

PRISON TO EMPLOYMENT

KEY LEARNINGS FROM 2019-2022

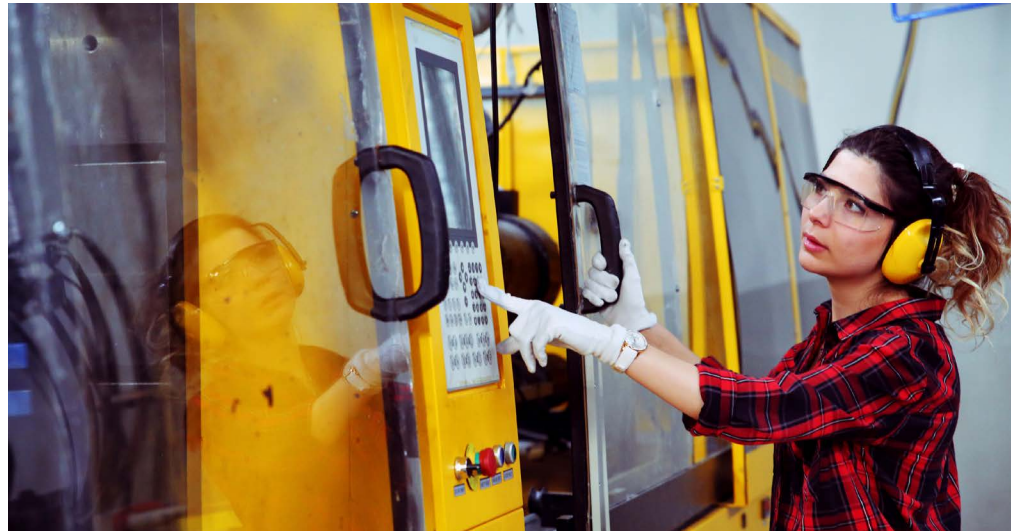


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PRISON TO EMPLOYMENT KEY LEARNINGS FROM 2019-2022

This document provides an overview of what Ventura County has learned and accomplished while implementing the three-year Prison to Employment (P2E) grants from September 2019 - March 2022. The document provides insight into key challenges as well as recommendations for future investment.



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I. PRISON TO EMPLOYMENT (P2E) OVERVIEW

In July 2018, the California Legislature approved SB 856 which included \$37 million in state general funds to re-source the Prison to Employment (P2E) Initiative proposed by Governor Jerry Brown with three grant cycles:

1. Regional Planning Grants (Fall 2018)
2. Implementation and Direct Services Grants (Spring 2019)
3. Supportive Services and Earn and Learn Grants (Spring 2019)

Prison to Employment Initiative (P2E) funding was allocated in Fall of 2019 and provided grantees 3 years to operationalize the integration of workforce and reentry services. The goal of the P2E Initiative is to strengthen systems collaboration between state workforce and corrections systems in order to improve the process by which formerly incarcerated and justice-involved individuals reenter society and achieve gainful employment.

P2E seeks to:

- ✓ Increase collaboration (and align systems)
- ✓ Support, expand, and elevate existing best practices
- ✓ Employ justice-involved individuals
- ✓ Innovate
- ✓ Create system change

Ventura County's P2E Process and Funding

Ventura County received a Regional Planning grant in Fall of 2018 and contracted Cause IMPACTS to develop a P2E Regional Plan. From that process and plan, the Workforce Board applied for Direct Services and Supportive Services grants. Some, but not all, of the region's recommendations were funded. The table below provides an overview of what was funded in Ventura County and what contractors were selected to complete the work.

Direct Services Grant Commitments	Supportive Service & Earn & Learn Grant Commitments
Goodwill <ul style="list-style-type: none">Contract with Community-Based Organizations (CBOs) working on direct employment and placementServe 30 participantsMinimum of 12 On-the-Job Trainings (OJTs) Adult and Family Services (AFS) under the County of Ventura Human Services Agency (HSA) <ul style="list-style-type: none">Create a registry of 40 employers willing to do "First Opportunity" hiring	VACE (Ventura Adult and Continuing Education): <ul style="list-style-type: none">Expand existing food handler credential program model in Todd Road JailServe 25 incarcerated participants Adult and Family Services (AFS) under the County of Ventura Human Services Agency (HSA) <ul style="list-style-type: none">Provide earn and learn opportunity with on-the-job trainingServe 45 participantsMinimum of 15 OJTsDevelop a pre-release resource file and toolkit

P2E Provider Outcome Numbers

Provider	Goal	Final # Served
VACE	25	38
Goodwill	30	41
County of Ventura AFS	45	64

I. PRISON TO EMPLOYMENT (P2E) OVERVIEW

2018/19 P2E PROGRAMMATIC RECOMMENDATIONS & STATUS

This page shows the progress toward the 2018-19 P2E Plan's recommendations. These recommendations were not all funded.

Increase Earn and Learn

Create a Regional Employer Outreach and Training Program dedicated to partnership cultivation and train employers about the incentives to hiring justice-involved individuals. This will streamline employer outreach and establish a pipeline of employers that all CBOs and agencies can utilize.



AFS created a [list of employers](#); however, most agencies continue to engage employers in silos and without a comprehensive strategy.

Contract with CBOs Focused On Direct Employment and Placement to ensure gainful employment and a continuum of care into the community. Work with AJCC partners and expand CBO services to inmates from incarceration through reentry to facilitate a continuum of care as they transition back into the community. Subsequently provide career education, job placement, and earn and learn funding to support direct employment.



Expansion of contracts to Goodwill and VACE increased the capacity to support direct employment. COVID-19 disrupted the plan to develop a continuum of care from Todd Road to the community.

Develop a Registered Pre-Apprenticeship and Apprenticeship in Manufacturing Program for justice-involved individuals that prepares people for entry-level jobs as an assembler on up. Manufacturing is the top industry in Ventura, in terms of GDP, and includes multiple opportunity occupations with upward mobility that can help justice-involved individuals survive and thrive.



The Ventura County Community College District created a pre-apprentice and apprenticeship in CNC Machining and National Institute for Metalworking Skills (NIMS). This was done apart from P2E efforts but could benefit the justice-involved in the future.

Expand Food Handler Credential Program Model at Todd Road Jail To Include Landscaping and Maintenance Work Crew and Expand Employer Partnerships. Establish an industry-recognized credential in landscaping and maintenance for the grounds keeping work crew at Todd Road Jail. The work crew already exists; by providing minimal classroom training, the inmates can also attain a valuable credential upon release. The program will also include direct outreach and partnership with relevant employers.



Todd Road Jail individually, without P2E funding, implemented the SuperCrew Employee Training for Landscape Professionals program and a certified Custodial Technician training program during COVID. Numbers from 2020-2021:

- ✓ 91 Food Handler certificates
- ✓ 35 Custodial certificates
- ✓ 30 Landscaping certificates
- ✓ The Food handler program continued but was unsuccessful at connecting participants to employers on the outside.

I. PRISON TO EMPLOYMENT (P2E) OVERVIEW

2018/19 P2E PROGRAMMATIC RECOMMENDATIONS & STATUS, CONT.

Develop a Mandatory Pre-Release Resources File and Toolkit. Pilot a program at Ventura County Jails, with STEPS to work enrollees and, potentially, with newly contracted CBO partners, to develop a mandatory pre-release resources file and toolkit. Back up these documents on a virtual database through which individuals can access their paperwork even if they misplace hard copies.



AFS created a list of resources in March 2022 but did not develop a user guide or a strategy to ensure that dissemination of the guide become mandatory in facilities.

Develop a Joint Day Reporting Center for Probation and Parole. There is currently no Day Reporting Center (DRC) for Parolees in Ventura County, even though there is a DRC for probationers. A joint DRC will encourage partnership between the two agencies and save resources as the two agencies serve clients with similar needs.



Provide Micro-Contracts to Sober Living Houses. Expand housing for more justice-involved people by providing micro-contracts to sober living houses and allowing Probation and Parole to refer and pay for clients' housing for 90 days, regardless of probation status. Such micro-contracts will reduce existing waitlists for sober living facilities and provide needed funds for sober living houses.



No micro grants were provided; however, P2E providers developed strong partnerships with sober living homes during the pandemic.

Formalize a Ventura County Reentry Council that can act as a neutral convener and regular incubator for collaboration, planning, and reflection. This council will facilitate partnerships between public agencies, industry, CBOs, and other local organizations so that momentum developed during the P2E planning phase is not lost.



The Reentry Council continues to be facilitated by interface on a volunteer basis with no dedicated staff or resources.



Martin's Story



Martin was released from state prison in 2021 and was eager to make a significant change in his life. Martin had never had stable employment due to various factors, including substance use and his justice involvement.

Martin was referred to Goodwill Industries directly from a sober living home and was enrolled into the Prison to Employment (P2E) program. Through the P2E program, Martin updated his resume, practiced job search skills, practiced interview skills, and began to search for a job. To support him during his training, Goodwill staff provided him with a bicycle and work clothing. Goodwill also connected him to a local employer that hired him into a full-time position using on-the-job training (OJT) funds.

Martin has made substantial professional strides that he has not achieved previously. He has now been employed for over 4-months, and the employer reports that his performance is excellent. Martin stated, "I could not have done it without the resources this program provided."

II. DEMOGRAPHICS - Youth Demographics

549 Justice-involved youth in diversion, on probation, and in facilities in Ventura County

(Note that this does not include the 465 youth awaiting trial or transfer. This includes youth who are: Awaiting their court date during which cases are often dropped and youth are released, and youth who reside in another county awaiting pick up and transfer.)



54% of detained & incarcerated youth are TAY.

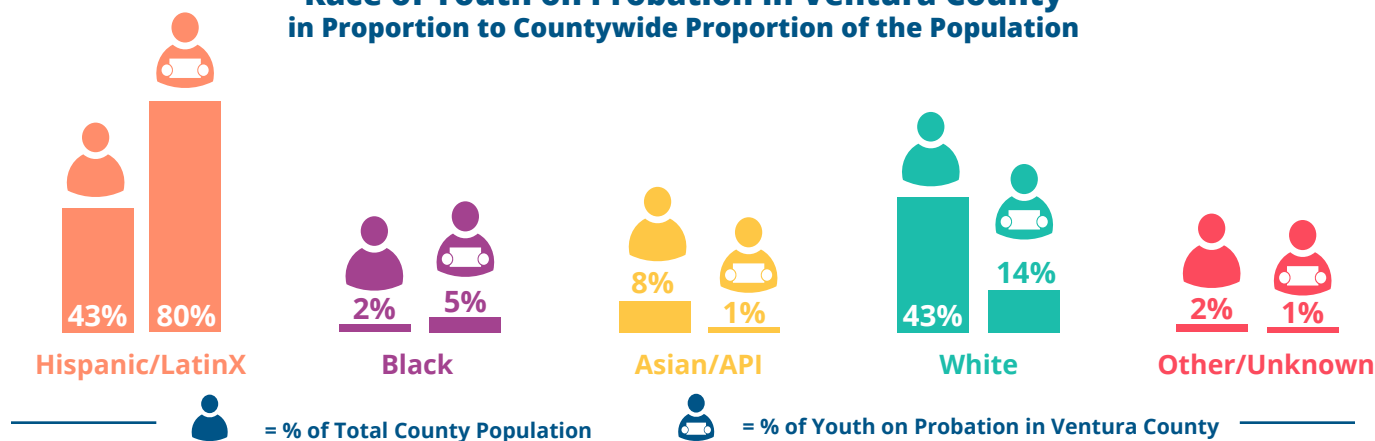
(35 youth out of 65 Ventura County youth in facilities are Transition Aged Youth.)

>80% of all justice involved youth in Ventura County are Hispanic/LatinX

Hispanic/LatinX and African American youth are vastly overrepresented in the population of youth on probation compared to their proportion of the general population.

- African-Americans comprise **2%** of the County population, but account for **5%** of the youth on Probation.
- Hispanics/Latinos comprise **43%** of the County population, but account for over **80%** of youth on Probation.¹

Race of Youth on Probation in Ventura County in Proportion to Countywide Proportion of the Population



Justice-Involved Youth Population in Ventura County

	Youth in Diversion		Youth on Probation		Youth in Facilities		
	Point in time data March 9, 2022				Data from January 1, 2021		
	#	%	#	%	Serving Commitment <i>(for a period of time)</i>	In Detention <i>(could be awaiting trial)</i>	Booked & Awaiting Trial or Transfer
Total (N)	107		377		*39	*26	*465
Sex							
Male	68	64%	307	81%	394		
Female	39	36%	70	19%	134		
Unknown				0%	2		
Race							
Hispanic/LatinX	93	87%	302	80%	428		
Black	0	0%	20	5%	37		
Asian/API	0	0%	2	1%	4		
White	12	11%	51	14%	53		
Other/unknown	2	2%	2	1%	8		
Age							
<15	38	36%	27	7%	87		
15-17	61	57%	160	42%	324		
18-24	8	7%	190	50%	118		

¹Due to COVID, all youth are being housed in the detention facility as it has more capacity and provides sufficient space to provide every youth their own room rather than sharing a room on the commitment side.

II. DEMOGRAPHICS - Adult Demographics

Number on Adults on Parole

 **765** 58 = Female
707 = Male

**Adults on Parole and Under
State Supervision**

 **82**

**# to be Released from
State Prison in 2022 to
Ventura County****

 **118**

in Diversion by CDCR

*** unable to filter all Ventura County Inmates that are currently incarcerated in the Prisons.*

Adults on Probation

The number of adults on probation has gone down significantly to 5,193 from over 8,000 in 2019. This is mostly due to three legal and legislative changes including:

- Proposition 47 reduced a lot of crimes to misdemeanors that not mandate supervision.
- AB1950 limited the amount of time someone can be on probation. For example, most individuals with felony charge are now placed probation for 2 years versus 3-5 years before the passage of AB190.
- Ventura County courts no longer place first time DUI charges formal probation. This justment rereduced the number of adults on formal probation over 1,000.

Supervision Type	Total	Gender		Race				
		F	M	Hispanic/ Latinx	Black	Asian/ API	White	Other/ Unknown
PRCS	566	40	526	362	26	10	151	17
MS	452	83	369	261	24	11	126	30
Formal	3,954	730	3,224	2,384	182	50	1,156	182
MHPD	61	19	42	19	4	1	30	7
Pretrial	160	48	112	81	7	3	63	6
Total on Formal Probation	5,193	920	4,273	3,107	243	75	1,526	235
% of Total		19%	82%	60%	5%	1%	29%	5%

(Data Snapshot February 17, 2022)

- The COVID-19 stay at home order and general pandemic impacts also contributed to a reduction in many public crimes. However, local law enforcement did see an increase in domestic violence cases.

Jose's Story

Jose re-entered the community after 22 years of incarceration in state prison in September of 2021. Jose moved into Hope House in Ventura County and his Parole Officer referred him to the P2E program.



Jose met with a P2E Case Manager at Hope House a week after his release. During his first discussion with his case manager, Jose expressed that he had strategies to remain out of custody, plans for how to cope with the challenges ahead, and a strong family support system. Jose's primary goal was to find a temporary position for 1.5 years in Ventura County, which was the expected length of his court restrictions of residency for his parole period. Due to his justice involvement, Jose faced multiple hurdles in finding employment.

After receiving 12 rejection letters from prospective employers, Jose found a position in an Oxnard computer components factory willing to hire him on a temporary to permanent basis. Jose was offered a permanent role within three weeks and is currently working 48 hours per week. Jose is well on his way to paying off his court-mandated restitution. Also, his Parole Officer is discussing a reduction in the length of his supervision from 3 years to 1 year. Jose is a profoundly spiritual individual and has discovered that volunteering with local church-based groups to help others in various ways is a way to express his gratitude for the opportunity to re-enter the community.

III. STRENGTHS

STRENGTHS, CHALLENGES, OPPORTUNITIES, AND THREATS TO THE VENTURA COUNTY P2E PROGRAMMING

This graphic synthesizes the strengths and challenges of Ventura County's provision of the P2E grant. It also synthesizes opportunities and threats identifies that were outside of the control of the grant and/or providers that should be addressed.

INTERNAL	 <h3>STRENGTHS</h3> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reentry Council & P2E partner meetings • Increased connection across programs & agencies • Service providers are more aware of existing services • Flexible funding allowed providers to support clients as needed • Incentive funding increased attendance & morale • High level of commitment from service providers • 4 trainings to P2E partners annually • Creation of new case management tools 	 <h3>CHALLENGES</h3> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lack of training for P2E Case Managers • Limited knowledge about existing programs by all • No continuum of services from incarceration to community • Limited referrals from Probation & Parole to P2E providers • No central place to capture case management tools & resources • Duplicative employer outreach • Lack of coordination and collaboration across agencies • Lack of a universal referral process • Success metrics are tied to job placement and training completion rather than recidivism
	 <h3>OPPORTUNITIES</h3> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increased use of technology • Increased communication using Zoom • New partnerships & referrals with transitional living homes • Identification of joint grant opportunities • Opportunity to use the COVID-driven employee shortages to increase employment of justice-involved • Provide bikes as a means of transportation 	 <h3>THREATS</h3> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • COVID-19 service disruptions • Lack of affordable housing & transitional living placements • Insufficient residential drug treatment and detox facilities • Lack of employers willing to hire • Lack of digital literacy-Some couldn't use or access Zoom • Lack of relevant certificate and credential offerings • Substance abuse and mental health challenges • Limited resources for sex offenders • Inaccurate and incomplete data collection and tracking

III. STRENGTHS

Outcomes, Strengths, and Assets Experienced While Implementing P2E in Ventura County

Flexible funding allowed providers to support clients as needed – Flexible funds were used to buy bikes, work boots, tools, a first tank of gas, etc. For example, Goodwill now partners with the Oxnard Bike hub to provide bikes to clients for transportation.

Incentives allowed providers to boost morale and provide financial incentives to clients such as an Amazon gift card which encouraged them to attend appointments.

Service providers and agencies are more aware of existing services due to the initial P2E planning and continued networking through the Prison to Employment Partner Meeting and the Reentry Council. This social network helps providers make referrals and connect their clients to other programs. For example, prior to P2E, CDCR typically referred parolees to the Oxnard Adult School. Due to the P2E grant and funding, CDCR branched out to include VACE in their network and officers appreciated the services



Lots of referrals came from transitional living homes which provided an added support system to clients who were enrolled in P2E. Once a client was enrolled, they often referred their housemates. In some instances, VACE and Goodwill were providing services to many people in a home in cohort-style sessions.

In the midst of the COVID-19 pandemic, the Todd Road Jail individually, without P2E funding, implemented the SuperCrew Employee Training for Landscape Professionals program and a certified Custodial Technician training program. Cecil Argue tried to partner with a local college but none had an existing program or were willing to develop one for the jail. Instead, the jail partnered with the University of Georgia College of Agriculture and Environmental Sciences to provide their remote, video-based [SuperCrew](#) series.



Sarah's Story

Sarah was identified as a Prison to Employment (P2E) candidate while in custody at Todd Road Jail and enrolled in a program offered by Ventura Adult and Continuing Education (VACE). Upon her release in May of 2021, Sarah was able to reach out to VACE and was enrolled in the program.

Sarah had extensive employment experience in office settings prior to her justice involvement so her initial goal was to complete a Business Administration and Management certificate course with VACE while also pursuing employment in an office. Sarah completed multiple job applications, but her justice involvement and restrictions on the type of employment she could follow prevented a successful job search.

Sarah shared with her Case Manager that she had always been interested in becoming an Esthetician. So, her Case Manager had her research licensing and education requirements to determine the feasibility and a path forward. Sarah learned that it would require 9-months of education at a beauty school and then testing for her state license. Sarah and her Case Manager researched local schools, and Sarah enrolled in the Ross Beauty Academy in Ventura, California.

Sarah successfully graduated from her program in June of 2021 and obtained her state Esthetician license. She is currently practicing privately while awaiting formal transfer of her Probation to the state of Texas, where she will be reunited with her family and can easily transfer her Esthetician license.

IMPACT OF COVID 19 ON PROGRAMMING

The COVID-19 pandemic exacerbated existing workforce inequities and forced the planned thirty-day reentry to community P2E program to make significant adjustments as the jail shut down to outsiders. COVID-19 also provided some unexpected opportunities for improvement and innovation in how we serve the justice-involved population.

Challenges Created by COVID-19:

A 2020 Policylink Report reported that workers of color are underrepresented in jobs that pay well and are resilient to automation.² Unfortunately, **automation is accelerating in the wake of the COVID-19 pandemic and workers of color are at significantly greater risk of losing their jobs to automation** than white workers. This is even truer of the justice-involved population who overwhelmingly lack basic digital skills. Thus, it is more important than ever to identify well-paying upward-mobility jobs that are resistant to automation for the justice-involved population.

The pandemic also forced service providers to re-think entire programs that were provided in person pre-pandemic. For many, the pandemic created immense barriers to their ability to provide services as clients did not know how to use smart phones, log into zoom, or use email. Some clients who have been in state or federal prisons for years have never even seen a smart phone; they need extensive digital skills training to reenter society and participate in day-to-day life. For example, many entry level jobs now mandate the use of apps and digital tools that people may never have heard of or have the ability to access. An agriculture worker may now use a computer to test soil water levels or a construction worker may have to clock in using a digital time sheet. This lack of technology access and aptitude created new barriers to access for clients and complicated the case managers' ability to stay in touch with their clients. These clients need basic digital literacy training in order to function in the world today and get a job. Even so, one case manager warned about the challenges of providing such digital literacy trainings once inmates were released:

"When people reenter, they have a long list of things they have to do such as find their ID and birth certificate, get visitation rights with their children, get a job, etc. Learning to use a computer is far down the list."

Finally, the **Todd Road Jail closed and stopped admitting service providers and visitors due to the pandemic.** This drastically impacted the initial P2E plan to provide services in the jail that transitioned to the community. This also affected the number of referrals that both Goodwill and VACE received from Todd Road Jail. The VACE Teachers were able to conduct classes via Zoom for several months and then returned in-person in May 2021.

Opportunities Presented by COVID-19:

COVID-19 also provided some unexpected opportunities for improvement and innovation in how we serve the justice-involved population. The Zoom platform provided a phenomenal tool to connect with clients quickly without asking them to drive or take a bus. Zoom and other meeting platforms allowed case managers to share their screens and walk clients through different websites, resume creation, and exercises. Case managers who embraced online meeting technology and took the time to teach their clients how to use smart phones and log into Zoom believe that they were often better equipped to support their clients. One case manager shared:

"Now I can just hop on a quick video call to help a client who is at the DMV or I can quickly get on Zoom if a client is having a crisis. Before, we asked clients to get on the bus and travel to us. Zoom allows us to meet them where they are when they need us."

During the pandemic, **P2E providers strengthened their collaboration with sober living homes.** In some cases, case managers enrolled multiple participants from a home and purchased computer video cameras for group homes so participants could join in Zoom meetings and cohort-style sessions with their housemates.

There is also an **opportunity to use the current lack of workers due to "the great resignation" to increase employment of justice-involved individuals.** People with records represent a previously untapped human capital potential that can fill current vacancies. By adjusting existing HR policies and educating employers about existing incentives and federal bonding program, there may be a window of opportunity to increase the number of employers willing to hire individuals with a record.

CHALLENGES

Challenges Providing Supportive Services

There is not a continuum of care for services when transitioning from the jail to the community. Reentry programs should start while clients are incarcerated. Inmates can request and receive a resource guide with information about an array of services and agency providers; however, there is no formal point of contact for returnees. An example of best practices is the situation in which a mental health liaison flags when an inmate that has a mental health file will be released and then Telecare works with the mental health providers in the jail to link those individuals directly from prison to the community on a 24/7 basis. This is currently done for a small group; it is highly effective and should be replicated for other groups. Non mental health cases do not get flagged on release dates and are expected to find a phone and eligible service providers if they want to receive the services that are already funded for them.

Overly prescriptive service time-frames may cut off services when they are still needed. Clients need different levels and time-frames of help. Case managers recommend a longer-term service-provision window that provides wrap around support for two years.

Case managers receive inadequate training and professional development. Each P2E case manager shared that they had to learn how to case manage on the job. They reported receiving limited training on how to use CalJOBS and then had to learn everything else on the job. Case managers need specific training on how to best serve those who are justice-involved and specifics regarding services available.

There is no central place to capture case management tools and resources. Many case managers develop tools and learn about resources while on the job; but, there is no central place to capture them so resources are constantly in a state of creation, discovery, and rediscovery rather than in a state of improvement. Most case managers shared that they were provided few or no resources to help their clients navigate reentry and existing services. For example, some case managers mentioned tools that they had to “find” that should have been common knowledge. One case manager shared that the jails have a new self-attestation process through which inmates can fill in a form if they do not have their right-to-work documents. This form helps the jail identify what documents the inmate needs and then helps connect them to the correct resource/s quickly. This is not a new process but many case managers have only recently learned about it.



Service providers have a slow response time to referrals. Services must be provided immediately with a high-need population. During the P2E grant period, some referrals were never responded to and others took weeks until a response was heard. The justice-involved community needs immediate services and schedules must be set up to provide crisis-response as it is needed. One case manager said: “If my client has to make an appointment a week from now to get services for a crisis that they are in now, that is not helpful.” As an example, Santa Barbara County runs a CARES mental health crisis clinic that provides crisis support on a 24/7 basis.

There are not sufficient residential drug treatment and detox facilities to support the demand. Many in custody need medically assisted treatment (MAT) to address their addictions and establish new habits. MAT in-custody provides an initial induction to the medication as well as preliminary participation in treatment orientation and/or groups. Limited MAT is available while inmates are in custody through grant funding (Health Management Associate-HMA). Post-release MAT is available in the community to individuals supervised on probation. Interface currently holds this contract.

There is a dearth in affordable housing and transitional living housing in Ventura County. There are empty facilities in which such housing could be provided, however, there is no concerted effort to change policies that prevent using such facilities. Further, there are very few residential drug treatment beds available in Ventura County, so many people go without treatment or have to go out of the County for treatment. The gap is worse for those with a sex-offense as there is no direct housing for sex offenders which leaves many of them homeless and even more challenging to serve.

CHALLENGES

Challenges with Direct Employment and Earn and Learn Programming

“The justice-involved and formerly incarcerated population represents an untapped pool of local talent that can help meet the demands of regional industry and address some of the County’s overarching workforce challenges. But this cannot happen overnight. The County must be willing and prepared to forge cross sector partnerships, try new things, and develop programs that invest in people over time.”

(Original 2018-19 P2E Report)

Limited first opportunity employers and those willing to hire justice-involved. Many potential employers assume they cannot hire people with a record and, thus, do not even begin a conversation with a case manager. Other employers need to assess and adjust their HR policies in order to hire people. Most employers are not aware of the Work Opportunity Tax Credit (WOTC) or existing federal bonds that take the liability off of the employers if they hire an individual with a record. Even most employers who serve on VACE’s Advisory councils are not willing to hire.

The \$3,000-\$10,000 on the job training incentive is not sufficient to sway employers to complete the cumbersome paperwork and reporting and/or to take a chance on justice-involved individuals.

No centralized database of potential employers who are willing to employ those with records. All case managers seemingly conduct individual research and outreach to identify employers who are willing to employ those who are justice-involved. Organizations and case managers are territorial over their lists and assume there are a scarce number of willing employers. This limits opportunities to expand outreach and achieve economies of scale and prevents a robust and efficient county-wide employer engagement strategy from taking place.

There is a lack of existing relevant certificate and credential programs offerings from which justice-involved individuals can actually benefit. Many certificate programs have restrictive eligibility requirements, are impacted, and/or are not accessible to participants. Some offerings do not allow people with criminal records



or drug charges to participate. For example, phlebotomy is an offering that requires minimal prior skills; however, those with a drug history cannot participate. Many existing offerings also require that participants have basic digital technology skills to participate. Further, many existing programs are provided during the traditional work hours and are unpaid which prevents those with a job or those who need to earn an income right away from participating. Finally, case managers have limited knowledge of existing certificate and credential offerings as there is no central list apart from the ELTP list which must be used for WIOA programs. Examples of program obstacles include: 1) One of the welding programs in Ventura County has a 1-year-long waiting list. 2) Class A trucking programs are programs that many justice-involved individuals are interested in; however, most trucking programs in the region are impacted and difficult to get to. 3) There is one truck driving school in Simi Valley that is on the ETPL list. The school is impacted and allows too many students into the classes so it takes students longer than usual to get the required number of driving hours. Further, Simi Valley is not easy to access for many in the County and participants need a driver’s license to begin the classes and many clients do not have one.

CHALLENGES

Challenges Collaborating

There is no mandate to develop strong provider and government agency networks to serve the justice-involved population. Many individuals are passionate about improving the system and build their own networks; however, those networks are usually not institutionalized. Due to this, when those involved people leave, relationships and systems that were created by those individuals die.

There is limited knowledge about existing programs by service providers, officers, and potential clients. It is extremely difficult for CBOs, County agencies, education providers, Parole Agents, and Probation Officers to understand the menu of program offerings already available in the County. Several factors limit program knowledge such as newly hired employees, constantly changing CBO offerings due to funding, changes in state-funded programs, etc. These challenges lead to continuous duplication of efforts as every service provider develops their own list of “key contacts,” referral partners, potential employers, and resources. The jails currently have a resource list that they provide to many inmates upon reentry. Further, CDCR and Probation each have a different resource list. Finally, most CBOs create their own lists. This lack of collaboration and minimal sharing of resources is a waste in financial resources and causes confusion for clients who get mixed information from multiple providers.

Referrals and services are provided to clients based on silos and segmented grant funding which usually does not capture all of those in need. There are funding streams and specific contractors for the AB-109 population, parolees, probationers, those released from Todd Road Jail with a mental health case file, etc. These categories unintentionally leave out swaths of the reentry population (such as those released from Todd Road Jail without supervision and the non-AB-109 population) and make it more difficult to provide services to those not assigned to a specific category.

Challenges with Data

Inaccurate and incomplete data collection and tracking reduced the Region’s ability to evaluate and improve services. Parole agents enter data into the CDCR SOMS (Strategic Offender Management System) and it is time intensive; therefore, agents do not always enter the data or data is outdated when entered. Further the data that is collected is often subjective.

Success metrics that are tied to job placement and training completion may incompletely capture the success made by justice-involved clients. These individuals often need housing, recovery, mental health, basic skills, and pro-social skills before they can even think of attaining a job. Unfortunately, current metrics do not track the supportive services and success that must happen prior to searching for and attaining a job. Further, P2E success metrics do not track recidivism ; lack of which is a very clear indicator of reentry success.

P2E retention metric may not capture the true employment of clients as this population often changes jobs. If the measure is retention in the first job, it undercounts success.



For example:

- Many inmates are released without mandatory supervision/probation so they are not tracked and have limited access to funded services. This is a missed opportunity as these individuals could be provided with a resource guide that could help them connect to services.
- Need more services for non-AB-109 clients including housing
- Residential treatment beds are allocated and funded based on service categories and not based on need.

There is no universal referral that is short and easy to use. Many referral forms have been developed over the years and many fail because they are overly complicated. Probation and parole officers and case managers resist filling out lengthy forms or engaging in lengthy referral processes. For example, Ed Sajor at the AJCC created an internal referral but, it was considered time intensive as it was needed in addition to the CDCR referral. Consequently, parole agents often did not fill it out. Given this, CDCR set up a simple referral that went to P2E@oxnard.net. Unfortunately, there was a period of time when no one from the AJCC reached out to the referred parolees so parole agents lost faith in the system.

There are limited to no feedback loops between organizations and agencies that refer clients to one another. This gap hurts collaboration and does not help serve clients who may need a push from their PO or service provider to take advantage of other offerings. For example, Parole shared that 53 referrals were submitted to P2E from Parole from 3/2/20 – 1/4/22. Parole did not hear from providers after they made referrals and did not learn what programs their clients were enrolled in if any.

KEY LEARNING



Providing participants with immediate employment supported completion and retention. Goodwill has a Second Chance program which allows them to immediately hire and pay people for 60 days. Goodwill shared that this program proved instrumental in preparing people for P2E success. Goodwill's Second Chance Program plus P2E was successful because participants received immediate work experience that was immediately paid for 60 days and then moved into a P2E position. This on-site, temporary employment boosts morale and builds soft skills and their resume simultaneously.



Providing P2E services in partnership with programs that provide wrap around supports such as housing and substance abuse treatment was successful. For example, sober living home participants and GEO Day Reporting Center participants were more successful at Goodwill and VACE likely due to the continuum of care and wrap around they experience in these programs. The partnership with GEO was especially symbiotic as they provide substance abuse treatment and other services not provided by Goodwill or VACE. Further, these environments often cultivated cohorts of participants in one place who were easier to track, facilitate, and meet with.



Using Zoom and other online meeting platforms and apps to support client communication and case management can increase access to clients and eventual success. When COVID-19 restrictions cease, case managers should develop a hybrid case management model that allows for online case management as desired by the client.



Getting a car or a bike for transportation is a huge milestone.

VACE Case Manager Amy Tyrrell developed a robust case management process that built trust with clients, allowed more individualization, and increased client access to her support and her access to them. Amy made herself available to her clients 24/7 by phone and answered at all times to support them. During the contract period, she got calls almost every day with an influx every Sunday evening after 9PM.

Amy Tyrrell's Case Management process:

- ✓ Use a conversational intake tool to build trust and identify some basic needs.
- ✓ Collect necessary documents such as ID and proof of justice involvement.
- ✓ Support client's retrieval of necessary documents- Amy created many documents and process guides that walked clients through basic processes. For example, she created a one pager on DMV locations/websites and actions to get an ID.
- ✓ Begin the Courage to Change 2-textbook series (Seeking Employment and Managing My Life). Amy scheduled weekly meetings with each person via Zoom during which they walked through topics conversationally. The Courage to Change assignments are very powerful as they walk through critical thinking, overcoming barriers barrier identification and action plans. The exercises also created a schedule and accountability with follow up. These materials were part of the Re-Entry Assistance Program at Todd Road jail and provide interactive exercises.
- ✓ Provide Get Out of Your Own Way book by Mark Goulston and Philip Goldberg. This book was/is available to inmates while in custody in the Todd Road Jail library. The text contains exercises and thought processes to overcome self-sabotage. These materials are self-study.
- ✓ Identify and meet if possible Support Service needs related to job seeking and education.
- ✓ Begin to identify career interests using ONET skills assessment and free Myers Briggs assessment.
- ✓ Provide resume preparation support and acquaint participants with hands on tours and experiences on using CalJobs and other job search engines.
- ✓ Conduct mock interviews once participant identifies jobs they want.
- ✓ Provide coaching to employer (if requested) and to participant once job is obtained.
- ✓ *Provide as needed 24/7 call support



RECOMMENDATIONS

Some of these recommendations are repeated from the ★ initial P2E Plan. These are indicated with a star.

1 Identify funding to staff the Ventura County Reentry Council to formalize regional collaboration, incubate innovation, and continue planning and reflection. The current Reentry Council is an invaluable asset. It provides a common place for service providers to share information, network, and learn from each other. The Reentry Council is run by Interface with no funding and no dedicated staff. This lack of dedicated staff reduced the impact that the Reentry Council could make. For example, the Council could:

- Collect and develop resources and tools to improve service provision for all members.
- Provide professional development and design training to achieve economies of scale
- Develop and formalize a co-referral process
- Conduct research to advance the region's capacity to serve the justice-involved population in Ventura County.
- Document and report to the CEO's office about regional progress
- Increase informal communication and collaboration between probation and parole officers and service providers. For example, provide tours of service provider locations and build social capital between probation and parole officers and providers.

2 Hire justice-involved individuals as case managers and client service ambassadors. People with lived experience can relate to and communicate better with other people who have similar lived experiences.

3 Partner with transitional living and sober living homes to provide cohort programming. The cohort offers a supportive social network for the clients while the house provides an on-site location for services that are accessible for participants.

★ 4 Provide returning inmates with needed reentry documents and enroll them in services they qualify for prior to release. There are many existing programs available to the justice-involved population. However, most are difficult to enroll in and minimally publicized. When people are incarcerated, their whereabouts are precisely known, meaning that outreach and enrollment for these programs, providing needed documents, and other resources could be consolidated and simplified. For example, Interface is contracted by the Ventura County Human Services Agency to conduct Medi-Cal pre-enrollment 30 days before release for sentenced inmates with a scheduled release date. Santa Barbara County will begin connecting inmates to housing



and documents in one place at the jails, similar to how the 2018 Ventura County P2E report recommended and was intended before COVID-19. Goodwill will provide services in the Santa Barbara jails and may have critical learnings to share.

5 Flag all inmates being released from Ventura County Jails (e.g.: Todd Road Jail) to receive direct services and follow up from some organization to help them prepare for release and receive services immediately upon release. The County should explore how to connect existing contractors to inmates while incarcerated to develop a continuum of care. Inmate Services is not sufficiently staffed to “flag” all inmates and ensure they get connected to services. This could be the responsibility of a contracted agency case manager through existing WIOA programs.

6 Develop a Ventura County Comprehensive Guide to Reentry that consolidates resources in one place. Use the Reentry Council and CCP to improve upon the [resource guide](#) developed by the HSA. Begin by having P2E providers meet to capture and consolidate resources, identify existing resource lists, and review and add to the reentry services toolkit being developed by HSA. Note that the guide will have to be updated annually since service provider contracts change annually. This will create a centralized place for documentation and allow providers to improve upon existing tools rather than constantly starting from scratch. Two versions should be made to include: 1) tools and training for service providers and 2) simple guides for clients.

Case Managers and Officer's Guide to Reentry should include training and resources. Could include:

- Checklist of what to do upon reentering
- List of documents needed by clients and how to attain them (e.g., I.D., transcripts, court documents)
- Training printouts and links (e.g., CalJOBS training, motivational interviewing resources)
- Job search resources and tools (e.g., ONET, free skills assessments, etc.)
- Client Resource Guide should be provided to all inmates leaving incarceration or anyone seeking services.

RECOMMENDATIONS

7 **Develop collaborative professional development for Ventura County case managers to attain economies of scale and share best practices and resources developed.**

- **Document VACE Case Manager Amy Tyrrell's case management process and the tools developed to share with other organizations and provide resources for future case management training.** Ask Amy Tyrrell to produce a Case Management 101 and 102 training for those serving justice-involved individuals and to add her tools to the Ventura County Comprehensive Guide to Reentry.
- **Train agents and providers on proper data collection protocol and why data is essential.** When possible, connect data reporting to employee performance evaluations.

8 **Develop a jointly funded position to develop and implement a Regional Employer Outreach and Engagement Initiative to expand the list of employers willing to hire those who are justice-involved.**

This person or organization will be dedicated to partnership cultivation, resource development, and training employers about the incentives available to employers who employ justice-involved individuals. This will streamline employer outreach and establish a pipeline of employers that all CBOs and agencies can utilize. This person can:

- Develop outreach materials that explain the benefit of hiring this population and the many ways employers can contribute by providing job experiences, internships, temporary work experiences, and mock interviews.
- Develop outreach collateral. This may include developing an H.R. newsletter, outreach fliers, conducting presentations to Chambers, and asking current employer partners to share their stories via social media.
- Identify existing H.R. training and resources that can be used to conduct employer outreach and education in Ventura County. For example:
- The Second Chance Business Coalition (SCBC) is a cross-sector coalition of large, private-sector firms committed to expanding their companies' second chance hiring and advancement practices.
- Dave's killer bread developed an H.R. training and foundation after successfully hiring justice-involved individuals.
- Slack's Next Chapter program transforms the technology sector by creating sustainable employment pathways for people leaving incarceration. This apprenticeship program partners with several large companies, including Affirm, DropBox, the Kellogg Foundation, Square, and Zoom to create environments inclusive of formerly incarcerated people."³



9 **Contract with an existing residential program to develop a holistic residential wrap-around reentry center that provides all services necessary in one location.** (E.g., Orien house, Amnesty, Delancey Street, etc.) P2E stakeholders expressed an overwhelming request for a live-in facility that provides housing, training, wrap-around, mental health, drug treatment, childcare, and employment. The consensus of all P2E collaborative members was that if all of these services could be provided in one central location, people would have tremendous success, recidivate less, and become reintegrated into society faster as a continuum of services would be evident simply by residing at the center.

10 **Develop a working group of providers to pool their resources and develop digital skills and technology training for clients to provide them with the knowledge base they need to participate in digital services.** Training should include basic digital literacy: How to send a text; How to turn on a computer; How to navigate and send emails; How to create a word document; How to attach a resume to an email; and How to log into and use zoom. Some of the existing regional providers who have computer skills courses and tools include:

- Goodwill has a self-paced Intro to Computers training program taken in-person at Goodwill that can be paid for through CalFresh or Goodwill's Round Up funds. Percipio created the program. Participants take modules, watch videos, and complete skills assessments.
- VACE Provides computer skills on closed systems at Todd Road Jail. They want to develop and provide real-world exercises such as filling out mock online applications without going on the internet. This will require investment in additional software.
- Staff the Day Reporting Center to teach computer skills on an as-needed one-on-one basis.
- The AJCCs have big computer labs; however, due to COVID, clients have to make an appointment and walk-ins cannot be served.
- CDCR provides technology training to lifers who are being released.

RECOMMENDATIONS

11 **Develop a local list of relevant justice-involved friendly certificate and credential programs including complete lists of requirements for each.** Potentially expand the existing ETPL list to include training providers that have relevant offerings.

12 **Formalize reentry collaboration across the County by creating a coalition of high-level cross-sector decision-makers who commit to developing strong institution-level service connections.** This formal group will create expectations that line staff participate in collaborative efforts to improve service for the justice-involved and ensure that progress is being made by increasing accountability. This group can review high-level findings, identify funding that can be braided, develop economies of scale, and develop policies and protocols. This could be formalized in a “Re-Entry Oversight Division” that reports to the CEO and include: CEO; Probation; Sheriff; Community Corrections Partnership; Ventura County Attorney; Courts; Public Defender; Ventura County Human Services Agency; CDCR; WDB-VC; Ventura County Behavioral Health; Ventura County Medical System (VMC); Housing Partners; Partner CBO Agencies



Some of the first projects such a group should pursue include:

- Develop a universal Ventura County referral form and process with a 24-hour response time that service providers, agencies, and officers can use.
- Develop a joint agency working group to map existing funding streams that are available to support serving justice-involved individuals, identify how to efficiently braid funding and draft joint grant proposals and programs. Some of the initial funding streams to look into include:
 - Prison to Employment
 - Strong Workforce
 - Prop 63 MHSA funds to incorporate mental health and treatment
 - CalAIM funds to support residential drug treatment and detox facilities
 - Community-based MAT funding
 - Prop 47 funds to provide community-based programs
 - Homeless Hiring Tax Credit (HHTC)

Sal's Story

Sal was released to Hope House in Ventura, California, with a 6-month paid stay after being incarcerated for 3-years in state prison. Sal was anxious about his next steps as he had experienced eight other incarcerations over the last 10-years.

Sal enrolled in the Prison to Employment (P2E) program with Ventura Adult and Continuing Education (VACE) in early September 2021. Sal had two immediate goals: 1) Complete his HISET certification by May 2021 and 2) Find permanent work as a Warehouse Worker to help pay off his court-mandated restitution. Sal passed his last HISET exam on December 31, 2021, four months before his initial goal for completion. Sal also found a warehouse position with a temporary agency. However, he found the work unsatisfactory and decided that he would like to return to the restaurant industry. In early December of 2021, Sal landed a position as a Line Cook at \$22/hour with a guarantee of 32 hours per week at a local restaurant. Eager to earn more funds to help pay off his court-mandated restitution, Sal also got a job working at a local grocery store chain as a graveyard re-stocking clerk.

Sal is now working both jobs and has made significant strides toward paying off his court-mandated restitution. After completing his HISET, Sal enrolled in a Mathematics AA program at Oxnard College as a first step toward achieving a bachelor's degree in mathematics. Given Sal's significant progress and dedication, his Parole Officer is discussing the opportunity for a reduction in the length of time Sal will be required to be on supervision.



**Ventura Adult and
Continuing Education**

CONCLUSION

This P2E Key Learnings document identifies key strengths of the County as well as persisting challenges that will continue to limit progress if not addressed. This plan provides essential information that will help the County strengthen linkages between the workforce and corrections systems in order to improve the processes by which formerly incarcerated and justice-involved individuals reenter society and the workforce.

The extensive recommendations presented herein can improve outcomes for justice-involved individuals while strategically addressing the unique workforce needs of the region. Implementing the recommendations in this document will take considerable time, effort, compromise, and coordination. Doing so, will result in a well-coordinated workforce-reentry system that empowers justice-involved individuals to thrive personally and professionally.

Tommy's Story

Tommy, a single father of two, was recently off Probation and seeking ways to earn more money to provide for his family. He heard about the P2E program from residents at a group home in Oxnard, so he called in September 2021 to inquire about enrollment.

During his first meeting with the Adult and Family Services, P2E Employment Specialist, Tommy shared that his main goal was to secure training to be a Commercial, Class A Driver. His case manager and he developed an action plan with clear goals and objectives that would guide his path forward. The P2E program helped him develop a resume, provided him with interview clothes, paid for a bus pass so he could get around, and ultimately, paid for his Class A drivers training and related fees.

A month after beginning the P2E program, Tommy acquired his Class C license, which the P2E program reimbursed him for. Then, in November of 2021, Tommy attained a part-time job and enrolled in a Class A training program with Sergio's School of Trucking. The P2E program paid for all training fees which provided Tommy the ability to participate. Tommy started the training in early December and passed the Class A permit test within a month. He is currently attending trainings and practicing behind the wheel so that he may become a Class A Driver.



¹ US Census Bureau Quick Facts, Ventura County Population Estimates July 1, 2021. Retrieved from: U.S. Census Bureau QuickFacts: Ventura County, California

² Langston, Scoggins and Walsh, "Race and the Work of the Future: Advancing Workforce Equity in the United States," PolicyLink and USC Equity Research Institute, November 2020, <https://nationalfund.org/learning-evaluation/publications/race-and-the-work-of-the-future/Workforce-Matters-Report-2021-Final.pdf>

³ Ramdath, Cassandra, "Corporate America Can Advance Racial Equity by Expanding Employment Opportunities to Justice-Impacted People," Urban Institute, April 2021, Corporate America Can Advance Racial Equity by Expanding Employment Opportunities to Justice-Impacted People | Urban Institute

A. Methodology: Interviewees and Data Collection

B. Employer List

APPENDIX A: METHODOLOGY

Thank you to all of the individuals and organizations who provided feedback and interviews for this P2E update.

Interviews:

- Cecil Argue, Inmate programs Manager, Ventura County Sheriff's Inmate Services Unit, Todd Road jail
- Theresa Hart, Division Manager, Adult Field Services and Jail Alternative Services, Ventura County Probation Agency
- Brian Mendoza, Parole Agent II, Adult Program Unit, CDCR Parole
- Amy Tyrrell – P2E Case Manager, VACE
- Norman Albances, PhD, Assistant Director, Workforce Development Board of Ventura County
- Alex Renteria, Goodwill of Ventura and Santa Barbara Counties
- Micah Bailey, P2E coordinator, Goodwill of Ventura and Santa Barbara Counties
- Maria Lopez, Bridges to Work and STEPS Coordinator, Ventura County Human Services Department
- Courtney Stallings, Interface Family Services
- Yesenia Munoz, Interface Family Services
- Heather Garcia, Interface Family Services
- Michael Heck, State Director, California Operations, Community Solutions

Data Support:

Carrie Vredenburg, Division Manager, Ventura County Juvenile Field Services

Sandra Carrillo, Division Manager, Ventura County Juvenile Facilities

Focus Groups:

- Reentry Council Meeting
- P2E Partner Meeting

APPENDIX B: EMPLOYERS THAT HIRE JUSTICE-INVOLVED INDIVIDUALS

Case managers each create their own lists of employers who are willing to hire those with a record. During this update, a number of these were captured. Note that some of the employers are not aware of the employee's justice-involved status.

Industry Trends:

- Warehouses and Production lines
- Distribution centers (E.G. Amazon drivers)
- Manufacturing agencies
- Wholesale locations
- Restaurants where they've not disclosed their history and the restaurants don't check, (E.g.; Buffalo Wild Wings, Red Robin, Islands, Urbane Cafe.
- Demolition companies

Employers:

- Sprouts- once they get one, they are open to taking others.
- Bimbo Bakeries
- Ojai Valley Inn
- Landscaping jobs (some of these are through small family companies)
- Wendy's fast-food restaurant (unaware of the parolee's status)
- Volutone Distribution (they are aware of parole status)
- UPS (employer unaware of parole status)
- Scosche Industries (employer unaware of parole status)
- Coffee Bean & Tea Leaf (employer unaware of parole status)
- Goodwill Industries
- Apatz
- Colourpop
- Smucker's
- Limoneira
- West Coast Demolition
- Marriott, Ventura
- Ojai Valley Inn
- Buffalo Wild Wings
- Red Robin
- Islands
- Urbane Café
- CD Lions
- Patriot Cleaning Services

**A few parolees have been denied employment at Amazon based on their criminal history