



**Dallas County Criminal Justice Advisory Board
General Membership Minutes for Monday, March 27, 2023**

Welcome & Introductions, Commissioner Dr. Garcia, called the meeting to order at 2:33 PM. All in attendance made customary introductions.

Membership & Infrastructure:

There were no changes to membership or infrastructure at this time.

Meeting Minutes:

The minutes from the CJAB General Membership meeting held on December 19, 2022, were made a part of the packet. A motion was made to approve minutes by Duane Steele; the motion was seconded by Christina Crain and approved.

Presentations:

Unlocking Doors– Christina Crain

Commissioner Dr. Garcia introduced the speaker, Christina Crain.

Over three decades ago, Mrs. Christina Crain had the chance to chair the Texas Department of Criminal Justice Board under Governor Perry, and during her tenure, she realized there were things that weren't being done to help those coming out of incarceration. Mrs. Crain reported that annually, over seventy thousand individuals are released from T.D.C.J., many of whom desire a more prosperous life but lack the know-how to get there. Unlocking Doors, a non-profit designed to coordinate with other entities, was founded to guide these ex-offenders through the system and empower them to reach their goals.

Mrs. Crain reported that their client base had recently been revamped to include anyone with a criminal record, including juvenile offenders exiting the juvenile system. Furthermore, she laid out the requirements for participating in the Unlocking Doors program: clients can be referred from community partnerships, through a court referral, a grant referral, prerelease referral, or self-referral. Participation is voluntary and not mandatory.

Mrs. Crain shared a flyer to the collective that included relevant information about Unlocking Doors. This service can be accessed via a walk-in option or an appointment. The headquarters of Unlocking Doors is located in Dallas, and they

also have an affiliated Tarrant County office housed within Cornerstone Assistance Network. Additionally, they are collaborating with Lynn Richardson's team from the Public Defender's Office in the Lancaster Office and the South Dallas Government Center. Recently, Unlocking Doors has opened a new office in Houston and has been receiving attention from San Antonio.

Mrs. Crain explained, upon enrolling in the program, clients are charged a fee of five dollars and complete the sign-up process in a legalistic manner. This fee is then reinvested in the client to provide them with things like tools, work boots, or a required uniform for their employment. Unlocking Doors takes it a step further and helps them get important documents like their social security card, driver's license, and state identification card. Moreover, the organization performs extensive background checks to get the full picture of the individual's history, including any offenses in different states or federal jurisdictions. Furthermore, the individual fills out executive program documents to help educate the client on what they can expect from this program.

Mrs. Crain described the Unlocking Doors model of reentry brokerage, which requires the individual to receive an assessment of all their needs to be referred to an appropriate provider. The broker assigned to the individual will assess the risks of recidivism and ascertain the skills needed to facilitate the reentry process. Unlocking Doors uses the Texas Risk Assessment System (TRAS) - a reentry tool taught to them by the Texas Department of Criminal Justice (TDCJ). As the only community-based organization to use TRAS, the data acquired is evidence-based and can be compared to the other TRAS the individual has completed. In addition, a 'Career Key' questionnaire is completed by the client in order to give the organization a sense of the individual's career goals. By understanding what skills are desired, they are better equipped to assist the client in acquiring gainful employment.

Mrs. Crain further explained the Behavior and Experience Inventory (BEI) is an extremely useful tool for analyzing an individual's behaviors and thoughts. It can reveal potential signs of abuse or neglect, as well as any prior engagement with the criminal justice system. Additionally, the program allows them to see the extent to which their family may have been involved with similar matters and it gives them a better analysis of the psychological aspects. The Benefits Calculator is employed to identify what government benefits an individual may be eligible for during their most vulnerable times. Their goal is to help them find gainful employment so they can become independent from those benefits.

Mrs. Crain shared after performing these assessments of a client's needs, the broker compiles all the data into a plan. This plan is essentially the patient navigator system. After determining what the client may lack, the broker can arrange for multiple experts to provide the necessary services such as employment, housing, substance abuse treatment, transportation, and other basic needs to get the client back on their feet. These experts will be coordinated by the broker to ensure their availability. Through their database, they refer their

clients to several different providers. Recently, they have implemented a new tool, Reconnect, in order to maintain connection with their clients during the pandemic. This tool provides virtual check-ins, GPS capability, and keeps track of when clients visit providers. It eliminates the need for the brokers to constantly pick up the phone or email to confirm attendance. However, this system may not work for every client.

Mrs. Crain concluded her presentation by sharing that Unlocking Doors provides its clients with lifelong assistance. Through collecting data from their clients, with their permission, the organization is able to analyze trends and compile reports which are helpful to the community, Law Makers, Funders, Organizations, Network Providers and Supporters. Mrs. Crain shared she would love to look at other opportunities with law enforcement to continue making an impact. Mrs. Crain opened the floor for questions.

During the discussion, someone questioned the need for government-issued identification. Mrs. Crain clarified that this was necessary for obtaining employment and accessing certain services. Luckily, Unlocking Doors has partnered with organizations to help clients obtain State IDs. Another inquiry followed, asking if there were any restrictions on the clients they work with. Mrs. Crain replied that they work with everyone, even sexual offenders. The organization is currently working with the legislature to remove some of the barriers put in place by the TDLR laws regarding occupational licenses, which prevent those who have been trained while incarcerated from obtaining employment upon release.

Lastly, Commissioner Garcia inquired about the efficacy of Unlocking Doors. In response, Ms. Crain proudly shared that with nearly 14 years of experience serving almost 7,000 clients, Unlocking Doors boasts a remarkable 92% success rate. As she explained, the organization is committed to supporting their clients through the long-term, and will not remove them from their services, ensuring their continued success.

Committee Project Updates:

Criminal Justice Administration & Jail Population Management Update:

LaShonda Jefferson provided the update. The Jail Population committee meeting was held on Friday, March 10. The Jail Population packet was distributed. Excerpts from that packet can be found on pages 24 through 31 of the CJAB packet. The jail population for today is 5,981, which is 83% of our total jail capacity. The average jail population for February 2023 was 6,109 and our yearly average for 2023, so far, is 6,097. Ms. Jefferson reported a trend where there are more releases than bookings. The Criminal Justice Department continues to collaborate with stakeholders to manage our jail population. The Criminal Justice Department also recently approved two jail population coordinator positions to help assist, monitor, track and research jail population.

Fair Defense Committee:

Lynn Richardson had no updates to report.

Justice of the Peace:

Judge Valencia Nash was selected by her peers and will represent Justice of the Peace going forward. However, Judge Nash was unable to attend today's meeting.

Law Enforcement/Jurisprudence:

Ellyce Lindberg gave the update. Ms. Lindberg reported there was not a formal meeting held by the subcommittee in the last quarter. She introduced Judge Autry to speak to the group. Judge Autry gave a quick update regarding the emergency protective orders. He reminded the LEAs to get as much correct information as possible. These are unfunded mandates and it's challenging; however, this information is crucial for EPOs. He shared his contact information and asked to get the message out.

Pretrial:

Jeff Segura gave the update. Pretrial Services numbers were as follows: Alcohol monitoring at 1584, Electronic Monitoring at 679, Mental Health at 259 and General Pretrial at 136, totaling 2,658 for the department. He provided an update on the additional officers, they are now trained and assigned full caseloads. This has helped alleviate their officers' ratios tremendously. Mr. Duane Steele added his appreciation for the support to get those positions. Of the 75 positions, 72 positions are currently filled.

Reentry:

Christina Crain did not have anything additional to report.

Program Update:

Ellyce Lindberg delivered an important update regarding the Local Data Advisory Board during the meeting. The LDAB convenes biweekly, with the next meeting scheduled for April 6th. Ms. Lindberg highlighted the crucial requirement that Dallas County must maintain an overall 90% closure rate for all arrests that took place between 2017 and 2021, failure to meet this goal could potentially result in the loss of all grant funding for the county. In addition, she discussed the changes made in the 2019 legislature that counted Class C cases, previously not counted, as a part of the overall closure rate. She revealed that meetings were held with the City of Dallas, and communication was made with Charles Reed, to explore options to have municipal Class C cases removed from the count. Ms. Charlene Randolph expressed her optimism that the 90% goal could be achieved by mid-June, thanks to their ongoing success in disposing of cases. However, there remain some lingering issues that require attention.

Commissioner Garcia announced an exciting development for the Dallas Deflection Center's program update. With a strong emphasis on community involvement, a letter was sent out to law enforcement agencies and community

groups detailing the Center's assistance. Ellyce Lindberg introduced Leah Gamble, whose contract is aimed to promote the Center. Gamble's mission is to raise awareness about the Dallas Deflection Center and its benefits; she is currently working on a video to share with all interested parties. To learn more about the Dallas Deflection Center, she can be reached at leah.martin@dallascounty.org.

Public Comments:

None.

Announcements:

The next CJAB meeting will be held on June 26, 2023, at 2:30pm.

Adjournment:

A motion was made to adjourn the meeting; it was seconded and approved at 3:37PM.