



COUNTY OF SAN DIEGO

AGENDA ITEM

BOARD OF SUPERVISORS

VACANT
First District

JOEL ANDERSON
Second District

TERRA LAWSON-REMER
Third District

MONICA MONTGOMERY STEPPE
Fourth District

JIM DESMOND
Fifth District

DATE: May 20, 2025

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TO: Board of Supervisors

SUBJECT

RECEIVE UPDATE ON THE ALTERNATIVES TO INCARCERATION WORK PLAN, APPROVAL IN PRINCIPLE TO LEASE SPACE FOR A RESOURCE AND REENTRY HUB, AND AUTHORITY FOR FUTURE ATI-RELATED GRANTS (DISTRICTS: ALL)

OVERVIEW

The Board of Supervisors (Board) initiated Alternatives to Incarceration (ATI) on October 19, 2021 (3), directing data collection, analysis, best practice review, and stakeholder engagement to develop recommendations for County actions and investments in treatment and supportive services to reduce jail use for individuals who did not pose a public safety threat. Staff have returned periodically to the Board to provide updates on the ATI work plan received by the Board on May 23, 2023 (20). Since then, the Board directed the development of additional ATI actions related to transportation, care coordination and housing services for individuals released from County jails on December 10, 2024 (1).

ATI is a collaborative approach aimed at reducing justice involvement and jail use for people who do not pose a public safety threat through effective, equitable and accessible community-based supportive services, and systemic efforts to connect justice-involved individuals to the help they need. ATI programs are expected to reduce initial or future arrests and incarceration while increasing equity, health, and self-sufficiency. Partners in ATI include County and City of San Diego health and justice departments, the Office of Equity and Racial Justice, the Office of Labor Standards and Enforcement, the Office of Evaluation, Performance, and Analytics, and community partners representing diverse perspectives.

Today's recommendations include receiving an update on the initial ATI work plan actions, evaluation and plans for new ATI actions, and authorizing a real estate search and lease negotiations for a Resource and Reentry Hub. Today's actions would also support identifying and leveraging grant funding to support ATI programs by waiving Board Policy B-29 and authorizing the Deputy Chief Administrative Officer (DCAO) for PSG, or the HHSA director, through June 30, 2030, to apply for grant funding that supports ATI in the areas of prevention, diversion and reentry programs.

RECOMMENDATION(S)

CHIEF ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICER

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1. Receive a presentation on Alternatives to Incarceration (ATI) work plan, including updates on the ATI work plan, new planned and proposed ATI actions, and ATI evaluation.
2. Approve actions related to siting a Resource and Reentry Hub (the Hub):
 - a. Find that the proposed action is not an approval of a project as defined by the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) pursuant to Section 15378 (b)(5) of the State CEQA guidelines.
 - b. Approve in principle the lease of approximately 6,000-square-feet of office space in the central San Diego region for the Hub.
 - c. Authorize the Director, Department of General Services, to conduct a site search, negotiate a lease, and upon successful negotiations, return to the Board for approval of the lease agreement.
3. Waive Board Policy B-29, Fees, Grants, Revenue Contracts – Department Responsibility for Cost Recovery, which requires prior approval of grant applications and full cost recovery for grants, and authorize the Deputy Chief Administrative Officer for the Public Safety Group or the Health and Human Services Agency Director, or their designees, through June 30, 2030, to apply for grant funding that supports alternatives to incarceration in the areas of prevention, diversion and reentry programs to provide assistance to justice-impacted individuals, and to execute all required grant documents including any annual extensions, amendments and/or revisions thereto that do not materially impact or alter the services or funding level.

EQUITY IMPACT STATEMENT

Nationally and in San Diego County, arrest and incarceration disproportionately impact people of color and those who are low-income, disabled, experiencing homelessness, and/or have behavioral health needs. San Diego County jail data indicate that Black individuals composed more than 27% of the average daily jail population in 2024, and 44% were Hispanic/Latinx. Additionally, 36% of incarcerated individuals surveyed during the 2024 Jail Point in Time Count reported they were experiencing unsheltered homelessness prior to their current arrest. Approximately, 43% of the current incarcerated population who were experiencing homelessness reported they had previously been in a juvenile detention facility. The Alternatives to Incarceration initiative aims to create equitable pathways to services that reduce justice system contact and episodes of incarceration to advance equity and address systemic disparities in the justice system.

SUSTAINABILITY IMPACT STATEMENT

The actions proposed in today's item contribute to the County of San Diego's Sustainability Goals of engaging the community, providing just and equitable access, and protecting health and well-being. The ongoing Alternatives to Incarceration initiative is intended to positively impact the communities and socioeconomic groups historically burdened by incarceration with better long-term health, well-being, and opportunity. Extensive community engagement through surveys, community listening sessions, and an external Advisory Group including individuals with lived experience is a major component of the initiative.

FISCAL IMPACT

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There is no fiscal impact associated with receiving today's updated Alternatives to Incarceration (ATI) plan actions and ATI evaluation. Funding for the new ATI work plan programs (Attachment B) of \$9,533,997 are included in the Fiscal Year 2025-26 CAO Recommended Operational Plan and will be funded with Local Revenue Fund 2011, Public Safety Realignment (Community Corrections Subaccount). Staff will return to the Board as necessary to accept grant awards and to establish appropriations. There is no change in net General Fund costs or staff years.

BUSINESS IMPACT STATEMENT

N/A

ADVISORY BOARD STATEMENT

The County of San Diego is guided by an Alternatives to Incarceration (ATI) Advisory Group composed of community members – including people with lived experience, community activists, social service providers, the San Diego Reentry Roundtable and local government leadership¹. The ATI Advisory Group convenes every other month to review work plan updates, discuss new approaches and best practices, and develop recommendations. The Advisory Group partnered with other departments across the enterprise and community-based organizations to engage the community and solicit feedback and input to inform today's actions.

BACKGROUND

The Board of Supervisors (Board) initiated Alternatives to Incarceration (ATI) on October 19, 2021 (3), directing data collection, analysis, best practice review and stakeholder engagement to develop recommendations for County actions and investments in treatment and supportive services to reduce jail use for individuals who did not pose a public safety threat. Based on all that work, the County's consultant, the San Diego Association of Governments (SANDAG), developed more than 50 recommendations for the County in a final report. County health and justice partners considered SANDAG's recommendations and incorporated about half of them into the ATI work plan, which was presented to the Board on May 23, 2023 (20). On March 12, 2024 (20), staff presented the ATI County enterprise structure, established to implement, oversee, and continue the analysis required by ATI.

Since then, the ATI Advisory Group has focused on building a shared understanding of work plan actions under way, reviewing the priority and feasibility of additional work plan actions, providing input into proposed next steps, presented as part of today's actions, and elevating new concerns based on community input. New proposed and planned ATI actions continue to build on SANDAG's analysis and recommendations, while incorporating timely data, updated stakeholder input, and new Board direction.

¹Public agency representatives include leadership from Behavioral Health Services; the District Attorney's Office; the Office of Equity and Racial Justice; the Office of Evaluation, Performance, and Analytics; Housing and Community Development Services, Office of Homeless Solutions; the Office of Labor Standards and Enforcement; Medical Care Services; the Probation Department; Office of the Public Defender; the Public Safety Group; the City Attorney's Office; the San Diego Police Department; and the Sheriff's Office.

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ATI is an integrated approach to identifying, building, and evaluating effective supportive services to reduce the risk of individuals becoming justice-involved and increase connections to services that decrease future justice involvement. The collaborative approach is governed by the Public Safety Group and the Health and Human Services Agency (HHS) Deputy Chief Administrative Officers and the Director of the Office of Equity and Racial Justice (OERJ), with input from an Advisory Group that includes representatives from health, justice, and equity-focused County departments, City law enforcement partners, and community members. ATI leverages frequent community engagement activities for consistent feedback.

Updates On Initial ATI Work Plan Actions

Initial work plan actions taken since May 2023 have resulted in eight new programs being initiated, enhancements and process improvements to existing programs, increased connections to services and housing for previously unserved populations, and steps towards implementing evaluation. The work plan included recommendations to address behavioral health crises with services that prevent justice system involvement, establish better connections for service-disconnected individuals who cycle through the system on low level matters, address the high intersection between homelessness and jail, and strengthen reentry services, transitions, and community supports after jail. The work plan also included administrative actions to support more effective service design and delivery. Attachment A describes the results of the work plan as of December 31, 2024. The information is also found at <https://www.sandiegocounty.gov/content/sdc/alternatives-to-incarceration/ATI-work-plan.html>.

Highlights of initial work plan:

The Recovery and Bridge Center (RBC): The Sheriff's Office and the San Diego Police Department divert people arrested for public intoxication from jail to treatment, with 1,586 admissions in Fiscal Year 2024-25.

Alternatives to Incarceration Program: Care coordination and housing program launched in October 2024 had enrolled 60 individuals as of March 2025. The program establishes connections to services for high-need and homeless individuals with repeated but often brief encounters with the justice system.

Homeless Pop-up Resource Fair Events: The District Attorney, Public Defender, City Attorney, Superior Court, and community-based organizations collaborate to host these fairs, which have doubled from 11 to 22 annually since January 2024 and served more than 4,000 individuals since 2021.

Focus on Housing Connections from Jail: Since Spring 2024, the Sheriff's Office has enhanced support for incarcerated individuals at risk of homelessness by adding correctional counselors, transportation contracts, and interim housing contracts, successfully connecting over 516 individuals to interim housing as of March 2025.

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Enrolling justice-involved Individuals in Medi-Cal Benefits: Since March 2023, Medical Care Services staff have been convening a monthly Healthy San Diego justice-involved workgroup meeting to connect Medi-Cal Managed Care Plans, providers, and consumers for optimized operational alignment. The Sheriff's Office and Probation Department are working to implement the state-mandated Medi-Cal Transformation Justice-Involved Reentry Initiative, which is a monumental shift intended to streamline and improve care before and during incarceration as well as post-release to improve likelihood of successful reentry.

Local Fair Chance Ordinance: In August 2024, the Board approved the San Diego County Fair Chance Ordinance, building on the Office of Labor Standards and Enforcement's (OLSE) existing outreach efforts which have included employer trainings, over 100 "Know Your Rights" seminars, and engagement with approximately 650 incarcerated individuals at the Las Colinas and East Mesa reentry facilities.

Resource and Reentry Hub (Hub): On March 12, 2024 (20), the Board authorized a competitive solicitation and other contracting actions for a Resource and Reentry Hub (Hub) in the central region. The Hub is intended to consolidate multiple public agency and community-based services in one location.

Following the Board authorization for Hub contracting actions, County staff developed a statement of service objectives and a Request for Proposals (RFP), incorporating extensive refinement of the concept based on three industry days, listening sessions, and focus groups with various stakeholders, including many individuals with lived justice system experience and homelessness, and the close collaboration of public agency partners. Criminal justice and health leadership including representatives of the Court, the Sheriff, the District Attorney, the Public Defender, the Probation Chief, the San Diego Police Chief, OERJ, and HHSA provided guidance on how the Hub can effectively support positive outcomes for people at risk of justice involvement or successfully resolve criminal legal matters.

Community outreach has shown strong support for the Hub. Grassroots organizations and other community partners with innovative programs have a high interest in collaborating on service delivery and proposals, and the RFP asks proposers to maximize the involvement of a range of partners, including small providers as subcontractors. The County may issue future solicitations to maximize provider opportunities for County-funded services at the Hub, enhancing the range of support available to participants.

Many industry day participants voiced concerns that requirements to provide a leased or owned facility could be a barrier to proposing services for all but the biggest, wealthiest organizations. Therefore, the RFP provides an option for proposers to provide a facility with a service array or services without a facility. Today's action would allow the County to conduct a real estate search and enter into negotiations for a lease as an option. The Department of General Services would work with the Public Safety Executive Office to identify a space of approximately 6,000 square feet in the downtown San Diego or other central area close to transit. The goal is to create an option where the County provides a leased space for the Resource and Reentry Hub, with services being

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provided by a lead agency and subcontracted providers, and with public agency partners onsite including the Probation Department and HHSA. County staff would return to the Board for authority to enter into a lease; however, the RFP may result in an efficient and effective proposal for a contractor to provide this space, preempting the need for a County-leased space.

The Board's approval in principle to lease office space for the Hub in the central San Diego area is not a project under the California Environmental Quality Act. The Board's approval does not commit the County to a definite course of action with respect to any project. Once a property is identified for lease, staff will return to the Board with the appropriate environmental finding.

ATI Measurement and Evaluation Framework

Since sharing the Measurement and Evaluation (M&E) framework with the Board on March 12, 2024 (20), the Office of Evaluation, Performance, and Analytics (OEPA) has made progress in operationalizing the framework with a focus on analysis of ATI program design and performance measurement. As part of the program design analysis, OEPA conducted an extensive literature review to analyze how the initiative's design will achieve its intended goals, identifying potential challenges and key assumptions. OEPA expects to produce a report with findings of this analysis by August 2025. As part of the performance measurement efforts, OEPA has additionally worked with the justice partners and HHSA departments and identified 15 Key Performance Indicators to support collective reporting across 13 work plan items. These measures include outputs—such as the number and characteristics of people who receive ATI services—as well as outcomes, such as the proportion that get connected to jobs, housing, or mental health treatment. These measures are aligned with existing program metrics from other justice initiatives where possible. OEPA is aiming to launch performance measurement tools for sharing progress on ATI goals with ATI stakeholders and the general public by late 2025, including dashboards and data storytelling (which transforms data into interactive, engaging narratives by leveraging personas and compelling visualizations).

Over the next year, OEPA will work on process evaluations to assess the implementation of the ATI initiative and its workplan items, gathering input from participants with lived experience in the justice system. In partnership with OERJ, OEPA is developing an equity framework to guide an equity evaluation. Working closely with ATI stakeholders, OEPA is identifying additional technical assistance, learning opportunities, and funding sources to enhance ATI's performance and evaluation efforts, with a particular focus on potential impact evaluations. Additionally, OEPA will integrate new ATI work plan items into the M&E framework as they are adopted.

New Work Plan Actions

Since October 2023, the ATI Advisory Group has reviewed the feasibility and priority of SANDAG recommendations not addressed in the initial work plan, including input from a February 2024 listening session and new direction from the Board of Supervisors. New ATI work plan actions presented today are supported by the ATI Advisory Group and have been identified as priorities that are also feasible for action during Fiscal Year 2025-26. Some actions require funding, which has been included in the Fiscal Year 2025-26 CAO Recommended Operational Plan; others are feasible with existing resources.

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The new work plan actions include a response to December 10, 2024 (1) Board direction that County staff work with the Sheriff's Office and the ATI Advisory Group to develop a plan to extend universal transportation, care coordination, and housing to those released from County detention and reentry facilities, and work with the Sheriff's Office to implement steps to make sure released individuals can have information available on how to use the transit system.

The plans align with previous SANDAG analysis and community input and will involve several work plan actions, partners, programs, and new actions led by several departments.

New ATI Work Plan Actions:

The following highlights planned actions. Full descriptions of each new work plan action can be found online at <https://www.sandiegocounty.gov/content/sdc/alternatives-to-incarceration/ATI-work-plan.html> and are included as Attachment B.

1. **Develop new pathways to provide supportive services in lieu of jail or prosecution to resolve low-level criminal cases:** Community support and evidence for the effectiveness of alternatives to incarceration for low level crimes and behavioral health crisis remains high. This action will focus on continuing to establish partnerships with law enforcement, medical first responders, outreach workers, the City Attorney's Office, defense and prosecution to develop options and practices to utilize new services such as the Resource and Reentry Hub as alternatives to incarceration.
2. **Expand universal transportation, care coordination, and housing for individuals released from County detention and reentry facilities:** This effort incorporates several work plan actions and includes:
 - *Transportation Access.* The County and Sheriff's Office will expand transportation access by providing bus passes and transit information to all individuals released from County detention and reentry facilities.
 - *Transpiration communication materials.* The Sheriff's Office and ATI staff are working with MTS to develop new displays and handouts specific to each detention facility to assist individuals navigate public transit upon release from custody.
 - *Care Coordination and Housing Services.* Services will expand to newly released populations, emphasizing voluntary self-referral to engage the majority of releases without time for an in-custody service connection. (also described in action #3 below).
 - *Resource and Reentry Hub.* The Central region service will include transportation to the Hub from all County facilities, including after-hours services.
3. **Update and reprocore community care coordination and housing programs:** HHSA will work with justice partners to re-design, reprocore and expand existing programs to include leveraging services available through Medi-Cal, to serve specialty populations, such as veterans or individuals with complex health and housing needs, and broad reentry populations with high needs, including those with shorter jail stays. Authorization to solicit these services

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was included in the May 23, 2023 (20) Board direction, which broadly supported care coordination and housing programs for justice involved populations. ATI partners will continue to strengthen collaboration with local housing authorities and the Regional Taskforce on Homelessness to identify and address existing barriers to permanent housing and create new housing opportunities. These efforts are also reflected in other County-led housing initiatives such as the Housing Blueprint.

4. **Launch the Resource and Reentry Hub:** Secure a lease for an appropriate, central location and launch this service including building out the data collection and analysis plan, and track outcomes.
5. **Expand in-custody rehabilitative programming:** The Sheriff's Office will expand opportunities to participate in one-on-one and group services for incarcerated persons.
6. **Increase Peer Workforce:** ATI partners will host job fairs focused on career pathways and peer roles for justice-involved individuals in the service system in all regions of the County.

Both new ATI and previous actions represent a significant body of work, and today's action would allow PSG and HHSA to seek and accept grants to support work plan actions or advance innovative approaches.

Looking ahead, input and recommendations from the ATI Advisory Group, community stakeholders and the original SANDAG analysis point to important areas of action not yet developed as work plan actions, and further review will identify future feasible County actions. Areas under review include Probation revocations, equity in contracting, better supporting families of justice-involved individuals, and models of non-justice system responses for low-level behaviors. Likewise, ATI partners are updating the community outreach strategy to increase engagement with community stakeholders unfamiliar with ATI and incorporate additional perspectives, not captured before. Extensive community engagement and outreach has taken place starting in 2024 and continuing into 2025, including visits with grassroots community providers, visits at Las Colinas Detention and Reentry Facility and East Mesa Reentry Facility, an ATI presentation at the 2024 Live Well Advance Conference and School Summit, community listening sessions and Industry Days, engagement with the Reentry Roundtable, and working closely with the Lived Experience Consultants for ATI. This outreach and engagement have proven invaluable to our planning and implementation of ATI actions.

As part of today's action, the Board will receive a presentation highlighting updates on the ATI work plan, including proposed actions and evaluation updates. In addition, staff are requesting the Board to approve, in principle, the lease of an office space in the central San Diego region for a Resource and Reentry Hub. Upon successful negotiation of a lease agreement, staff will return to the Board to request approval of the lease agreement. Today's actions also support identifying and applying for funding to support ATI work plan actions by waiving Board Policy B-29 and authorizing the DCAO for PSG, or the HHSA director, through June 30, 2030, to apply for grant funding that supports ATI in the areas of prevention, diversion and reentry programs.

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LINKAGE TO THE COUNTY OF SAN DIEGO STRATEGIC PLAN

Today's proposed actions support the County of San Diego 2025-2030 Strategic Plan initiatives of Equity (Health and Housing), Community (Engagement, Quality of Life, and Partnership), and Justice (Safety and Restorative), by providing access to basic needs and health and social services to support reducing disparities in the justice system and to safely support alternatives to incarceration.

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Andrew Strong', with a long horizontal line extending to the right.

Andrew Strong for

EBONY N. SHELTON
Chief Administrative Officer

ATTACHMENT(S)

Attachment A – Initial Alternatives to Incarceration Work Plan Progress Report

Attachment B – New Alternatives to Incarceration Work Plan Actions