



Office of Community Involvement



Department of Community Justice CBAC

TO: Chair Deborah Kafoury and Board of County Commissioners

FROM: Department of Community Justice Community Budget Advisory Committee

DATE: April 29, 2022

SUBJECT: DCJ Community Budget Advisory Committee Report & Recommendations

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The DCJ CBAC is committed to a safe county for all our residents that supports people being on the path to leading their best lives. We believe that pathway must include significant investment in culturally specific community based programs and victim services. With the unique opportunity presented by a 0% constraint and a decreasing supervision population, we urge county leadership to prioritize these services that promote true community safety rather than inflating the funding of supervision and law enforcement programs.

PROCESS

The FY 2023 DCJ CBAC met monthly with DCJ staff and contractors beginning in October 2021. Our members are all full-time students and professionals; consistent attendance continues to be a challenge. We continue to believe that stipends for committee members in exchange for their time and lived experience would enable more consistent attendance and participation. We also believe recruiting members who have directly interacted with the criminal justice system would lead to richer dialogue and a better representation of the community in the budget process.

While the CBAC appreciates the commitment and availability of DCJ to meet monthly outside of the budget season, we again note with disappointment that CBAC members did not enjoy access to the Director's budget proposal until the day that proposal became public and that CBAC members were not consulted on proposed budget offers. This is simply not enough time for a volunteer committee to meaningfully evaluate a \$116M (\$84M general fund) budget proposal spread over 59 distinct program offers. While recognizing the department's need to maintain discretion when budget proposals could impact current employees, we again urge the department to consider ways to be more transparent with their budget proposals earlier in the process. We particularly note that other county departments involve their CBACs earlier in program offer development (DCA/DCM, DA).

EMERGING ISSUES & CHANGES

For the first time in years, county departments were asked to propose a budget with a 0% constraint. At the same time, the public continues to push for drastic reimagining and transformation of our county's public safety system. This is a perfect opportunity for a transformative budget, with significant investments in culturally specific community-based resources and crime victim services. These programs serve the communities most impacted by crime and those harmed both historically and in the present day by the public safety systems of this region.

We are also facing an increase in violence in our county, which has been weaponized by political opportunists and some law enforcement leaders. While the causes of crime are complex, the systemic underinvestment and neglect of our communities was laid bare during the ongoing pandemic and racial justice protests. Every dollar spent on supervision, jail, and other systems of control is a dollar not invested in housing, education, health, and employment, which are factors that sustain community safety and prosperity.

BUDGET FEEDBACK

Our recommendations are very similar to the recommendations that we shared for FY22. We urge county leadership to consider the decline in the supervision population and reallocate funding from supervision related services toward victim services and culturally specific community based programs, which are underfunded yet serve an increasing number of people.

Increase in number of people served by victim services – The number of people served by victim services is increasing significantly, even with similar numbers of initial contacts. We agree with the department in attributing this to the outreach efforts of the victim services unit in spite of the ongoing pandemic, which has likely made reaching crime survivors more difficult. In FY22, after the victim services unit served 85 survivors in FY20, the budget anticipated they would have served a total of 70 people in FY21, attributing the decline to the pandemic. Instead, the FY23 budget shows that the unit actually served 187 survivors in FY12. Even with the department's conservative estimate of serving 150 survivors in FY23, the general fund ask seems to have increased only by a 5% cost of living increase, which does not reflect the more than doubled workload.

Effective service from underfunded culturally specific community based services – Like the victim services unit, culturally specific community programs are serving more people, more effectively. Yet they are seeing a decline in funding. The Flip the Script program, for example, is estimated to have served more than three times the number of people anticipated in FY22 and is anticipated to have led to job placements for 10% more individuals than were anticipated. However, they are inexplicably facing a 2% cut in their funding.

Members: Robbie Davis, Rebecca Fisher, Lisa Freeman, Aron Klein, Na'ama Schweitzer, Vera Warren

Staff: Tami Wallis, Karen Rhein

Reduction in number of people under supervision – In contrast to victim services and culturally specific community based services, the supervision population is decreasing. In FY22, the department submitted a budget assuming an adult supervision population of 11,500. Our FY22 report looked at statewide and local trends and suggested that the actual population would be approximately 9,200 people. Ultimately, the adopted FY22 budget estimated an adult supervision population of 10,000. We are pleased to see that the department’s submitted FY23 budget indicates that the estimated population in FY23 was approximately 9,000 and they are budgeting for that same number in FY23.¹ The juvenile numbers are even more stark. The department anticipated 1,200 juvenile referrals in FY22, but the submitted FY23 budget shows an estimate of 600 referrals in FY22 and they anticipate 600 referrals in FY23. Yet, the department continues to budget for supervision services based on their inflated estimates of the community corrections population from FY22.

PROGRAM OFFER RECOMMENDATIONS

As stated above, the CBAC supports additional resources for Victim & Survivor Services, restorative practices, and culturally specific services within the Department of Community Justice. Our specific recommendations are as follows, in priority order:

1. 50003 Victim & Survivor Services \$947,554

The Victim & Survivor Services (VSS) Unit provides critical support to crime victims and survivors within a justice system that was not designed to specifically serve victims and survivors. The CBAC is impressed by how much VSS is able to achieve on a shoestring budget, and recommends continuing and increasing funding for these services. Offer #50003 would increase the VSS budget by a marginal cost of living increase (just over \$100,000 within a \$116 million department budget). The CBAC recommends further expanding the VSS budget an additional \$500,000-\$1 million. This increase, still nominal in view of the department’s overall budget, would allow culturally specific advocates for underserved communities, greater advocacy services, and more manageable caseload for VSS staff.

2. 50032B Community Healing Initiative (CHI) \$2,278,020

The Community Healing Initiative (CHI) is a family- and community-centered collaboration providing culturally specific and evidence-based services to at-risk youth and their families. It has been fully implemented in the Juvenile Services Division [Offer 50065] since July 2015 and

¹ The FY23 estimate is supported by the most recent Oregon DOC economic estimate which forecasts a similar statewide community corrections population in 2023 as 2022. The forecast predicts that the probation and post-prison supervision population will slowly increase through 2026 before leveling off at 95% of the prepandemic level.

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has proven effective. Offer #50032B would expand the program to 17-25 year-old African American male clients. We believe that CHI would be equally effective with this young-adult population.

3. 50035 Flip the Script \$377,990

The Flip the Script program provides culturally specific services to Black and African Americans as part of a package that shifts funds from the traditional criminal justice system and reinvests in upstream prevention, diversion and reentry programs. The CBAC is supportive of culturally specific programming that enables individuals to avoid incarceration and thrive when re-entering the community. Rather than cutting the budget of this program as proposed in the current budget, the CBAC recommends expanding the budget to allow more individuals to be served by this program and/or greater investment in those individuals.

4. 50050B Juvenile Training and Restorative Practices \$228,529

This program offer will expand a restorative justice philosophy and practices into juvenile detention facilities. The CBAC is supportive of and would like to see even greater investment in the expansion of restorative justice programs, philosophy, and practices, which will better serve both perpetrators and victims/survivors.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS – The Committee would like to give special thanks to all DCJ staff that took time out of their evenings to attend our monthly meetings and provide us with valuable information about the budget and the department. Specifically, Erika Preuitt, Karen Rhein, Tami Wallis, and Kathryn Sofich have arranged, facilitated, and contributed greatly to the meetings, and taken time outside of meetings to respond to questions as they have come up. We appreciate your commitment to this work!