



Office of Community Involvement



Department of Community Justice CBAC

TO: Chair Jessica Vega Pederson and Board of County Commissioners (4) pages

FROM: Department of Community Justice Community Budget Advisory Committee (CBAC)

DATE: May 4, 2023

SUBJECT: DCJ Community Budget Advisory Committee Report & Recommendations

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The DCJ CBAC is committed to helping achieve a safe county for all residents. We affirm that the Multnomah County Department of Community Justice (DCJ) is a nationally recognized pioneer in juvenile justice, gun violence reduction and in helping youth and adults obtain mental health and substance abuse treatment and social services. We encourage County leaders to build on these successful programs by bolstering this department's professional staff and with the support and resources they need to do the job. We believe that County leaders should expect all County departments to work as a team and to collaborate so that each person can be successful, just as in an emergency room or a sports field. We urge county leadership to prioritize these services that promote true community safety, rather than inflating the funding of supervision and law enforcement programs. Specifically, this means investing in culturally specific, community based programs and victim services throughout the County and creating a working environment that is safe for all.

PROCESS

The FY 2024 DCJ CBAC met monthly with DCJ staff beginning in October 2022. As a new cohort, we were educated on the budget process and received several presentations from program staff.

While the CBAC appreciates the commitment and availability of DCJ to meet monthly outside of

Department of Community Justice CBAC

the budget season, we note with disappointment that CBAC members did not enjoy access to the Director's budget proposal until the day that proposal became public and that CBAC members were not consulted on proposed budget offers. This is simply not enough time for a volunteer committee to meaningfully evaluate a budget proposal. While recognizing the department's need to maintain discretion when budget proposals could impact current employees, we again urge the department to consider ways to be more transparent with their budget proposals earlier in the process. We particularly note that other county departments involve their CBACs earlier in program offer development (DCA/DCM, DA).

We believe that stipends for committee members in exchange for their time and lived experience would enable more consistent attendance and participation. We also believe recruiting members who have directly interacted with the criminal justice system would lead to richer dialogue and a better representation of the community in the budget process.

EMERGING ISSUES & CHANGES

The community wants action, results, and to feel safe, without significant additional expense. At the same time, the public continues to push for drastic reimagining and transformation of our county's public safety system. This is a perfect opportunity for a transformative budget, with significant investments in culturally specific, community-based resources and crime victim services. These programs serve the communities most impacted by crime and those harmed both historically and in the present day by the public safety systems of this region.

There is also increasing gun violence, created by the easy access to guns by youth and young adults without any firearm safety training. Effective community justice requires facilities that are welcoming, culturally specific, and SAFE. This protects the employees, their clients and their clients' families by letting them access services without worrying about whether they will be shot or attacked.

Finally, the individuals served by DCJ are increasingly facing multiple issues of trauma, drugs, mental health, uncertain jobs, housing and income supports. This has been exacerbated by under-investment in communities and community based programs, as well as high inflation costs.

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Staff: *Erika Preuitt, Christia Mayer, Tami Wallis*

Department of Community Justice CBAC

Every dollar spent on supervision, jail, and other systems of control is a dollar not invested in housing, education, health and employment, which are factors that sustain community safety and prosperity.

BUDGET FEEDBACK

We urge County leadership to consider the reduction in the supervision population and reallocate funding from supervision-related services toward victim services and culturally specific community based programs. These programs are underfunded, but they serve an increasing number of people. We also want to celebrate the successful work of the DCJ employees who are using innovative approaches and taking a whole-person and team-based approach with their clients. We urge the County leaders to require “warm-hand-offs”, so that there is a seamless transition between departments and programs. With this approach personal success is encouraged and the investment the County has made in the individual and for community safety is protected. This means that mental health, housing and other services County and contractor staff provide are involved earlier in the transition process, and that the resources and people of the community are engaged.

We SUPPORT the Executive Budget for DCJ.

PROGRAM OFFER RECOMMENDATIONS

DCJ’s CBAC supports more funds for Victim & Survivor Services, restorative practices and culturally specific services within the Department of Community Justice. Our specific recommendations are as follows, in priority order:

1. 50041 Stabilization and Readiness Program (SARP)

The Stabilization and Readiness Program (SARP) enhances motivation for treatment, stabilization, skill development and case management services for individuals with severe and persistent mental illness. The program will work with individuals assigned to DCJ's Mental Health Unit (MHU) who are (1) not ready to engage with mental health treatment; (2) are waiting to enter mental health treatment; or (3) are unable to access the appropriate level of care in the community. This program in 2023 has over 75% of clients involved in treatment by the time of discharge. Almost 90% of the persons engage in services.

The DCJ CBAC believes that this innovative program is worthy of expansion and suggests

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that the County leadership consider additional investments in this program ABOVE those proposed by the DCJ and found in the Executive Budget. This would allow the program to expand and serve other communities within the County.

2. 50040 East Campus South Building Improvements

DCJ's East Campus expansion would increase safety and security in the North building and allow for future access to the South building if that becomes available later. Expanding office space at this campus improves equity by investing in employee and client safety and bringing supervision services closer to where individuals on supervision live, reducing travel time and cost.

The DCJ CBAC believes that this program is vital to achieving the atmosphere of safety and stability that both DCJ staff and their clients need to productively engage with the services the department provides. This campus expansion is very likely to further improve the already significant success rate clients who engage with DCJ services show.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS – The Committee would like to give special thanks to all DCJ staff that took time out of their evenings to attend our monthly meetings and provide us with valuable information about the budget and the department. Tami Wallis facilitated and arranged our meetings, and she was always available to respond to our questions. We appreciate your commitment to this work!

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