

**CSAC Challenge Award Nomination
Executive Summary:
Reprogramming Corrections**

Overview: The Humboldt County Sheriff's Office provides in-custody support at the county jail. Our overall goal is to reduce recidivism by investing resources to those impacted by incarceration.

Challenge: The impact of realignment on the Humboldt County Correctional Facility.

With the implementation of Prison Realignment in 2011, county correctional facilities in California were burdened with meeting the demands of a more intensive population. Our rural community is now expected to provide resources comparable to those previously only offered in the prison system. This challenge, as well as the challenges within our local economy, perpetuate a continuous level of recidivism. We are in the planning stages of a new reentry resource center that will consolidate reentry services under one roof, and anticipate we will open our new facility in 2019 or 2020. However, the Sheriff's Office is taking the initiative now to combat some of the present challenges within the criminal justice system, as well as to laying a foundation for the new facility to build upon.

Innovative Solution: Providing a variety of resources to people currently in custody.

The Sheriff's Office partnered with Humboldt State University Sociology students to conduct research within the jail. One of the recommendations that came from the research was to hold a three-day Reentry Fair to connect people in custody with community resources and employers. On the first day, staff went to each of the housing units to prepare inmates for the coming days; laying expectations and providing advice about the importance of first impressions. The next day consisted of local employers meeting with people currently in custody, providing them with information on their business and employment applications. We brought employers directly into five of our housing units, and they spent an hour in each unit sitting at tables answering questions about their workplaces and programs in a job fair-type setting. On the final day we brought in service providers ranging from food security, alcohol and drug care services, to education, housing opportunities and more. We also partnered with the Employment Training Division (ETD) to develop résumé and master application classes. Every participant completed a résumé, and received assistance on conducting an employment search and preparing for an interview. Participants received a flash drive loaded with

community and employment resources, and a copy of their new résumé. The flash drive was placed with their stored property to take with them upon release. We also developed an employment readiness business card that was widely distributed throughout the facility. The card explains how to obtain right-to-work documents as well as employers that are currently hiring and open to hiring ex-offenders.

Originality: The Humboldt County Sheriff's Office brings the resources to the people.

For a rural county, with limited resources we were able to implement several effective strategies to support people in custody. These strategies include bringing employers, service providers and resources directly to the currently incarcerated. They also include creating community accountability through providing transparency around our efforts to reduce recidivism.

Results: The results and the success of these programs have had a large community impact.

The Sheriff's Office distributed a survey to current inmates regarding the Reentry Fair where they were asked about their knowledge of community resources and top choices for employers. 73% of participants said the Reentry Fair was helpful with job resources, 53% with housing options, and 49% with substance abuse program information. Reentry Fair employers had the opportunity to promote their businesses and meet viable candidates for employment. Service providers were able to provide in-depth program information. After the Reentry Fair, some service providers shared that they have never seen the formerly incarcerated more prepared when they are released. An Alcohol and Drug Care Program Manager saw a difference in the recently incarcerated participants in his program, saying, "They seem to have a plan. They come out organized, prepared, and inspired." Some formerly incarcerated people were hired through the Reentry Fair, and are grateful for the community knowledge they received from the event. The ongoing employment preparation services have also had a community impact. ETD said they are meeting with former inmates that have put in to use their résumé and master applications they produced while in custody. The Sheriff's Office will now hold the Reentry Fair twice a year to continue to support a well-planned reentry for those in custody.

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