



REENTRY SF

One Year Evaluation

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THE BRIDGING GROUP



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OVERVIEW OF REENTRY SF

PROGRAM OVERVIEW

Reentry SF (RSF) offers a comprehensive array of reentry services including: work readiness training, work based assessment, mental health and substance abuse treatment and prevention, mentoring, education programs, vocational skills training, supportive services, and job placement and retention. Reentry SF creates a pathway for building new skills and permanently exiting the criminal justice system. The program goal is to reduce recidivism of clients by 50% over a five year period, improve public safety and inspire enrichment of both human and social capital. See Appendix A for the Reentry SF Program Brochure.

TARGET POPULATION

The target population for RSF is adult men and women (over age 18) who are on probation in San Francisco under one of two types of supervision, Post-Release Community Supervision (PRCS) or 1170 (h) Mandatory Supervision.

Post-Release Community Supervision - People released from State Prison on or after October 1, 2011 who served a sentence for a non-serious, non-violent, non-sex offense are released to Post-Release Community Supervision (PRCS), which is the responsibility of the Adult Probation Department. Prior to October 1, 2011 these individuals would have been on State Parole with the California Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation (CDCR). PRCS violations are heard in San Francisco Superior Court, and revocation sentences are served in San Francisco County Jail.

PC1170 (h) Mandatory Supervision - Individuals convicted of certain felonies on or after October 1, 2011 may be sentenced to San Francisco County Jail for more than 12 months. Individuals sentenced under PC1170 (h) may be sentenced to the low, mid, or upper term of a triad. Individuals may be sentenced to serve that entire time in County Jail, or may be sentenced to serve that time split between County Jail and Mandatory Supervision. Mandatory Supervision is the responsibility of the Adult Probation Department.

While, per AB109, these clients' most recent offenses are non-serious, non-violent, and non-sex offenses, many have extensive criminal histories and significant unmet needs. 89% of PRCS clients and 88% of those on Mandatory Supervision have been assessed as high risk for

recidivating, per the COMPAS assessment tool.

Those on PRCS have an average of eight prior felony convictions. Thus, Reentry SF is engaging high risk and high needs clients.

*"The name says it all – Reentry SF...
It's about putting criminality behind
you."*

- RSF Participant

REENTRY SF SERVICE COMPONENTS

Reentry SF service components are broken down into three service phases. The following is a brief description of each program component by service phase:

Phase 1

Referrals - Utilizing the COMPAS Assessment, APD Deputy Probation Officers (DPOs) assess employment needs and job readiness for men and women who meet the eligibility criteria. They then make appropriate referrals of eligible clients to Goodwill for Reentry SF.

Pre-Release Services - Eligible men who are identified in the Reentry Pod at San Francisco County Jail can attend a RSF Orientation while still in custody. At this time, the program is described and expectations and outcomes are discussed with the potential participants. If participants are interested in enrollment into Phase 2 of Reentry SF, they are given a card with the necessary contact information and days and times to report to the program once released from custody. During Phase 1, individuals also attend weekly job readiness trainings in order to prepare for reentry.

Pre-Release Services were introduced to Reentry SF too late to be included in this evaluation.

Phase 2

Orientation - Goodwill Industries oversees a weekly, hour-long orientation in the community. Clients learn about RSF benefits and requirements. After this orientation, clients work with their DPOs to determine if Reentry SF is in fact an appropriate placement.

Assessment/Enrollment - Goodwill oversees a comprehensive assessment and enrollment process that includes intake, educational and vocational (PESCO) assessment, and walks clients through the results of the assessments so they can better understand their literacy needs, and the results of the PESCO vocational assessment.

Resource Specialist/Barrier Removal – This is a critical RSF component. In this phase of Reentry SF, clients seek to gain stability through addressing and overcoming basic barriers to self-sufficiency through employment or educational pursuits. The Resource Specialist helps clients attain documents like California ID/CDL, birth certificate, and social security cards, and provides resource navigation assistance so that clients get access to needed housing, food, health care, parenting support, behavioral health, and childcare support. By overcoming these barriers, clients set a foundation for moving through other aspects of RSF. Reentry SF uses a point

system in this phase. Each critical “barrier to employment” is assigned point values. When a client overcomes all barriers, she/he has achieved the requisite 60 points, and can move on to Career Advising and working with the Employer Engagement Specialist.

“The biggest success is seeing a client who went from no housing, drug use problems and no right to work documentation, to seeing them find a job that they enjoy doing. The process may take a long while, but to see the transformation is worth it.”

-RSF Provider

Job Readiness Training (JRT) - While

clients are in the barrier removal phase, they also participate in a three-week job readiness curriculum that covers soft skills such as attitude and behavioral exercises like filmed mock interviews, and JRT also helps clients build resumes, cover letters, and references.

Phase 3

Work Based Assessments – Clients that complete the job readiness training can spend up to two-weeks “on the job” being observed by staff. Reentry SF staff then engage in constructive conversations with clients regarding their performance, all with the goal of preparing the client for a longer term transitional or unsubsidized work position.

Digital Literacy – Many clients do not have strong or any familiarity with the digital world. Goodwill has an onsite digital literacy program that walks clients through the world of computers, basic computer processing, and internet navigation. All clients receive a flash drive through this component so they can save all of their work readiness and other documents.

Career Advisors – Career advisors in some cases play an as needed Resource Specialist role to address client barriers that emerge after they have completed the barrier removal phase. The primary goal of this position however is to work closely with the client and Reentry SF Employer Engagement Specialist to ensure that the client has updated resumes, cover letters, references and has fine-tuned interviewing skills so that the client becomes better prepared for a transitional or unsubsidized job interview.

Employer Engagement Specialist – This position studies trends in the labor market and strengthens relationships with employers in all sectors. The Specialist works closely with client and Career Advisor to connect clients to employment that is aligned with interests and talents.

Employment Placement – Reentry SF clients get connected to transitional (subsidized wage), as well as unsubsidized positions. RSF is fortunate to have Goodwill Industries as a core partner. Goodwill Industries is a thriving Social Enterprise. As a leading employer of highly at-risk clients, Goodwill also permanently hires some Reentry SF clients for warehouse, retail, and other

administrative positions. Dovetailing with the employment opportunities at Goodwill is the role of the Employer Engagement Specialist who seeks other longer-term employment and career pathways for clients as they become ready for work in an unsubsidized environment.

Available Services Through All Phases

Collaborative Case Management – The Reentry SF team comprised of representatives from community services providers and the SF Adult Probation Department convenes weekly for programmatic troubleshooting and troubleshooting client needs. This format allows the team to more nimbly identify and troubleshoot evolving issues such as behavioral health, child support, income/benefits, and a variety of other issues.

Behavioral Health Services – While the SF Department of Public Health is the primary provider of behavioral health services to RSF clients, Reentry SF partner Healthright360° is a vendor of DPH and can get RSF referrals through the DPH system, or from RSF provider referrals. The priority is to ensure that when a RSF client begins to display a potential behavioral health issue, that the team efficiently responds and ensures the client gets as needed access to services.

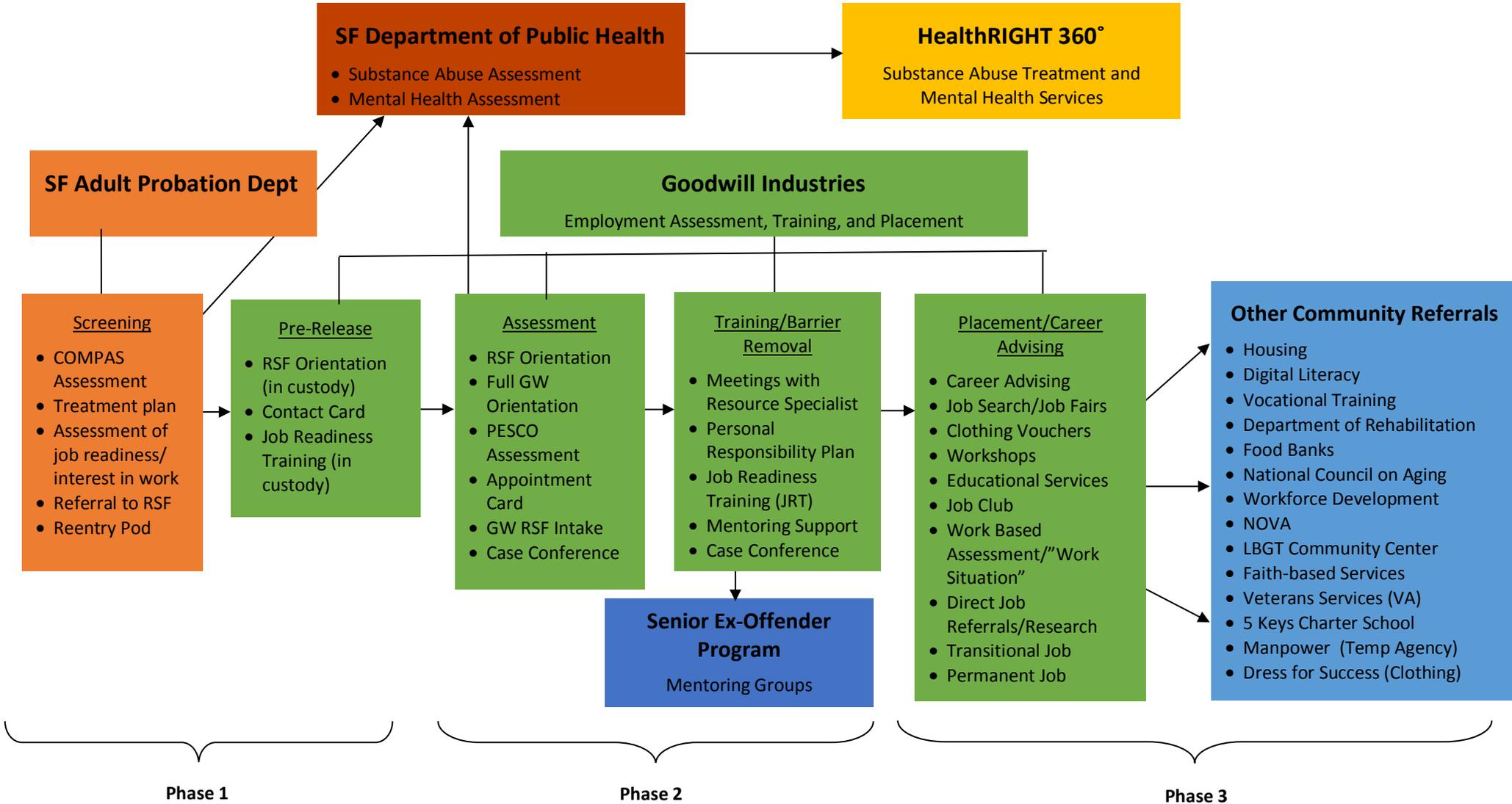
Mentoring – The RSF mentoring group meets weekly. The Senior Ex-Offender Program facilitates sessions focused largely on developing trusting and positive peer relationships, building life skills, examining cognitive decision making, and resource sharing.

High School/GED Program – While clients are in all phases of RSF, if they do not have a GED or high school diploma (HSD), they are required to work towards an educational goal. There is an accredited Five Keys Charter School on site at Goodwill. RSF clients that do not have an HSD or GED will be referred into the program on a schedule that is aligned with a reentry plan that also includes other service access requirements. Graduates of Reentry SF will have completed their academic goals.

“I enjoy every minute of it [RSF]. I enjoy getting up in the morning. I’m doing something positive. How to be a better person. Positive. Everything is positive. It’s wonderful. Inspiring.”

- RSF Participant

Figure 1: Reentry SF Flow of Services



RSF COLLABORATION

Reentry SF is a partnership of the San Francisco Adult Probation Department, Goodwill Industries of San Francisco, San Mateo and Marin, HealthRIGHT 360° (formerly Haight Ashbury Free Clinics – Walden House), Bayview Hunters Point Multipurpose Senior Center/Senior Ex-Offender Program, and the San Francisco Department of Public Health. RSF Partners play a variety of roles:

San Francisco Adult Probation Department – Conducts COMPAS assessments to determine the risk/needs of clients, refers high and medium risk clients into the Reentry SF system, and closely collaborates with the RSF team to meet the needs of clients.

Goodwill Industries of San Francisco, San Mateo, and Marin – Tracks post release referrals from APD, and oversees all education and employment components of RSF. Goodwill oversees Reentry SF orientation, and a comprehensive enrollment process. Resource specialists provide client barrier removal, and address client basic needs like food, housing and hygiene kits. Goodwill also has a GED/HSD program on site and provides efficient access to educational and digital literacy opportunities. Goodwill also administers the three week job readiness training, and oversees the work based assessment component. Career Advisors mentor clients that have completed job readiness and work based assessment and ensure they are prepared to meet the demands of interviewing and starting up in either transitional or unsubsidized employment. The Employment Engagement Specialist works directly with employers to carve out job opportunities that are aligned with the skills and interests of Reentry SF clients.

HealthRIGHT 360° –HealthRIGHT’s RSF Transitional Case Manager provides critical behavioral health support to Reentry SF clients.

Bayview Hunters Point Multi-service Center/Senior Ex Offender Program (SEOP) – SEOP provides weekly mentoring groups to RSF clients in the community.

San Francisco Department of Public Health – Provides in-custody and community based behavioral health (mental health and substance abuse) assessments, health benefits assessments, and enrolls eligible clients into a robust system of behavioral health care through its Behavioral Health Access Center - BHAC.

“The team behind the participants are stellar. They truly care for the participants and want to see them succeed.”

- RSF Staff Member

Figure 2: Reentry SF Collaboration



OVERVIEW OF EVALUATION

The goal of the Reentry SF one year evaluation was to help the Reentry SF collaborative to (1) understand and describe their process throughout the first year of program design and implementation, (2) analyze preliminary outcome data collected to date, and (3) determine lessons learned that help to inform progress for this project or other like collaboratives.

METHODOLOGY

In order to evaluate Reentry SF, the evaluation team has conducted the following:

1. Data was extracted from APD and Goodwill Industries data bases.
2. A Focus group was conducted with key project collaborators including community service providers, APD Reentry Department Staff and APD Deputy Probation Officers (Appendix B).
3. Surveys were distributed to key staff from collaborative community service providers and a sampling of the Deputy Probation Officers who provided program referrals to Reentry SF (Appendix C).
4. A Focus Group was conducted with active participants in the program (Appendix D).
5. One-on-one interviews were conducted with participants who did not successfully complete the RSF program (Appendix E).

Focus group guides, interview guide, and survey questions were developed by the evaluation team and finalized with feedback received from APD staff. The quantitative data collected from database extractions was aggregated and analyzed to measure averages and frequencies while the qualitative data collected from focus groups, interviews and surveys was sorted, organized, and synthesized based on emerging themes.

Limitations

One of the primary limitations to any evaluation is available resources (time and budget). As well, the limited number of participants involved in interviews and focus groups (8 participants) means that findings are not generalizable to the larger RSF or SF Probation population.

Table 1: Data Collection Methods

Data Collection Method	N
Participant Data Files Reviewed for Data Extraction	104
Focus Group with RSF Collaborative Stakeholders (community partners plus APD staff)	15
Surveys of RSF Collaborative Stakeholders and APD Deputy Probation Officers	15
Focus Group with active RSF participants	6
Interviews with participants who did not successfully complete the program	2

PARTICIPANT DATA OVERVIEW

In documenting quantitative outcomes for RSF, The Bridging Group worked with the Research Director and Reentry Pre-Release Coordinator of the Reentry Division of SFADP to generate these data. Data was extradited for 104 Reentry SF participants to gauge participant demographics and outcomes represented by the program to date.

Of 104 RSF participants, 18 were 1170h clients and 86 were PRCS clients. 95 participants were male, 9 were women and there were no identified transgender clients. The racial/ethnicity representation was 63 African American participants (61%), 14 Caucasian participants (13%), 13 Latino/a participants (13%), 7 API participants (7%) with the remaining 7 individuals (7%) either identifying as “other” or unknown. 11 participants (11%) were between 18-24 years old; 39 participants (38%) were between 25-39 years old; 43 participants (41%) were between 40-54 years old; and 11 participants (10%) were between 55 and 69 years old. The average age was 40. 84% of participants assessed at medium, medium high or high risk through their COMPAS assessment. The following table and charts summarize the demographic data.

Table 2: Participant Characteristics

RSF Participants (N= 104)					
Probation Status	N	%	Age	N	%
1170h Clients (jail)	18	17%	18 - 24 years old	11	11%
PRCS Clients (prison)	86	82%	25 - 39 years old	39	38%
			40 - 54 years old	43	41%
Gender	N	%	55 - 69 years old	11	11%
Male	95	91%	70+	0	0%
Female	9	9%			
Transgender	0	0%	Average age	40	
Race/Ethnicity	N	%	COMPAS Risk Level	N	%
African American	63	61%	High	64	62%
Asian	5	5%	Medium High	19	18%
Chinese	1	1%	Medium	4	4%
Filipino	1	1%	Low	10	10%
Latino/a	13	13%	No Assessment	7	7%
Other	6	6%			
Unknown	1	1%			
White	14	13%			

Chart 1: Reentry SF Participants by Ethnicity

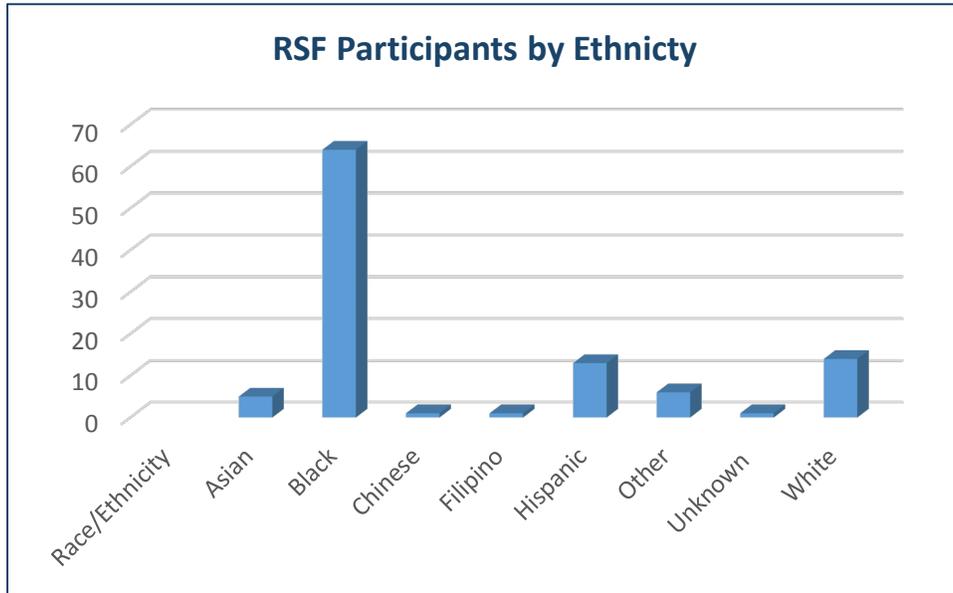


Chart 2: Reentry SF Participant Age Distribution

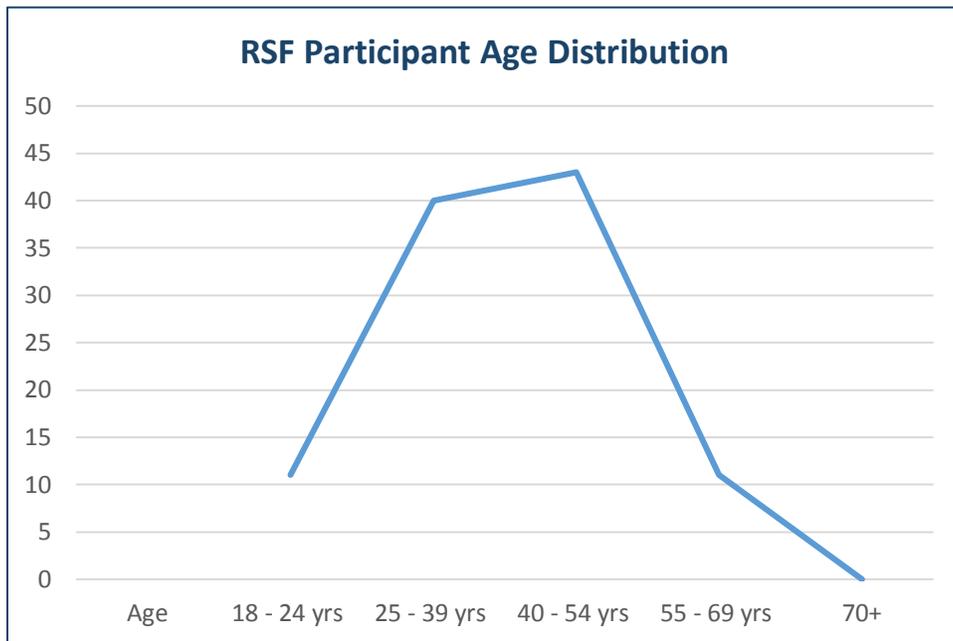


Chart 3: Reentry SF Participant Gender Distribution

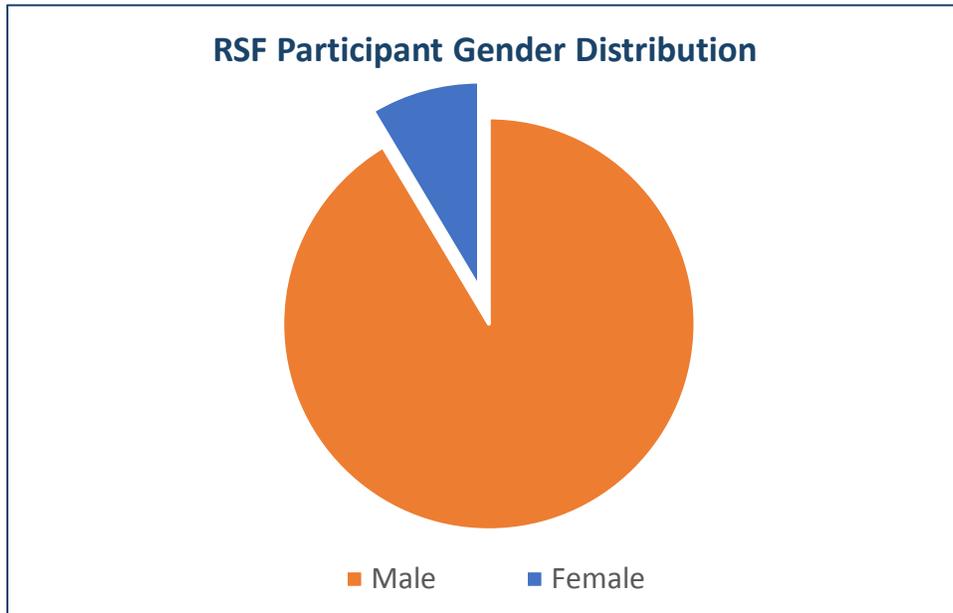
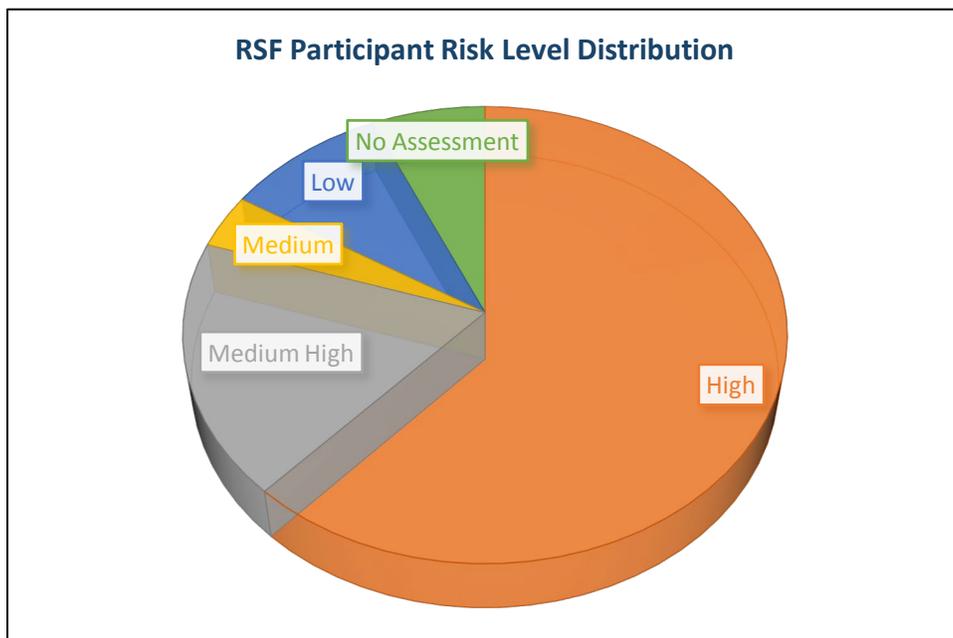


Chart 4: Reentry SF Participant Risk Level Distribution



QUANTITATIVE DATA REVIEW

PROGRAM PARTICIPATION AND EMPLOYMENT OUTCOMES

San Francisco Adult Probation Department (SFAPD) has prioritized using evidence based practices in their operations. A primary component of this prioritization is the ongoing measurement and evaluation of its programs. SFADP has integrated the National Institute of Correction's "Principles of Effective Interventions" with the California Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation's "Program Assessment Process" and is using the validated COMPAS (Correctional Offender Management Profiling Alternative Sanctions) as its assessment of risks/needs, and community functioning.

This approach prioritizes the 8 criminogenic factors associated with recidivism. RSF focuses on employment, behavioral health, family, education, as well as on pro-social attitudes and pro-social peer networks.

As of April 30, 2013, SFAPD had supervised a total of 707 clients through either PRCS (530) or 1170 (177). Of these 707 clients, 218 individuals were referred by SF Adult Probation to the RSF program and 133 of these individuals attended the initial Goodwill Orientation (61%) after they were released from jail or prison. Of these 133 individuals, 104 enrolled in RSF by completing the PESCO assessment, which is the agreed upon program entry point for RSF.

Of these 104 participants, 61 individuals (59%) started Goodwill's JRT training activities (Phase 2) with 57 completing this phase of the program (one person dropped out when he acquired a job). Thirty RSF participants gained employment. All of the participants (100%) who had been in job placements from 3-6 months at the time of this evaluation, had retained employment.

Those clients that were referred to RSF and engaged in its activities were productively engaged in pro-social activities for much of their time. They were also surrounded by others that were interested and engaged with these pro-social activities. These are two very important components of an evidenced based program whose focus is the reduction of criminal activity, re-arrest and re-incarceration.

RSF clients also had access to mental health and substance use treatment services that were tailored to the criminal justice population. These programs and services engaged clients in productive life activities in a pro-social environment.

"Once you have a criminal record, you feel like you don't fit into society. This program didn't look at me as an addict or a criminal."

- RSF Participant

Table 3: Program Participation and Employment Outcomes

Program Participation	N
Phase 1: Program Eligibility Assessment and Referral	
Reentry SF Unduplicated Referrals from Adult Probation Department	218
Phase 2: Employability Assessment and Training/Barrier Removal	
Attended 1-2 Days of Goodwill Orientation	133
Completed GW Orientation and <u>Enrolled in Reentry SF</u> (completed PESCO assessment)	104
Completed Training and Employment Barrier Removal	57
Phase 3: Career Advising and Job Placement	
Attended at least 3 Mentoring Groups	39
Successfully Completed Reentry SF (<i>completed all RSF goals or terminated probation</i>)	21
Still active in program	30
Did Not Complete Reentry SF (<i>disengaged from program, moved out of county, rearrested, or transferred to residential substance abuse treatment program</i>)	53
Program Outcomes	
Successfully gained employment	30
Retained Employment 3-6 months Post Job Placement	30

RE-ARREST OUTCOMES

It’s important to highlight, that there are many ways to effectively review the re-arrest outcomes of RSF. The level of committed resources dictated how in-depth and efficacious this outcome was determined for this evaluation. By comparing three (3) different groups, we can get a quantifiable picture of RSF re-arrest outcomes. The three groups are 1) individuals that are identified as AB109 clients that were not referred to RSF (though we are unaware of other programs these clients may have been referred to or engaged in); 2) individuals that are AB109 clients that were referred to RSF but did not attend or engage in the program; and 3) AB109 clients that did engage and participate in RSF.

Preliminary outcomes indicate that clients who are engaged in RSF, have a slightly lower re-arrest rate¹ than a comparable group of AB109 SFAPD clients. By breaking down RSF clients that engaged in the program (n=59) to both RSF clients that did not engage in the program (n=45) and AB109 non-RSF clients (n=603), it can be documented that those clients that engaged in the programs had a 10% lower re-arrest rate than non RSF AB109 clients. Even those RSF clients that did not engage, but had limited interactions with RSF, had a 5% lower re-arrest rate than non RSF AB109 clients.*

The following table presents the Re-arrest Data Comparison between RSF and Non-RSF AB109 Clients:

Table 4: Re-Arrest Rates for RSF vs. Non-RSF Probation Clients

Re-Arrest Rates				
Participant Type	Total		Re-arrested	%
AB109 Clients:	707			
RSF Clients:	104		25	24
Non RSF Clients:	603		193	32
RSF Clients:	104		25	24
Engaged:	59		13	22
Non Engaged:	45		12	27

*It is important to note that while these are meaningful measures and outcomes, this evaluation is not based on a research study. Thus, those participants who were referred to RSF and those participants who engaged in RSF services may not be identical to those individuals who were not referred or engaged in the program.

¹ An arrest for a new law violation that resulted in a new charge or formal violation (3455a) or MTR (motion to revoke); these do not include flash incarcerations.

QUALITATIVE DATA OVERVIEW

In addition to data extracted from various databases, the evaluators collected qualitative data through focus groups, surveys and individual interviews from RSF collaborator stakeholders and current and previous RSF program participants. The following tables provide an overview of the characteristics for participants in the collaborator focus group, participant focus group or individual participant interviews.

Table 5: Collaborator Stakeholders Focus Group Participants

Stakeholder Collaborators Focus Group (N=15)*	
Collaborator Agency	N
Goodwill Industries	9
HealthRIGHT 360°	2
APD Reentry Department Staff	1
APD Deputy Probation Officers	3

* Representatives from Senior Ex-Offender Mentoring Program and San Francisco Department of Public Health were not present at the RSF Stakeholder Focus Group

Table 6: Characteristics of Program Clients Participating in Focus Group or Interview

RSF Participants in Focus Group or Interview (N= 8)					
Gender	N	%	Age	N	%
Male	7	88%	18 - 24 years old	1	12%
Female	1	12%	25 - 39 years old	1	12%
			40 - 54 years old	6	75%
Race/Ethnicity	N	%	55 - 69 years old	0	0%
African American	4	50%	70+	0	0%
Asian	0	0%			
Latino/a	2	25%	Average age	44	
Other: African	1	12%			
Unknown	0	0%			
White	1	12%			

QUALITATIVE DATA REVIEW

The following section presents the results of the qualitative data as it has been reviewed and coded into key themes and findings.

WHAT WORKS: PROGRAM DESIGN

Employment Barrier Removal - Many of the providers felt that employment barrier removal was an essential component of the program. They placed a high value on helping participants to obtain identification and other “right to work documents.” A few of the providers noted that while helping participants to secure these documents is key to employment success, it is a labor intensive and time consuming process for both staff and participants.

“When you go to the job fairs, you know that the employers already know about our histories. This relieves the stress of ‘having to talk about it.’ Then you can put your best you out there.

-RSF Participant

Comprehensive Employment Services - Both the providers and the program participants felt there were many strengths to the RSF program design. Program participants felt the strongest components of the program are the variety of employment readiness services including career counseling and advising, job fairs with prescreened employers, connections to real employers, and the job club. They also value employment services including helping to secure identifications and other work documents, provision of clothing, and interview coaching on how to speak, dress, and present yourself, even with a criminal background. Providers also felt the program benefited from embedding employment services into other service components including counseling, mental health treatment and substance abuse treatment.

Mentoring and Other Support - Individuals who participated in the mentoring groups, also found them to be valuable. As a provider described the groups, “The mentoring program provides an essential outlet for the participants to express themselves and give and receive support.” Other providers mentioned that the entire program was designed to provide a strong support network for the participants.

“We get down and dirty in there. You get it out, get it out! Release that! How you feelin’ now? It don’t hurt to cry.”

-RSF Participant

Provider Collaboration - Many of the providers mentioned a key to the success of the program is collaboration and communication across the collaboration of providers. Providers specifically mentioned that RSF had helped to develop a stronger connection between community services providers and the Adult Probation Department.

Computer Training and Digital Literacy - Both participants and providers expressed strong support for the computer training course. Participants found the course to be a key component of the program and one that greatly increased their skill set. Participants acknowledged that the computer course “opened employment doors for them,” increased their knowledge of available jobs and enabled them to develop skills that can help them move from labor jobs to management positions. Many of the participants expressed they had few to no computer skills prior to the course including how to access job postings online and how to manage an email account. **Of significant note, more than 50% of the focus group participants had never had an email account before taking the course.**

“I used to be scared of the computer. The computer course saved my life. It gave me an email address for the very first time.”

“It’s very tangible – teaches you how to go online, how to write a resume, how to apply for a job online. This was all very hard for me before and put a lot of work out of reach for me.”

-RSF Participants

WHAT WORKS: INDIVIDUAL READINESS

Both participants and providers discussed that the program’s success can depend on the individual readiness of the participant to put in the work necessary to succeed. They clearly expressed that RSF is a program for people who are ready and have a “willingness to do whatever it takes” attitude. Providers discussed the participants’ determination to want more, to have a desire to work and the resilience of the participants’ untapped resolve, strength and skills. A few of the providers noted that some participants are not ready to complete the program the first time around and that it can take a 2nd or 3rd referral to the program before they are successful.

“Out of the 10 guys I came into the [RSF] program with, I am the only one who survived the whole process- the others weren’t individually ready – they had other things going on....I did what I had to do. I did all the footwork!”

- RSF Participant

WHAT WORKS: THE STAFF

The participants had almost unanimous positive feedback about all of the staff from the community service providers. They saw the staff as a group of sincere, dedicated and supportive individuals. They clearly stated that they would not have had the success with the program if it had not been for the high quality of the staff at the community service agencies. They noted that the staff were honest and strict and would push participants when they felt participants were not doing their best. One participant even noted that if a Deputy Probation Officer had pushed him as hard as the Goodwill staff had, he may “have run.” But he felt comfortable with the Goodwill staff because he knew they cared. Only one participant had criticism for Goodwill staff, though this was not a RSF staff member and instead was a supervisor at one of the Goodwill work sites.

“They [Goodwill staff] really have good will. They treat you with good will. They surprised me every day. They always exceeded my expectations. They always get things done.”

“Nothing but good from every person I’ve come into contact with. From reception to management to the counselors.”

- RSF Participants

WHAT WORKS: “THE NEW PROBATION” AND AB109

Participants had very good things to say about the changes in the Adult Probation Department, many of which they attributed to how APD is working with AB 109. Many of the participants mentioned the changes in the shortened probation timeline. They specifically noted that one year is an attainable goal and thus they were willing to “give it a try” to do what they needed to do to “get off paperwork.” They acknowledged that being involved in programs gives you a chance to get off probation earlier. Participants also discussed the change in culture of the Deputy Probation Officers and the increase in community resources available to individuals on probation. Multiple participants noted that they saw their DPOs as a source of support which was not necessarily the case with past parole or probation officers. In the past, they felt probation and parole officers were “just waiting for people to mess up so that they could send

“This new probation is different. In the past, probation just stayed away unless you caught a new case. And they didn’t have any resources. Realignment is the best thing that happened. I wanted to change and probation had the resources to help me change.”

- RSF Participant

people back to prison or jail.” Participants stated that the DPOs currently working with the RSF program had a different approach, one that is much more hands-on and based on fairness, support and the belief that people can do better. In addition, it was noted that APD has funds for many community resources for individuals.

RSF Community Providers noted however, that while it is a benefit to get off probation as quickly as possible, once an individual is “off paperwork,” they are no longer eligible for services.

“I’ve been on parole and probation in the past. Probation has improved 1000%. They don’t test you, they don’t harp on you...they actually spend time with you, talking with you... you just have to show up when you have to and do the work.”

“Under realignment, you want to be on probation and not parole ‘cause probation has all of the resources and support.”

- RSF Participants

WHAT DOES NOT WORK

Program Too Rigid and Structured - A few participants noted that the program is very rigid and structured and may not work for “non-traditional learners.” This note was especially applied to the job readiness training (JRT) course. Some participants may have learning differences that make the more traditional JRT course a challenge for them.

“Really, the classroom thing [JRT] didn’t work for me...it was too much like school, and I was never that good in school.”

- RSF Participant

More Reentry Resources are Necessary in San Francisco - Both participants and providers mentioned that additional reentry resources in San Francisco are necessary in order to truly be successful after reentry. Participants specifically mentioned the need for childcare support for working parents and access to more affordable housing. The providers also mentioned the need for more housing resources plus the need for more reentry friendly employers and additional mental health services.

Program Length - Many of the providers spoke about the length of the program. Overall, providers felt the program length was too short. Additionally, when participants end probation, they are no longer eligible for the program. Individuals are getting off probation earlier and earlier. While shorter probation terms can be a good thing, it also shortens the time period that people are able to access services.

Lack of Right to Work Documents is Time Consuming - Many providers noted that many of the program participants did not possess the necessary documents for work. Given that these documents are necessary for participants to gain employment, providers needed to spend the staff time and resources necessary to obtain these documents. While it was necessary, this task takes a significant amount of time and can be a staff burden if it is not taken into account in the program planning.

“Participants are only allowed to be in the program while on probation. If their probation ends while they are in Phase 1, the services end per the program requirements.”

Pre and Post Program Design - Many providers discussed the lack of a pre-release program due to the late startup of the reentry pod. In addition, it was noted that the program would benefit from better “aftercare” or a “coping” program component once participants have finished Phase 3.

“It takes a long time to obtain right to work documents and by the time they may obtain them, the client may be off probation.”

- RSF Providers

Better Communication between Providers and DPOs - While many of the providers note that communication had increased with the SF Probation Department due to this collaborative program, a few of the providers note that communication could still be improved. They specifically noted that it would be helpful to have DPOs present more often at weekly team meetings and more phone communication when positive things were happening and not just when there were problems.

LESSONS LEARNED AND RECOMMENDATIONS

LESSONS LEARNED

1. RSF provides a comprehensive job readiness, training and placement program through its wide range of services available to program participants.
2. The Barrier Removal components of RSF work at both the client and systems level and play a large role in client success.
3. Through its computer courses, RSF is helping individuals to best prepare themselves for the current digital era of employment readiness.
4. RSF is most successful with clients who are individually motivated, ready to make changes and are able to learn in a more structured and traditional classroom setting.
5. Engagement with RSF is associated with lower re-arrest rates.
6. SFAPD, through RSF and realignment, has a multitude of new resources available to its clients.
7. The primary community provider (Goodwill Industries) is very well received by clients.
8. The DPOs involved with RSF are perceived by both services providers and clients as having a supportive attitude with their clients that differs drastically from clients' previous experience with both probation and parole.
9. Competing programing can be an engagement issue. An example of this competition is that the required program, "Thinking for Change" delays RSF enrollment by 12 weeks, which in turn, affects RSF engagement and potentially affects RSF clients' ability to complete the program before their term of probation ends.
10. Communication can be improved between all the providers, including involving "case conferencing."

RECOMMENDATIONS

1. Consider expanding eligibility criteria to all individuals on probation beyond AB 109 eligible participants.
2. Having the client/provider relationship start during a pre-release phase will strengthen this connection and can improve program outcomes.
3. Consider changing the referral process to allow for participants who drop out of the program to reengage without having to acquire a new formal referral from their DPO.
4. Clearly document the skills set of the current service providers so that future staffing patterns can mimic the success of current staff who are able to effectively motivate and engage clients in a rigorous program.
5. Communication and data sharing (in a timely manner) between all the providers, contractors and collaborators (including DPH) will strengthen the ability to analyze, report and modify RSF to meet its goals.
6. Further evaluation should be considered to further assess the core elements of RSF success.
7. Successful elements of Reentry SF should be sustained through alternate funding sources. As evidenced by this evaluation, RSF achieved a number of successes and should be continued on a permanently funded basis.
8. APD should link resources developed and lessons learned from Reentry SF to any future APD supported job placement programs.

ABOUT THE EVALUATORS: THE BRIDGING GROUP

Founded in 2008, The Bridging Group (TBG) is a consulting firm focusing on the effect of incarceration on the public's health, families and community re-entry. The company's expertise includes: 1) Capacity Building Assistance & Organizational Development; 2) Evaluation & Research; 3) Fund & Program Development; 4) Policy Development; and 5) Training, Education & Dissemination. Together, the principal consultants have over 45 years of experience working on the development, implementation and evaluation of programs serving individuals and families affected by the criminal justice system. In addition to the principal consultants, The Bridging Group works with a team of affiliated consultants who represent some of the country's leading experts in criminal justice-based program development, training, evaluation and dissemination. TBG staff has extensive experience working with government agencies at the local, state and federal levels and has worked in over 6 countries. TBG also has a strong community/ academic partnership with the University of California, San Francisco.



For more information about The Bridging Group, please visit www.thebridginggroup.com or contact them at info@thebridginggroup.com.

APPENDICES

Appendix A: Reentry SF Program Brochure

Appendix B: Collaborative Stakeholder Focus Group Guide

Appendix C: Collaborative Stakeholder Survey

Appendix D: Program Participant Focus Group Guide

Appendix E: Program Participant Interview Guide