



Reinvesting in Justice: What Comes Next?

Dallas City Hall
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LEARNING OBJECTIVES

November 12, 2015

Working with Unlikely Allies: A Case Study (Plenary A)

In Texas and across the country, unlikely alliances have formed between stakeholders to re-examine penalties for drug crimes, consider when diversionary programs might be preferable to traditional case processing, and reform the prison system. This session will explore how a multi-party coalition of organizations has teamed up to advocate for policy changes in the Texas criminal justice system, including decriminalizing truancy for juveniles, advocating for sentencing alternatives, and encouraging rehabilitation programs in jails.

Learning Objectives

- Understand a case study of bipartisan criminal justice reform in Texas
- Gain insight into how to build relationships with ideological opponents
- Contextualize Texas reform in the wider convergence of political parties on criminal justice issues

Engaging the Community in the Work of Justice (Plenary B)

Impactful court and other justice programs can benefit from strong buy-in from the community. Justice innovations that reflect a deep partnership with the local community can better ensure that needs are being met and public perceptions and trust in the justice system are improved. In this session, justice system actors and community leaders will share lessons learned from collaboration, including challenges faced along the way.

Learning Objectives



- Understand why community engagement by the justice system is worth the effort
- Explore factors that make effective engagement of community members successful, and how to address challenges
- Learn tips to establish genuine relationships and build trust within a diverse community

What We're Learning About the Neuroscience of Addiction (Plenary C)

With more and more courts, prosecutors, and other justice actors seeking to link defendants with substance use disorders to treatment programs, it can be challenging to stay up-to-date on the latest research in brain science on addiction. This session will explore new research findings on drug and alcohol addiction and their pharmacologic treatment, and provide participants with a better insight into addressing these challenges.

Learning Objectives

- Learn the latest research findings on the neuroscience of addiction
- Understand what the research tells us about pharmacologic treatment
- Explore ways to apply this research to justice system practices

Justice Strategies for Improving Outcomes for Clients with Co-Occurring Disorders (Breakout 1)

One of the biggest challenges facing justice system practitioners is how to treat chronic offenders with co-occurring disorders. Justice agencies have developed a range of programmatic options to help this population. This session will explore three different innovative programs seeking to enhance outcomes for offenders with co-occurring disorders, including two public defender-led initiatives and a mental health court.

Learning Objectives

- Hear about three different programs addressing the needs of clients with co-occurring disorders
- Learn how creating “community linkage plans” can help reduce recidivism for clients with mental health needs
- Understand how legal representation can be offered to clients with mental health disorders earlier in the process

Pretrial Justice and Judicial Innovation (Breakout 2)

Bail reform and pretrial detention have gained much attention in the U.S. in recent years, given that 6 in 10 inmates nationally are held in pretrial detention. In this session, panelists will discuss pretrial practices that are seeking to safely reduce jail populations, including the challenges and opportunities they present.

Learning Objectives

- Understand bail reform efforts and the use of pretrial detention in the U.S.
- Learn how to identify the leading drivers of jail population in your jurisdiction
- Explore strategies for implementing successful initiatives to reduce pretrial detention without compromising public safety



Changing Offender Behavior: What Works? (Breakout 3)

Courts regularly use different tactics to attempt to change offender behavior and limit recidivism. Whether in a specialty court or a general docket, justice actors apply different incentives and sanctions to curb damaging behavior. In this session, panelists will share insights into what works to change offender behavior, including court-supervised drug treatment as well as “24/7” programs that help participants achieve sobriety based on their knowledge that they will be tested on a regular basis.

Learning Objectives

- Learn about drug court and community court approaches to changing offender behavior
- Understand the importance of using sanctions and incentives
- Learn about “24/7” sobriety programs and their effect on repeat DUI offenders

Risk, Needs, and the Misdemeanor Population (Breakout 4)

Research has shown that offender services should not be based on hunch or intuition, but rather on the combination of clinical judgment and systematic application of validated screening and assessment tools to inform evidence-based interventions. This session will present risk-need-responsivity (RNR) principles, provide examples of validated assessment tools, and discuss the challenges presented by the application of RNR principles in the misdemeanor context.

Learning Objectives

- Understand risk-need-responsivity principles
- Learn strategies for selecting and implementing evidence-based assessment tools
- Consider some of the challenges to applying RNR principles in the misdemeanor context

Legitimacy, Race, and Procedural Justice (Plenary D)

With racial and ethnic disparities in the justice system coming under increasing examination, public trust and confidence in the justice system are low around the country. At the same time, research has shown that people who perceive that they have received fair treatment view the justice system as more legitimate, are more likely to complete mandates, and are more likely to follow the law in general. This panel will discuss the intersection of race and procedural justice in justice system efforts to increase its legitimacy to the public it serves.

Learning Objectives

- Discuss the extent of racial and ethnic disparities in the justice system
- Learn strategies for implementing procedural justice principles in frontline work
- Consider best practices for enhancing perceptions of voice, understanding, respect, and neutrality in the justice system

