



SAN FRANCISCO COLLABORATIVE COURTS

Juvenile Reentry Court

The San Francisco Juvenile Reentry Court was established in 2009 as a Second Chance Act National Demonstration Project Site. This pioneering model, one of only 5 such grants awarded nationwide and the only one where the Juvenile Court is directly involved, was initiated by the Juvenile Probation Department, the Office of the Public Defender and the Center on Juvenile and Criminal Justice (CJCJ). The program provides comprehensive reentry case planning and after care services for high needs youth returning from out-of-home placement and Log Cabin Ranch. The Reentry Court team is comprised of the Superior Court, Juvenile Probation Department, Office of the Public Defender, Private Bar Panel, Office of the District Attorney, the Center on Juvenile and Criminal Justice – all of whom work closely with youth and their families to ensure that coordinated services are in place for a successful transition back home.

Program Components

The model establishes a collaborative team approach in the development and implementation of reentry plans for youth. Participants in the reentry court receive an integrated case plan during their transition and community reintegration process; a case plan that the youth and their families are instrumental in creating with the team. The team has also developed community partnerships with the San Francisco Unified School District, Seneca Connections, Independent Living Skills Program (ILSP), San Francisco City College and various employment agencies.

Prior to the grant, San Francisco juvenile offenders were referred to local or out-of-state group homes for a year or longer, and then released back to their homes, into the same environment they were in before becoming incarcerated, without appropriate planning. The team makes initial contact with every participant at the time of disposition to begin the formal process of developing a reentry plan. Three months prior to release, the plan is finalized and may include housing, vocational training, education, therapy, drug treatment, and any other services needed to ensure the minor's success. Each member signs the plan as a commitment to advocate on behalf of the child and family, and jointly presents the plan to the Judge. The reentry program ensures that the youth and family are prepared and have the tools they need to succeed.

Goals

- To reduce recidivism for youth returning from long-term commitments through comprehensive aftercare services, thereby reducing the disparate rates of juvenile crime and recidivism in San Francisco's low-income, minority communities.
- To improve collaborative inter-agency case planning and coordination for juvenile justice-involved youth beginning at commitment through termination of probation.

- Increase public safety by reducing the recidivism among youth returning home from long-term commitments

Reentry Court Reduces Recidivism

The Juvenile Reentry Court has approximately 172 youth in the program. In 2009, the recidivism rate of re-entry youths was approximately 69 percent. Five years later the rate exponentially decreased to approximately 13 percent.

Reentry Court Nationally Recognized

The effectiveness of the program has been nationally recognized. The team's collaborative work was featured in the September-October 2013 Judicial Council of California/Administrative Office of the Courts Newsletter in an article titled "San Francisco's Juvenile Reentry Court to Participating Youth: We've Got Your Back."

In 2011, California Chief Justice Tani Cantil-Sakauye visited the program to witness the process and its impact on the youth and families served by the program. She was so impressed that a videotape was produced and is now on the website of the California Judicial Council Administrative Office of the Courts.

On February 23, 2011, the team presented at the National Reentry Resource Center's Second Act Grantee Conference on the subject of "Implementing Cross-System Collaboration." Based on the conference evaluations, the workshop was one of the highest rated sessions for juvenile grantees. The program was profiled in the June 2011 National Reentry Resource Center Newsletter.

On December 15, 2011, the program was presented at the Judicial Council of California Administrative Office of the Courts *Beyond the Bench* Conference on a panel titled "Collaborative Courts in the Delinquency System: Juvenile Mental Health, Drug Courts, and Reentry Courts." *Beyond the Bench* is a state-wide conference where more than five hundred attendees from the judicial, legal and law enforcement communities attend multiple workshops and plenaries to improve the dependency and juvenile justice system in California.