



EAST PALO ALTO POLICE DEPARTMENT

Parole Reentry Program

COPS Conference

August 1, 2011



Background

- On January 7, 2006, East Palo Alto police officer Richard May was shot and killed in the line of duty by a parolee who had been released just a few months out of prison.
- This tragedy underscored the need for the community to address the staggering rate at which people released from prison were committing new offenses and returning back to prison – also known as the recidivism rate.



Background

- The city, police department and the family of Officer May worked with California State Assemblymember Ira Ruskin to enact California Assembly Bill (AB) 2436.
- AB 2436 required the California Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation (CDCR) to establish a pilot parole reentry program in East Palo Alto that blended enforcement and programming services.



Assembly Bill (AB) 2436

- The Police Department entered into a 3.5 year contract with CDCR to implement the East Palo Alto Community-Based Coalition (CBC).
- CDCR funded the contract at \$3.5 million.
- EPA PD the first police department in the state to enter into contract with CDCR and operate a reentry program.
- The program opened its door in early 2008 and provided the following services to an estimated 120 East Palo Alto parolees on an annual basis.



Program Services

1. Created a Day Reporting Center that provides a single reporting location for parolees and provides a host of reentry services, such as:
 - Individualized treatment plans
 - Residential/transitional housing
 - Substance abuse education and treatment
 - Anger management
 - Domestic violence programs
 - Cognitive and life skills development
 - Parenting and family reintegration
 - Community service
 - Educational services (GED preparation)
 - Budgeting and money management
 - Job readiness and job search
 - Discharge planning and aftercare



Program Services

2. Provided transitional sober living accommodations for the target population.
3. Conducted a prerelease needs assessment of inmates scheduled for parole.
2. Developed reentry plans identifying services needed by persons returning to the community.
3. Forged partnership between the police and CDCR parole agents to enhance the level of supervision and accountability of parolees residing in East Palo Alto.
4. Created partnerships with local community organizations and service providers to provide support services to parolees such as transitional housing, job training, or placement, or substance abuse treatment.



Cal Trans Program

- ❑ The California Department of Transportation (Cal Trans) provided a unique job training and placement program.
- ❑ This program provided 20 jobs (for 90 days with the ability to extend to 120 days) to work on the highways conducting litter abatement on the freeways.
- ❑ Participants received training from Cal Trans and were paid \$10 an hour while working full time during this program.
- ❑ Successful participants in this program were also eligible to apply for full-time employment with Cal Trans.



Police Department

- Responsible for overall program

- Worked (subcontracted) with community and faith-based organizations:
 - Free-at-Last
 - Job Train
 - Ministerial Alliance

- Designated a police officer to serve as “Parole Reentry Officer”
 - Worked with Day Reporting Center
 - Served as part of the “transition team”
 - Worked with Cal Trans crews
 - Coordinated with state parole and law enforcement
 - Primary link between program and police department



Results

- Out of the 205 parolees that participated in the program:
 - Thirty (30) or 14% returned to prison. This return-to-custody rate is well below the state average of approximately 70%.
 - During this period the city's murder rate dropped over 30% and its crime rate over 13%. Although there is not a direct nexus between this decrease and the program, we believe the reduction in recidivism played a key role in our success.



Benefits

- ❑ Reduce recidivism rate
- ❑ Reduce crime (and victimization) rates
- ❑ Reduce costs
- ❑ Increase public trust and confidence
- ❑ Improve police-community relations
- ❑ Reduce disparate incarceration rates
- ❑ Enhance police legitimacy
- ❑ Change perceptions about the police (only want to take people to jail)
- ❑ Change the perceptions of the police (people are deserving of redemption)

Testimonials



“The East Palo Alto Parole Reentry Program has been a blessing to me. It has helped in my ability to stay free and become a productive working member. The things I have accomplished are truly a testament for why a parole reentry program should be provided to all people leaving prison.”

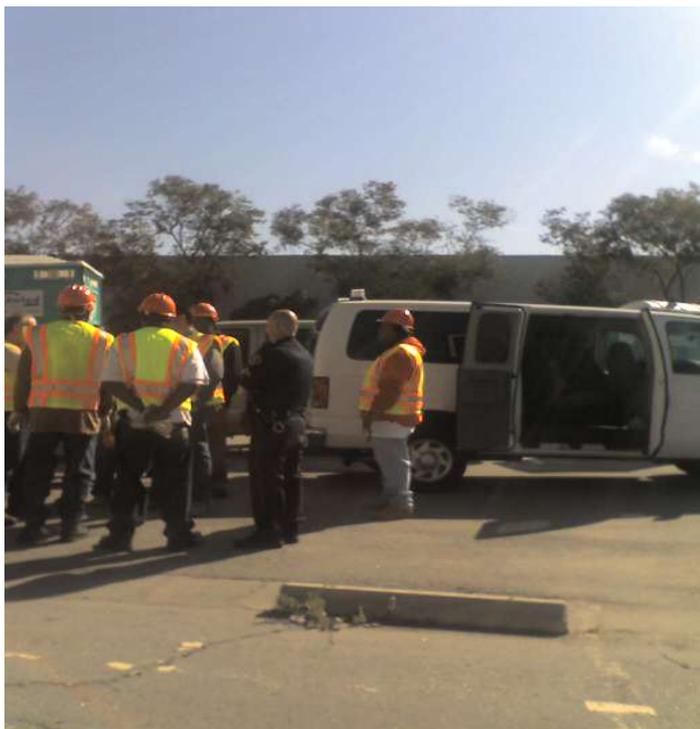
Corey B.



For many of us, changing our thinking process is not as easy as we would like it to be. The program has helped me to get re-certified in the Hazardous Waste Management field. Given the fact that the California Prison System is overcrowding and must reduce its prison population, I think it would be great if those parolees could get the same chance and help as I did.

Jose C.

Cal Trans Program



IN MEMORIAM

“DAVID LEWIS”



David Lewis is the co-founder of “Free-at-Last” and one of the main architects of the East Palo Alto parole reentry program.