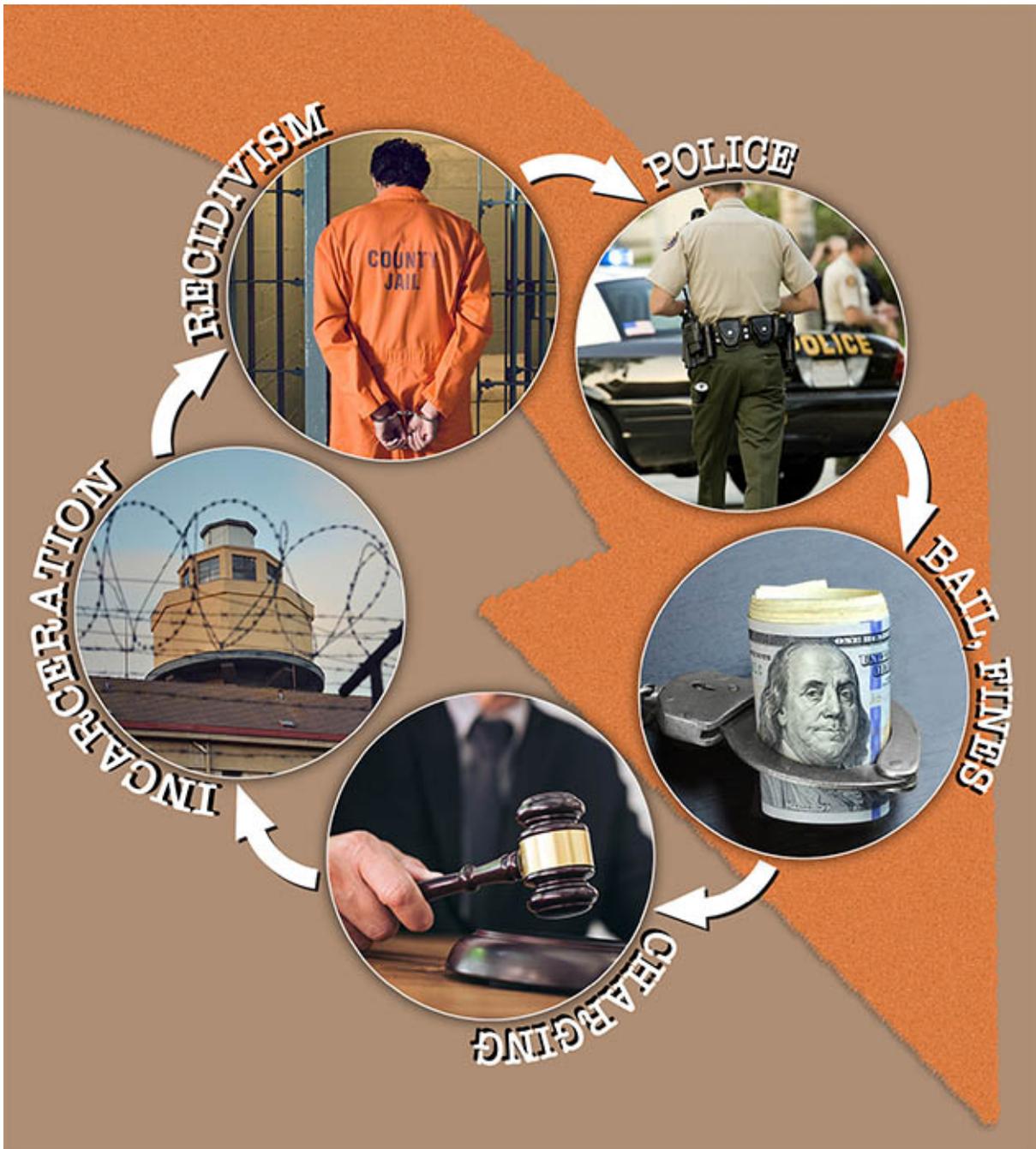


# “Criminal Justice in Arizona”

Marana Community Town Hall Report

Marana, AZ – September 14, 2018



# **CRIMINAL JUSTICE IN ARIZONA**

## **Marana Community Town Hall Report**

### **September 14, 2018 – The Highlands at Dove Mountain**

Participants of the September 2018 Marana Community Town Hall make the following findings and recommendations. This report reflects the consensus achieved through group discussions by Community Town Hall participants.

#### **GOALS FOR ARIZONA'S CRIMINAL JUSTICE SYSTEM**

The core goals of the criminal justice system should be based on safety including prevention, rehabilitation, and reduced recidivism, and should include the following:

- A focus on the deployment of community resources to prevent crimes, such as mental health services, substance abuse treatment, early education for children and continued education throughout their development;
- A respect for the role of the victim, including victim safety and closure through the process of justice; and
- A return on investment reflecting an increase in community safety and true rehabilitation of offenders rather than a simple ratio of dollars spent to crimes committed, including a focus on services throughout the pendency of the justice process, on education designed to reduce recidivism, and on an appropriate series of consequences and alternatives specifically related to the nature of the offense.

These goals should be adequately and sustainably funded.

#### **PRIOR TO INCARCERATION**

Prior to the point of incarceration, the process of criminal justice can be improved by strong efforts in the following areas:

- Education, involving sustainable funding for early education continuing through adulthood in areas of a specific relation to crime prevention and building skills for successful lives outside of crime; educating citizens through civic engagement efforts focused on awareness of their role in criminal justice and how to promote community safety through involvement; and better education within the criminal justice system itself, in order to provide resources and programs to the pre-incarcerated offenders which strengthen their skill sets prior to becoming incarcerated.
- Support for our youth, specifically defined as increased funding and support for child protective services; better support for youth involved in the juvenile justice system, including increased educational resources; increasing resources for parents and parent surrogates, including community resources such as YMCA and Big Brother Big Sister; and providing vocational education and job training to prepare young people for paying careers.
- Specialty Courts, including a specific focus on the efficacy of the misdemeanor level intervention; including the provision of the appropriate amount of services and resources for professionals in the field of mental health, substance abuse, and other areas related to the specialties to participate adequately in the justice process; appropriate funding for diversion and deflection programs; and increased and sustainable funding to reflect the true value the Specialty Courts provide; collaboration and coordination among misdemeanor problem-solving courts within each county; ensuring adherence within the problem-solving courts to evidence-based best practices published by the National Drug Court Institute; training by National Association of Drug Court Professionals, for judges, prosecutors, and other criminal justice professionals alike.

- Reforms of certain pre-incarceration practices, such as the fee structure of fines within the process of justice and how to decrease the instances of increased entrenchment within the criminal justice system due to the inability to pay fees; the focus on deflection and diversion programs, when appropriate, in place of incarceration, including the relationship-building efforts necessary between criminal justice agencies and community services organizations such as CRC or CBI; reducing racial and ethnic disparities through tools such as the risk assessment instrument; legislation should be enacted to allow for institutionalization of dangerous, violent offenders who are incompetent and cannot be restored to competency.
- Increased support and funding for public safety, with the simple appropriation of additional officers being a core strategy in this regard, but also the integration of specialized professionals, such as mental health and substance abuse treatment providers, into the front-line approach to criminal justice.

### **AFTER INCARCERATION**

After incarceration, steps that can be taken to improve Arizona’s criminal justice system include:

- The general policy that the re-entry process begins upon incarceration, and that a continuum of service should be instituted to ensure the best possible rehabilitation and outcome for society, including the speedy assignment of appropriate sentencing, leading to reduced recidivism; and the appropriate inclusion of victims and victim families in the re-entry process.
- A robust program of transitioning inmates back to society, including job training; discussion and training related to inmate safety, health, and wellness; community-based inmate work programs; educational offerings throughout and after incarceration; and an established system of support for the released to actively rely upon for access to these program element.
- Availability of post-incarceration services to inmates after release, including continuing mental health and substance treatment; accessible housing; job placement services; and accountability on the part of those service providers to ensure that the released are meeting the goals of transitioning into society.
- Access to the rights afforded to them as post-incarcerated individuals, including the support and education necessary to understand their rights
- The reduction of legal and administrative barriers to re-entry, for example in the form of “ban the box” type initiatives; and community outreach and education necessary to reduce collateral consequences of incarceration.

### **THE MARANA COMMUNITY**

The most critical criminal justice issues facing the Marana/Pima County community are lack or misallocation of resources, funding, and staffing for criminal justice-related services regionally; substance abuse and mental health and their effects on the justice process; lack of coordination between different jurisdictions, agencies, and mental and behavioral health treatment professionals in Pima County, leading to gaps in service and missed opportunities for appropriate treatment or sentencing; pay disparity between public employees, leading to larger state and federal agencies being more attractive employers for experienced criminal justice professionals; lack of access to basic health services; and an underfunded child safety program statewide.

Solutions offered to these critical issues include increased funding for resources and staffing in the region, to the point of ensuring local jurisdictions are able to offer pay which is competitive with larger state and federal agencies; eliminating siloes through better coordination between jurisdictions, agencies, and community service providers to ensure that the criminal justice process makes the most efficient use of all of its resources; greater education and outreach regarding the current services available to all

involved in the justice process, including pre-trial services and their benefits to offenders; and statewide focus on supporting child safety and services not only through increased funding but also greater education such as domestic violence awareness campaigns, access to health services from an early age, and a strong education system which support children throughout childhood, adolescence, and early adulthood.

## **SETTING PRIORITIES AND TAKING ACTION**

Participants first determined the most important priorities and goals for addressing criminal justice issues in the Marana Community. The areas identified (in no particular order) are: re-entry programs; collaboration; early intervention; and alternatives to incarceration. Participants then self-selected into groups to develop outlines of needs and action plans for accomplishing the identified goals.

- Re-entry programs
  - a. There should be services available to someone post-conviction.
  - b. Have dedicated case managers to provide necessary accountability and to ensure they are adequately transitioned back into community.
  - c. Before they are released into custody, ensure that they have adequate time to have job training and soft skills training.
  - d. Do a better job of identifying high demand employment areas for post-conviction.
  - e. Provide vocational training.
  - f. Make individuals aware of what services they need to have readily available post-release and create connections for those services to be made available.
  - g. Workforce development grants should be restructured to be focused on people with convictions specifically.
  - h. Create a task force at the County level to work with every player in the criminal justice system process (from behavioral health to attorneys to the court) to provide information on re-entry services as soon as the process begins for any particular individual.
- Collaboration
  - a. Create more collaboration between all players in the criminal justice system.
  - b. Get coordinated community responses to address families and individuals.
  - c. There is a great opportunity in Pima County given its reasonably manageable size and willingness of participating jurisdictions.
  - d. Information sharing is a major challenge, with technology being costly and requirements such as HIPAA being barriers to increased participation. Develop a consistent release form for all stakeholders to share so that all can feel comfortable sharing information.
  - e. Amelia Cramer is going to speak to the Pima County Justice Coordinating Council about expanding participation by creating smaller county groups made up of criminal justice professionals which will discuss specific issues.
  - f. Training will be provided on evidence-based best practices.
- Early intervention
  - a. Develop good relationships between police and the community through initiatives such as school resource officers in middle schools in Marana.
    - i. Address substance abuse before it starts through early education by having school resource officers (SROs).

- ii. Identify funding for SROs by researching ways to allocate court fines to SROs, school bonds and overrides, funding within police agencies, technology fees, grants and lottery funds.
    - iii. David Udall & Ed Nossem volunteered to get together with middle schools to assess and see how to make these goals happen.
    - iv. Use people with lived experiences, such as former inmates, to educate children on impact of substance abuse.
  - b. Provide education at well-child checks to parents who may not have the knowledge.
    - i. Madeleine Hernandez will work with Vic Paric to get these handouts to MHC Healthcare centers.
- Alternatives to incarceration
  - a. Look at opportunities to expand drug diversion and other programs as a way to identify situations where someone does not require incarceration but should not be released into society and could be placed in a treatment facility.
  - b. Personnel, funding, and community partnerships all present challenges to the above goal.
  - c. Specialty Courts are in need of more dedicated funding beyond grant-based funds.
  - d. The County Attorney's office can collaborate with other public organizations in the region to increase the efficacy of these existing programs.
  - e. These efforts should involve not only criminal justice system professionals but also health care providers and other community partners.
  - f. Continue to apply for grant funds when and where available.
  - g. Successes with alternative programs should be documented and publicized to increase the public's awareness, which will aid in lobbying for increasing funding for these programs.

## **INDIVIDUAL ACTIONS**

Recognizing that the power to change the future begins with each individual, participants committed to take personal actions based on their experience and discussions at the Marana Community Town Hall. Below are individual actions that were shared.

### ***I WILL...***

- Continue to attend Town Hall meetings to gain further knowledge of how I can impact my community in a positive and effective way. I will take what I learn out to the community and my co-workers.
- Be more proactive in strengthening my knowledge and relationships of and with other agencies and entities of the criminal justice system in my community in order to better serve it.
- I would like to facilitate communication between criminal justice organizations and service agencies to break down the silo approach that currently exists.
- Focus on prevention by presenting to and communicating with school-aged children on being a responsible and contributing member of a community.
- Make an effort to better engage members of the criminal justice system in treatment planning for behavioral health clinics.
- Make efforts to coordinate/communicate with other participants in the criminal justice system.
- Work with other agencies to increase collaborative services and lobby elected officials.

- Enhance publicizing and training on evidence-based best practices for Drug Courts and Drug Treatment Alternative to Prison and Diversion.
- Continue to educate, continue to advocate for change, and use social networking to help others
- Be a mentor; volunteer in junior high school.
- Refine my mental health court program.
- Reintegration and employment opportunities with employers participating in AZ@Work prevention initiatives.
- Talk with other community members about criminal justice system issues that were discussed today; correct inaccuracies about the criminal justice system when people discuss reforms to ensure meaningful reforms are discussed and proposed.
- Advocate for early intervention at grade school level.
- Develop and participate in the education of defendants and their families regarding available community services.
- Continue to work to build a diverse coalition of stakeholders to support more effective offender reentry within my jurisdiction.
- Continue to share the insights and ideas that I have learned through the community town halls throughout the state.
- Look into the feasibility of a portion of court fees/fines being allocated towards education; look for other creative sources of funding.
- Vote.
- Participate in community meetings to increase collaboration and connectivity to behavioral health services.
- Go to church and pray for our community.
- Continue to make an impact on offenders lives while incarcerated and prepare for successful integration back into society.
- Advocate for victims of violence so their voice is not forgotten as agencies focus on reentry and decreasing jail population; advocate for the broadened use of 13-3601.01; use best practices supported by evidence to interact with defendants and victims.
- Increase communication between agencies and community partners.
- Educate my family, friends, community, and networks regarding issues within the criminal justice system so that they can make more informed decisions on legislation – legislators and their involvement in community activism.
- Work with my administration regarding creating better communication efforts between agencies
- Contact behavioral health provider in our area to better communicate needs of accused and families in criminal justice system.
- Participate in non-profit organizations that serve underprivileged children.
- Bring info from today's session to Metropolitan Education Commission/Youth Advisory Council for further discussion and formulation of ideas and action items.
- Get involved!
- Continue to empower victims to seek justice and connect to resources to regain control and establish their new normal.
- Continue to pay attention to communication and info on criminal justice practices. Lobby state legislators to increase funding and close the gap on incompetents being released.

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