



Criminal Justice Commission

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June 21, 2016

Dear Mayor Berger and Members,
Palm Beach County Board of County Commissioners

On behalf of the members, I am proud to present the Criminal Justice Commission's (CJC) Annual Report for 2015. This year the CJC continued its long history of forming partnerships in order to make life for the residents of Palm Beach County better.

The priorities established by the members at their Annual Planning Meeting on February 22, 2015 included the Reentry Program, the Law Enforcement eXchange (LEX) Program, and the establishment of a new Behavioral Health Task Force to evaluate and develop recommendations to reduce system contact of persons with mental health and substance use disorders. Below is an overview of the accomplishments made in these areas this year:

1. This year the Reentry Program made great strides in partnering with the Florida Department of Corrections to identify and work with prisoners returning to the County. On average, 98 state prisoners are released each month back to the County. The Program expanded its juvenile initiatives by working with the juveniles housed within the County jail in collaboration with the Sheriff's Office. The Program also advocated and was successful in having the City of Boynton Beach and the County "Ban the Box" removing the checkbox for prior arrests on job applications. Also, the Program was selected as one of two sites in the nation to implement the Integrated Reentry Employment Strategies (IRES) pilot project under the Council for State Governments.
2. The Law Enforcement eXchange (LEX) is a countywide data-sharing program to aid law enforcement with tactical and investigative support by sharing information generated by the County's law enforcement agencies' Record Management Systems (RMS). This includes incident reports, investigative reports, field interviews, person's reports and any other data stored by the agency. In 2015 LEX saw a steady increase in the number of users and unique logins meaning that local law enforcement is accessing the system to help solve crimes in their jurisdictions and be informed of important intelligence information. LEX trained over 1,000 users countywide. By the end of 2015, 11 of the 25 local law enforcement agencies contributed data to the LEX system with more agencies designated to participate in 2016.
3. The Behavioral Health Task Force slowed its efforts because many of its members participated in the application process for the MacArthur Safety and Justice Challenge grant, which included a behavioral health component. The CJC was awarded a \$150,000 planning grant as one of twenty (20) sites selected from across the country. The grant was a data-driven exercise to study ways to reduce the use of the local jail and racial disparities. At the end of the planning grant in January 2016, an application was submitted to the MacArthur Foundation to implement system changes and programming to address identifiable issues with up to ten million dollars in funding possible over a five-year period.

Letter from William Kramer

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The CJC is committed to evaluating the programs it either creates or that it recommends for funding through trust funds or formula grants. To that end, the CJC's Program Monitoring and Evaluation Subcommittee produces an annual report that assists the CJC in determining funding priorities for the next year based on each program's performance. For fiscal year 2015, the report showed that of the 18 programs evaluated, the majority met or exceeded their goals. The programs monitored included the various Drug Courts, the different Reentry Program tracks, the Law Enforcement eXchange (LEX), and the misdemeanor probation service provider, Professional Probation Services, Inc.

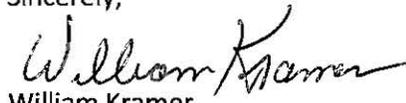
This year also saw some significant changes to the leadership and structure of the CJC. First, Executive Director Michael Rodriguez resigned in October after nine (9) years of service. A Selection Committee of CJC members and the County Administrator reviewed 60 applications and a new Executive Director, Kristina Henson, was hired in January 2016. The CJC members wish to express appreciation to Assistant County Administrator Vince Bonvento for assuming yet another hat of leadership by serving as the Interim Executive Director during this transition. Second, the Reentry Program and the oversight of CJC finances, including grant and contract management were transferred to the County's Public Safety Department. The Reentry Program was transferred to sustain and support the program going forward. With the CJC's purpose of incubating programs, this is a step toward making this much needed program a permanent fixture. Finally, a review of the County Ordinance which established the CJC began this year and continued into 2016 with some changes to the membership and some needed updates to the old language.

The CJC accomplishments come from building consensus and involving all agencies affected by a particular issue in developing solutions. The CJC operates through committees because its members understand that in order to succeed, stakeholders must be a part of the solution. The ownership resulting from their participation is an invaluable asset that brings with it pride and satisfaction. The CJC involved over 200 subject matter experts and community members in reviewing, evaluating, and recommending improvements to the County's criminal justice system this past year.

The decades of successful collaboration have provided the CJC members an appreciation and understanding of all system agencies' perspectives, preventing the silo mentality that plagues many jurisdictions. This alone is an invaluable benefit of the CJC because when pressing issues arise, the members know how to come together and work toward a solution quickly and effectively.

You can be proud of this unique organization. I hope this report provides you an appreciation of the valuable work the CJC members do to make our community a great place to live and work.

Sincerely,



William Kramer,
2015 CJC Chairman