

Concept Paper for Reorganization of In-Custody and Reentry Contracting

I. Current Model

Background:

Over the past several years, New York City has seen tremendous growth in both in-custody jail programming and post-release reentry supports. Through Department of Correction (DOC) and Mayor's Office of Criminal Justice (MOCJ) programs like the Individualized Correctional Achievement Network (ICAN), the Specialized Model for Adult Reentry (SMART), the Youth Reentry Network (YRN) and most recently, Jails to Jobs (J2J), the City has invested significantly in providing pre- and post-release comprehensive in-custody and reentry services.

Based on best practice models, all the programs described above were designed with a continuum of care, meaning that services provided by community based providers in city jails intentionally link to post-release services of the same type—often offered by the same providers with both in-custody and in community footprints. Because of this emphasis on program continuity, the DOC and MOCJ contracts described above include funding for both pre- and post-release services.

Structural Challenges:

While the importance of the continuum of care model cannot be overstated, the current contracting structure has resulted in various substantive challenges around the effective delivery and tracking of in-custody and post-release services for DOC, MOCJ and contracted providers. The existing service delivery model has, therefore, caused DOC, MOCJ, and partnering providers to recognize missed opportunities to effectively continue care (i.e., community navigation, job placement, housing placement and participant retention) in the city's communities. Further amplifying these issues are technological and operational challenges and the demands of in-custody operations. However, the City now has the opportunity to correct these issues through a redefined RFP process.

Because ICAN, SMART, YRN and J2J were all designed as separate programs with distinct yet complimentary services—often utilizing the same vendors—an unintended set of consequences have emerged, which include:

- DOC currently funds and is responsible for operational oversight, data tracking and performance evaluation for community-based services well after the point of discharge from DOC facilities, although the agency is not well positioned to oversee services that are provided in a community-based setting.
- Provider feedback has illustrated that current contracts contain potentially competing and/or conflicting structures across programs that prevent providers from offering services in the most operationally and fiscally effective ways. For example, by having the dual mission of providing in-custody programming and in-community reentry services in one contract, performance targets can be difficult for providers to meet, especially when a provider is serving individuals in custody that are likely to be transferred to state prison rather than released from jail to the community.

- Unbalanced pre- and post-release service matrices resulting in gaps in availability of both pre- and post-release components

Opportunity for Additional Improvements:

The opportunity to reconfigure existing programming and reentry contracts also provides an opening to make improvements based on lessons learned over the past several years, directed at the following goals:

- Bolstering program uptake and participation rates both in-custody and post-release
- Better tailoring services to individuals' specific interests and needs
- Increasing availability of Cognitive Behavioral Therapy and other evidence-based practices
- Focusing on service models in the following domains:
 - Pre-release: programming designed to maximize in-custody outcomes including violence reduction, adjustment to incarceration, educational services, and maintaining family and community connections
 - Point of discharge: immediate connections to services
 - Post-release: more effective support in the community, with a focus on placement and retention in transitional and permanent employment.

Provider Feedback:

Through a series of focus groups, nonprofit service provider organizations and other stakeholders have supplied the following feedback for the City to consider in future proposals for pre- and post-release services:

- Programming that directly addresses the impact of trauma and utilizes trauma-informed service models
- Enhanced educational services including adult basic education, literacy, High School Equivalency and post-secondary education
- Mentorship
- Opportunities for choice and autonomy in program and/or provider selection
- Employment of individuals with lived experience in the criminal justice system to engage and connect individuals to services in-custody and in the community
- Programming that prepares individuals for transitioning to state prison
- Job training programs that prepare individuals for employment in high growth and creative sectors
- Mechanisms for tracking programming and making and receiving referrals for services among providers

II. Proposed Solution and Considerations

Proposed Service Delivery Structure:

The City now has the opportunity to redesign program and contract structures in a manner consistent with insights gained in the delivery of both pre- and post-release programming and best practice knowledge.

DOC and MOCJ invited many of the city's nonprofit organizations to structured focus groups to discuss their experiences, concerns and ideas regarding programming both inside DOC facilities and in the community. Feedback from these groups, as well as lessons learned by the City over the past several years, will inform the two new RFPs, which are described below.

- DOC will reissue an RFP for in-custody services (including services up until the point of discharge) that combines core in-custody services currently offered via ICAN, SMART and YRN programs.
- MOCJ will issue an RFP for post-release services (including services that are hybrid community/in-custody reentry planning roles and all services from the point of discharge forward) that combines core post-release services currently offered by ICAN, SMART, YRN, and Jails to Jobs.

While the new model will separate the provision of in-custody and post-release programs and services, maintaining continuity between these areas is critical. To that end, the City envisions that the contracts for post-release services will include a mechanism for coordinating with participants while they are still detained and with the in-custody providers who serve them, to ensure that services are effectively delivered along a continuum of care model intended to maximize effectiveness and engagement in the community.

The City is committed to engaging as broadly as possible with the nonprofit provider community in this realignment effort. As such, DOC and MOCJ encourage proposals both from providers that currently provide reentry services and programming and from those who do not.

Jail-Based Services Model

The New York City Department of Correction (DOC) intends to redesign its jail-based program model to focus more directly on in-custody programming. While DOC still has an important role to play in promoting and helping to facilitate positive reentry outcomes, DOC would not directly provide community-based reentry programming. This realigned approach to programs and services not only better serves justice-involved individuals by allowing contract partners to meet their mission in a more deliberate manner, but also addresses long-standing problems. For instance, there has been frustration expressed by providers with meeting performance targets for jail-and community-based programs through one contract. Decision-making on staffing, dedication of resources, curriculum and service development are all impacted by a "one contract/two area" approach. However, given that this represents a change in historical structure, the City also seeks provider feedback as part of this contract design process as to how this practice shift will potentially impact business models, funding needs and staffing models.

It is the goal of the DOC to shift the program model from a generalized approach to an individualized and targeted model based on best practices. To that end, DOC seeks jail-based programming that provides individualized interventions for people who are pretrial and sentenced across ages and genders. The contractors will be expected to provide interventions using innovative methods of engagement that are tailored to an individual's specific needs, risks and interests. Programs should also be delivered through a trauma-informed lens. Requirements may include in-custody case management, discharge planning, soft skill vocational training and workforce readiness, substance abuse programming, enrichment activities, and/or cognitive behavioral therapy, among other items as identified through individual assessments and case plans.

In order for the DOC to operationalize this new program design, a means of assessment is critical for success. Furthermore, this assessment must be culturally sensitive and appropriate for the different demographic groups. An effective means of assessment will allow the DOC to offer individuals programs that are better matched to needs and interests while in custody. Provider feedback in this area will be greatly beneficial.

As noted in the beginning of this section, the DOC has listened to providers and recognizes the challenges they encountered with the previous contracts. This RFP will be informed by many of those concerns as the City seeks to provide high quality, tailored and effective in-custody programming that is delivered separately from, but in coordination with, community-based supports.

In-Community and Hybrid Reentry Services Model

The Mayor's Office of Criminal Justice (MOCJ) seeks to develop a citywide re-entry strategy focused on providing cohesive, comprehensive and specialized services to individuals leaving jail and transitioning back to communities throughout the five boroughs. This program model acknowledges the importance of targeted services, including, but not limited to, those listed below. The City is also open to service models in which organizations provide many of the services listed, as well as fewer, specific sets of services.

- **Hybrid reentry planning roles** that encompass pre-release planning and case management, as well as in-community support.
- **Triaging immediate needs upon release** from court and jail including transportation, basic needs, and connections to services.
- **Providing comprehensive and holistic services in the community** to help individuals effectively transition from in-custody experience to life in the community, including:
 - Emphasis on providing services in neighborhoods in which individuals are disproportionately impacted by the criminal justice system, which may include, but are not limited to: Bedford-Stuyvesant, Brownsville, East New York, Harlem, Jamaica, the South Bronx, and Northern Staten Island
 - Community-based services that incorporate partnerships with local cultural institutions, small businesses and other neighborhood organizations
 - Ongoing transition and reentry navigation by individuals (ideally who have had personal involvement in the criminal justice system) with comprehensive training in modalities such as Cognitive Behavioral Therapy, Motivational Interviewing and Trauma-informed care

- Paid transitional employment
- Connections to permanent employment
- Job training and job readiness workshops
- Job support services (e.g., resume writing, soft skills development, employment retention support)
- Career certifications
- Rap sheet clean-up
- Assistance obtaining identification and vital documents
- Mental, behavioral and physical health care
- Substance use treatment
- Family support and reunification
- Assistance identifying transitional and permanent housing and completing housing applications
- Educational programming and support (e.g., literacy, GED/HSE, college readiness)
- Case management
- Connections to child care options
- Benefits enrollment
- Program retention support

Funding:

Exact funding has not been determined at this time. The awarded amount must cover all operational expenses and costs associated with delivering programs and services. Providers are encouraged to share example budgets and staffing models to help the City best assess cost implications and funding needs.

Contract Period:

It is anticipated that the first contract term will be for a period of three (3) years starting on April 1, 2020.

Basis for Award:

Award selection will be based on the best technically rated proposals for which the price falls within the price per participant. Proposals will be evaluated according to criteria that will include the quality and quantity of successful relevant experience and proposed approach and design of the program. Organizations selected for award will be those which demonstrate successful experience providing similar services to similar populations as those targeted by the RFPs.

Procurement Timeline:

It is anticipated the two RFPs will be released in summer 2019 with contracts starting spring 2020.

Use of HHS Accelerator:

To respond to the forthcoming RFPs and all other client and community services (CCS) Requests for Proposals (RFPs), vendors must first complete and submit an electronic prequalification application using the City's Health and Human Services (HHS) Accelerator System. The HHS Accelerator System is a web-based system maintained by the City of New York for use by its human services Agencies to manage procurement.

Only organizations with approved HHS Accelerator Business Application and Services Applications for one or more of the following will be able to propose:

- Alternative Justice Management
- Discharge / Re-Entry
- Non-secure placement
- Secure Detention
- Outreach
- Conflict Resolution/Mediation
- Case Management
- Job Placement Services
- Job/Vocational Training
- Work Readiness
- Financial Counseling

To submit a Business and Service application to become eligible to apply for this and other CCS RFPs, please visit <http://www.nyc.gov/hhsaccelerator>

III. Comments

DOC and MOCJ wish to receive feedback from service providers and other stakeholders concerning the following:

- **Risk and need assessment administered in DOC custody** – How the assessment could be implemented, who could conduct the assessment, when the assessment could be done to be most effective, where the information could be stored, and how information could be communicated between DOC staff and providers working in custody and providers working in the community.
- **In-custody programming** – What specific kinds of in-custody programming should be included.
- **Communication in custody and in community** – Proposed mechanisms of communication between providers working in DOC custody and in the community to ensure a continuum of service provision.
- **Hybrid Roles** – What type of staff could have a presence both in custody and in the community (e.g., peer navigators, social workers, case managers, etc.) and how these hybrid roles could be implemented in a program model.
- **Triaging needs upon discharge** – How providers could connect with individuals as soon as they are discharged from jail and/or court to provide access to immediate needs.
- **In-community services** – What specific kinds of programming and services providers should be included in the community model.
- **Provider networks in the community** – how MOCJ could help providers build and maintain a network of services that encourages referrals and warm hand-offs from one provider to the next (e.g., via communication platforms, contracting mechanisms, etc.)

Please email written comments to MOCJProcurements@cityhall.nyc.gov no later than Friday June 21, 2019. Place “Reentry RFPs” in the subject line. Both DOC and MOCJ will review all comments submitted.