



# RESULTS FIRST INITIATIVE

Santa Barbara County

## 2017 Progress Report

Santa Barbara County was the first California county to participate in the Pew-MacArthur Results First Initiative (Results First), a project of The Pew Charitable Trusts and the John D. and Catherine T. MacArthur Foundation.

Results First is a capacity-building initiative that provides tools and technical assistance to state and local governments to implement evidence-based policymaking. Results First provides a benefit cost model that can be customized with County specific data to calculate and monetize the benefits of operating a program in the County based on its expected effect on recidivism. The Santa Barbara Results First model monetizes recidivism reductions using the marginal costs associated with each part

of the criminal justice system (victimization, arrest, prosecution, defense, Court processing, jail, probation, prison, and parole). Participation in Results Firsts allows the County to use public safety performance data (the degree to which a program or strategy reduces recidivism) and County costs to inform decisions about how resources are allocated.



## Overview

The Santa Barbara County Board of Supervisors endorsed the Results First Initiative on August 27, 2013. The Board recognized the need to identify effective forms of recidivism reduction in order to maximize limited jail capacity and staff service delivery, as well as the County's capacity to manage overall public safety expenses.

Participating in Results First allows the County to use public safety performance data (the degree to which a program or strategy reduces recidivism) and County costs to inform decisions about how resources are allocated. By considering benefit cost analysis, the County can identify and invest in effective strategies, allowing the County to:

- ▶ Increase public safety by reducing recidivism
- ▶ Increase the success rates for members of the community receiving post-release services
- ▶ Increase staff effectiveness
- ▶ Generate public support for using high quality cost and performance data to reduce recidivism

## How it Works

Results First utilizes County specific data to calculate and monetize the benefits of operating a program in the County based on its expected effect on recidivism. The Santa Barbara Results First model measures recidivism by reconviction rates and calculates the cost of recidivism using the marginal costs associated with each part of the criminal justice system (victimization, arrest, prosecution, defense, court processing, jail, probation, prison, and parole). There are 4 steps in the Results First Approach:

- 1. PROGRAM INVENTORY** As a first step, the Results First approach includes the development of a comprehensive inventory of all funded programs. This comprehensive inventory of programs<sup>1</sup> allows local stakeholders to compare options in order to identify those that most effectively achieve outcomes with the best value for taxpayers.
- 2. EVIDENCE REVIEW** Programs in the inventory are then examined to determine which are proven to reduce recidivism among individuals under supervision. Santa Barbara County utilizes the Results First Clearinghouse Database<sup>2</sup> which provides information on the effectiveness of various interventions as rated by eight national research clearinghouses.
- 3. BENEFIT COST ANALYSIS** Identifying the programs that most effectively achieve outcomes with the best values for taxpayers is achieved by monetizing the local costs related to the return of an offender to the criminal justice system. In partnership with the Results First team, Santa Barbara County created a *County specific* benefit cost model, which estimates long term costs and benefits of investments in evidence-based programs. The information assists the County to determine which investments will yield the best and most cost-effective results.
- 4. EVIDENCE-BASED POLICYMAKING** Equipped with both the research and cost-benefit information, the County can now systematically consider policy decisions with a clear summary of available evidence and knowledge of whether a program is likely to be an effective use of County resources known to reduce recidivism.



<sup>1</sup> Santa Barbara County's Program Inventory is available online at: <http://www.countyofsb.org/probation/asset.c?724>

<sup>2</sup> The Results First Clearinghouse Database is available online at: <http://www.pewtrusts.org/en/multimedia/data-visualizations/2015/results-first-clearinghouse-database>



## An Example

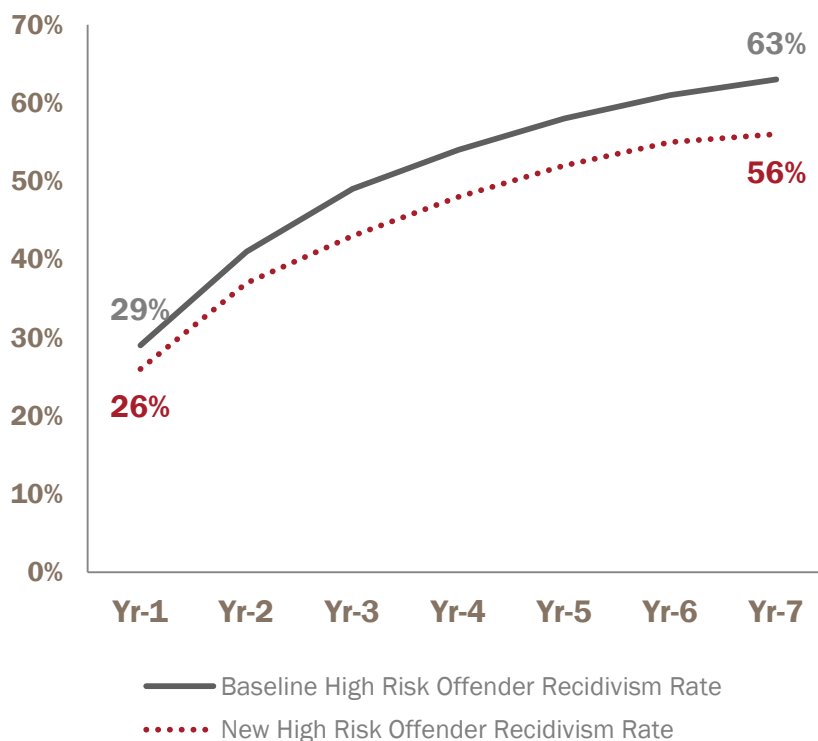
Reasoning and Rehabilitation (R&R) is an evidence-based cognitive behavioral treatment program that is known to reduce recidivism. In Santa Barbara County, this program is projected to reduce recidivism by over 10% in the long-term (see Figure 1). Based on County data, this program is cost-beneficial; every dollar invested generated approximately \$21 in benefits to taxpayers and victims.



Figure 1:  
**Reasoning and Rehabilitation Benefit Cost Summary**

Program/Practice Name	Benefits per Participant	Cost per Participant	Net Benefit per Participant	Benefit Cost Ratio	Recidivism Reduction
REASONING AND REHABILITATION	\$4,553	\$216	\$4,337	\$21.08	-10.83%

Figure 2:  
**Effects of Reasoning and Rehabilitation on Santa Barbara County High-Risk Offender Recidivism**



### The Problem

- On average, 63% of high-risk probationers are reconvicted within a 7-year period; 29% are reconvicted within the first year of being placed on probation.
- An estimated 56% of offenders enrolled in the Reasoning and Rehabilitation program recidivate within a 7-year period, as compared to the average 63% of high-risk probationers.
- Recidivism is costly to the community. Each high-risk probationer reconvicted costs **\$92,480** in criminal justice system and victimization costs.

## Implementation

Reducing recidivism in the County will avoid crimes in the community and victimization costs. Rigorous research has demonstrated that quality programs can improve public safety and reduce future crime. Using that research, benefit cost analysis can assist the County to determine which investments will yield the best and most cost-effective results. See below for the comparative costs, benefits and anticipated crime reduction of local programs.

Program/Practice Name	Benefits per Participant	Cost per Participant	Net Benefit per Participant	Benefit Cost Ratio	Recidivism Reduction
DAY REPORTING CENTER	\$10,094	\$2,869	\$7,225	\$3.52	-24.06%
DRUG COURT	\$8,335	\$5,680	\$2,655	\$1.47	-19.86%
ELECTRONIC MONITORING (in lieu of jail)	\$6,823	\$1,650	\$5,173	\$4.14	-7.67%
OUTPATIENT DRUG/ALCOHOL TREATMENT (Matrix)	\$838	\$1,763	\$925	\$0.48	-1.99%
REASONING AND REHABILITATION	\$4,553	\$216	\$4,337	\$21.08	-10.83%
RISK-NEED-RESPONSIVITY	\$8,063	N/A	\$8,063	N/A	-19.21%
WAGE\$\$	\$3,827	\$199	\$3,628	\$19.23	-9.1%

- **Day Reporting Centers (DRC)** are non-residential facilities that are used as a form of intermediate sanction for offenders. DRCs both enhance supervision and surveillance of offenders while providing treatment directly through collaboration with community treatment programs.
- **Drug Court** combines the close supervision of the judicial process with resources available through alcohol and drug treatment services. The goal is to reduce recidivism by maintaining drug offenders in a highly structured treatment setting until they establish a firm foundation for a clean and sober lifestyle.
- **Electronic Monitoring (EM)** is provided as an alternative to detention in county jail. EM allows offenders to be supervised at home while being closely tracked and their compliance monitored. Locally, GPS technology is utilized and provides “real time” alerts.
- **Outpatient drug/alcohol treatment**, Santa Barbara County utilizes the Matrix Model, which is an intensive outpatient treatment approach for substance abuse and dependence that was developed through 20 years of experience in real-world treatment settings. The intervention consists of relapse-prevention groups, education groups, social-support groups, individual counseling, and urine and breath testing.
- **Reasoning and Rehabilitation (R&R)** is a cognitive-behavioral curriculum that focuses on changing the criminogenic thinking of offenders. It includes cognitive restructuring, social skills enhancement and the development of problem solving skills. The activities in each session challenge the offender’s egocentric thinking and increase thinking, perspective-taking, and reasoning skills.
- **Risk-Need-Responsivity (RNR)** model states that the risk and needs of an offender should determine the strategies appropriate for addressing the individual’s criminogenic factors. RNR integrates the science around effective screening, assessment, programs and treatment matching (responsivity) to improve individuals and system outcomes. Locally, RNR strategies are utilized in the supervision and treatment of all high-risk offenders.
- **Work and Gain Economic Self Sufficiency (WAGE\$\$)** is designed to assist unemployed or under-employed clients. In addition to received direction as to where to seek employment, participants learn job-seeking skills with a focus on how to answer difficult questions regarding a felony conviction. Clients are taught interviewing techniques, how to select suitable interview attire, and how to complete a résumé.

## Cementing our Work

In the last fiscal year, Santa Barbara County began incorporating this work to inform spending decisions. In partnership with Results First, the County introduced specific requirements for providers and agencies requesting funding for criminal justice programming. At the outset of a solicitation, agency representatives are to complete a *Criminal Justice Funding Opportunity Form*<sup>3</sup> to convey information regarding the target population, criminogenic need, desired program outcomes, and available evidence that demonstrates the program is likely effective. Where possible, the form also requests benefit cost analysis using the Results First approach, or an assessment of the outcomes that are required for the County to break-even on its investment when a benefit cost analysis is not possible (a novel application of the Results First benefit cost model).

This new protocol allows County agencies to not only systematically consider funding requests but also equips partners with the information needed to provide the County Board of Supervisors with a clear summary of available evidence and a confident recommendation of whether a proposal is likely to be an effective use of County resources.

## Next Steps

In the coming year, the County has identified next steps to further incorporate the Results First approach into the culture of using evidence and information in decision making. These include:

- ▶ **CONTINUING EDUCATION** Identify opportunities to share information regarding the initiative-what it is (and is not), why it matters, and how it can be used to identify and prioritize effective programs.
- ▶ **CAPITALIZE ON EXISTING OPPORTUNITIES** Identify and leverage known projects to embed Results First language. Exploit opportunities to share successes of the initiative and message goals as well as explore pain points of the approach.
- ▶ **FOCUSED POLICY AREAS** Demonstrate the utility of the Results First tool to our prominent partners and focus efforts on

policy areas that cut across county departments.

- ▶ **EXPAND TO JUVENILE SERVICES** Expand existing efforts to include a program inventory of juvenile interventions and build upon what is known currently of adult interventions.
- ▶ **EMBED EVIDENCE INTO DECISION MAKING** Utilize the funding protocol form in decision-making processes to build upon the climate of information-driven decision making. Continue to use benefit cost analysis language in existing conversations of budget/contracting to keep the approach top-of-mind internally and with external partners.
- ▶ **EXPLORE CONTRACT AND BUDGET APPLICATIONS** Utilize the Results First approach to complement the County's existing contract and budgeting process.

**Benefit cost analysis** is a standard practice of the private sector. The Results First Model utilizes an econometric modeling and simulations to project the fiscal and public safety outcomes for criminal justice interventions. The benefit cost ratio is a measure of a program's cost effectiveness at reducing recidivism. This ratio shows the total benefits (government and society) realized for each dollar spent on the program. The Results First process provides reasonable expectations of performance for evidence-based interventions and brings the power of research to aid budget and policy decisions.

<sup>3</sup> The Criminal Justice Funding Opportunity Form is available online at: <http://countyofsb.org/probation/crimjustfund.sbc>



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