

**MULTNOMAH COUNTY OREGON**  
**Department of Community Justice**  
**Citizen Budget Advisory Committee**  
**501 SE Hawthorne Boulevard, Suite 250**  
**Portland, Oregon 97214**

**FISCAL YEAR 2007/2008 REPORT**

**INTRODUCTION**

This CBAC experienced several administrative problems in being able to discuss and review offers this year due to a variety of circumstances, some internal to DCJ and/ or the county process and others external to these entities. However, Steve Liday and Dana Schnell have worked hard to resolve or at least ameliorate them. The discussion at the meeting of 3/27/07 focused on possible new strategies, some of which were offered by the CBAC members, several suggested by Mr. Liday and Ms. Schnell themselves. These included scheduling a CBAC DCJ orientation in the Fall, focusing more on themes and strategies rather than the multitude of program offers per se, inviting other community members at DCJ request to fill out CBAC membership, connecting the program presentations offered to the CBAC by DCJ program staff more concretely to broad DCJ strategic planning, and keeping to a monthly schedule of meetings starting September 2007. This report reflects a somewhat cursory examination of each of the offers and a more thorough review of the excellently detailed Budget Transmittal letter of the DCJ to Chairman Wheeler dated 2/9/07.

**RECOMMENDATIONS/CONCERNS:**

The CBAC generally supports the Department of Community Justice's (DCJ) programs as written and sees no reason why the County Commissioners would not accept them except for their statutory responsibility to ensure a variety of services and supports under the purview of the Commissioners get offered to the citizens of Multnomah County. The CBAC recognizes that the Commissioners must seek to balance many legitimate competing interests and sometimes, due to budgetary constraints, may not fund offers which otherwise reflect a real service gap but meet a lower priority need. We in the CBAC commend the department for providing reasonably detailed and data supported program offers that should make the Commissioners' decisions more informed vis a vis DCJ. As noted above, the following brief comments and recommendations are essentially based on the DCJ Budget Transmittal Letter (2/9/07) and end with some general comments about the structure of and information contained within the DCJ program offers submitted for review by the CBAC.

There continues to be a strong need for drug and alcohol treatment for non incarcerated and low risk offenders that is not adequately addressed by the Department of Community Justice or County Health Services or local/ state mental health and substance abuse resources. Prevention programs and treatment for addictions is almost always less expensive than confining a person but often politically more difficult to justify than immediate attention to more visible problems resulting from inadequate prevention and treatment. The CBAC commends the DCJ for attempting to focus on these needed areas as well as on associated topics that dovetail with substance abuse and criminal justice involvement such as family supports and domestic violence initiatives.

The CBAC would like to continue to encourage the County Commissioners to seek greater alliance and alignment between those agencies concerned with issues that impinge on

DCJs mandate such as other safety, mental health and substance abuse treatment, youth services, and education service providers. DCJ seems to do a reasonable good job of linking with other services and programs both in terms of county, city, state agencies and other private community resources such as Cascadia Behavioral Health and Central City Concern. However, it is safe to say that more can and should be done in these areas and we would support continued emphasis from the County Commissioners on such service and community intervention integration.

The new program offers included in the Budget Transmittal Letter appear well thought through and overall focused on areas with long term benefits, keeping people as much as possible in the community and not incarcerated, and reflecting county wide priorities and past experience. While recognizing the thinking that goes into specific programming targeted to clients from ethnic/racial/linguistically diverse backgrounds, the CBAC would like to ensure that such services attend to unique needs attributable to these factors (e.g., bi-lingual or native language speaking staff) and not stereotypical racial profiles. Also the CBAC recognizes that due to its unique nature, Portland and Multnomah County may not receive an equitable distribution of state corrections money under the current formula. While we would support ensuring that DCJ and the county do receive adequate funding, we also recognize that there are legitimate competing statewide and social interests in a statewide approach in a variety of areas (e.g., school funding) that would support the notion of a statewide social policy compact that might transcend individual city or agency fairness.

The Forest Project which has been eliminated and not offered this year was one that the DCJ staff felt attached to and had hoped to continue. They will continue to explore alternatives for resurrecting it in some form but in terms of overall priorities and budgetary needs, the CBAC supports the decision to eliminate it from the budget process.

Finally the CBAC strongly endorses the overall concerns and needs stated in the Emerging Issues section of the Budget Transmittal letter. Alternatives to incarceration and expanded mental health and drug abuse treatment capacity are in some respects the *raisons d'être* of a DCJ rather than a purely punitive criminal justice approach. Furthermore, within the broad budgetary compromises that all agencies within the county must make, these are clearly high priority for restoration and further resource development through county, state, federal, or foundation funding options. The DCJs commitment to evidence based and data driven services is a noble one and we would hope they continue to put actions behind those words in terms of its ongoing management, supervision, program evaluation, and quality improvement activities.

## **PROCESS/ PROGRAM OFFER STRUCTURE**

The CBAC would also like to offer some general comments about the form and structure of the DCJ offers which have been discussed with DCJ staff. Based on reviews of other offers and involvement of some of us on the Central CBAC it appears that the DCJ program offers are of comparatively high quality and more detailed than many of the other ones seen. So, DCJ staff should be commended for that. However, there are several areas where they could be improved and be more useful documents. While DCJ offers usually include quantitative measures of success, they do not always include benchmarking data (i.e., how do these measures compare to best or evidence based practice?). We believe the outcome descriptions should consistently contain benchmarking information or reasons why none is available. Also, in reviewing measures for past and future years, it is not clearly explained why sometimes outcome measures for the proposed offer show a decline from the outcomes obtained in current or previous years. There may be a good reason but the rationale to this counter intuitive decision should be stated. Similarly when results obtained vary significantly from projections (e.g., +/- 10%) it would be useful if the offers explained this discrepancy. Occasionally, the buzzwords and mantras of “evidence based practice” or “research demonstrates” slip into the offers without attendant

justification (i.e., what research? What and whose evidence?). A final perhaps minor point here also since the CBAC members generally do not possess a great deal of technical knowledge base about DCJ work. However, when references in offers are cited in academic format (e.g., [Smith, 1998] or [Andrews and Balzell, 2001]) we would recommend including the actual reference rather than just the in text citation which does not give any context for those who might be interested in the topic.

We hope you find these comments useful. Thank you for the opportunity to participate in the CBAC process. Feel free to contact any one of use for further information or comment.

Respectfully submitted by

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Joe Marrone". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Joe" and last name "Marrone" clearly distinguishable.

Joe Marrone  
for DCJ CBAC  
3/28/07