



## Year 4 Evaluation: Potential Topics

This document presents a list of potential Year 4 evaluation components. The description of each component is broad; we plan to use this list as a starting point and will refine evaluation scope, activities, and budget through further conversation. The budgets reflected in this document are fully-loaded, which include funding for client communication, travel, and project management. The following areas of evaluation are based on a combination of findings, areas for future inquiry, and recommendations from prior reports; previous scopes of work/evaluation plans; and work RDA has performed in other jurisdictions.

### System-Level

#### 1. Reentry Assessment

RDA's 2017 *Sonoma County AB 109 Process Evaluation* found that Sonoma County has incorporated evidence-based and best practices throughout the justice process, but also that improved coordination was needed across agencies to facilitate pre-release transition planning and continuity of services. Recognizing there have been progress and changes over time, this assessment will revisit and provide more detail in understanding the reentry process and evaluating the degree to which Sonoma County's reentry system aligns with best practices. Using RDA's 2020 *Reentry Best Practices Review* as a guide, this assessment will focus on four key areas in-custody and out of custody: system coordination, skilled/trained professionals, evidence-based decision-making, and treatment and supportive services. The evaluation would provide information to assist Sonoma County in building an evidence-based reentry system that supports individuals reentering the community from jail.

Fully-loaded budget: \$76,642

#### 2. Racial/Ethnic Disparities Assessment

This analysis will determine the extent to which racial/ethnic disparities exist within Sonoma County's criminal justice system, identifying possible disparities across different decision making points and offenses. The assessment will require data from justice partners at each decision making point. At each juncture, the analysis will compare race/ethnicity rates to the general Sonoma County population and to the last decision point (known as the relative rate index). This evaluation would provide an understanding of any racial/ethnic disparities within Sonoma County's criminal justice system and provide recommendations for mitigating these disparities.

Fully-loaded budget: \$59,907



### **3. Research and Planning to Address Program Barriers**

Through the program-level evaluations, RDA has identified a number of cross-cutting barriers or challenges that impede program implementation and effectiveness. These include:

- Limited transportation for AB 109 clients to access treatment, programming, employment, and other resources
- A high “no show” rate, resulting in a only 40-50% of individuals referred to programming actually receiving these services
- Disparities in the proportion of Hispanic/Latino AB 109 clients receiving services, relative to their proportion of the overall AB 109 population
- The gender responsiveness of programming to meet female probation clients’ needs
- Limited communication between probation officers and program staff

To identify strategies to address these barriers, RDA will conduct a literature review of best and promising practices. To supplement the literature review, RDA will conduct key informant interviews with Sonoma County stakeholders and select stakeholders from other California counties to discuss how probation departments and community-based organizations have dealt with these challenges. After identifying promising strategies, RDA would engage Sonoma County stakeholders to develop an implementation plan to address these barriers.

Fully-loaded budget: \$37,361

## **Agency-Level**

### **4. Probation Process Evaluation**

This evaluation will focus on the alignment of Probation services with best practices and use of evidence-based practices for community supervision. The evaluation will include the degree to which the Department has adopted and implemented the Risk-Need-Responsivity model and explore other areas such as the use of Effective Practices in Community Supervision (EPICS), caseloads, case management, reentry support, referrals to programs and services, compliance checks, use of flash incarceration, graduated sanctions and incentives, training, communication and collaboration with partners, and variations across caseload types. RDA will analyze measures of fidelity in the application of evidence-based practices, caseload, meetings with supervised individuals, and service referrals. This evaluation would strengthen the Probation Department’s processes and programs by increasing their alignment with evidence-based practices.

Fully-loaded budget: \$71,901 (*this evaluation will be funded by the Probation Department*)



## Program-Level

### 5. Jail Programs Process and Outcome Evaluations

RDA has already conducted program-level evaluations of four AB 109-funded programs: Turning Point, Job Link, transitional housing services, and the outpatient substance use program. RDA can conduct additional **program-level process and outcome evaluations** and/or **cluster evaluations by location/stage of reentry**. Topics for exploration will include implementation process and alignment with best practices, utilization of services and service capacity, coordination between providers and justice agencies, and data capacity and technical assistance.

Potential program-level evaluations include only Starting Point or Starting Point plus the collection of AB 109-funded jail programs (e.g., workforce preparation classes, alternatives to violence workshop, education over obstacles, and library and literacy programs).

Fully-loaded budget

- Starting Point only: \$50,589
- Starting Point + other jail programs: \$70,556