

## **Imperial County Adult Re-Entry Summit CSAC Executive Summary**

### **Overview:**

The Adult Re-entry Summit is a collaborative effort of the Imperial County Probation Department and the Imperial County Community Corrections Partnership that strives to enhance public safety by convening public and private local resources to help adult offenders successfully return to their communities as self-sufficient and law abiding citizens.

### **Challenge:**

The 2011 Public Safety Realignment Act (AB109) resulted in major changes to the California criminal justice system, requiring all qualifying lower level offenders serve their sentences in county jail rather than in state prison, or serve a probation sentence at the county level. The Imperial County Community Corrections Partnership's mission is to implement beneficial programs and services that will assist this population in their rehabilitation and reintegration back into society. The agencies that comprise the Community Corrections Partnership include the Imperial County Probation Department, Sheriff's Office, District Attorney's Office, Public Defenders Office, Superior Courts, Behavioral Health, and local police departments.

Utilizing AB 109 funding, various programs have been developed and offered to this population within the county. However, after hearing from clients that they were unable to locate local career or education opportunities along with family support information, a Re-entry Probation Officer of the Imperial County Probation Department felt that it was necessary to provide clients with additional assistance to meet their needs.

In 2015, the Probation Department began planning the first "Re-entry Summit." With an initial allocation of just \$3,500, Department staff began identifying participating partners, workshop topics, and a guest speaker.

### **Innovation Solution:**

The Adult Re-entry Summit is geared towards offering adult probationers and incarcerated individuals information and contacts regarding education, healthcare and employment opportunities from local agencies. As beneficial as informational booths are to clients, the Imperial County Adult Re-entry Summit differs from other counties by offering breakout sessions that are geared towards the needs of many clients within the criminal justice system. The hands-on workshops have consists of various topics such as child support assistance presented by the Imperial County Department of Child Support Services, recognizing mental health signs and symptoms offered by Imperial County Behavioral Health Services, and the process to expunge a criminal record presented by Probation staff.

The Imperial County Adult Re-entry Summit also provides both offenders and exhibitors a luncheon that features a motivational speaker with an inspirational message to the group on how personal life struggles assisted in their rehabilitation and future success. The first Adult Re-entry Summit guest speaker, Matthew Maher, provided a powerful message emphasizing integrity and accountability to the summit attendees. The second Adult Re-entry Summit guest speaker was actor Noel G., who shared his life story of homelessness and incarceration, and described how acting was able to save him and help him build a better future.

The summit has also helped clients create connections with local private and public agencies whose goal is to assist them in their rehabilitative efforts. Another factor that sets the

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Imperial County Adult Re-entry Summit apart from others is that low risk level inmates who are cleared to leave the jail facility also participate in the summit. This unique component provides an opportunity for low risk inmates to interact with the agencies at the summit, obtain information through the workshops, and hear the guest speaker's powerful message. This allows them to work on their rehabilitation while in custody and use their time productively.

### **Originality:**

The size and challenges that Imperial County faces enables strong collaboration between various public and private agencies. The Adult Re-entry Summit has been able to bring these entities together to provide opportunities for justice-involved clients in an effort to increase productivity and reduce recidivism. Working together with limited resources, we have developed a transformative event which other counties could replicate by providing similar services, programs, and opportunities to criminal justice involved individuals transitioning back to their communities after a period of incarceration.

The collaboration experienced through the Adult Re-entry Summit demonstrates the willingness to help mutual clients toward the goal of rehabilitation. By offering impactful workshops, informational booths, and guest speakers, and interacting directly with providers, clients learn of helpful programs and services that they can utilize.

### **Cost Effectiveness:**

Most costs for the Adult Re-entry Summit are absorbed through staff's normal work schedules as the Re-entry Probation Officer and others attend various planning meetings leading up to the event. In addition, participating agencies also donate time and resources to add value to the experience. A raffle is held to keep participants fully engaged, with prizes donated through community partners.

### **Results:**

The success of the Adult Re-entry Summit is measured by several factors. Service providers who participate at the event are asked to fill out a survey to provide feedback on their experience. Ninety percent of the surveys received were positive, noting the value of the guest speaker, workshop relevance and a strong interest in participating in the next Adult Re-entry Summit.

From the first Adult Re-entry Summit in 2016 to the second in 2017 the number of clients in attendance increased by 60%, demonstrating that participants are motivated in obtaining information and attending workshops to improve their future. These results suggest that the Adult Re-entry Summit has been an asset to our clients and the continued collaboration between agencies will make next year's event even more impactful.

### **Project or Program Contact:**

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**Additional Information:**



**Figure 1: Probation Assistant presenting the Summit's Expungement Workshop**



**Figure 2: Actor Noel G. speaking to guests present at the 2<sup>nd</sup> Annual Adult Re-entry Summit**



**Figure 3: Clients visiting informational booths at Adult Re-entry Summit**



**Figure 4: Probation Staff pictured with Adult Re-entry Summit speaker, Noel G.**