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To: [SAC](#); [Hannah Stone](#); [Todd Donovan](#)
Subject: SAC Meeting 1/20/2022 Feedback
Date: Thursday, January 20, 2022 4:17:33 PM

SAC Members et al.,

Thank you for moving this forward. I watched the meeting today -- some feedback -- please share with the group members.

1. I raised my hand to ask a question, but was not acknowledged. Very last minute of the meeting, Holly just said send an email... Fine -- but being able to ask a question in the context of the discussion would be more valuable -- I would prefer that -- and would certainly adhere to the group agreements laid-out at the beginning of the meeting.

2. Stakeholders I don't see included in this group, but really need to be:

-- folx with experience being incarcerated

-- families of folx who are / have ever been incarcerated -- massive impact and downstream consequences here

-- employers / someone who can speak to how background checks are used with the major Whatcom County employers to screen formerly incarcerated folx; someone who can speak to how employers are / are not; and should/should not be connected to re-entry, inclusion, prevention, etc. items within scope of SAC discussions; employers curious about risks / opportunities / others' experience / etc. re: hiring formerly incarcerated folx or learning and planning for the impact an incarcerated family member can have on their employees, etc.

3. Ritchie mentioned some stats on pre-trial incarceration. This is something we can do something about right now, without spending any money at all. Pre-trial incarceration for non-violent individuals who cannot afford bail is deeply wrong -- morally, financially, unjustly.... Incarceration hurts people -- it HURTS people -- the person locked-up, their family, their employer, their clients, et al. -- and in non-violent cases, this isn't something we have to do -- there's no point to it / no good served by it. We are choosing to hurt people not convicted of a crime -- for what net community good or purpose? We need to reduce this metric to zero -- and engage in the creativity, research, partnerships, explorations, etc. to find that pathway. Not that it should take all of that work -- this is not a hard question. This impacts low-income people disproportionately -- any justification a "lock-em-up" thinker wants to come-up with for these questions above has to be answered in the form of: "It's important to do this to poor people and not important to do it to wealthier people because they are different in the following ways: morally superior/inferior to one another; more/less entitled to humane treatment and respect than one another; etc. -- hopefully that strikes you as absurd -- what is it about having or not having money that defines the character of a person, or their value to the community?"

-- 3a: What metrics do we have that could help us understand these outcomes further? E.g., do we know how many pre-trial lock-up cases were ultimately dismissed / reduced / otherwise did not result in sentencing that required incarceration?; do we know how many pre-trial lock-up subjects lost their jobs or housing, etc.? These kinds of metrics seem important to know / inform future thinking and decision-making.

4. Elfo mentioned the reduction in plea deals as a cause for longer-term lock-ups (what was it -- 7 days up to 13 or something close to that?). What he didn't mention is whether or how the reduction in plea deals resulted in dismissals, jury trials, non-carceral sentences, and so on. We know that plea deals are fraught -- people are asked to gamble with their lives instead of seek justice or accountability with a judge / jury of peers. I understand the financial incentive to do this

-- it's a root problem for justice to be sure. How can we get metrics on these other questions, so we can form a better picture of net impact of declining rates of plea deals?

4. Elfo (& Ritchie both?) talked about incarceration as a pathway to services. I think Ritchie mentioned incarceration's coercive value (I understood this as: e.g., if I can't threaten you with incarceration, I have no other way to "encourage" you to get treatment for your addiction, etc.). In Elfo's comment, I didn't get a clear sense of what he meant -- were you saying that incarceration was an eligibility factor for treatment? Really interested to get that clarification; and then in both cases, explore, research, etc. pathways to treatment that do not necessitate incarceration or threat-of / coercion. The calculus for a subject of incarceration / coercion -- I think it's too easy to reduce them to a bad person, or being too willful, etc. -- may be more complex. I'd be very curious to seek those cases where a person chooses against treatment not because there's nobody to threaten them with jail, but because if they do seek treatment, _____, _____, _____, ... will result (e.g., they can't afford it; can't get time off work for it; can't qualify for it; what have you -- all things that incarceration would "solve", so to speak -- so we think it's working -- but in these cases it's curative value certainly seems dubious). Important on this point to mention -- I'm not in the one-size-fits-all-solution camp -- I'm talking only about the subset this applies to -- people who would seek treatment without the threat of incarceration if only they had such a pathway.

5. It's important to keep undocumented folk in context here. We can talk about white nationalism / white supremacist thinking, racist tropes used to mis-inform and generate fear, historical white-washing etc. -- important conversations there that I'm glad to have with anyone -- and maybe we should do that -- but as far as SAC is concerned -- it should be a priority for this committee to make it clear that funding / policing is not to be used for profiling, arresting, holding, harassing, etc. undocumented folk.

6. I'd be very interested to see current (<= last 5 years) metrics on folk incarcerated due to being homeless, or factors adjacent to that / that can be predicted, prevented, etc. via understanding and provision of proper sheltering, food, etc. How many, comparative costs (jail versus housing / alternatives), crime rates, recidivism rates, etc.

7. I appreciated Lilliquist & Buchanon's emphasis on the intention and importance of this not being or becoming the 'fund a new jail' committee. So important to stay curious and work hard finding non-punitive solutions to our community safety & security needs -- so incredibly important.

Thank you all again -- what a difference, having a professional facilitator -- I really appreciated that. Gockley -- you're on my radar now -- what a great presentation & perspective you brought! I'd really like to get a copy of the recording of this meeting -- I imagine you'll post it -- but if you could let me know.

Take care,
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