

Reentry Council

City & County of San Francisco

Direct Services and Legislation, Policy and Practice Subcommittee Joint Meeting

AGENDA

Thursday, May 9, 2019

2:30pm-4:30pm

25 Van Ness Avenue

Lower Level Conference Room

San Francisco, California 94102

Note: Public comment will be taken throughout the meeting.

1. Introductions (discussion only)
2. Review the Direct Services Minutes of November 8, 2018, December 3, 2018 (Retreat Notes) and January 10, 2019, March 14, 2019 (informal notes)
3. Staff Reports (discussion only)
 - a. Confirming District Attorney Candidates
 - b. Reporting back Logistical Planning of the DA Debate
 - c. Recruitment May 22, 2019 Lobby Day
 - d. Reporting back planning of the Sacramento Lobby Day
4. Group Discussion: May 22, 2019 Lobby Day and Proposed Workgroups
5. Group Discussion: August 22, 2019 District Attorney's Debate/ Proposed Workgroups
6. Adjournment

Next Meeting:

Thursday, July 11, 2019

2:30-4:30pm

25 Van Ness Avenue

Lower Level Conference Room

Reentry Council

City & County of San Francisco

SUBMITTING WRITTEN PUBLIC COMMENT TO THE REENTRY COUNCIL

Persons who are unable to attend the public meeting may submit to the Reentry Council, by the time the proceedings begin, written comments regarding the subject of the meeting. These comments will be made a part of the official public record, and brought to the attention of the Reentry Council. Written comments should be submitted to: Geoffrea Morris, Reentry Policy Planner, Adult Probation Department, 564 Sixth St., San Francisco, CA 94102, or via email: reentry.council@sfgov.org.

MEETING MATERIALS

Copies of agendas, minutes, and explanatory documents are available through the Reentry Council's website at <http://sfreentry.com> or by calling Geoffrea Morris at (415) 241-4241 during normal business hours. The material can be Faxed or mailed to you upon request.

ACCOMMODATIONS

To obtain a disability-related modification or accommodation, including auxiliary aids or services, to participate in the meeting, please contact Geoffrea Morris, at reentry.council@sfgov.org or (415) 241-4241 at least two business days before the meeting.

TRANSLATION

Interpreters for languages other than English are available on request. Sign language interpreters are also available on request. For either accommodation, please contact Geoffrea Morris, at reentry.council@sfgov.org or (415) 241-4241 at least two business days before the meeting.

CHEMICAL SENSITIVITIES

To assist the City in its efforts to accommodate persons with severe allergies, environmental illness, multiple chemical sensitivity or related disabilities, attendees at public meetings are reminded that other attendees may be sensitive to various chemical based products. Please help the City accommodate these individuals.

KNOW YOUR RIGHTS UNDER THE SUNSHINE ORDINANCE (Chapter 67 of the San Francisco Administrative Code)

Government's duty is to serve the public, reaching its decisions in full view of the public. Commissions, boards, councils and other agencies of the City and County exist to conduct the people's business. This ordinance assures that deliberations are conducted before the people and that City operations are open to the people's review. Copies of the Sunshine Ordinance can be obtained from the Clerk of the Sunshine Task Force, the San Francisco Public Library, and on the City's web site at: www.sfgov.org/sunshine.

FOR MORE INFORMATION ON YOUR RIGHTS UNDER THE SUNSHINE ORDINANCE OR TO REPORT A VIOLATION OF THE ORDINANCE, CONTACT THE SUNSHINE ORDINANCE TASK FORCE:

Administrator
Sunshine Ordinance Task Force
City Hall, Room 244
1 Dr. Carlton B. Goodlett Place,
San Francisco, CA 94102-4683.
Telephone: (415) 554-7724
Fax: (415) 554-5163
E-Mail: soft@sfgov.org

CELL PHONES

The ringing of and use of cell phones, pagers and similar sound-producing electronic devices are prohibited at this meeting. Please be advised that the Co-Chairs may order the removal from the meeting room of any person(s) responsible for the ringing or use of a cell phone, pager, or other similar sound-producing electronic devices.

LOBBYIST ORDINANCE

Individuals and entities that influence or attempt to influence local legislative or administrative action may be required by San Francisco Lobbyist Ordinance (SF Campaign and Governmental Conduct Code sections 2.100-2.160) to register and report lobbying activity. For more information about the Lobbyist Ordinance, please contact the Ethics Commission at 30 Van Ness Avenue, Suite 3900, San Francisco CA 94102, telephone (415) 581-2300, FAX (415) 581-2317, and web site <http://www.sfgov.org/ethics/>

Reentry Council of the City and County of San Francisco

2019 Meeting Calendar

Council Meetings: Last Thursday of the first month of each quarter
10am-noon

January 24— St. Anthony's Foundation, 150 Golden Gate Ave
April 25—St. Anthony's Foundation, 150 Golden Gate Ave
July 25— St. Anthony's Foundation, 150 Golden Gate Ave
October 24— St. Anthony's Foundation, 150 Golden Gate Ave

Subcommittee on Direct Services: 2nd Thursday of all uneven months 2:30-4:30pm, all in
25 Van Ness, Lower Level conference room, except for January 10, 2019 meeting

January 10, 564 6th Street at the Community Assessment Service Center (CASC)
March 14
May 9
July 11
September 12
November 14

Subcommittee on Legislation, Policy and Practices: 4th Wednesday of all uneven months 2:30-4:30pm,
all in 25 Van Ness, Lower Level conference room

January 23
March 27
May 22
July 24
September 25
November 13 (Changed to the Second Wednesday because of the Holiday Season)

Slated Community Events supported and/or hosted by Reentry Council

- Wednesday, May 22, 2019- 8:00am to 3:00pm Reentry Council Lobby Day at California's State Capital in Sacramento
- Thursday, June 13, 2019- 6:30pm- 9:00pm, 3rd Annual Community Appreciation Dinner at Cathedral of St. Mary of the Assumption Event Center located at 1111 Gough St
- Thursday, August 22, 2019- 6:00pm to 8:00pm Reentry Council District Attorney Debate, Main Library's Koret Auditorium located at 100 Larkin Street, San Francisco, Ca 94102.
- Wednesday, September 4, 2019- 8:00am to 3:00pm Second Reentry Council Lobby Day at California's State Capital in Sacramento
- September 2019- 6th Annual Restorative Justice Reentry Conference and Resource Fair at Cathedral of St. Mary of the Assumption Event Center located at 1111 Gough St
- Thursday, October 10, 2019-Targeted Register to Vote Outreach Day in San Francisco's most-impacted criminal justice communities

Reentry Council

City & County of San Francisco

Subcommittee on Direct Services

Draft Minutes

Thursday, November 8, 2018

2:30-4:30pm

555 7th Street, 3rd Floor

San Francisco, California 94103

Members Present: Victoria Westbrook, Simin Shamji (For Demarris Evans), Angela Coleman, Freda Glenn, Monica Wong, Maggie Rivera, Alex Weil, David Wiesner, Ali Riker

Members Absent: Amarita King, Charles Adams, Jeanie Austin, Andres Salas, Majeid Crawford, Destiny Pletsch

Guest Present: Lucero Herrera, Robin Candler, Neely Upamaka, Rexanne Biserra, Ron Kurland

1. Review the draft minutes of September 13, 2018 (discussion and action)

The draft minutes for September 13, 2018 were passed unanimously.

2. Staff Report (discussion only)

a. Unexcused Absences of Subcommittee Members

Geoffrea informed the body that she would be notifying members who have constantly missed meetings without giving prior notice. Geoffrea stated she would begin enforcing the subcommittee rules and removing individuals who are no longer active participants in the subcommittee.

b. New BOS Appointed Reentry Council Members

Geoffrea informed the Direct Services subcommittee that the Board of Supervisors had just recently appointed the following members to the Reentry Council: Seat 1-Jose Bernal (reappointment), Seat 2- Angela Coleman (reappointment), Seat 3- Victoria Westbrook (new appointment) and Seat 4- Theodore Tolliver (new appointment)

c. Mayoral Appointed Reentry Council Seats -- Updates

Geoffrea informed the committee that there were two interested candidates for general justice involved mayoral seat. Geoffrea stated she would be working with Mayor Breed's office to fill the general justice involved seat. Geoffrea informed the subcommittee that the Transitional Age Youth seat remained vacant and she encouraged members of the subcommittee to refer a positive transitional age youth to the seat. She also informed the group that this person needed to be between the ages of 18-35 and that the interest candidate had to be involved with the criminal system prior to the age of 25.

d. Subcommittee Retreat

Geoffrea announced the annual subcommittee retreat would be on December 3, 2018 at Pier 1 on the Embarcadero. Geoffrea stated the retreat would be from 9:00am to 1:00pm and that it would encompass both subcommittees, Direct Services and Legislation, Policy, and Practices Subcommittee, members of the reentry community, community stakeholders and city agencies.

Reentry Council

City & County of San Francisco

e. Passed/Failed 2018 Legislation

Geoffrea informed the committee of the following bills that were supported by the Legislation, Policy, and Practices subcommittee and provided feedback on whether or not any of these bills were signed by the governor.

Introduced Reentry Council	RC Endorsement	City's State/Leg Endorsement	Originating House	Passed the Second House	Signed/ Veto Notes
AB2138: Occupational licensing	YES	YES	YES	YES	SIGNED
SB 906: Statewide Peer Specialist Certification	YES	YES	YES	YES	VETOED
SB1393: Sentencing reform – Judicial sentencing discretion regarding prior serious felonies	YES	YES	YES	YES	SIGNED
SB1437: Sentencing reform – Reform to accomplice liability	NO	N/A	YES	YES	SIGNED
SB1105: Expands Vehicle Code Section 41500 immunity to individuals in local detention facilities	YES	N/A	NO	N/A	
SB1025: Sentencing reform – Probation eligibility for drug offenses	YES	YES	YES	NO	
SB1392: Sentencing reform – Judicial sentencing discretion regarding prior prison or jail terms	YES	N/A	NO	N/A	
SB 10: Bail Reform	YES	YES	YES	YES	SIGNED

SB 906 Veto Message: Currently, peer support specialists are used as providers in Medi-Cal without a state certificate. This bill imposes a costly new program, which will permit some of these individuals to continue providing services but shut others out. I urge the stakeholders and the department to improve upon the existing framework while allowing all peer support specialists to continue to work.

3. Report-backs from the five Workgroup committees:

a. Reentry Dinner/ Reentry Conference

Ernest Kirkwood presented on Reentry Dinner; which is slated to happen on Thursday, June 6, 2019 from 5:00pm to 9:00pm (times may vary) at Cathedral of St. Mary of the Assumption Event Center located at

Reentry Council

City & County of San Francisco

1111 Gough Street. This will be the 3rd Annual Community Appreciation Dinner hosted by Ernest Kirkwood, Restorative Justice Ministry of San Francisco Archdiocese, and the Reentry Council. Ernest informed members that this is a fun event with over 100 participants and that members of the Reentry Community sit down to a banquet style setting and meal.

Geoffrea added the 5th Reentry Conference was held at the same venue and it was a success. She also mentioned that next year the Direct Services Subcommittee should try to have a more of active role in recruiting and helping out at this event.

b. Reentry Navigation

Victoria Westbrook reported back about setting possible meeting with GEO (For-profit reentry program), the vendor for CDCR/ Federal government. There was also discussion about better access to the Sheriff's cab service program regarding late night releases.

c. Alternative to Incarceration (programming credits)

Simin Shamji, sitting in for Demarris Evans chair of this workgroup, brainstormed on furthering the subcommittee's mission and goals under this workgroup. She spoke about the Public Defender's Racial Justice committee and she stated Demarris Evans was also the chair of this committee. She spoke about DMV records being obstacles that Racial Justice Committee were tackling. The conversation leaned to getting the Sheriff department more involved in the conversation regarding alternative to incarceration and programming credits.

d. Stop the Violence in the Tenderloin

Majeid Crawford, chair of Stop the Violence in the Tenderloin, was not present to provide any updates on the status of this event.

e. Breadwinners/ Toastmasters

Ernest Kirkwood, chair of the Breadwinners/ Toastmaster, mentioned removing this workgroup from the list because he was not receiving a lot of interest from members of the subcommittee. Ernest informed the group that Breadwinners had formed a unique partnership with Adult Probation Department and the Sheriff Department. He explained this partnership would allow women presently on probation into the pod to speak about challenges/ successes on probation. Ernest stated these women would basically act like mentor/ inspiration to the women presently incarcerated. Victoria Westbrook express some interest in being a part of this partnership.

f. Justice Involved Homeless Transitional Age Youth Group

Andres Salas, chair of this workgroup, had a schedule conflict and he could not attend so Geoffrea presented to for him. Geoffrea informed the committee of Mayor Breed's Rising Up Campaign; which is aimed to house 500 homeless and at-risk youth. Geoffrea informed the subcommittee that Andres had held a community forum circled around the issue of "Justice-Involved Homeless Young Adults" at Larkin Street Youth Services on November 5, 2019. Geoffrea informed the committee that this meeting was well received and that Andres had become an active member in Mayor Breed's Rising Up Campaign and that he was currently working to ensure that justice involve youth were recognized in the 500 beds goal. He also was working to see if a carve out in some of the 500 beds sought could be devoted to justice involved transitional age youth. There was also a discussion about people renting rooms out in their homes to members of the reentry community.

Reentry Council

City & County of San Francisco

4. New Business

a. Eliminating some of the working groups

The subcommittee agreed that some of the work groups should be eliminated. In January, the members plan to reevaluated the work groups and remove whatever work groups that the subcommittee believes are no longer aligned with the Direct Services Subcommittee 2019 objectives.

b. Creating new working groups for 2019

I. Voting Outreach and Education Workgroup

The Subcommittee agreed that there should be a voting outreach and education workgroup.

5. Member Roundtable and Agenda Items for Next Meeting (discussion only)

Lucero Herrera informed the subcommittee of this comprehensive study the Young Women's Freedom Center (YWFC) was conducting. She stated the study was slated to be released in January of 2019. She mentioned to the subcommittee that YWFC was working with the Debug Organization. She also stated they were focusing on presently incarcerated community in knowing their rights and assisting them to be active participants in their defenses.

6. Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned. The next meeting is scheduled for Thursday, January 10, 2019 from 2:30pm to 4:30pm. Geoffrea stated she would be sending an email in the next month with an actual location for January 10th subcommittee meeting.

NOTES – 12/3/2018 Retreat of the Direct Services and Legislation, Policy and Practices Subcommittees of the Reentry Council of the City and County of San Francisco

Overview – On 12/3/2018, a retreat of the Direct Services and Legislation, Policy and Practices Subcommittees met to acknowledge successes of 2018, take a retrospective review of subcommittees work, to brainstorm direct services and policy goals for 2019....and use the brainstorm as a basis for crafting a strategic plan. The final draft of a to-be-developed Strategic Plan will be agendized for review at a future full Reentry Council Meeting.

Once finalized, chairs of the committee will use the plan to guide efforts of each subcommittee, and will report back on progress and challenges to the full Reentry Council, and may seek troubleshooting support from members of the Reentry Council.

The below represents a summary of the brainstorm list of issues, and policy/action next steps that were generated at the meeting. At the next subcommittee meetings in March (if not before), the Chairs of the committees will facilitate a discussion of subcommittee members to prioritize issues, and create an actionable strategic plan. All of the information will be consolidated into one Strategic Plan for Reentry Council review in April, 2019.

If you have questions on this information, please contact Lauren Bell, Reentry Division Director at lauren.bell@sfgov.org or by phone at 415-241-4253.

12/3/2018 Subcommittees Retreat – BRAINSTORM of successes, issues and policy/action next steps

Subcommittee Successes

The subcommittees of the Reentry Council of the City and County of San Francisco are made up of a collection of 31 people across the private/non-profit and public sectors. The commitment, passion, and expertise of the members is to be commended. Members of both subcommittees are committed to using the retreat as an opportunity to refocus on priority areas that support policies, practices and services that strengthen the safety network of currently incarcerated and previously incarcerated community members.

Thank you to the members of the subcommittees! Here is a summarized list of work/success of subcommittees and the members:

- Gang Injunction conversation moved a lot further
- Criminal Justice fines and fees were mitigated in San Francisco
- Burns report and community meetings/neighborhood meetings
- AB1008/Ban the Box passed and with RC support
- A lot of legislative advocacy and RC support
- Merged subcommittees together during retreats/striving for more coordination between committees
- Helped with 2018 Community Appreciation Dinner
- There is a plan for digitizing the GOSO guide
- Resolution to prioritize non-profit over for profit providers was passed by BOS
- Policy committee pursued a robust agenda in 2018

Legislation, Policy and Practices Subcommittee (LPP) – issues and policy/action next steps

Issue	Policy/Action
LEGISLATIVE Priorities of LPP	
1. Legislation/Policy – Input from incarcerated/formerly incarcerated	Input currently resides in APD, Sheriff, Public Health, Education
2.	
3. Timeline for Legislation Planning and Advocacy	Start planning earlier
4. SB 1142 – needs continued efforts	SB 1142 – Home Safe Act – requires protocol for SFSD to notify inmates and public that inmates can voluntarily stay for up to an additional 16 hours after sentencing RC should write a letter of support
5. Legislation? Local Re: Coordination with BOS	Have a more streamlined process/connected relationship with the BOS in order to create more specific/focused legislation.
6. Legislation/ National/State – Social Security	Law/mandate allows incarcerated individuals working while incarcerated to accrue social security/public safety
7.	
8. Late Night Releases	Consider a BOS hearing?
9. Bail Reform	Bail Reform – continue to review risk assessment Better bail reform that actually helps people in custody
10. Gang Enhancements Language	Reentry Debate Forum Statewide legislation on gang enhancements – change language of gang enhancements - injunctions?
11. SF Gang Injunctions	Abolish them
12. Fines and Fees	Statewide leg on fines and fees
13. Prison Phone Calls	Statewide action around prison phone calls
14. Support Sex Worker rights	Further explore impact of FOSTA...Fight Online Sex Trafficking Bill...

15. Resolution re: Prioritizing Non Profits over For Profits	Implement prioritizing non-profits in procurement and contracting (*the resolution was not signed by the Mayor's note – lb)
OTHER LPP Priorities	
16. Reentry Council – representation/Co-chair	Consider a previously incarcerated co-chair Elevate the voice of previously incarcerated to compel action from RC
17. Discharge Planning	<p>Discharge Planning –</p> <p>Includes TB referral services</p> <p>Menu of services in release docs – make menu of services to meet different needs – consider needs of TAY, LGBTQI, seniors etc.</p> <p>Ordinance to require discharge planning with follow up/feedback</p> <p>Better communication with judges to better coordinate released</p> <p>Medical coverage – sign up before exit Requirement for coordinated, centralized plan making</p> <p>Consider community service in lieu of fees</p> <p>Distinguish between clients released from custody who are on probation vs. those who are not.</p>
18. Peer Specialists - Formalizing	<p>Peer Support – start inside for continuation post release</p> <p>Require hiring peers for city funding</p> <p>Peer mentor counselor certification</p> <p>Advocacy with legislature</p> <p>Peer mentor/counselor certification – policy and curriculum funded by HSA/Jobs Now or thru Medi-Cal – peer navigators, paid transitional employment, part of discharge plan, training in custody</p>

19. Dedicated reentry office or commission	Review multidepartment unit to address reentry – look at LA’s Office of Diversion and Reentry Look into creating a Reentry Commission
20. Commissary	Review rules around charges with commissary
21. Racial Disparities	Continue to address racial disparities in the criminal justice system – push for action following or simultaneously with decision point analysis What’s the follow up on the Burns Report? Decision Point Analysis?
22. AB109 Allocation	Review AB109 funds and community partnerships to better understand funds going to CBOs vs. Gov’t Agencies
23. Communication/Action with Council, BOS, Mayor (and SFFE? – note unclear)	Robust reporting from subcommittee to council to city government
24. Less punitive vs. holistic community centered reentry models	Partnership w with probation and CBOs to allow returnee to meet in community
25. Community input into allocation/program decisions	Policy to fund technical assistance to empower Citywide, depts. CBOs to make data informed decisions
26. Mental Health Treatment	Status of Jail Rebuild/Mental Health Treatment
27. Drug Use	Recovery Summit Work – Longer treatment episodes, fund a variety of treatment options, create a treatment continuum Improving treatment for reentry population
28. Communication with SF Police Department	More presence at Police Commission Meeting
29. Collaboration with other CJ advocacy groups	Create a quarterly conversation of community based CJ advocacy groups
30. Inclusive Language	Policy on being more inclusive with City and County of San Francisco How to engage/outreach? European model?

	Engaging SF community at large around inclusive priorities and unifying principles
31. Strengthened Women's Gender Responsive services for justice involved women	Pursue policies and services that are responsive to the needs of cis and trans women. Ensure more TGN training in custody

Direct Services Subcommittee (DS) - issues and policy/action next steps

Issue	Policy/Action
DS In-Custody Priorities	
32. Centralized Discharge Planning	<p>From day 1/intake through release</p> <p>Process/plan, address the needs of the individual, directly address barriers as part of the process Integrate previously incarcerated, peer specialists into this work</p> <p>Ensure a specific plan on discharge day</p> <p>Look at NY model as a sample</p> <p>Mandate BOS/Policy and procedure?</p> <p>Make a discharge video to be viewed in custody</p> <p>Contract with someone who can provide safe passage</p>
33. Need Resource/Hand Out/One pager Re: Release Resources, Planning	<p>Create a resource handout for all – Basic "need to know where to go once released"</p> <p>All inmates to have a basic checklist of things needed for exit</p> <p>Connect with CM or mental health provider prior to release</p> <p>Get medi-cal sign up prior to release</p> <p>Discharge planner on site until 10pm with resources and taxi voucher</p> <p>Ensure Flywheel information is in the list.</p>

34. Getting social security cards/birth certificates	Create a streamlined pathway for working on getting Social Security cards and IDs prior to release
35. TB Test – Not standardized by SFSD	Put in inmate handbook how to request test/access results – use a medical action request Receive paper copy/results when released If CBO wants copy must do consent to JMS & have faxed or pick up. Get copy from client.
36. Technology/Release App	Consider a phone app related to release/reentry prep
37. Credit for Time Served (CTS) is problematic as we can't plan	Work with Judges regarding sentencing and allowing inmates to volunteer to be released in tandem with services plan
DS – Housing/Treatment Services Priorities	
38. Rise Up – TAY Housing	TAY Navigation Center, same day shelter bed @ GA
39. Expand services for TGN folks	Look at TGN specific housing
40. Reentry Navigation Center	Create a reentry navigation center for late night releases Consider priority shelter for reentry, justice involved population
41. 24/7 Navigation Center Services	Open a 24/7 navigation center
42. Expand Family Housing	Inclusive of TAY parents, supporting housing
43. Address issues/challenges in treatment/shelter/transitional housing	Turf Issues/safety issues are barriers to people accessing resources Need more women's gender responsive resources
44. Accessing benefits to address mental health and substance abuse	Create a class to teach people on how to apply for benefits/healthcare
DS – Coordination and Community Based Priorities	
45. Supervision/Case Management	Not enough community based organizations to provide supervision in place of traditional probation officers. Explore community based

	models of supervision. Develop legislation to grant authority to community based organizations to provide county supervision services.
46. Closer collaboration with CDCR	Establish reentry committees in prison, share communication with prison newspapers
47. Strengthen collaboration with the Public Library	Have more film screenings, speakers, reentry fair
48. Clean Slate	Expand Clean Slate opportunities
49. Host a community forum for DA candidates	Host a community forum for DA candidates
50. Increased Engagement/Partnership with Community	More representation from community Community Voice Better outreach
51. RC Presence in the Community	RC can create objectives for more opportunities to engage with the community/public about matters related to reentry.
52. More Coordinated Processes, Community/Gov't	Reduce duplicative services More front end coordination Expand LEAD like service Model – address diverting people from the system Host quarterly meetings of community agencies and develop a coordinated plan for support and outreach
53. Online Tool for Resources, Collaboration and Organizing	Create online tool for resources, information sharing, connecting and organizing...maybe as part of GOSO? SFReentry.org? Self-service referral?

Notes from Direct Services Committee 01/10/19

1. Meeting started with a retro check in about discussions of November 2018 meeting
2. Some subcommittee decisions were made at some of the last meetings
 - a. Such as Unexcused Absences
 - b. If members have 2 missed meetings without communication they will be removed from subcommittee
 - i. LB to reach out to members with unexcused absences, and let them know that while they can no longer be a sitting member on the subcommittee, they are welcome to return as the public
 - c. We discussed some of the bylaws of the subcommittee
 - i. Participation is mandatory
 - ii. 2 Unexcused absences will allow for members to be removed
 - iii. LB will send by laws to subcommittee members
 - iv. Apply bylaws, and if we do can people still participate
3. RC SEATS - Mayoral seats needed
 - a. LB to reach out to Mawuil/Mayor's Office for status update
 - b. 2 seats left
 - i. 1 TAY Seat for clients 18-35
 - ii. Someone requested for an application for a possible candidate
 - c. General Application
 - i. Person would sit on Reentry Council
 - d. LB will email Alex Director of CASC application he would like to see who would be a perspective client/ prior client that would be interested
4. WORKGROUPS
 - a. We discussed eliminating the Stop the Violence Workgroup
 - i. Workgroup lead has competing priorities/not enough participation
 - b. In-custody – Breadwinners/Toast Masters is still active
 - i. Destiny volunteered to attend group
 - ii. Angela already provides services in the Pod
 - iii. Victoria may be able to attend/will follow up with Ernest
 - c. Group committed to sustaining a Voting Outreach and Education Workgroup and to CHANGE the working title to "Civic Engagement Working Group"
 - i. The work of this group will be particularly active during election cycles.
 - ii. This group will also lead community engagement/education efforts to inform the community about reentry legislation that was passed at the state level and what is the impact on community
 1. For example – AB 2138 – Occupational Licensing. This workgroup can update the community on this success/the impact of the bill.
 2. LB will send the FAQ sheets for each of the pieces of leg that were passed and call on Direct Services subcommittee members to envision how to present the information to the community during a workshop session.
 - d. Reentry Navigation Workgroup – Victoria is lead. Angela interested in joining

- i. LB to reach out to HSH and set up a meeting of HSH, Victoria and Angela
- e. The group wants to keep Peer Specialist work on the table and to continue to chip away at how they can support the implementation of more peer specialist opportunities.
- f. The group wants to keep "Warm Hand-offs and Late Night Releases on the table and continue to chip away at how they can make an impact on improving releases and handoffs.
- g. Led by PD Demarris Evans, the group will continue to work with SFSD on efforts to reduce the exclusion list for disqualifying offenses so that more inmates can participate in community programs.
 - i. Related to program limitations/prohibitions, the group talked about limited services (in and out of custody) for Trans Men and limited services for Trans Women – wants to continue to support services expansion.
- h. Justice involved TAY youth
 - i. APD attended the Mayor's Rise Up, TAY focused, multi-agency and community effort which was hosted by HSH
 - 1. Need more community voices at this conversation. APD will reach out to HSH re: next meeting and inviting more members of the subcommittee

5. RETREAT - Reflections

- a. Last Retreat was very structured and well organized
- b. We Sheparded the Process really well
- c. Set up was good
- d. The mix of Policy/Small Group was great idea
- e. Space was really amazing and set the tone
- f. Group lead to great conversations
- g. We all got to meet new people that provide an array of services
- h. Need a contact list and some background information on the people attending our meetings – LB to look into creating list

6. GENERAL THOUGHTS on COMMITTEE IMPROVEMENTS

- a. Administrative brush ups
 - i. Put approved meeting dates on everyone's calendars
 - 1. LB to confirm where the meetings are scheduled
 - ii. Take meeting notes and ensure they are shared out
 - iii. More follow up on action items identified
 - iv. We need to have more coordinated efforts across committees
 - v. LB needs to
- b. We need to better define what the workgroups are doing and why
 - i. Move from staying stuck in abstract to specific action
 - ii. Some of our Groups are very broad and not specific enough

7. NEW IDEAS

- a. Angela discussed Parole Letters
 - i. She receives a lot of them. Can the Direct Services subcommittee provide services information and other details to support strong/viable reentry plans of people returning home from state prison?

- b. PD Demarris Evans who was unable to attend, but emailed information – made a request that this year the group look at strategies for eliminating for profit phone calls from the jails. This has been accomplished in New York.

8. Next Steps

- a. The Reinvisioning the Jail process touched on a lot of the ideas covered by the Direct Services subcommittee.
 - i. LB to see if someone who worked on the process could provide history and
- b. Annual Archdiocese/Reentry Council - Reentry Service Dinner/ Conference
 - i. All hands on deck!
 - ii. We will work with Ernest about Community Appreciation Dinner event and get a list of items the he needs support with report back to the group
 - iii. We need date so we can lock it down
 - iv. We are looking at June 6th at St. Marys waiting for confirmation
 - v. LB to meet with Julio to discuss
- c. Jeanie Austin of SF Public Library shared that the library has funds to support community events/speakers at SF public libraries. She can be reached at Jeanie.Austin@sfpl.org for more information.

Reentry Council

City & County of San Francisco

Subcommittee on Direct Services

Informational Notes

Thursday, March 14, 2019
2:30pm-4:30pm
25 Van Ness Avenue
Lower Level Conference Room
San Francisco, California 94102

Members Present: Victoria Westbrook, Jeanie Austin (SFPL), Dana Drusinsky (For Demarris Evans, Public Defender's Office), Chloe Turner (For Ali Riker, Sheriff's Department)

Members Absent: Amarita King, Destiny Pletsch, Angela Coleman, Freda Glenn, Monica Wong, Maggie Rivera, Alex Weil, David Wiesner,

Inactive Members: Majeid Crawford, Charles Adams

1. Review the minutes of November 8, 2018, December 3, 2018 (Retreat Notes) and January 10, 2019

There were only four members at the meeting so quorum was not met. The meeting notes could not be approved.

2. Review last meeting decisions (discussion only)

- a. 2019 Schedule
The group review the Reentry Council's Calendar
- b. BSCC Grant Information
Geoffrea asked the group if anyone had applied to the Board of State and Community Corrections Grant that was presented in January's meeting. No one present stated they applied for the BSCC Grant.
- c. Mayoral Appointed Reentry Council Seats – Updates
Geoffrea informed the group that a TAY (Transitional Age Youth) Candidate had been identified and that this person was working with Mayor Breed's Office on being appointed.
- d. Eliminating some of the workgroups and workgroup participation
The group thought some of the workgroups should be eliminated; however, since the group did not have quorum, no decisions could be made.

3. Direct Services Results Survey

The group went over the Direct Services' survey that was sent to all members. There were 12-members who responded to the survey. The final results were as followed:

Reentry Council

City & County of San Francisco

(1) Centralized Discharge Planning:

The group wanted to coordinate releases with judges so that the release times were in tandem with individuals' reentry service plans. Secondly, the group wanted individuals to be provided with a one-page handout of 72-hour post-releases services. The group also wanted to visit Alameda County and review their court programs and how peer health workers assist clients in court proceeding. Lastly, the group wanted to ensure that TB Test verification was provided at release for anyone that was incarcerated longer than 5 days and that everyone being released from county jail was given an opportunity to meet with a Sheriff's Discharge Planner.

(2) Late Night Reentry Navigation:

The group wanted to support Senator Skinner's Bill, SB 42, Home Safe Act. The group wanted to support the efforts to have the CASC and the WRC opened until 10pm with mental health clinicians, case managers and peer mentors on staff during those hours. The group also wanted individuals to have continued access to county medical and financial benefits up to 10pm at the CASC.

(3) Expansion of Reentry Services for Gender Non-Confirming Community:

The group wanted more programming and funding for the non-binary community in-custody and out-of-custody. The group also wanted Reentry Housing devoted to the transgender/gender variant community. The group wanted on-site mental health services offered through the housing.

(4) After Hours Connection to Mental Health Service and Substance Abuse Treatment:

The group wanted a 24-hour sobering center/ wet center at SFGH that would include 24-hour drop-in psychiatric services and detox.

4. Report-backs from the five Workgroup committees (discussion only)

- a. Reentry Dinner/ Reentry Conference
- b. Reentry Navigation
- c. Alternative to Incarceration (programming credits)
- d. Justice Involved Homeless Transitional Age Youth Group
- e. Civic Engagement Working Group
- f. Reentry Pen Pal Workgroup

This area was tabled for the next scheduled meeting because the group did not have quorum.

5. Member Roundtable and Agenda Items for Next Meeting (discussion only)

Members Jeanie Austin, Victoria Westbrook decided to form a small committee that would begin the preliminary planning of the public safety debate.

6. Adjournment

The meeting adjourned at 4:15pm.

Direct Services Subcommittee 2019 Strategic Plan

This subcommittee works specifically to reduce San Francisco's recidivism rates by strengthening returning community members' access and connections to community based services, programs and health facilities.

The Direct Services Subcommittee mission is to assist the Reentry Council of the City and County of San Francisco ("Reentry Council") in supporting and investing in non-profit and grassroots community organizations, movements or activities geared to servicing and impacting incarcerated and/ or formerly incarcerated people in the areas of violence reduction, permanent housing, education, employment, mental and physical health, and substance abuse recovery.

Late Night-Reentry Navigation

- SB 42- Supporting Getting Home Safe Act
- Having the CASC and WRC staffed with Mental Clinicians, case managers, peer mentors until 10pm
- Continue Access to County Benefits

After Hours Connection to Mental Health Service and Substance Abuse Treatment

- Creation of a 24 hour Sobering Center at SFGH
- 24 hour Drop-in psychiatric services

2019 Priority 1

Priority 3

Centralized Discharge Planning

- Coordinated Release with judges so that release times are in tandem with service plan
- One-pager handout of 72 hour resources
- TB Test Verification provided at release
- Visiting Alameda County and reviewing their program in which they use peer health workers to assist clients during court proceeding.
- Everyone being released from county jail got an opportunity to meet with a discharge planner.
- TB given upon release for those released <5 days

Priority 2

Expansion of Reentry Services for Gender Non-Confirming Community

- More Programming and funding for the non-binary community in custody and out-of-custody
- Reentry Housing devoted to Transgender community
- Mental Health Services including the housing.

Priority 4

Planning a Successful Lobby Day

One of the most effective ways of letting elected officials know your organization's views on issues is through a personal meeting. In political terms, this is called lobbying. Lobbying provides members of Congress, state, and local officials with the information they need to make the best decisions for their constituencies. The information and education you can provide may be critical to the decisions they make on policy that affects your profession.

Elected officials take heed to mass numbers. When a group of people from an elected official's district requests a meeting regarding a particular issue, the elected official wants to hear their point of view. Most elected officials want to make sure that they understand the consequences and benefits of any particular piece of legislation on their constituency.

Because lobbying can be so valuable in getting an organization's view known, the planning and implementation of a lobby day is very important. Your success will be based on how well you organize the participants who will represent your organization's point of view. **Remember, "The appearance of power is power."** The more effectively you plan for your grassroots lobby day at the Capitol or City Hall, the more seriously the elected officials will view it.

IMPORTANT LOBBY DAY DECISIONS

Determine the date and notify potential participants

Setting your date early will ensure that your lobby day will get on the calendar of all of your members so they can plan ahead for expenses in their fiscal year budget. You will want to consider the legislative calendar and, if at the state level, make sure that the state legislature is in session.

Determine the format of your lobby day

Groups organize their lobby days in many different ways. The most traditional technique is to organize members of your organization to go to the offices of the elected officials. However, organizations have been known to have receptions or forums, at which they invite legislators to speak on particular issues and take questions.

Determine the staging/meeting location for your lobby day

This is a very important decision and will affect transportation, food and hotel decisions. If you select a venue that is not within walking distance of the legislator's offices, you will need to consider providing transportation to Capitol Hill (or State Legislature). When selecting a staging site for your lobby day activities, be sure that the location's capacity is large enough for the number of participants expected. In addition, make sure that all of the technical equipment you might need is accessible. Your location should also be accessible to people with disabilities.

Determine whether to provide lunch or snacks

Your decision to provide food for your participants always comes down to your budget. Be sure to explore many options, from purchasing gift cards for local eating establishments or locations, to asking another organization to use their facility for a lunch location.

Determine how appointments will be set

It is imperative that you determine early who will set-up the appointments.

This can be a huge undertaking for one individual; however, if appointments are set in one central location, the organization can better determine the number of members attending each appointment. Scheduling of appointments should start about 3 weeks before the lobby day. Many offices will not confirm a meeting until 1 week out. If appointments are set by participants, be sure to have them notify the organizer so that an overall schedule can be maintained.

Determine what issue(s) you will be lobbying

Because the status of legislation changes on a daily basis, it can be a challenge to select the issue(s) on which you will focus your attention. Your issue(s) have to be determined before a scheduling letter is sent to elected officials regarding the lobby day. Most offices will not set up appointments if they do not know what they will be discussing. Remember, you want to get the largest benefit from your lobby day. Legislators usually have limited time. At a meeting, the participant should educate the elected official on one or two issues and shore up his or her support. **Trying to discuss too many issues will only result in confusion and no commitment from the elected official.** Information on other issues can always be sent later.

Determine the contents of your Lobby Day Packet

In order for the participants to have a positive lobby day experience, a lobby day packet is essential to guide them through their daily meetings. Packets should include but are not limited to:

- Agenda of the day's activities
- Appointments list
- Map of office locations
- Letter from executive director or president to elected official asking them to support your issues
- Talking points on the issues
- Educational information on the issue that can be given to the elected official
- Lobby day meeting follow-up report form
- Sample thank you letter

Determine the number of volunteers you will need

Organizing a lobby day is a huge endeavor. You will benefit from enlisting the support of a few co-workers to help make phone calls, prepare materials, stuff folders, make appointments and even assist in lobbying. On the lobby day itself, the organizer will be taking care of many things that you did not anticipate. Here are some of the volunteers' roles on lobby day:

- Sign in participants and name tags
- Hand out lobby day packets
- Meet guest speakers and introduce them around the room
- Handle any technical issues, such as laptops/projectors/Power Points
- Handle the food
- Handle the transportation

Determine who will take part in your training session for lobby day

Preparing your participants for lobby day is critical. Many may have no experience in advocacy and may be unfamiliar with the issues. A pre-lobby day briefing is a good way to prepare your participants for lobbying and to answer any questions they might have. An Advocacy 101 session is recommended, followed by in-depth briefings on your issues, perhaps by experts from other organizations who may be willing to come and participate. Factor in some time for role-playing exercises to ease jitters, reiterate the dos and don'ts of lobbying, and actually practice lobbying.

Determine whether to invite the media to your lobby day

This is where the appearance of power comes into play. If you can get your local or statewide media to cover your lobby day, that can determine its success. If the media covers your lobby day and mentions the issues about which you will be meeting with legislators, pressure will be added to the legislators to support your view, especially if the media in their districts covered the lobby day. Try to use all media outlets, including television, radio, newspapers, and the Internet.

LOBBY DAY PLAN TIMELINE

Based on a four-month planning process

The date for your lobby day should already be selected. When you select a date, make sure that the legislature is in session. Once you have your date, you can begin to advertise your lobby day to your members in the newsletter, on your Web site, and at conferences.

Prepare a Lobby Day Timeline and Checklist

This can be an Excel file or basic document, but should include the projected completion date, task and person responsible. This timeline will guide you and keep you on track, so make sure you have included every task for planning purposes.

Four months out

- Determine meeting logistics and reserve your meeting room and a block of hotel rooms if applicable.
- Determine if lunch or transportation is needed and reserve chartered bus if applicable. Explore catering options and narrow choices based on budgetary constraints.
- Determine format for lobby day, whether it is a day of visiting legislators' offices or a reception, forum or briefing for legislators and staff.

90 Days Out

- Post registration information on Web site and alert invitees so that they can make travel arrangements.
- Create lobby day agenda and instructions.
- Determine your issues.
- Discuss options for special guest speakers who will speak at your training.
- Determine who will schedule appointments for lobby day.

60 Days Out

- Determine what will be in participants' folders: Lobby tips, maps of legislative building locations or city council offices; lobby report form; talking points and position papers; draft letter from executive director or president to members of congress, the state legislature, or the city council
- Draft press releases
- Determine organizational volunteers and their roles
- Invite guest speakers who will provide briefings on issues

45 Days Out

- Draft talking points and leave behinds on issues.
- Draft letter from the executive director or president that will go into the packet of information for legislators on lobby day.

30 Days Out

- Begin meeting requests via telephone, email or fax.
- If you are scheduling appointments, allow seven days and then make follow-up calls for appointments.
- Start recruiting volunteers to help with your effort.
- Order any materials you might need for lobby day such as pencils, folders, note pads, and nametags.

15 Days Out

- Prepare participant folders and mail out, if applicable.
- Prepare your meeting location and make sure that you have everything you need.
- Call people with whom you have contracts and make any last minute changes.
- Follow up on all meeting requests with legislators offices that have not yet responded. If not already started, prepare master schedule with all meetings and participants; revise as meetings are scheduled.

2 Days Out

- If applicable, send a press advisory to the media regarding the event.
- Finalize master meeting schedule.
- Prepare cell phone list.
- Confirm bus (if applicable) and lunch/catering provider (if applicable).

Day of Event

- Send a more detailed press release to the media.
- Arrive at the transportation pick up site early to greet participants.
- Plan to have extra materials in case participants want to do some “drop-by” visits at other legislator offices.

5 Days after Lobby Day

- Send thank you letters out the following week to elected officials and participants.
- Write a follow-up article for your newsletter or Website.
- Post survey and notify participants.

APPOINTMENT SETTING

Appointments may either be made in writing by faxing or emailing the legislator’s scheduling person, or by phone. Every office differs in their preferred scheduling process, so please check with them to determine which process to use. Sample language follows for emails, faxes and phone call scripts.

Sample Email or Fax

Dear [Name of Scheduler],

Members of the National Association for Sport and Physical Education will be in Washington, D.C. on [date]. We would very much appreciate a meeting with Senator [Name] and/or his Education staff person to discuss the importance of quality physical education and related legislative issues.

Among attendees will be [Insert names of participants from the Senator’s home state and their affiliation] There may be others at the meeting as well, but I am unable to confirm the names at this time.

A meeting between the hours of [times] would be ideal.

Thank you so much for your consideration of our request.

Cordially,

Phone Script

“Hello, my name is [name] from [name of organization]. May I please speak to the scheduler?” (Write down the scheduler’s name. Be sure to get the correct spelling.)

“Several of our members will be in Washington, D.C. on [date], and we would like to schedule a meeting with Senator [Name] and/or his Education staff person to discuss the importance of quality physical education and related legislative issues. May we do this on the phone, or would you prefer an email or fax?”

At this point, you may either continue, or take down the email address or fax number. Although you should make every effort to get a meeting with the legislator, many times you will be referred to the appropriate staff person, e.g., the one who handles education issues. If you are able to continue on the phone, let the scheduler know who is coming:

“At this time, the following people will be attending: [list names and affiliations]. We would like to schedule a meeting between the hours of [times].”

Note: You may have to contact the office several times before someone returns your call or confirms an appointment. Be persistent and proactive—you are calling as a voting constituent [or on behalf of voting constituents].

Appointment Report Form

The best way to keep track of appointments is with the Excel program, or something similar. Information to include in the report form:

- Name of Legislator (w/ state/district they represent)
- Name of Scheduler
- Phone number of Congressional office
- Name of staff person who may take the meeting
- Time requested/Time confirmed
- Attendees (with contact information—emails/office #/cell #)
- Meeting location
- Date appointment is confirmed and who confirmed it

LEAVE BEHINDS

A personal meeting with a legislator is the perfect opportunity to educate your elected official about your profession and organization. You do not want to overwhelm the official, but you do want him or her to leave the meeting with a better understanding of the role of your organization or profession. A one page “leave-behind” that clearly and succinctly defines the issues is probably the most important document in your packet. Try to avoid leaving behind more than 1 or 2 pages. Other materials you may consider leaving with the legislator or staff person are:

- Your organization’s Public Policy Agenda
- Your business card
- Letter from President of the organization supporting the issues

- Letters from other constituents that were not able to attend the Lobby Day asking for support for the issues

PARTICIPANT FOLDERS

Information to include in the participants' folders should include:

- Lobby day agenda/schedule, including meal instructions, if applicable
- Your organization's Public Policy Agenda
- Talking points for each issue
- Extra copies of the one-page leave-behind
- Map of Capitol Hill (or state capitol)
- Lobby Day tips
- Cell phone numbers of others in group and lobby day organizers
- Meeting Report forms

ON LOBBY DAY

For the pre-lobby day briefing, arrive at your event location 2 hours early to make sure the venue is set up as requested. Make sure that the meeting room is comfortable, roomy, has enough seating and tables, and test any electronic equipment well in advance of use. Ask your volunteers to arrive 1 hour early and position them to assist participants with directions. Also, position one of your volunteers as a greeter for your guest speakers. Collect cell phone numbers, if you don't already have them. Set up your table with folders, name tags and additional copies of important documents (maps, talking points, etc.).

On lobby day, arrive early to provide direction and ease any jitters the participants may be feeling. Check in with the transportation provider(s) to make sure they are on time.

AFTER LOBBY DAY

Evaluations/Survey

If you decide to ask your participants to complete a survey, you should prepare this within 2 weeks of your event, so that their memories are fresh. Several on-line venues are available for surveys. Upon completion, review your evaluations or survey results and note where you could do better next year in implementing your lobby day.

Meeting Forms

Review the meeting forms and pass on any follow-up that might be needed to the appropriate person.

Wrap Up Article

Wrap up your efforts with an article in your organization newsletter or Website informing members of the results of your lobby day. The article could include the number of participants, the number of offices visited, the number of legislators that supported the issue, and the legislators your organization still needs to persuade.

Outstanding Debt

Remember to pay any outstanding debt that you might have incurred during the planning and implementation of your lobby day. Outstanding debt could be bills you incurred for catering, transportation, or sound equipment. You don't want to burn any bridges during this process.

FOLLOW UP

One of the most important aspects of a lobby day is the follow up. First, send a thank you note (via fax or email) within a week of returning home. Thank the legislator and/or staff person for their time and reiterate your support for the issue and the "ask".

Secondly, it is important to follow up a month or 6 weeks later if your legislator or their staff person did not give you a clear answer, or gave you a positive answer but then did not follow through with their commitment. Whether this is done by phone or email, or even in person at a home state site visit, the staffer and legislator will know you are serious if you follow up. Always be friendly and professional, and offer to provide additional information if it will help them to make a decision.



Hold your own **ROCK THE VOTE** Candidate Event

In Conjunction with



The voices of young voters have been all but ignored by elected officials and candidates for decades. Now in 2008, with young voters going to the polls in record numbers and taking action on the ground to make this election our own, politicians are beginning to talk to and with us about the issues we care about.

By hosting your own candidate event, you can make sure candidates in your state or hometown pay attention to young people's issues and help shape the debate within your community this election season.

Rock the Vote is working with young adults around the country on "Talking Politics 2.0," our series of state and local candidate forums. **We want to work with you on one in your state!** Check out the "how-to" below and get in touch with us at forum@rockthevote.com if you'd like to hold a Rock the Vote candidate event this fall.

Hold a Rock the Vote Event

Rock the Vote has made it simple for anyone around the country to make their effort a Rock the Vote effort. Kick your event off right and license the Rock the Vote logo. This will give you permission to use the Rock the Vote name and logo on co-branded event materials and advertise *your* event with our name. Once your application has been approved, you're ready to go!

Rock the Vote is a nonpartisan organization. This means that we do not support or endorse candidates, nor do we participate in any activities that could benefit one party over another. There are many laws governing our work as a nonpartisan organization and we take our nonpartisanship seriously. *We cannot approve use of our logo for any partisan effort.*

To request the Rock the Vote logo, fill out the form at: <http://www.rockthevote.com/act-out/logo-request/>

Invite Participants

Who do you want at your event? Mayoral, state legislative, city council, or congressional races are great places to start. Remember, to hold a nonpartisan event you must invite all candidates for a particular office.

Be sure to invite your chosen candidates well ahead of the date you have in mind. Draft a letter to each potential participant that outlines your event proposal and explains why he or she should attend. Follow up with a phone call to each candidate's scheduling office.

If both candidates agree to the forum, you're in business! However, keep in mind that you and the candidates must all agree on the details and terms of the debate. Candidates will be particularly



interested in the site and format details. Ask each participant to name a representative who has the power to speak for him or her. Find out how to contact those representatives quickly, including when they are on the road.

Choose a Site

Securing a location for your event doesn't have to be an expensive proposition. Utilize the free or low-cost facilities within your own community, such as school auditoriums, civic centers, or theaters. Other possible locations include hotels and TV studios. But remember: make sure to pick a site that is as neutral as possible to both candidates.

If your event is going to be televised, find a site that is already well suited to the necessary technical equipment. Depending on how complex the production will be, you can solicit advice from a freelance producer or someone from a local television or radio station. Getting advice in advance from an expert will save you time, money, and headaches later.

When choosing a debate site, size is an immediate consideration. A stage for candidates, broadcasting equipment, and room for journalists will take up significant space. If you anticipate heavy media interest, you may want to provide journalists with a separate media center that they can work in both before and after the event. This area also provides room for post-debate interviews and commentary.

Choose a Format

Your candidate event can take on almost any form you can think up. However, there are a number of available models to guide you. The top three most common formats are a debate, a forum, and a discussion.

Debate

In a debate, candidates are on stage at the same time and interact directly with each other. There are several different debate formats; the most widely known include the town hall meeting (audience members ask the questions), the panel (a number of pre-selected individuals question the candidates), and the single moderator (one person asks the questions). Each type has its own set of benefits and drawbacks. While town hall and panel discussions encourage greater participation and involvement, the single moderator tends to focus attention more firmly on the candidates and their positions.

Forum

At a candidate forum, speakers answer questions directly from audience members, panelists, or a moderator but do not directly engage with each other. Speakers may be on stage simultaneously, or at separate times.

Discussion

At this type of event, candidates sit down with a group of young adults one at a time and have a discussion. Rather than follow the traditional question-and-answer format, discussions have a more conversational tone and involve back-and-forth exchanges between the candidate and the participants.

If your format requires a moderator, pick a person that is familiar with the issues and candidates, such as a journalist or professor. Journalists are likely to be more experienced with handling the technical



requirements of a broadcast setting. Above all, choose a moderator or panelists whom you and the event participants trust to be professional and fair. If you decide to organize your event as a town hall, make sure that your audience is as balanced and unbiased as possible. Try to distribute tickets evenly to supporters of each candidate and seek out undecided, independent voters.

Other formatting issues to consider include:

- **Topic**
What do you want your debate to be about? It can be wide-ranging or confined to just a few issues that are relevant to young voters. Much like the rest of the electorate, top youth issues in 2008 include jobs and the economy, the war in Iraq, health care, and education. You should also consider addressing local issues that are relevant to your community.
- **Length**
How long should the debate be? This can depend on a number of factors, including scheduling constraints, the number of participants, and whether it will be broadcast. The presidential debates are typically ninety minutes.
- **Opening and Closing Statements**
Will the candidates have opening and closing statements? Prepared statements reduce the amount of time for questions, so try limiting them to two or three minutes each.
- **Time Limits**
Should time limits for questions and answers be set? The lengths of both will determine how many topics can be addressed during the debate. For example, questions could be limited to twenty seconds, with two minutes allotted for answers. If you do opt for time limits, select a responsible person to keep time and establish an easy system to let the moderator and participants know when their time is up. Remember, mistakes in timing can lead to claims of unfairness later.
- **Order of Speaking**
Who speaks first and who finishes up? Try to use an easy and fair selection process, such as flipping a coin or drawing straws.

Once the format has been finalized and agreed to, put everything in writing and distribute to all parties.

Invite the Audience

If you are going to have a live audience for your event, deciding who attends is important. As soon as a debate is announced, many people will want tickets. Decide on audience size and ticket distribution early and stick to those guidelines. Will the event be open to the public? Will it be limited to a certain group or demographic, such as young adults under 30? Establish a ticket policy and enforce rules of audience conduct during the forum. Remember that time taken up with audience reaction is time taken away from the candidates and their views.

Make sure to consider the logistics of having a live audience at your event site. The setup of your debate hall can greatly affect how noisy things might get. Uncarpeted floors, for instance, can magnify every audience move from applause to sneezes. The larger the audience, the greater the potential for noise. If you anticipate heckling or other disruptive behavior, make sure to have adequate security on hand. Make it clear to ticket-holders in advance if they can bring cameras or other electronic equipment; flash devices



can be distracting to candidates and TV camera crews. Finally, make sure the size of the audience and the seating plans are consistent with safe use of the hall, and that all relevant fire and building codes are met.

And remember: once your event is scheduled, send the details to forum@rockthevote.com. We'll work with you to connect with other Rock the Vote people in your area that might be interested in volunteering or attending your debate.

Involve the Media

Political debates and candidate forums are news events, so you must consider the media in your planning. The press is an excellent promotional tool that can be used to generate excitement and interest in your event.

Once the details of the debate or forum have been finalized, write a press release and distribute it to local media outlets. Explore promotional opportunities with nearby college newspapers and radio stations. Schedule interviews to preview the forum and discuss the topics you hope to cover with the candidates. Create a website for the debate to publicize the latest news.

Think about issuing credentials to journalists who want to cover the event. This will allow you to identify and control the number of journalists who have access to the event site and to fairly allocate space. Consider the needs of different types of media. Is the event going to be televised? Try getting help from a TV producer who can assist with camera placement, lighting, and power sources. Will there be still photographers in the hall? Designate where they should be and make sure their equipment is not distracting.

After the event, many journalists will want to question the candidates. The media center described earlier can become the area where this exchange takes place. Post-debate commentary can be lengthy, so it is important to find a location where it does not interfere with the process of cleaning up the hall.

Plan and Budget

Hosting a candidate event requires a considerable amount of planning. However, early and thorough preparation will save you from many problems down the line.

Taking the time to work out a budget is critical. Keep these possible expenses in mind:

- **Debate Hall**
Can you use a facility that will be provided free of charge, or will it have to be rented?
- **Furniture/Stage**
Do you need to provide a raised platform and podiums for the speakers, desks and tables for the moderator/panelists, or chairs for the audience?
- **Electrical**
Will you need to obtain microphones, additional lights, or extra power sources? If your event is going to be broadcast, decide what equipment you will provide and what media representatives will bring.
- **Printed Materials**
Will you print programs, posters, media credentials, or audience tickets?

ROCK THE VOTE

- **Labor**
Will you require professional help to handle equipment?
- **Security**
Will you need to provide security if you are using a facility after its normal business hours?
- **Cassettes/Transcripts**
Do you plan to offer video, audio, or written transcripts of the debate?

However, a number of these costs can be reduced or entirely eliminated with creative planning. Careful location scouting can reduce the need for furniture, staging, and electrical equipment. If you plan to produce printed materials, consider soliciting sponsors for the event to help offset your costs. These sponsors can be recognized in your printed and electronic promotional materials, as well as on-site. Finding politically-engaged volunteers will also save you in labor and security. You can charge for tapes and transcripts to cover the cost of producing them.

Once you've decided to hold an event, reach out to your local television stations early. Let them know that you are planning a debate or forum and ask if they would be interested in broadcasting all or part of the event. Having your event broadcast is an important consideration as you select your debate hall, decide on the size of the audience, and invite journalists.

Think about the internet as you're planning. A website can be used to promote the date, time, and location of your event, solicit volunteers and donors, order tickets, acknowledge sponsors, post transcripts, and receive post-debate feedback. You can also reach out to local schools, businesses, and civic groups to help promote your event on their sites. Don't limit yourself – the web provides endless options to make your forum unique. You might even consider webcasting your event, hosting an internet forum, or soliciting questions for the candidates on your website.

Follow Up

Once the debate is over, your job as the host is fairly simple. Make sure your event site is restored to normal, and that any borrowed or rented equipment is returned. If you decided to produce transcripts or tapes of the debate, you will be providing journalists with a valuable tool. The sooner you can transcribe the debate and distribute copies, the more useful they will be. Send thank you notes to all participants, as well as any partners or sponsors.

Finally, let Rock the Vote know about your success! Send photos, video, and any press coverage generated to forum@rockthevote.com. We'll put it up on our website to show how young people across the country are taking charge and shaping the debate in their communities.

Keep in touch, stay involved, and volunteer with Rock the Vote!

Sources

"Guide to Hosting Your Own Debate" by the Commission on Presidential Debates
"Organizing Speeches and Debates by Local Candidates or Stand-ins for Candidates" by Shirley Jackson

Morris, Geoffrea (ADP)

From: Geoffrea Morris <msggeoffrea@icloud.com>
Sent: Thursday, May 09, 2019 6:04 AM
To: Morris, Geoffrea (ADP)
Subject: 10 Tips: Running a Political Debate | The Educators Room

This message is from outside the City email system. Do not open links or attachments from untrusted sources.

<https://theeducatorsroom.com/10-tips-running-political-debate/>

10 Tips: Running a Political Debate

Jake Miller

- About the Author
- Latest Posts

About Jake Miller

Mr. Jake Miller teaches middle school history near Harrisburg, PA. He is the 2016 National History Day Pennsylvania Teacher of the Year and a 2017 NEA Foundation Teacher of Excellence. His articles have appeared in The Washington Post, The Guardian, WeAreTeachers, and several other periodicals, but Miller has called TER home since 2012.

- *The Fallacy of a Picture-Perfect Social Media Life – and Its Effects on Education... or Us All - December 17, 2018*
- *My Morning Routine As a Teacher - November 28, 2018*
- *Let's Diversify America's Teaching Staff - November 26, 2018*
- *15 Things My 3-Year-Old Taught Me This Year - November 20, 2018*
- *Mandy Manning Is The National Teacher of the Year We Need – And Deserve - May 12, 2018*
- *10 Things My Newborn Younger Son Taught Me About Education - May 8, 2018*
- *Test Scores > Hungry Kids? PA Teacher Fired for Making Pancakes - April 17, 2018*
- *An Act Declaring April the Worst Month to Teach - March 25, 2018*
- *I Wish Everyone Knew How Long It Takes to Plan Great Lessons - March 25, 2018*
- *10 Thoughts During a Failed Lesson - March 11, 2018*

Last week I shared [“10 Reasons Why Teachers Should Host Political Debates.”](#) It was a reflection piece on a State Senate debate I helped plan, coordinate, and orchestrate. Since then I’ve received several letters of thanks and strangers in the community approaching me in appreciation. Most importantly, students (and their parents) have expressed the most abundant appreciation, as have the candidates themselves. However, now that our primary election has passed and the candidate window wanes, I truly hope you use the experiences I’ve gained and the thoughts below to earn similar platitudes and gratitude.

10 Tips for Teachers Organizing and Running a Debate:

1 — Reach out to the candidates – Probably the most important aspect of initiating a debate is ensuring that the candidates are willing and able to participate. This can be done by simply researching the candidates webpages or Facebook pages and initiating a conversation with them and/or their staff. Since our teachers’ union makes electoral recommendations, I always reach out to the candidates and wish to have a conversation with them. One beauty of democracy is that **most elected leaders** – and more so, those who seek the office – are often not just able to meet with teachers, but often relish the idea.

2 — Find a place – The next component is to find a location to host the debate. School districts should permit the usage of the facility so long as its signed out by an entity. So, whether its the teachers’ union, the Young Democrats, Young Republicans, or the local party, an organization – not the district – should officially host the debate to permit the district to remain completely **unbiased**. One thing I didn’t do that I wished I had ahead of time was to visit the facility at the time of the event to see what it would look like (*I realized only during the debate that 3 of the 5 light bulbs on stage were burnt out!*).

3 — Find a time – The earlier the idea for the debate, the better, here. Candidates schedules fill up rater quickly. There are two ways to go about this: one is to simply select a time and tell the candidates to make it at their peril or protection; the other is to participate in a back-and-forth with the campaigns until a time is aligned. I **danced between these 2 choices**, as I sent the candidates a Google Form asking them to check off times that they and the facility was available. We finished on one single, solitary match.

4 — Recruit credible panelists and a moderator – I enlisted the help of our **county’s party chair** (and a current State Rep. who had spoken with and supported all 4 of the candidates), a **news broadcaster from a local Fox station**, and a news broadcaster from the **local ABC station**, to join me on the panel. When it became evident that the teachers’ union was a big source of controversy in the campaign (one of the candidates received support, and the others attacked him for gaining it), I recused myself from the panel and was able to quickly find an additional panelist (who was a female voice from the party committee we

sorely needed in an all-male panel and asking questions of all-male candidates). When organizing a debate, **I recommend recruiting more from the media than the party**. It's the media's job – or at least it should be – to act as the “4th branch of government,” as Edmund Burke once stated, seeking to balance the other three. One of the panelists from the media should serve as **moderator**, to verbally run the event while I, the organizer, ran it from behind the scenes.

5 — Advertise! – As soon as the dates, places, and panelists are chosen, grab people's attention and get them to the debate! A debate – much like a meeting – is simply a formality without voters in attendance. The panelists from their respective media should hopefully help with that, but don't be afraid to post on **social media**, create a **flyer to handout** for the debate, and hang **laminated signs** both inside and outside of school ahead of time.

6 — Enlist the help of students and other teachers – This seems silly, but my favorite part of the debate was getting others on board. When we created the rules, I realized I needed a **timekeeper**. I chose two of my most reliable, strong students to take on the role together, and they did a fantastic job. I also asked several of my closest teacher-friends to help me seat and distribute information to attendees. In the future, I plan on gathering more students (and teachers, for that matter) to be greeters and participate in the process.

7 — Set ground rules – Just like the classroom, the debate needs structure. The rules we implemented were:

–Candidates had 2 minutes for introductions and conclusions

–90 seconds to respond to questions

–30 seconds to rebut any time they are mentioned / criticized

–No pre-written notes were permitted at the podium

–Campaign literature was not to be distributed until after the debate One rule I wished I generated was one on yard signs; as one of the candidates lined the drive up to the school with his signs and the others were a bit upset at this. So I realized I had to...

8 — Be willing to make quick decisions, and be firm with them – I should have known better that the candidates, their campaigns, and their supporters would act more like my 7th-grade students than I thought. But the fact of the matter is nobody was there to help me make the decision on the campaign signs. Nobody else would have been able to do something about the lighting on stage (so I interrupted the debate) to actually push their podiums together. *Ha!*

9 — Don't forget the minutia – Cold bottles of water, pens, and notepads were essential for each candidate's podium, and it's something I almost forgot at the last minute. There should

be as many **microphones** as there are candidates and panelists. The custodians should have ample time to **clean** and set-up **podiums, tables, and chairs**. In addition, I thought I could run the sound and lights on my own, and thankfully I second guessed myself and we found a **sound technician** who completely saved the day by wrangling our ancient sound system.

10 — Appreciate the democracy of it all – In *Candidate Confessional*, a podcast that interviews candidates who lose their elections, Howard Dean reiterated that democratic elections are the replacement of the constant tumultuous anarchy surrounding past transfers of power. Just 300 years ago, when one was wrested from power, it was because somebody else staged a violent revolution. Today, politics can be ugly – almost battle-laden, in some regards – but it is much better than the alternative. Once elections are finished, we have peaceful transfers of power. After running my own debate, it was nice to know I was an integral part of that.

Keep in mind that debates, like any classroom lesson, will have snafus. Things will go wrong. Problems won't just hatch on stage, they've probably manifested themselves for weeks. It's largely because of the fact that our profession makes more decisions – nearly 1,500 a day, by some estimates – that we are the perfect person for the job of organizing and running a debate. But in case we need more reasons to remind ourselves why, I invite you to (again) read the first part of this article.