prison, and any postrelease supervision would be the responsibility of county probation. There was no cap on the length of these jail sentences, which had previously been capped at one year.
- *“Split sentencing” for AB 109 county jail sentences.* Local sentences for offenses impacted by Realignment were expected to include a period of incarceration followed by a suspended sentence with mandatory community supervision. In January 2015, the California Judicial Council issued Rule 4.415, which included a statutory mandate for split sentences absent justification, and declared that denials of mandatory supervision should be limited.
- *County supervision of some released prison inmates.* Individuals returning from prison who had been convicted of non-serious, non-violent crimes were supervised by county probation departments under “post release community supervision” or PRCS, rather than being released to state parole supervision.
- *Parole revocations to county jails.* Parole violators could no longer be returned to state prison unless convicted of a new offense. Parole revocations could be served only in local jails for a period of up to 180 days.
- *State funding commensurate with each county’s projected realigned population.* The state allocated significant funding to counties, estimated to total approximately half of the marginal cost of state prison or parole for each realigned offender. Proposition 30, approved by voters in November 2012, amended the state Constitution to include a sales and income tax increase to fund Realignment indefinitely.
- *Requirement for county Realignment planning.* In order to receive state Realignment funds, each county had to develop a plan for managing the realigned population and allocating the funds. Plans were developed and endorsed by local Community Corrections Partnerships, collaboratives mandated by statute and comprised of criminal justice system stakeholders and county partners. Each plan was submitted to the County Board of Supervisors, who had the option of rejecting the plan by a 2/3 majority.

Source: CDCR (2013); Couzens and Bigelow (2015).

Criminal justice leaders in Fresno County engaged in collaboration through two entities: the Criminal Justice Coordinating Council (CJCC) and the Community Corrections Partnership (CCP). The CJCC was formed in 2007 and included the Presiding Judge of the Fresno Superior Court, the District Attorney, the Sheriff, the Chief Probation Officer, the Fresno Chief of Police, the Public Defender, and several subcommittee members. Initially tasked to focus on the issue of jail crowding, the CJCC expanded its scope to address issues throughout the justice system. The CCP was formed in 2011, as required by AB 109, and charged with developing and overseeing the implementation plan for Realignment in the county. Both of these bodies and the jail and probation leadership were supportive of efforts to improve jail reentry.

In Fresno County's TJC application, it listed priority gaps in practice to address through TJC participation as:

- Screening for risk of recidivism consistent with evidence based practices that may include an improved risk/needs assessment and higher intensive interventions for the highest risk populations that are identified;
- Pretrial practices for detention populations including alternative release strategies;
- Development and implementation of a system of in-custody and transitional services, including assessment, case management, and evidenced-based programs and services;
- Engagement of community stakeholders in the development of a system of care;
- Ongoing analysis of the characteristics of the jail population that would assist in the development of services and shared offender information; and
- Tracking offenders through the continuum of reentry with a particular emphasis on program participation, and practice-based evaluation efforts to measure effectiveness of effort.

Achieving these goals would constitute substantial progress in terms of client-level jail transition practice. There was a minimal level of available jail-based interventions and infrastructure to target them appropriately by risk to reoffend and criminogenic need. FCSO was collecting the information at booking needed to score the Proxy Triage Risk Screener (Proxy) to quickly gauge risk to reoffend, but Proxy scores did not affect program placement or any other transition-related decisions. Due to significant staff shortages, the jail did not provide any needs assessment and only provided very minimal case management services to few inmates. A few programs—including religious programs, twelve-step programs (AA, NA, and Celebrate Recovery), GED, ESL, and relationship and parenting education classes—were being provided to the general population. Participation was guided by inmate initiative; program placement and/or eligibility were not based on risk and

needs information. There was no general cognitive-behavioral programming offered to inmates while they were in custody. The Offender Program Unit also provided a community resource guide to inmates to help them access services after release.

The jail's capacity to deliver programming was limited due to space constraints and the complex logistics of inmate movement within the jail. These difficulties were exacerbated by the substantial population of gang members from multiple gangs in the Fresno jails, who by policy had to be kept separate. As a result of the minimal jail programming and interventions, the jail staff was not very familiar with the concept or execution of risk reduction interventions. However, some case management and diversion options were available for inmates with mental health issues.

There was, however, more developed intervention capacity on the postrelease side. When TJC implementation began, the Probation Department was using the STRONG to assess its clients. The STRONG consisted of two components: the STR, which assessed static risk factors, and the ONG, which assessed dynamic need factors. The STR was conducted for every felony probationer at sentencing, while the ONG was conducted upon intake to Probation for those felony probationers found to be at medium- and high-risk to reoffend. The ONG was used to create case plans for these probationers. Probation also provided evidence-based programming in the community, including the *Thinking for a Change* (T4C) curriculum to address criminal thinking and cognitive behavioral change, and it contracted with an organization called Turning Point to provide substance abuse, mental health, and other treatment services to the AB 109 probation population. FCSO and Probation did not have a formalized cross-agency process to facilitate discharge planning and reentry to the community. In addition, coordination and information-sharing among the FCSO, Probation, and community providers was limited. While many individuals leaving the jail were supervised by Probation, there were substantial numbers who were not supervised, and there was not a process to connect them with resources or services in the community.

Fresno County also made new investments in working with the pretrial population at the outset of Realignment. Probation established a pretrial supervision program as part of Fresno's Realignment work, with capacity to supervise up to 80 individuals. Probation began using the Virginia Pretrial Risk Assessment Instrument (VPRAI) to assess risk for those referred to the pretrial supervision program by the court. Many pretrial detainees were released in accord with the federal consent decree prior to being screened for pretrial release; therefore, most pretrial referrals came from the remainder of detainees whose charges and/or risk posed to the community were more serious. The confined pretrial population was eligible for the general-population programs in the jail at their own initiative.

Corrections data-tracking and performance measures that were in place in Fresno were primarily related to Realignment; the jurisdiction had an AB 109 Implementation plan in place and regularly submitted data on the AB 109 population to the CCP. Prior to Realignment, jail data was regularly submitted to the CJCC for review, but this was less common after Realignment. Furthermore, no system of data sharing across agencies and organizations was in place. Some of the main data integration challenges Fresno faced included lack of common identifiers and the fact that most of the data was not automated. In the jail, the lack of IT staff capacity was another major obstacle for data analysis.

TJC Structure, Leadership, and Collaboration

Development of an effective jail transition strategy requires the active involvement of policymakers from both the jail and the community to articulate a clear vision of success, set expectations, identify important issues, and engage staff and other stakeholders in the effort. This leadership is necessary to align the cultures of partnering organizations for the common purpose of facilitating successful transition into the community. Leadership must be engaged at multiple levels. Collaborative structures are needed to make strategic decisions about jail transition priorities and resource allocation and to create continuity of care and approach between agencies and across the point of release.

A TJC collaborative structure must achieve four things:

- Inspire, increase, and maintain support for jail transition from a broad array of community partners.
- Identify, prioritize, and build consensus around actions needed to improve the jail transition system.
- Ensure that these actions are taken.
- Monitor the transition process and practice to ensure accountability and improve the approach as needed.

Fresno County's TJC work was spurred by and unfolded against the backdrop of the broader change process brought on by Realignment. This change process was overseen by the Fresno County CCP, the Executive Committee of which included executive leaders from all Fresno criminal justice agencies, as well as the Director of Behavioral Health for Fresno County. Building an effective jail transition process aligned with Fresno County's Realignment goals, as evidenced by the CCP listing expansion of programming in the jail among the responsibilities of the FCSO in its AB 109 implementation plan. In general, Realignment required all Fresno County criminal justice actors to make changes in practice, creating a dynamic environment in which the justice status quo could not be maintained regardless of whether people desired to do so. While managing the new AB 109 responsibilities created substantial challenges for the justice system, it also created opportunities for improving practice that might not have existed otherwise. As one TJC stakeholder put it, *"Realignment forced the county to do things that never in a million years it would have done."*

“Realignment forced the county to do things that never in a million years it would have done.”

The most concrete manifestation of the CCP’s support for the TJC approach in Fresno as it developed was its decision in March 2013 to provide funding for a jail-based program unit (generally referred to as the “TJC Unit”) to serve as the primary initial vehicle for delivery of intensive program and case planning services to Fresno’s TJC target population. This funding also solidified the CCP’s role in providing oversight of the TJC work, although it also concentrated the CCP’s attention on the TJC Unit’s performance, as opposed to the development of a broader systems approach that extended beyond that specific program. Several subcommittees of the CCP were created to address issues concerning AB 109 implementation, including a Community and Correctional Resources subcommittee designed to improve in-custody and transition services for inmates. This subcommittee included staff from the Department of Behavioral Health, Workforce Development, faith-based organizations, local universities, and veterans’ programs. However, this committee did not develop a clear mandate for coordinating the efforts of this diverse group of players around reentry, and it did not serve to connect the CCP directly to operational-level TJC work.

The foundational collaborative relationship in Fresno County’s TJC work was between the FCSO and Fresno County Probation. The Sheriff and the Chief Probation Officer were the agency heads most directly involved. FCSO and Fresno Probation contributed most of the members of the TJC Core Team and convened to work closely with the NIC/Urban TJC technical assistance team to set priorities for and guide implementation of key components of Fresno County’s TJC strategy. They worked closely to develop the TJC Unit program approach, and to define how handoff from the jail to probation would be handled, including the designation of two probation officers to be based in the jail to work with the TJC Unit and its population. FCSO and Probation also engaged in knowledge transfer and sharing of core tools, which allowed the TJC effort to benefit from Probation’s prior work to develop evidence-based approaches. Probation’s STRONG risk/needs assessment and case plans were utilized for the TJC Unit population, and Probation provided training to FCSO staff on delivering *Thinking for a Change* (T4C), a program that Probation had been utilizing for some time (and for which it had trained trainers) but was new to FCSO.

TJC stakeholders in Fresno County agreed universally that one of the effects of the TJC process (and of Realignment) was a much closer working relationship between FCSO and Probation than had been the case in the past, and that this was a significant accomplishment. At the same time, this relationship was not always easy, and differences of perspective arose with some frequency between FCSO and Probation over the

optimal operation of the TJC Unit and the priorities of the TJC effort generally. Effective communication between the two agencies was of critical importance, but it was not always achieved. The fact that roles and responsibilities of each agency for the TJC Unit's operation had not been memorialized as written policy likely contributed to such issues. While operational collaboration between the two agencies was strong throughout the TJC process, the need to regularly reestablish consensus on the TJC direction between the two agencies slowed the expansion of the TJC strategy beyond the TJC Unit.

Fresno County's collaboration with community partners during the TJC assistance period was almost entirely concentrated on working with the TJC Unit population. The community organizations participating in the Core Team were those providing services to the TJC Unit population. While TJC stakeholders in Fresno recognized from the start of the TJC process that it was important to secure broader community support and engagement, the timing for launching that engagement effort was pushed back repeatedly. The Core Team struggled to build community collaboration from the foundation of the TJC Unit's success because of challenges in maintaining consensus between the core correctional partners and consistency in the in-jail service provision partner. There was also a challenge due to the lack of a community reentry coalition with which to partner, meaning a community partner network would have to be created. An initial convening of a broader group of community partners in Fresno occurred in May 2015.

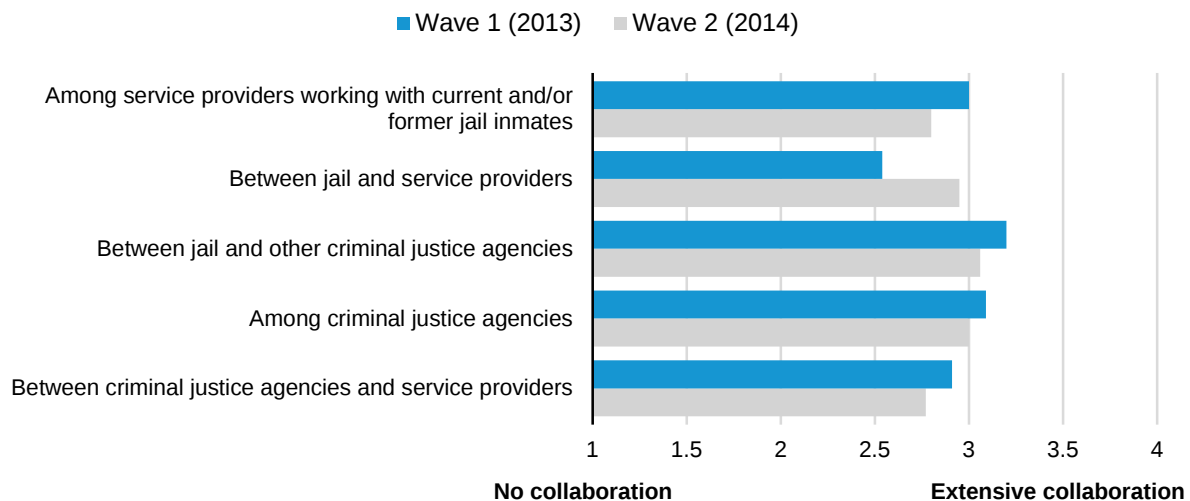
In the final year of TJC assistance, the judiciary in Fresno County spearheaded an effort to explore improving the county's practice for dealing with the pretrial population by engaging executive level leadership from FCSO, Probation, the District Attorney's office, the Public Defender, the County Administrator's Office, and other agencies with a stake in the issue. These leaders engaged the TJC national team, led by Mike Jones of the Pretrial Justice Institute, in strategic discussions regarding how the pretrial release process might be improved to ease jail crowding and produce better public safety outcomes. These discussions were focused more on issues of providing a common knowledge base about pretrial best practice and securing support for the general direction being taken by the county, in contrast to the more operational conversations related to the operation of the TJC Unit. TJC work thus proceeded through these different channels, as appropriate for their different goals.

The TJC stakeholder survey asked Fresno respondents to rate the extent of interagency collaboration on a four-point scale. Scores were averaged among respondents to calculate a measure of intensity: the higher the average score, the more extensive the degree of perceived collaboration. During both survey waves, stakeholders perceived collaboration to be greater than the midpoint score of 2.5 (see Figure 3). Collaboration between the jail and other criminal justice agencies was given the highest score during both waves, followed by collaboration among criminal justice agencies. This suggests that criminal justice agencies, including the jail, probation, local law enforcement, and the courts, had a strong partnership at the beginning of TJC and

maintained it over time. The area with the lowest levels of perceived collaboration at Wave 1 was between the jail and service providers. This was the only category of collaboration that was rated as stronger at Wave 2, and also the category that experienced the greatest change, indicating that collaboration between the jail and service providers went from a clear weakness to being roughly the same level as other collaborative relationships assessed.

FIGURE 2

TJC Stakeholder Survey, Extent of Collaboration

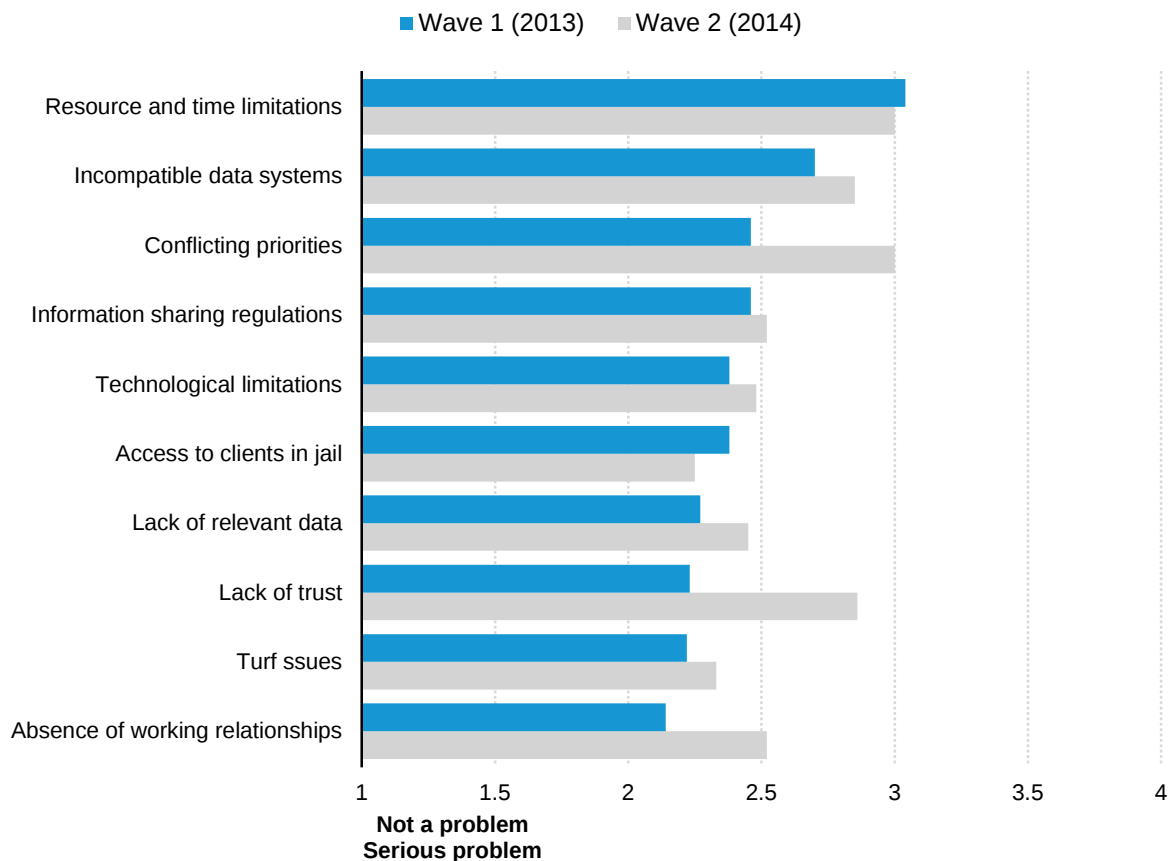


Source: Fresno County TJC stakeholder survey, 2013–14.

The survey also asked respondents to assess the degree to which a number of factors were barriers to collaboration (see Figure 4). At Wave 1, resource and time limitations were rated as the most serious barrier to collaboration by a wide margin (which is commonly the case in TJC sites, see Buck Willison et al. 2012). This remained the case at Wave 2, but conflicting priorities, lack of trust, and absence of working relationships were all rated as much more significant barriers to collaboration in Wave 2 than in Wave 1. This likely reflects the sharpening of tensions on a number of issues between FCSO and Probation, as well as issues related to the change in the primary community provider working within the TJC Unit.

FIGURE 3

TJC Stakeholder Survey, Barriers to Collaboration



Source: Fresno County TJC stakeholder survey, 2013–14.

While collaboration and leadership across organizations was necessary to Fresno’s TJC work, TJC stakeholders emphasized these as critically important within FCSO as well. As many stakeholders noted, establishing the TJC Unit required many departures from past jail practice, particularly around housing classification and allowing people with different gang statuses to live in the same housing unit. *“The biggest [change] is the agreement to allow us to open a mixed classification housing unit...Getting the buy-in to do something we have never done...we have active gangs, gang drops, blacks, whites, Asians, and Hispanics all in one housing unit.”* The jail captain dedicated to the TJC work in the initial period, Neal Dadian, was a particular catalyst for the work, committing to work out how to develop a program unit in the Fresno jail. Once it was clear that this was something that the jail’s leadership, all the way up to the Sheriff, believed could and would be done, it was energizing and provided focus to the entire TJC effort.

FCSO determined that dedicated TJC Unit staff would be critical to spread reentry leadership and knowledge within the organization. To that end, they identified a sergeant and corrections officers to staff the unit, soliciting applications from within the jail, and interviewing them. Having dedicated security staff working in the TJC Unit allowed them to deepen their knowledge and skills in program delivery and to manage the unit to support the program modalities. It also began to affect the internal staff culture of the jails. As one stakeholder noted, *“There’s certainly a change within the institution itself. Correctional officers are seen as special because they get to work in the pod – now there’s some jealousy and stuff – they are on a specific assignment and people aren’t used to that.”* Regardless, this addition to corrections officers’ duties served to initiate changes to the jail’s organizational culture that were far more conducive to effective jail transition practices.

FCSO then undertook efforts to extend these ideas, practices, and orientation to behavior change from the TJC Unit more broadly within the jail workforce. They initiated a two-hour skill training for all security staff, conducted by the TJC Unit sergeant. FCSO staff involved in TJC felt strongly that peer-to-peer training and knowledge exchange was the most effective (and possibly the only effective) way to secure buy-in to reentry principles from security staff generally. Openness to the TJC approach was also helped by the fact that mixing inmates with different classification levels and gang statuses in the TJC Unit did not result in fights or other disorder issues. TJC stakeholders, within FCSO and without, believed that the jail’s staff culture had become more accepting of reentry. One stakeholder noted: *“Some of my folks were upset with some of the incentives [TJC Unit participants] got – thought that they didn’t deserve anything – things are different now, you have to engage with people differently, talk differently. I think the platform is set, we can continue and move forward.”*

Fresno County’s work at the system level to provide needed leadership to the TJC work, extend collaboration, and provide a structure for the work set the context in which transition work with individuals was carried out. The next section turns to the client-level practices intended to reduce the risk of reoffense and support successful reintegration to the community.

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Targeted Intervention Strategies

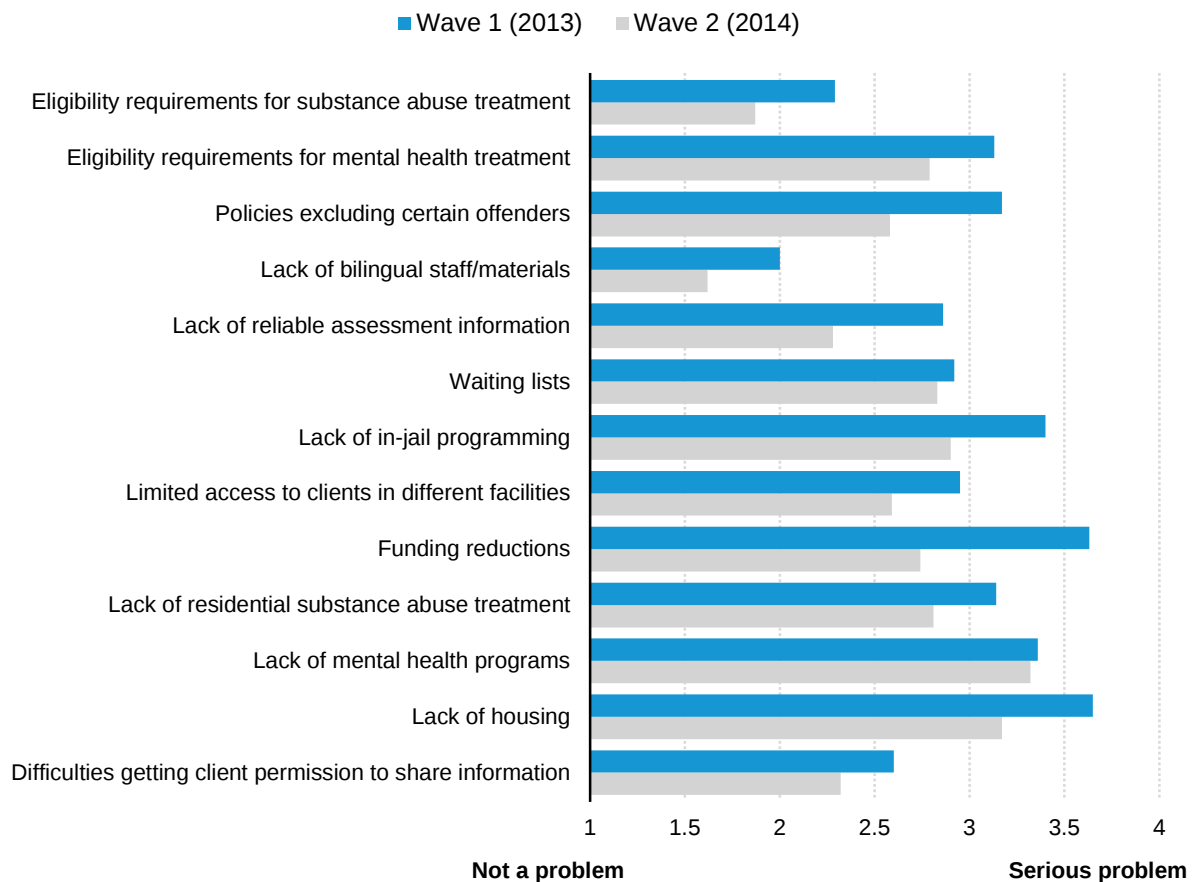
Targeted intervention strategies are the basic building blocks of jail transition. Improving transition at the individual level involves introducing specific interventions at critical points along the jail-to-community continuum. Interventions at these key points can improve reintegration and reduce reoffending, thereby increasing public safety. Screening and assessment, transition planning, and program interventions are key elements of this strategy.

The TJC model employs a triage approach to prioritize interventions based on where resources are most needed or most likely to be successful for a rapidly cycling jail population with deep and varied needs. The TJC triage approach is consistent with the research literature that higher-risk individuals should receive higher levels of intervention (Lowenkamp et al. 2006), that interventions intended to reduce recidivism must target criminogenic needs, targets for change that drive criminal behavior (Bonta and Andrews 2007), and that individuals at low risk to reoffend should be subject to minimal intervention, if any (Lowenkamp and Latessa 2004).

Fresno County entered into the TJC process with very minimal interventions available in the jail, as discussed in the introductory chapter to this report. The challenges facing Fresno in improving its targeted intervention delivery are indicated by the TJC stakeholder survey respondent assessment of problems related to service access, summarized in Figure 5. In 2013, only two of the potential issues in the survey were ranked below the midpoint of 2.5; all other issues were rated as more problematic than not. Many of these problems were seen as less serious by Wave 2, particularly reductions in funding, lack of in-jail programming, and lack of reliable assessment information—the latter two were the main areas of focus for the TJC initiative. Lack of housing and mental health programs were both indicated as serious issues at both waves, although housing was rated a much more critical issue at Wave 1.

FIGURE 4

Barriers to Service Access, TJC Stakeholder Survey



Source: Fresno County TJC stakeholder survey, 2013–14.

Fresno County’s TJC work on targeted intervention strategies focused primarily on the development, implementation, and monitoring of the TJC Unit and the facilitated handoff from that unit to the community at the point of release. The intent was to develop the ideal model for the jail transition process in Fresno through the TJC Unit, demonstrate its feasibility and effectiveness, and expand from there to other populations and locations in the jail. This approach was successful in putting multiple new and evidence-based reentry practices and processes into place quickly and successfully. However, there were a number of ongoing implementation challenges related to the TJC Unit that delayed the extension of the TJC work more broadly within the population of inmates returning from the jail. This had the follow-on effect of making TJC in Fresno synonymous with the TJC Unit in the minds of many Fresno TJC stakeholders. This is understandable, but means that work remains to realize the full intent of TJC to develop a system-wide approach to supporting transition, rather than a discrete program.

The Fresno TJC Unit

The Fresno County Core Team determined, during the initial TJC site visit, that developing a jail-based program unit was the best approach to begin building the targeted intervention infrastructure within the FCSO (including staff competencies) necessary to do effective jail transition. Fresno's TJC Unit, as is commonly the case for jail-based program units, sought to create a therapeutic milieu by housing the program participants together, and dedicating staff specifically to work with the unit. Doing this intensifies the effectiveness of the programming because staff and inmates in the unit are all involved in the programming operation, which allows for possibilities such as using tools associated with the T4C curriculum (e.g., thinking reports) to address misconduct issues. It also mitigates the difficulty of moving inmates from all over the facility to the program location by centralizing the program population near available classroom space.

The Core Team felt that the decision to have dedicated staff was critical to the TJC Unit's success. *"It's very important that you pick staff that is solely dedicated to a unit like this, very important to get buy in. The inmates trust us, we are the same staff they deal with every single day...They don't have to think about inconsistencies. I think that's imperative for a unit like this to know who the probation officers and TJC [corrections] officers are. We are a team that came together of people who wanted to do this – we weren't dragged in, which is very important."*

"We are a team that came together of people who wanted to do this – we weren't dragged in, which is very important."

Fresno County elected to define the target population for the TJC Unit as medium to high-risk male inmates with an AB 109 sentence split between jail custody and postrelease probation supervision ("MS," or Mandatory Supervision inmates). There were several reasons to focus on this population. As an AB 109 population, they were a population of focus for the CCP, which funded the staffing necessary to open the TJC Unit. The MS population was supervised by Probation after release, which meant probation officers from the AB 109 supervision unit could be dedicated to the TJC Unit and serve as the primary handoff partners for participants. It also meant that participants could access postrelease substance abuse treatment services funded for the MS population. The MS population also tended to have a longer time to serve in the jail, making more of them likely to have the three months remaining to serve necessary to complete TJC Unit

programming. Finally, most of them were medium- to high-risk to reoffend (see Table 1), criteria for inclusion in the Unit.

TABLE 1

Proxy Risk Level, Fresno Jail Population, January–June 2014

Risk Level (Proxy Score Range)	MS Population (n=391)	All Jail Bookings (n=13,499)
Low (0–2)	12.8%	25.2%
Medium (3–4)	43.5%	47.7%
High (5–6)	43.7%	27.1%

Risk to reoffend was determined using both the Proxy, as applied by FCSO, as well as the STR, the static portion of Probation’s STRONG assessment tool that predicts risk to reoffend. As the STR was conducted for all inmates for whom it was known that they would be supervised postrelease (inclusive of all MS inmates), and the Proxy was applied to all jail inmates at booking, all individuals eligible for the TJC Unit had both risk scores. During the TJC Unit development phase, Probation provided FCSO with access to the STR results. Through work on establishing the baseline characteristics of the jail population as part of the TJC TA process, FCSO discovered that information needed to score the Proxy was missing for a substantial number of inmates. Such inconsistency in application of the Proxy was unsurprising, as the scores had not been used prior to the advent of TJC. FCSO was able to remediate this issue and achieve consistent application of the Proxy in short order.

Both the Proxy and the STR scores were considered when determining eligibility for the TJC Unit. An automated report of male MS inmates including their Proxy scores and time remaining on their sentence was generated for FCSO program staff, who would check their STR scores and determine who had between three and six months of custody time remaining. They would then approach those inmates to determine whether they wanted to participate in the TJC Unit. If so, they signed a participation agreement (see appendix A) and were moved into the Unit. While the TJC Unit pod had the capacity to house 72 inmates, FCSO in particular felt that they would not be able to maintain program integrity for a population greater than 50.

Assessment and case planning for TJC Unit participants were done by the probation officers assigned to the Unit. After TJC Unit intake, they would conduct the ONG (Offender Need Guide) portion of the STRONG, which provided information about dynamic criminogenic need factors that needed to be addressed. Under standard practice, the ONG was conducted at probation intake in the community—TJC Unit participants were the only people in the jail receiving the ONG prior to release. The probation officers also developed the case plan using the standard probation case plan utilized for the MS population, based on the ONG results. The TJC Unit probation officers were the supervising officers for TJC Unit participants for the first 60 days after release, at which point the case was transferred to another probation officer. This model allowed for continuity across

the point of release while keeping the caseloads of the TJC Unit probation officers small enough that they could split their time between in-jail and community supervision work.

Given that the decision to participate in the TJC Unit was voluntary, incentives for doing so were very important. This was particularly true during the period prior to the passage of Proposition 47 (see box 2), when releases pursuant to the consent decree were common. As the TJC Unit never utilized all of the available beds, there were never overcrowding releases of participants, whereas eligible individuals declining to participate were likely to receive a consent decree release eventually. Incentives for unit participation included small things that were available immediately to any participant, such as access to microwaves and new clothing or bedding. Through the Unit's phase system, participants could earn rewards such as contact visits; TJC Unit participants were the only inmates allowed them. After the Unit had been operating for a year, the issue of consent decree releases as a disincentive for participation was raised with the Sheriff, who agreed to allow for the use of earned credits for a slightly earlier release. This was also used as a mechanism to avoid weekend releases, when immediate reporting to probation and postrelease services was not possible. It is important to note that each of these revisions/accommodations in long-standing practice within the FCSO were and will be significant in the advancement of Fresno's overarching TJC practice.

The backbone of programming in the TJC Unit consisted of T4C, which all participants were required to complete. T4C was the first cognitive-behavioral program available in the jail to address pro-criminal attitudes, orientations, and beliefs. T4C classes were co-facilitated by corrections officers, probation officers, and the TJC Unit social worker. When the TJC Unit launched, Probation agreed to allow its contract provider, Turning Point, to redirect some of its funding for community-based services for MS probationers to work with them in the TJC Unit prior to release. Turning Point provided substance abuse treatment, anger management classes, parenting and family systems, release and reintegration classes, as well as mental health assessment and counseling. Entering the second year of the TJC Unit's operation, Turning Point requested separate dedicated funding for the in-jail work from the CCP. When this did not happen, Turning Point withdrew from the TJC Unit, leaving a serious gap in the Unit's program offerings. The Sierra Education Research Institute (SERI), which was providing assessment and counseling services in the Unit, stepped up and agreed to take on the programming role previously held by Turning Point. The Fresno County Department of Education provided education and GED programming throughout the TJC period.

BOX 2

Proposition 47

In November 2014, California voters approved Proposition 47, which reclassified simple drug possession from a felony to a misdemeanor, and raised the monetary threshold to \$950 for petty theft, shoplifting, forging/writing a bad check, and receipt of stolen property to qualify as felonies. In addition to these changes applying prospectively, individuals incarcerated for these offenses at the time of Proposition 47's passage could apply for resentencing (and release), and individuals with these offense in their past criminal history could apply for their reclassification to misdemeanors.

The passage of Proposition 47 resulted in an immediate and substantial reduction in bookings to the jail in all three California counties participating in TJC at the time (Fresno, San Diego, and Santa Barbara), an experience presumably common throughout the state.

Source: "About Proposition 47," Californians for Safety and Justice, accessed August 9, 2015, <http://myprop47.org/about/>.

Probation acted as the primary case manager and broker for services after release, with Turning Point providing substance abuse, mental health, and some transitional housing services in the community. Probation stakeholders indicated that this handoff was producing a much better start to probation supervision for a population that often struggled on supervision, or simply failed to show up for their probation intake appointment. *"I think it's more of the POs being in at the jail and building rapport with the guys in the pod. Once they transition out they build that trust among each other, so we're saying if they stay in contact we can work things out on the outside. They've bought into that."*

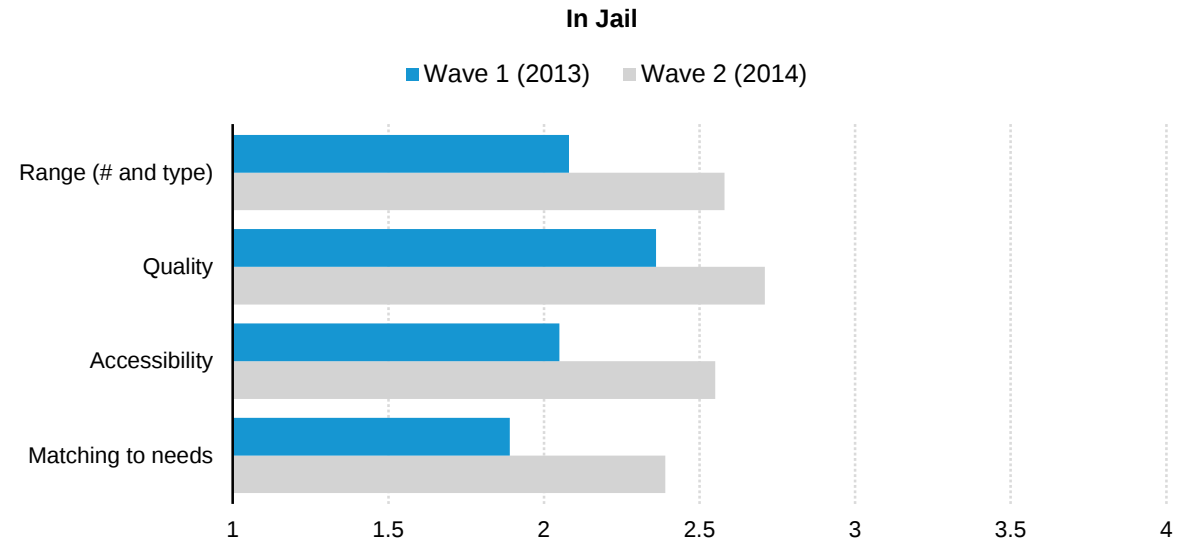
Some TJC interviewees also felt that the kinds of backsliding common among many probationers, such as relapse to drug use, were less likely to spiral out of control and result in revocation for TJC Unit participants. Rather than disengaging from supervision, stakeholders described how probationers released from the TJC Unit proactively communicated and were honest with probation officers: *"We have even had some call and say, 'I screwed up. I'm going to test dirty.' Zero people have done that before TJC. It's just unheard of."* Additionally, the TJC Unit corrections officers call former participants periodically to see how they are doing. *"They are really surprised that we actually follow up with them...It's just one more root of the tree holding on to them, gives them a little more support."*

Partners in the TJC Unit were pleased with how the in-custody portion of the program operated as well. In the first year of the Unit, 146 inmates were enrolled, of whom 26 were removed from the unit, nine of whom dropped out voluntarily, and 17 of who were removed for failing to follow the rules. No substantial difficulty related to mixing classification levels and gang statuses among the program participants emerged. T4C had a 60 percent completion rate over that time. Of the 76 TJC Unit clients released in the first year, 21 had

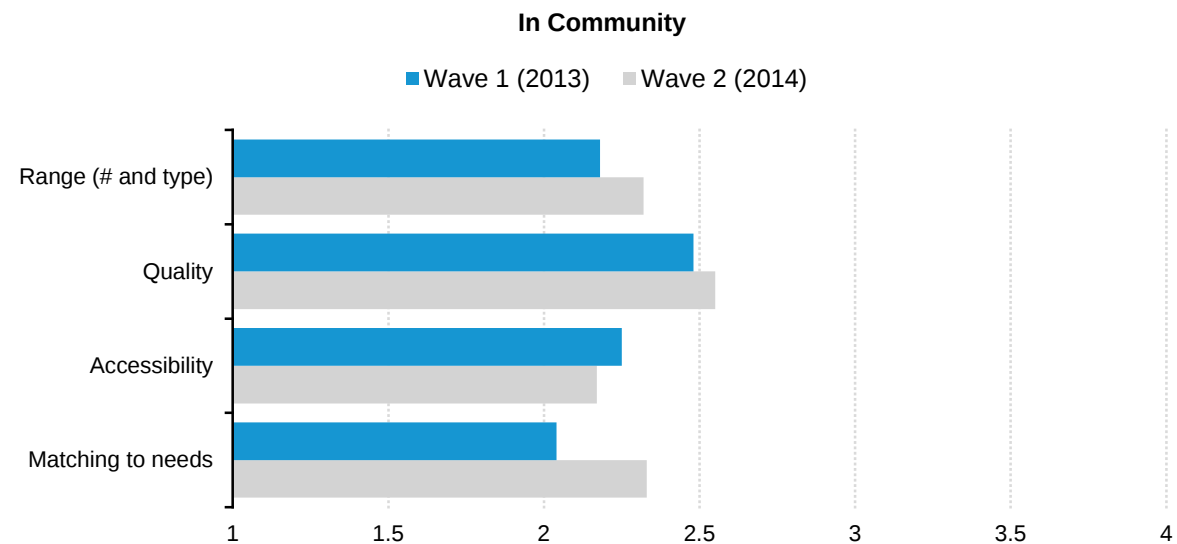
returned to jail custody and 6 were on warrant status. However, given the high rate of reoffending on the client population (clients placed in the TJC Unit had been arrested an average of four times in the year prior to placement in the Unit), this was considered provisional evidence of success.

FIGURE 5

Rating Quality of Services, TJC Stakeholder Survey



Source: Fresno County TJC stakeholder survey, 2013–14.



Source: Fresno County TJC stakeholder survey, 2013–14.

TJC stakeholders responding to the stakeholder survey rated services for individuals in the jail and in the community upon their return (see Figure 6). A few things stood out. First, respondents rated the in-jail services poorly relative to all four dimensions considered. Second, stakeholder assessment of services in the jail had improved significantly by Wave 2, while the estimation of community services had changed minimally, with the exception of improvement in matching to needs. While it is uncertain whether this change is related to changes due to the TJC work, it is true that the service environment changed much more in the jail than it did in the community. Still, assessment of services at Wave 2 in both the community and the jail were generally at or below the mid-point of 2.5, indicating room for improvement. This is not surprising given that TJC Core Team members and other stakeholders consistently indicated that available services were insufficient relative to the serious needs of the justice-involved population. Finally, the quality of services in both the jail and the community were rated higher on average than was their accessibility or range of available services, consistent with a situation in which availability of services was the primary challenge.

The most contentious and challenging issue around the TJC Unit related to the number of participants. In the first year of the TJC Unit's operation, there were consent decree releases from the jail occurring at a rate of 40 or more per day. This made empty beds in the TJC Unit a source of frustration for Fresno TJC stakeholders outside of FCSO. Many signaled a willingness to accept a population of 50 participants, but in practice the Unit's population rarely approached that number, and was frequently closer to 30 than to 50. One TJC stakeholder described this situation as a *"recipe for political disaster."* There was a concern that the TJC Unit needed to touch a larger number of people to justify the resources invested in it. As one stakeholder observed, *"Don't get me wrong, the results are phenomenal; hearing them talk, hearing how parents, girlfriends, fiancées are seeing a change, and hearing them say, 'on parole, if I had a violation, I would never see you again,' but now they reach out to probation officers...It's a different mindset, but for 40 people..."*

Efforts to improve the yield of eligible inmates agreeing to join the TJC Unit were made, particularly expansion of the available incentives. The increasing prevalence of MS sentences, as opposed to split sentences, also helped by increasing the pool of eligible inmates. It was the passage of Proposition 47, however, that did the most to mitigate tensions around the TJC Unit population because it greatly decreased the booking volume into the jail, with a large resulting decrease in consent decree releases. This lowered the temperature on complaints about the TJC Unit population even as it caused another decrease in the population, due to the smaller numbers of MS inmates eligible for the Unit (although it also reduced the incentive to join the Unit due to losing the opportunity for an early consent decree release).

Interventions Outside the TJC Unit

All the TJC stakeholders in Fresno recognized that it was important to expand their intervention capacity beyond the TJC Unit population in order to achieve the breadth of impact on reintegration and public safety outcomes that they were seeking. Planning to extend the reach of TJC interventions in the Fresno jail involved both considering expanding eligibility for the TJC unit beyond the MS inmate population and preparing to deliver more interventions outside of the TJC Unit. There were a number of obstacles to overcome in doing so. There were infrastructure limitations that had made setting up a program unit the most feasible first step for delivering interventions. Limitations in available classroom space remained an issue but could be mitigated by prioritizing evidence-based curricula such as T4C over programs not meeting the evidence-based standard. However, in addition to such infrastructure challenges, the general restrictions on mixing classification levels or mixing individuals with different gang affiliations remained a factor as well. As the TJC assistance period drew to a close, FCSO had begun training staff to utilize risk targeting for all risk reduction programming in the jail, in preparation for the expansion of T4C and other programs to the general jail population. FCSO hoped to begin providing stronger targeted programming for women, as the concentration of such programming in a single TJC housing unit meant no female inmates had access to these interventions.

There was also the question of determining who could provide assessment, case planning, and handoff to the community, a role that specially-designated probation officers filled for the TJC Unit. The TJC Core Team wanted to provide more interventions to non-AB109 sentenced individuals with postrelease probation, which raised challenges, as they were not supervised with the same intensity nor did they have access to funded treatment as the MS population did. FCSO secured doctoral student interns through SERI and paid for a coordinator so they could be trained on and conduct ONG assessments more broadly. Lack of community-based services for the non-MS population, however, remained a serious problem in Fresno, one that the Fresno TJC Core Team hoped to address through convening community partners. As the TJC assistance period concluded, stakeholders expressed interest in establishing a “reentry hub” with co-located services that could serve as a single point of access to services and provide continuity from prerelease case planning and programming. Whether such a hub can be developed remains to be seen.

Finally, there was the question of intervention-delivery to pretrial detainees, who constituted a sizable majority of inmates held by FCSO on a given day. In response to Realignment, Fresno County started a pretrial supervision program under the Probation department. Through late 2014, the pretrial supervision caseload had been no greater than 80, and the process for consideration (referral to pretrial supervision by a judge, then assessment via the VPRAI) took long enough that many defendants had been released pursuant to the

consent decree before they could be considered for pretrial supervision. The resulting pool for pretrial supervision, thus, was composed of fairly high-risk individuals.

In 2014, the Fresno County CCP allocated funds to expand pretrial supervision to 240 individuals at a time, and also to assess for pretrial release risk much earlier and more broadly by having probation staff stationed in the jail to conduct pretrial assessments there. These efforts were in their early stages as TJC technical assistance concluded in June 2015, but the intent was to make pretrial release and supervision in Fresno more data-driven and efficient and to increase system support and buy-in for such a process as being more conducive to public safety than past practice. On the in-jail front, pretrial detainees were a low priority for inclusion in the intervention continuum, given how much work remained to expand interventions throughout the sentenced population. Based on what we know about long-term public safety impacts of evidence-based pretrial release and supervision relative to detention (Lowenkamp et al. 2013), investment in capacity to support pretrial release in the community is a more promising route to delivering public safety for this population.

At the conclusion of the TJC technical assistance period, Fresno County had advanced far beyond where they began in terms of the extent and capacity of their jail transition interventions. However, Fresno TJC stakeholders recognized that considerable work remained to expand the reach of their transition efforts and to ensure that the county sustained both its TJC practices and system change process. The next section turns to Fresno County's plans for doing so.

Self-Evaluation and Sustainability

Self-evaluation uses objective data to guide operations, monitor progress, and inform decisionmaking about changes or improvements that may need to be made to the initiative. Sustainability is the use of strategies and mechanisms to ensure that the gains or progress of the initiative continue regardless of changes in leadership, policy, funding, or staffing. Self-evaluation and sustainability are interlinked and reinforce one another. This chapter describes Fresno County's use of data to inform, monitor, and refine its jail reentry processes and guide decisionmaking. We also explore the steps taken to ensure the sustainability of its jail transition work. Remaining priorities for implementation are also discussed.

Self-Evaluation and Data-Driven Approaches

Self-evaluation involves the use of objective data to guide operations, monitor progress, and inform decision-making about changes or improvements that may need to be made to the initiative. Sustainability involves the use of strategies and mechanisms to ensure that the gains or progress of the initiative are sustained over time despite changes in leadership, policy, funding, and staffing. Self-evaluation and sustainability are interlinked and reinforce one another. Here, we examine Fresno's data collection and analysis capacity and the procedures Fresno implemented to ensure the sustainability of its jail transition work. This chapter also discusses potential threats to the sustainability of TJC in Jacksonville along with remaining implementation gaps.

TJC is intended to be a data-driven process. At the outset, data is used to understand the population returning from jail to inform the prioritization and development of interventions. As the TJC approach in a jurisdiction is developed, data is used to monitor progress and identify problems. Fresno County knew going into the TJC process that data issues would present a challenge to the TJC work. In FCSO, there were many demands on the IT department, and obtaining timely data from the jail's management system could be subject to bottlenecks in demands on the available analysts. However, when data was provided, it could be helpful in identifying issues to be addressed. The most prominent example was the early discovery that Proxy scores could not be calculated for approximately 40 percent of jail bookings due to missing data. As the Proxy was intended to serve as the first step in a risk-based triage approach, this was a serious issue. Once the gap was identified, it was possible to fix it fairly quickly, and Proxy scores were soon available for almost everyone booked into the jail.

There were some challenges related to data sharing within and between agencies. The FCSO's IT department created a report providing the FCSO Programs Unit with Proxy score data on the MS population to assist determining who was eligible for the TJC Unit. But, until May 2015, Proxy scores were not readily accessible to the Programs Unit for any other population, which impeded consideration of non-MS sentenced individuals for participation in the TJC Unit when enrollment was below the desired level. Core measures of TJC Unit performance had to be put together by FCSO and Probation separately and then integrated, as there was no unified data system that covered both in-jail and supervision information. This created ongoing challenges due to data for the pre- and postrelease aspects of the TJC Unit covering different time periods and populations.

Developing a performance measurement framework and process for jail transition is a fundamental component of the TJC approach. The Fresno County TJC Core Team modified the TJC core measurement framework to incorporate data points on the MS population generally and the TJC Unit population specifically. Key early indicators of unit performance included the number of participants enrolled, the number removed/dropped out of the unit, the number completing T4C programming, the number accessing services in the community, and the number returning to the jail. The Core Team recognized the need to place data related to public safety outcomes such as probation compliance and returns to custody in context, exploring the possibility of comparison to MS releases who did not participate in the TJC Unit, either historically or contemporaneously. While neither would be a perfect comparison, it was important to set the performance of TJC clients in context, as they were a high-risk population, and TJC Unit success (if it occurred) was likely to take the form of decreasing recidivism rates from very high levels to moderate levels.

Data on TJC Unit performance were reported to the CCP at several points. Determining who will monitor the performance data and provide accountability has been a challenge in a number of TJC sites—the CCP's role as the funder of the TJC Unit led them to take on this role, spurring FCSO and Probation to produce the data. As Fresno County expands the reach of its interventions for people returning from the jail, it will have to similarly expand its data tracking and data reporting activity to maximize the usefulness of existing data (such as risk, needs, and pretrial risk) to inform system-wide policy decisions.

Critically involving FCSO program staff and probation officers in collecting data got them thinking in terms of measurement of success (or lack thereof) in their reentry work. Said one TJC stakeholder, *"I think collecting data itself made the picture clearer. Being a veteran PO and coming from a regular caseload to this caseload, the recidivism rate from my perspective is a lot different, if you want to compare stats. In this year, I, to date, have only arrested one person. And on a regular caseload it was about an arrest every week."*

Sustaining TJC in Fresno County

There are two related, but distinct components of sustaining TJC to have lasting impact in Fresno County. The first is that core transition practices, such as assessing for risk and criminogenic need and utilizing the T4C curriculum, must continue to be implemented consistently and with fidelity. The second is that the TJC process of collaboratively identifying key priorities for system improvement and working to meet them as they arise is maintained. This is particularly true as California's criminal justice policy environment continues to be very dynamic, resulting in an ongoing need to revise the TJC strategy as the context changes.

The fact that the Fresno TJC effort maintained its process and practice through several substantial changes that had the potential to undermine the effort is a promising sign for the long-term sustainability of TJC. There were several changes in the leadership of the TJC effort, including the retirement of Chief Probation Officer Linda Penner and FCSO Captain Neil Dadian, both of whom provided critical leadership in the first year of the TJC work. By the second year of the TJC work, the TJC Core Team looked very different than it had at the outset, partly due to the changes in Probation and FCSO, and partly due to the FCSO and Probation staff dedicated to the TJC Unit becoming the primary members of the Core Team. While the turnover in personnel did slow progress to a degree, it is significant that the TJC effort continued through them, and that Sheriff Margaret Mims and Chief Probation Officer Rick Chavez expressed and demonstrated steadfast commitment to sustaining and expanding the TJC approach as the technical assistance period concluded.

Another significant challenge to sustaining TJC was the abrupt withdrawal of Turning Point as the provider of substance abuse and other services within the TJC Unit. When this happened, FCSO moved quickly to deepen its partnership with SERI and replace Turning Point in this role. While this change was stressful, it again proved the resilience of the TJC effort and the commitment of partners to continuing. FCSO also stepped in to take on some of Turning Point's work, such as committing staff to transport TJC Unit participants to Probation upon release. Issues remain, such as a lack of continuity between in-jail programming provided by SERI and community-based services provided by Turning Point, who remains the provider there; however Fresno's demonstrated commitment to TJC bodes well for its ability to sustain and advance TJC and overcome these obstacles.

Fresno completed the TJC assistance period with a number of specific tasks yet to be accomplished. As noted in the previous section, foremost among these was expanding the population affected by TJC interventions. This will involve considering expanding the eligible population for the TJC Unit, which is the most intensive vehicle for delivering targeted interventions and structured handoff to the community. Such an expansion should be designed to serve as many high-risk people as the unit can accommodate while maintaining therapeutic integrity. It was clear that the level of resource investment in the TJC Unit relative to

the number of participants served remained a long-term sustainability concern, even if the FCSO makes fewer consent decree releases.

There was also the need to extend assessment and evidence-based interventions more broadly within the general jail population outside of the TJC Unit, specifically those not supervised after release. There are immediate steps that can be taken to do this, such as getting more FCSO staff trained to administer the STRONG, delivering T4C and other classes to women and men in the general population. For the longer-term, there are plans for new jail facilities that will afford more classroom space and better support programming, and expanding the reentry orientation and skills within the jail workforce will position the FCSO to take full advantage of the planned improvements to the physical plant. At the same time, many key program functions in the FCSO were funded through the Inmate Welfare Fund, which could be a less stable source of support than direct allocation of FCSO budget resources. It was also deemed essential to the effectiveness of jail transition activities that a quality assurance practice be developed to ensure that services be delivered with continuity between custody and community settings.

In parallel with the expansion of in-jail access to assessment, case planning, and programming, Fresno County needed to further develop a network of community partners to support reintegration after release. This would involve working collaboratively with community partners to coordinate information exchange, set priorities, assist with obtaining resources, and identify and reduce barriers to service. For example, in the initial convening of community partners in May 2015, the issue of access to services for people returning to areas outside of the City of Fresno was highlighted as a substantial challenge. Operationally, there was a need to determine whether community partners could co-locate services or otherwise develop a common point of access to services and support in the community.

Fresno TJC stakeholders recognized that tending to the collaborative relationship between FCSO and Probation was also a key pillar of sustainability. While the client-level collaboration was strong, leadership in both organizations agreed that routine communication at the executive level was necessary to ensure that consensus on the strategic direction of their joint efforts on jail reentry and general justice system performance was necessary, and the Sheriff and Chief Probation Officer committed to doing so.

In general, stakeholders we interviewed felt that the sustainability of TJC required the partner agencies to continue to accept and support reentry principles as fundamental to their practice. Said one interviewee, *“I hope this will be looked at as a normal every day practice. People still refer to it as a pilot project, but to me it’s a wave of current and future practices.”*

Conclusion

Fresno County became a TJC site in order to both meet the challenges of Public Safety Realignment and to take advantage of the opportunities for change that it presented to make substantial and sustainable progress toward a jail transition system that reduced reoffending in the community and facilitated community reintegration. It faced a difficult road in doing so. The jail had limited activity space, limited access to risk information, no assessment for criminogenic need, and little evidence-based programming or case planning capacity. On the community side, Probation had assessment and case planning tools, as well as access to services for at least a portion of the population returning from jail. However, difficulties abounded on the community side as well, with many people returning to communities with high levels of poverty, crime, and gang activity, and with a social service infrastructure that struggled to meet their level of need.

In recognition of this situation, Fresno County's TJC Core Team, in consultation with the TJC technical assistance team, focused on the development of the TJC Unit for the male Mandatory Supervision (MS) population, to develop a transition process consisting of in-jail intervention, community handoff, and postrelease intervention elements consistent with evidence-based practice. Further, they were successful in gaining leadership support for this direction as evidenced by the CCP's allocation of resources for the effort. While the intervention population to be served through the TJC Unit would be small relative to the total number of releases, or even to the high-risk to reoffend releases, from the Fresno jails, starting on a smaller scale was considered by all involved to be the most appropriate strategy to build Fresno's capacity for effective jail transition. This direction bore fruit: through the TJC Unit, Fresno County began targeting in-jail programming by risk and need, delivering evidence-based programming, case planning, and structured handoff to the community (in the form of Probation and Probation-funded services) at a level of quality that had not previously existed. Perhaps more importantly, given its success in implementing TJC, Fresno has proven for itself that evidence-based practices are both possible and useful in managing its offender population.

As Fresno County's time as a TJC learning site came to a close in the spring of 2015, its attention turned to the next steps necessary to continue to build from the strong base of the TJC Unit to expand the reach of the jail transition strategy and thereby broaden the public safety impact. Fresno County TJC stakeholders knew they needed to expand the TJC target intervention population to include individuals outside the male MS population and provide more evidence-based programming outside the TJC Unit so that other general population inmates, men and women, would have access to jail-based reentry interventions. They also needed to increase the level of community partner engagement to increase or access intervention capacity in the community to allow for postrelease handoff and interventions for the expanded TJC service population,

regardless of whether they would be supervised by Probation. Alongside this client-level work was the ongoing work to ensure that communication and collaboration between the FCSO, Probation, and an increasing circle of collaborative partners stayed functional and strong.

Fresno County made large strides in its jail transition practice during the TJC period, changing practice, policy, and organizational/system culture, building key staff reentry skills, and solidifying and expanding its commitment to effective reentry. Much work remains to be done, but Fresno County is significantly more able to take on this work than it was in the summer of 2012.

Appendix A. TJC Unit Participation Agreement



Fresno County Sheriff's Office

Transition from Jail to Community Program

PARTICIPANT CONTRACT

Name: _____

JID #: _____

In addition to the rules and regulations governing your incarceration, the following describes the obligations and benefits of participating in the Transition from Jail to Community Program (TJC).

I understand that:

I will receive an individually prescribed transition plan to assist me in my efforts to successfully transition back to the community.

The validity of this contract is conditioned upon my eligibility for the Transition from Jail to Community Program. If at any time after the execution of this agreement and in any phase of the TJC, it is discovered that I am, in fact, ineligible to participate in the program, I may be immediately terminated from the program and/or housing unit.

During the entire course of the TJC program and while in custody, I will be required to attend case management meetings, treatment and programming sessions, work assignments, and have regular and frequent contact with the TJC staff. I agree to participate and abide by the prescribed programs, treatments, rules and regulations; I may be immediately terminated from the program and/or housing unit.

I agree to execute the Authorization for Release of Information for all TJC program related assessments and all associated records, including confidential substance abuse information.

Participation in the TJC program is a privilege and not a right and it is a unique opportunity to obtain information, skills, services and associations to help me change my life and fulfill my potential. I promise to give the TJC program my honest and best efforts.

I have read the above contract and I understand what I have read. I am willing to enter into this agreement with the Fresno County Sheriff's Office Transition from Jail to Community Program.

Participant's Signature

Date

Correctional Staff Signature

Date

Notes

1. "E-1 Population Estimates for Cities, Counties, and the State — January 1, 2015 and 2016," California Department of Finance, accessed August 9, 2015, <http://www.dof.ca.gov/research/demographic/reports/estimates/e-1/view.php>
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3. "California Poverty Rates by County, 2011–2013," Public Policy Institute of California, accessed August 9, 2015, <http://www.ppic.org/main/mapdetail.asp?i=1396>.
4. "California Sentencing Institute," Center on Juvenile and Criminal Justice, accessed August 9, 2015, <http://casi.cjcj.org/>.
5. "Realignment Dashboard," Chief Probation Officers of California, accessed August 9, 2015, http://www.cpoc.org/assets/Realignment/dashboard_county.swf.

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