



Planning Council Meeting
Monday, February 13th, 2017
700 Lavaca, Room

Attendees: Helen Gaebler (UT School of Law), Sandra Eames (Austin Community College), Rebecca Farrell (Truth Be Told), Darla Gay (Travis County District Attorney's Office), Darwin Hamilton (Community Representative), Karen Keith (Community Representative), Jaime Rodriguez (U.S. Bureau of Prisons), Mia Sneed (TX HHSC), Laura Sovine (Austin Recovery), Louella Tate (Community Representative), Kenneth Thompson (TX DFPS), Bree Williams (ECHO), Sarah Worthington (TRLA)

Proxies: Efrain Davila (for Kimberly Pierce), Marcus Ramirez (for Lisa Howard), Jennifer Sowinski (for Pete Valdez)

Guests: Linda Anderson (TC Adult Probation SMART Program), Catherine Pfeiffer (Community Representative), Jaures Saucedo (TC Adult Probation Smart Program), David Shelton (TC Justice Planning), Abby Tatkov (ECHO)

Support: Caity Barillas (WNA), Kelly Nichols (WNA), Annette Price (Fellow)

I. Introductions (Helen Gaebler)

The meeting was called to order at 12:10pm. Helen Gaebler welcomed attendees and facilitated introductions. **Action Item:** Caity will create table cards for the proxies.

II. Approval of January 2017 Minutes (Helen Gaebler)

ACTION: Darla Gay moved to approve the January 2017 minutes, Mia Sneed seconded, and attendees unanimously passed the motion. **Amendments:** Fix the spelling of Sarah Worthington's name.

III. Fellowship Update (Helen Gaebler)

Helen announced the new Advocacy Fellow, Annette Price. She also noted that the Planning Council will need to continue to seek funding to fund the fellowships long-term.

IV. Financial Update (Sarah Worthington)

Sarah Worthington shared the financial report for February 2017 and announced that any questions about budget items can be directed to her. Helen noted that there will be additional money coming into the budget for 2017. There will be a second grant disbursement of \$10,000 coming in from Shield-Ayers. There will be \$5,000 coming in from Goodwill over the course of the next several months. There will also be \$7,000 coming in from Austin Travis County Integral Care.

Kelly Nichols also mentioned that the Roundtable is exploring future sources of revenue, including a partnering to submit a proposal in response to a current solicitation from the City of Austin for a Fair Chance Hiring Outreach Consultant. The Roundtable does not meet all of the required qualifications to be the primary contractor, but they could partner

with a communications firm or other entity. Planning Council members suggested the following organizations as possible partners: Goodwill, Just Leadership, Texas Advocates for Justice, and MEELJ. Kelly will work with the Executive Committee to determine whether the Roundtable will move forward on this opportunity.

V. **Legislative Session Overview (Annette Price)**

Kelly Nichols shared the overarching framework of how the fellows will handle the communication about the 85th legislative session. **Goal 1:** Inform the planning council about relevant bills. **Goal 2:** Organize work with RAP, engage with partner organizations, and help community representatives with lived experience learn to properly testify. **Goal 3:** Support bills the Planning Council has voted to prioritize. After the bill filing deadline in March, Planning Council members will be asked to identify which bills they would like the Roundtable to support during the legislative session. Those bills are the ones that the Fellows will take action.

Annette Price shared that every Friday during session she will share a Google Sheet with the Planning Council that gives updates for all relevant reentry bills, the committee members involved, and the actions that the fellows have taken in the past week. She will also share opportunities with the Planning Council that they can participate in. Annette can be reached at austinreentryroundtablefellow@gmail.com. **Action Items:** Kelly will send the fellow's workplan for the 85th legislative session to the Planning Council. The Fellows will conduct a training on how to follow bills on TLO at the March Planning Council meeting.

VI. **Presentation on Travis County SMART Program (Linda Anderson)**

Linda Anderson shared information about the Travis County SMART Program. She announced that they facilitate several types of programs including, trauma therapy, addiction therapy, parenting classes, GED courses, non-denominational services, and more. Linda also shared that the program helps place previously incarcerated individuals into homes, apartments, and helps them find jobs as they are leaving. She noted that they are always accepting clothing donations for those who have gone through the program. Participants in the program are court ordered to be in the program but there is a \$1,400 fee for the program that is tacked onto their probation fees and their probation fees are accruing while they are in the program. There is no full determination yet for completion rates or recidivism rates. Linda noted that if this program is not the right fit for certain individuals, they make recommendations to try to help them find alternatives. There are alternatives to the SMART program, but it is currently up to the court to determine what the alternative recommendation is. Linda explained that this program is different than jail because there are better services provided, the program works to help the clients reenter successfully into society, and they are taken better care of. There are also job services that they use as clients are wrapping up their time in the program, but they are looking to expand those services. Attendees noted that the cost of the program could be a burdensome issue for those that are trying to reenter and suggested that there may be those willing to give grant opportunities for those who complete the program and don't relapse to wipe out their fees completely. Attendees were very passionate about the fees associated with the program and suggested a policy change that changed the financial piece drastically. Attendees also suggested that testimonies from people with lived experience could be very beneficial to the program. For full details see handout attached. **Action Items:** Linda Anderson and Louella Tate will connect about education services. Linda's email linda.anderson@traviscountytexas.gov – she invited Planning Council members to contact her if they have additional questions.

VII. Misc. Announcements and Roundtable

Kelly announced that the first Housing Work Group meeting will be taking place today, February 13th just after the Planning Council meeting. The meeting was called to an end at 1:26pm.

**Next Meeting:
March 13th, 2017 -Noon - 1:30pm
700 Lavaca, Room 1.112**