

Criminal Justice Coordinating Council of the Pikes Peak Region

2019 – 2021 Action Plan Summary

Developed as an initial strategic plan for the Criminal Justice Coordinating Council of the Pikes Peak Region, the 2019-2021 Action Plan has served as a valuable roadmap for partners to work and collaborate on many different topics and concerns. The Action Plan promoted positive changes that achieve and sustain a more effective and equitable criminal justice system.

Read: [Criminal Justice Coordinating Council of the Pikes Peak Region 2019-2021 Action Plan](#)

Please direct any questions to El Paso County Criminal Justice Planner, Dr. Alexis Harper, alexisharper@elpasoco.com.

Council and Committee members, stakeholders, partners, and the public contributed to developing and accomplishing the three-year plan, expressing interest in highlighting goals to meet significant local gaps and needs within the criminal justice system and services. Evidence-based practices were reviewed and developed to provide the best opportunities for success as each Committee's objectives and tasks were undertaken and achieved. An executive summary across the first few pages of this document provides an overview of several specific and high-profile accomplishments. Outcomes for the tasks featured within this Action Plan are reviewed in more detail in the body of this summary.

Pretrial Services Community Advisory Board

- Pretrial assessment processes for increasing the use of personal recognizance bonds and successful bond outcomes have been researched, improved, and reflect evidence-based evaluation and recommendation techniques.
- El Paso County (EPC) Pretrial Services has been reviewed by the Colorado Association of Pretrial Services (CAPS). This is a non-profit organization focused on supporting the establishment of responsible Pretrial agencies to diversion services. Several improvements have been made to as a result of the CAPS recommendations.

Strategic Planning Committee

- Various metrics and data points have been collected and continuously reviewed to determine changes in the jail population, pretrial services, community corrections, and various behavioral health services. Data sharing agreements have grown between agencies and organizations as data analysis can improve service provision and resource utilization.
- An internship opportunity was developed in the spring of 2019 in collaboration with the University of Colorado Colorado Springs program in Criminal Justice. Through the end of 2021, the internship position has assisted ten students in completing their internship or capstone project requirements for graduation.

Financial Resources Committee

- A list of potential grants has been developed and shared with partners to provide information on funding opportunities that could benefit criminal justice projects in the region.
- Partners' grant applications and awards have been regularly tracked to raise awareness of the growth of projects and similar project interests to increase collaboration opportunities.

Behavioral Health Committee

- The Criminal Justice and Behavioral Health Summit of the Pikes Peak Region in 2019 provided a forum for nearly 100 representatives from more than 45 agencies and organizations who serve justice-involved individuals to identify gaps in services and promote solutions to problems that intersect behavioral health and criminal justice concerns.
- An analysis of criminal justice and behavioral health gaps and needs was conducted throughout 2020 through a \$100,000 local grant and partner contributions. Outcomes and recommendations from the study resulted in the redevelopment of the Behavioral Health Committee, into the "Steering" Committee which has organized multiple workgroups focused on specific areas of need to reduce the risk of justice involvement among individuals with behavioral health concerns.

Transition to Workforce Committee

- An Employers Association of businesses willing to hire ex-offenders has been established. It acts as a network for providing information on tax benefits for second chance hiring, and educating employers about best hiring practices and statistics on how those with criminal convictions often have higher job retention rates and other successful employment outcomes.
- Partnerships have been cultivated with local work readiness service providers and trade associations to help train and place formerly justice-involved individuals in legitimate, gainful employment opportunities.

Legislative Affairs Committee

- A criminal justice bill tracking spreadsheet is utilized and shared during legislative sessions to help monitor the progression of priority bills that could have significant impact locally if signed into law.
- Regular updates and forums are held in advance of and during legislative sessions for partners to discuss and weigh concerns around legislation, gain diverse insight, and raise awareness of differential impacts.

Pretrial Services Community Advisory Board

The **Pretrial Services Community Advisory Board** serves to help reduce the use of County Jail resources for defendants where less restrictive alternatives are appropriate, and to seek efficiencies in operating a cost-effective pretrial system that is safe, fair, and effective, which maximizes public safety, court appearance, and the appropriate use of release, supervision, and detention.

Action: Reduce the Jail Population Through Pretrial Services

Objective: Identify diversion options for qualified individuals from the Criminal Justice Center to help alleviate the average daily jail population while also addressing public safety concerns and court appearance rates.

Tasks:

- Evaluate the jail population to inform Personal Recognizance (PR) Bond recommendations and use of PR Bonds.
 - **Completed:** Various analyses have been conducted utilizing the interview and Colorado Pretrial Assessment data available from 2018 and 2019. Results have helped increase the efficiency of pretrial defendant interviews at the jail by assessing what questions are most important in predicting pretrial release success, defined as court appearance and public safety. Findings suggest that the CPAT is a valid tool for predicting pretrial release outcomes on PR Bond and being a primary caregiver of children is a significant insulating factor that reduces risk of failure. Many of these projects have been published or are forthcoming in peer-reviewed journals.
- Explore the use of a pretrial work release program with the El Paso County Sheriff's Office.
 - **Closed:** This task was unable to be addressed as the EPC Work Release program at the Criminal Justice Center was discontinued. It has been determined that work release must be utilized to a much higher degree to be a cost-effective program.
- Explore the implementation of administrative release authority.
 - **Completed:** A review of the feasibility and level of need for administrative release authority in EPC was completed in quarter three of 2019. Data reviewed from the fiscal year 2018-2019 show that more than half of all cases would be ineligible for Pretrial Administrative Release based on exclusionary charges and conditions, including domestic violence and assault in the third degree, which make up about 45% of cases alone. Other disqualifying conditions include high risk assessment scores, currently being on supervised release, or having active warrants. It was determined that as very few counties within the State of Colorado exercise delegated release, an alternative mechanism for helping reduce the pretrial jail population would be for law enforcement to issue felony summons when appropriate.

Action: Align Pretrial Services operations with state standards

Objective: Update Pretrial Services Operational Procedures based on the Professional Standards suggested by the Colorado Association of Pretrial Services (CAPS) and complete the CAPS Professional Standards Review Process.

Tasks: Utilize the CAPS Professional Standards guidelines, complete the self-review, and submit for an onsite review by CAPS.

- **Completed:** EPC Pretrial Services submitted a CAPS self-review in quarter 1 of 2019, which included a review of the purposes of the program, and screening, interview, release, supervision, and reporting protocols, as well as various metrics around organization and management of the program. The standards review allowed EPC Pretrial Services to receive

recommendations from CAPS for improving services locally, including best practices for interviewing and reporting to improve program outcomes.

Action: Consider national standards for Pretrial Services

Objective: Utilize the National Institute of Corrections “Measuring What Matters” for Pretrial Services.

Tasks: The National Institute of Corrections has outlined recommended outcome and performance measures and critical data needs for pretrial services programs to help enable agencies to more accurately gauge program effectiveness in meeting goals. By utilizing these recommendations, the Pikes Peak Region will have a better understanding of indicators of success in pretrial services and how to improve and increase successful outcomes.

- **Completed:** A statistics sheet reflecting NIC recommended metrics was developed in 2020 to begin an annual review of data points. This sheet was designed to illustrate outcome and performance measures so trends in improvements can be assessed, and areas that may need additional resources can be recognized. Data points include supervised vs. unsupervised PR Bond cases, court appearance and public safety rates as measures of program success, failure to appear and new charge rates as measures for program improvement needs, and various interview and recommendation related metrics.

Action: Improve pretrial supervision and case management

Objective: Examine the supervision and monitoring practices to determine effective case management of Pretrial Service defendants.

Tasks:

- Adapt additional practices to align with evidence-based pretrial practices.
 - **Ongoing:** Along with aligning with CAPS and NIC national standards, EPC Pretrial Services has increased staff by 83% over the Action Plan period to meet assessment and supervision demands. Staff developed treatment opportunities for defendants assigned conditions of sobriety monitoring to provide resources for managing substance use concerns.
- Measure the level of agreement between the Pretrial Services recommendation matrix and compliance with supervised conditions.
 - **Postponed:** In response to challenges presented by COVID-19 concerns, Pretrial Services suspended many in-person services and has redeveloped protocol with best-practices around health and safety considerations. Additionally, new risk assessment procedures have been developed, and therefore this task was postponed, to be reviewed in the 2022-2024 Action Plan.
- Track the length of time a defendant is on pretrial supervision. Monitoring the length of stay of pretrial defendants will help track costs and identify system-level issues such as court continuances that directly impact the length of stay.
 - **Completed:** Reports within the pretrial database illustrate time spent on a PR Bond during data years 2019-2021. The average number of days under supervision while released on a PR Bond was 108 days. While this average has increased over the Action Plan period due to COVID-19 related challenges in the court system and bonding process and outlier cases that inflate averages, the “mode”, or most frequently observed number of days under supervision is seven.
- Develop a means to survey pretrial defendants and stakeholders to help determine the value of pretrial supervision.
 - **Completed:** Quality assurance and valuation surveys were developed for stakeholder and defendant input on Pretrial Services during the first half of 2021. Survey questions were developed through the review of evidence-based evaluations of participant understanding of the program’s services, mission, resources, and value. The Justice Services graduate student intern made significant contributions to this project.

Strategic Planning Committee

The **Strategic Planning Committee** collects and analyzes past and current criminal justice system data, identifies gaps and deficiencies in the criminal justice system, and makes recommendations to address service gaps. The Committee also researches, analyzes, evaluates, and develops innovative planning and strategy recommendations regarding criminal justice matters.

Action: Monitor CJCC Action Plan Progress

Objective: Oversee the execution of the CJCC Action Plan

Tasks: Over the course of the three-year Action Plan, the Strategic Planning Committee will assist the Council and other committees by tracking the status of committee objectives, providing feedback and resource suggestions, and contribute to the completion of CJCC objectives.

- **Completed:** Meeting quarterly, the SPC maintained an awareness of projects across all CJCC committees and contributed to developing and reviewing major project reports and outcomes for public release. This committee provides oversight of Council operations and efficiency.

Action: Explore Innovative Criminal Justice Strategies

Objective: Explore innovative criminal justice strategies and best practices that may be applicable for implementation in the Pikes Peak region.

Tasks:

- Research evidence-based practices found to be effective in similar jurisdictions.
 - **Completed:** As a major part of the CJCC Internship opportunity, student interns would review innovative strategies utilized nationwide and produce newsletters on topics of interest to the CJCC. These newsletters were released monthly beginning in May 2019, shifting to quarterly releases during 2021, and can be accessed on the CJCC website or through this link: [Innovative Criminal Justice Strategies Newsletters](#).
- Actively participate in the National Network of Criminal Justice Coordinating Councils including attending the NNCJCC annual conference and working with Denver County, who holds a Network Membership, on developing initiatives.
 - **Completed:** Initial outreach to Denver County provided our local CJCC with information on how to structure committees and this Action Plan. The El Paso County Criminal Justice Planner, Dr. Alexis Harper, who coordinates the CJCC's operations, presented original research on the CJCC's Pretrial Community Advisory Board objectives at various national criminal justice and criminology conferences throughout the Action Plan period. Additionally, this Action Plan was selected as a national model for use by the NNCJCC, deemed the "favorite" as reviewed by the national office.
- Research innovative practices designed to divert people from the Criminal Justice Center (CJC) and / or reduce daily CJC population, such as self-surrender and safe-surrender programs.
 - **Ongoing:** In addition to the regular release of Innovative Criminal Justice Strategies Newsletters, many efforts continue to be made regarding reducing the average length of stay at the local jail or in promoting jail diversion efforts, including new strategies in pretrial and behavioral health assessments. EPC Community Services Department received the National Association of Counties (NACo) Innovation Award in 2020 for the local Self-Surrender Project. The project was created to help low-risk offenders sentenced to community corrections maintain their responsibilities in the community between sentencing and the start of their sentence in a local residential program rather than being remanded to custody.

Action: Establish an Internship Program

Objective: Establish a Criminal Justice Internship Program.

Tasks:

- Develop the duties and responsibilities for designated internships.
 - **Completed:** Internship duties primarily revolve around assisting in research literature reviews, project design and development, creating newsletters, tracking legislation and active bills during legislative sessions, and general copy editing and document formatting for public release.
- Inform local colleges and universities of the internship opportunities appropriate for students.
 - **Completed:** The University of Colorado Colorado Springs (UCCS) has been an extremely valuable partner. Justice Services staff provided UCCS Criminal Justice Program Internship Coordinators with materials highlighting internship goals and responsibilities and participated in several internship informational panels on opportunities for students to contribute to CJCC efforts.
- Complete the recruitment process for paid and / or non-paid interns.
 - **Completed:** From 2019 to 2021, eight undergraduate students, and one graduate student within the UCCS Criminal Justice Program completed their internship requirements for graduation with EPC Justice Services and the CJCC. The graduate student also completed their Capstone Project with Justice Services, contributing to accomplishing CJCC research goals in Pretrial Services.

Action: Explore Data Sharing Opportunities

Objective: Explore data collection and sharing opportunities between CJCC stakeholders.

Tasks:

- Determine the feasibility of developing an integrated data system, what agencies would be involved, and how information can more readily be shared without compromising security.
 - **Completed:** A data sharing Memorandum of Understanding between El Paso County and the State Court Judicial System was drafted during 2020 and approved by Judicial in quarter 4. The agreement allows for in-depth statistical analyses to determine patterns of justice involvement, charges, and offending in our community, and guide recommendations for improving systemwide outcomes. Additionally, many opportunities for data sharing grew throughout this Action Plan, including collaboration on addressing the needs of individuals who intersect criminal justice and behavioral health service areas. A data integration survey was distributed among CJCC partners in quarter 2 of 2021 to help assess information sharing, opportunities, and data collection and analysis abilities among partners. The results can be reviewed on the CJCC website or through this link: [CJCC Data Integration Survey and Analysis](#).
- Collaborate with the Financial Resources Committee to determine potential third-party funding sources to support the development of the integrated data system.
 - **Completed:** Various funding opportunities for database development and management have been identified and are available for review on the CJCC website on through this link: [Database Management Funding Opportunities](#)

Action: Family Justice Center Development

Objective: Support the continued exploration of a Family Justice Center.

Tasks: Complete a feasibility study to determine potential partners, facility needs, funding sources, and program opportunities.

- **Completed:** Contracts with local domestic violence victim's support organizations and a local market research firm made this feasibility study possible. Results indicated that resources would be better utilized when distributed to existing services, rather than through the creation of a new center. Study outcomes can be viewed on the CJCC website or through this link: [Family Justice Center Feasibility Study](#)

Financial Resources Committee

The **Financial Resources Committee** serves to explore and/or pursue legislative, federal, state, local and third-party funding opportunities to support our criminal justice system.

Action: Research and Support CJCC Actions

Objective: Identify potential grant and funding opportunities for the CJCC Committees based on specific committee objective funding needs.

Tasks: Develop a list of potential funders and grants that would promote the achievement of the other CJCC committees' objectives.

- **Ongoing:** Various public and private grant and funding opportunities available to support partner efforts have been identified and are available for review on the CJCC website or through this link: [Funding Sources](#)
- Work with the committees to establish reasonable timelines for the research, application, and award of funds for their objectives.
 - **Ongoing:** Collaboration has always been encouraged between partners, and communication of developing projects allows partners to be aware of intersections in interests to reduce duplication of efforts. Partners continue to work together and are knowledgeable about lines of funding applied for and awarded through grant tracking spreadsheets that provide an overview of criminal justice related project investments. The grant tracking spreadsheets can be viewed on the CJCC website or through this link: [CJCC Grant Tracking](#)
- Utilize El Paso County's memberships in the National Network of Criminal Justice Coordinating Councils and the National Association of Counties as potential funding opportunities arise.
 - **Ongoing:** The NNCJCC and NACo are both listed in the funding sources document and updates about funding opportunities through these sources are shared with partners when new information is made available.
- Develop proposal templates.
 - **Completed:** Templates for the general information requested in grant applications for specific annual grants, such as those provided through the Justice Assistance Grant Program, have been developed to help partners prepare an application, what types of programs are usually awarded funding, and timelines for when application portals typically open annually.

Action: Research and Support Resources for Community Criminal Justice Projects

Objective: Explore criminal justice funding opportunities that can be utilized for a variety of projects, along with effective ways to share information with stakeholders in a timely manner.

Tasks:

- Develop a list of potential funders and grants that would benefit criminal justice-oriented projects in the region to be shared on the county's website.
 - **Ongoing:** This task merged with the first task in the first objective regarding the development of a list of potential funders and grants that would promote the achievement of CJCC objectives, where a list of potential funders and grants can be reviewed on the CJCC website or through this link: [Funding Sources](#)
- Create a distribution list of individuals interested in criminal justice grant opportunities.
 - **Completed:** As the CJCC membership has with interested and engaged partners and collaborators, these resources have been made available to share with the community.

- Pursue additional funding for residential community corrections and auxiliary services.
 - **Completed:** During the Action Plan period, fiscal year funds increased almost 50% from five years earlier, with additional supplemental funds received for local vendors to increase the number of beds available for residential services and increase administrative support for services.

Action: Integrated Data System

Objective: Help determine the potential funding sources for developing an integrated data system among criminal justice agencies in the Pikes Peak Region.

Tasks: Use the feasibility study designed by the Strategic Planning Committee to seek funding for implementing an integrated data system.

- **Completed:** Aligning with accomplishments from the SPC on exploring data sharing and integration opportunities, a list of funding opportunities for database development and management was created for partners seeking to grow their data collection and analysis efforts. This resource can be reviewed on the CJCC website through this link: [Database Management Funding Opportunities](#)

Behavioral Health Committee and Steering Committee

The **Behavioral Health Committee** strives to bring together local service providers, agencies, and stakeholders to identify ongoing issues and gaps for people with mental health and/or co-occurring substance use concerns within the criminal justice system. The Committee is focused on prevention, diversion, and reducing recidivism.

Action: Hold a Behavioral Health/Criminal Justice Summit

Objective: Organize a Behavioral Health/Criminal Justice Summit within the Pikes Peak Region to bring together local service providers, agencies, and stakeholders to identify ongoing issues and gaps and propose solutions. It is important for various agencies to understand each other's services and responsibilities as a network is built to service community members with behavioral and mental health and substance use concerns.

Tasks:

- Host a summit within El Paso County, bringing together various criminal justice and behavioral health agencies/ stakeholders and generate a report outlining the results of the summit, knowledge gained, what the summit achieved, and next steps.
 - **Completed:** A Criminal Justice and Behavioral Health Summit was hosted by the CJCC in quarter 1 of 2019. Topics included discussing opportunities for diverting individuals with behavioral health concerns from jail, assisting those who have become justice-involved, and meeting basic needs. The Post-Summit Summary and a Summit Video can be viewed on the CJCC website or at the following links: [2019 Criminal Justice and Behavioral Health Summit Summary](#); [Summit Video](#)
- Extend invitations to agencies and stakeholders across the Pikes Peak Region.
 - **Completed:** The Summit brought together nearly 100 representatives from more than 45 criminal justice agencies and behavioral health services organizations and providers, and offered a forum to identify gaps in services and promote solutions to problems that intersect these topic areas.

Action: Expand Behavioral Health Services

Objective: Explore the need for additional behavioral health services and facilities in the Pikes Peak Region.

Tasks:

- Identify existing services and gaps in services, and a plan for how to fill these gaps by creating systems-wide case management through the coordination of services for offenders. These systems will be databases for informational sharing and personal advocates.
 - **Completed:** In 2019, the CJCC garnered \$100,000 through contributions from partners and a Colorado Springs Health Foundation grant, to hire Health Management Associates as a consulting firm to complete a Criminal Justice and Behavioral Health Gaps and Needs Analysis of the Pikes Peak Region. The study was completed in 2020, identifying several priority areas of focus, including expanding opportunities, efforts, and resources in diversion, treatment, reentry, community navigation, prevention, and data analytics. Recommendations resulted in the redevelopment of the Behavioral Health Committee into a Behavioral Health (BH) Steering Committee with workgroups designated to focus on the highest priority areas. The findings of the study can be reviewed on the CJCC website or through this link: [CJCC Behavioral Health Gaps and Needs Analysis of the Pikes Peak Region](#)

- Develop a guide of supportive services (housing, transportation, food, medical care, Veteran’s affairs, etc.) and information on how to enroll, access, and consume or utilize these services.
 - **Completed:** The Committee determined that the Helping Hands guide was comprehensive and regularly updated through the Pikes Peak Library District. Therefore, efforts were made to contribute to the list of services within the Helping Hands Community Resources Guide to help promote a single, go-to guide for services and resources within the region. The guide can be viewed at this link: [Helping Hands El Paso County Community Resources](#)
- Create an understanding of Medicaid benefits and other payer systems for incarcerated individuals.
 - **Completed:** Multiple partners contributed to drafting flow-charts to illustrate how individuals with different needs, including those reentering the community after incarceration, are connected to services. With a better understanding of process pitfalls, new efforts were developed in discharge planning, service referral, and Medicaid enrollment at the local jail in conjunction with the local Regional Accountability Entity (RAE) that oversees Medicaid.
- Evaluate and make recommendations regarding system challenges for individuals who cycle repeatedly through the criminal justice system.
 - **Completed:** This evaluation and related recommendations are available within the [CJCC Behavioral Health Gaps and Needs Analysis of the Pikes Peak Region](#).
- Seek a Colorado Springs Health Foundation Grant to support a study of existing and essential behavioral health resources within the Pikes Peak Region.
 - **Completed:** The CJCC is very thankful for the \$60,000 Capacity-Building and Technical Assistance Grant award in 2019 by the Colorado Springs Health Foundation to support the [CJCC Behavioral Health Gaps and Needs Analysis of the Pikes Peak Region](#).

Action: Utilize Jail Diversion Opportunities

Objective: Enhance the diversion of defendants with behavioral and mental health concerns from jail.

Tasks:

- Serve as the Steering Committee for the El Paso County Sheriff’s Office co-responder patrol unit, the Behavioral Health Connect Unit (BHCON). Pairing Sheriff’s Deputies with licensed behavioral health clinicians, the goal of the BHCON unit is to prevent unnecessary incarceration and/or hospitalization of individuals with mental health concerns by providing crisis intervention and linking clients to community programs that can support and sustain their mental health stability.
 - **Completed:** BHCON expanded into additional units in 2020 and 2021, managing to divert an overwhelming majority of mental health 911 calls from jail and emergency rooms, while increasing referral, follow-up, and administrative services. The Colorado Springs Behavioral Health Control Committee, which is made up of agencies engaged in crisis work in EPC and includes the majority of BHCON stakeholders, agreed to become the new steering committee for BHCON when this committee transitioned to the BH Steering Committee in 2021.
- Develop a resource guide for law enforcement to use when interacting with the community and offenders as a means for referring the public to various services.
 - **Completed:** In 2020, The EPC Sheriff’s Office and BHCON developed a pocket guide for law enforcement to utilize in behavioral health related calls to assist in referrals to local services.
- Actively participate in the Stepping Up Initiative, a national initiative to reduce the number of people with mental illness in jails. Work to complete the county self-assessment on implementation progress through www.stepuptogether.org.
 - **Completed:** The Stepping Up County Self-Assessment was completed in quarter 2 of 2020, reviewing leadership commitment to reducing the number of people in jail with mental illness, and mental-health related assessment, data, analysis, services, policies, practices, and abilities to track progress. The assessment is a living document to be updated with new efforts.

Transition to Workforce Committee

The **Transition to Workforce Committee** strives to create workforce connections for Pikes Peak Region residents with criminal convictions who may have difficulty finding employment. A healthier and safer community can be built by increasing effective collaboration, planning, and information sharing, while promoting restorative justice and focusing on offender reconciliation with the community.

Action: Build an Employer Association

Objective: Further expansion of the Employer Association.

Tasks:

- Develop a network of employers willing to participate in information gathering events about barriers to employing ex-offenders, and develop means for addressing these concerns to increase the hiring and employment of individuals with a criminal record.
 - **Completed:** The Committee maintained a spreadsheet of almost 70 different businesses and services willing to hire individuals with a criminal history. Many of these contacts were established through local Probation and Parole offices helping their clients find employment opportunities.
- Release regular news updates to Employer Association members highlighting employers of interest and other important and educational information subscribers may find helpful.
 - **Ongoing:** At the beginning of 2019, the Committee established a LinkedIn page to release newsletters and blogs with information on the benefits of hiring ex-offenders, including tax credits and job retention metrics demonstrating that individuals with a criminal history often make better, long-term employees worth investment in hiring by employers. The LinkedIn page can be viewed through this link: [CJCC Transition to Workforce Committee LinkedIn](#)

Action: Hold Regular Employer Association Events

Objective: Organize at least two events per year to act as networking opportunities between CJCC stakeholders, employers, and ex-offenders to help determine barriers to hiring offenders.

Tasks:

- Host various events within the Pikes Peak Region, bringing together employers willing to hire ex-offenders and generate a report assessing the results of these events, knowledge gained, and next steps toward connecting employers with potential employees.
 - **Completed:** Multiple events were hosted in 2019 to learn about barriers to employment for justice-involved individuals from the employer perspective and to present employers with information on the benefits of hiring these individuals. In response to COVID-19 concerns and the inability to safely conduct in-person events, the strategy shifted away from the Employer Association in 2020, to working with service providers and trade associations on promoting skills training and job readiness to help grow employability.
- Enlist guest speakers that can provide information to employers on a variety of relevant topics regarding employing ex-offenders as well as a networking opportunity.
 - **Completed:** Employer Association Event presenters included Springs Rescue Mission, Pikes Peak Workforce Center, and Colorado Community Health Alliance, each providing information on how their organization helps promote employability among justice-involved populations.

Action: Reduce Employment Barriers for Individuals with a Criminal History

Objective: Explore ways to prevent employees with criminal records from missing work for Probation/Parole Officer (PO) meetings and urine analysis (UA) testing, including extending office hours for these services for before/after work hours.

Tasks: Explore the extension of office hours for PO meetings and UA testing, and the exploration for expanding options such as the implementation of a mobile UA unit.

- **Completed:** Employers expressed concerns around hiring justice-involved individuals who would have to regularly leave work, halting their productivity, to check-in as a condition of their incarceration release. In 2020, Parole Officers began a new client check-in protocol involving site visits, reducing the need for clients to leave work to report. Additionally, office hours were expanded to open at 7AM and close at 6PM to accommodate necessary check-ins around regular business and working hours.

Action: Utilize local Workforce Centers

Objective: Further develop Pikes Peak Region Workforce Centers programs to assist those with a criminal history.

Tasks:

- Develop a tracking mechanism for the citizens referred to and receiving services from the workforce centers for follow-up purposes to determine service effectiveness.
 - **Ongoing:** Grants within the Pikes Peak Workforce Center (PPWFC) specific to serving justice-involved populations include Road to Work and Pathway Home. Funds help cover the costs for a participant's training programs and supportive services, assisting these individuals in finding long term employment, often prior to release from a correctional facility, with continuing services after release for transition into reentry programs in the community. During the last full fiscal year of this Action Plan (FY20-21), the PPWFC reported serving over 1,400 ex-offenders.
- Utilize job and resource fairs and on the job training events by working with hosting agencies to bring offenders and employers together to explore opportunities.
 - **Ongoing:** Prior to COVID-19 restrictions on holding large events in person, many of our Employers Association members were encouraged to attend job recruitment fairs. These events included setting up tables for Probation and Parole to offer a specific resource for justice-involved job seekers and help direct them to employers willing to hire ex-offenders. With a shift to more remote resources, job seekers guides have become available through the PPWFC website. Ex-offenders are often referred to upskilling resources which assist in skill development and job placement services. Visit the PPWFC Upskills website for more details: [PPWFC Upskill Job Resources](#)
- Identify courses currently being offered at the workforce centers, and gaps in knowledge or resources that would help improve employability. Develop, promote and share curriculum and courses that fill these employability gaps, including soft skills training and information that focuses on improving socialization skills (resume building, proper work attire, hygiene, etiquette, etc.).
 - **Ongoing:** There are many resources, courses, trainings, and workshops available through the PPWFC, focusing on building a career, business, and basic workplace skills. Visit the primary PPWFC website and explore their services for more information: <https://ppwfc.org/> Many trade associations have developed agreements through grant programs to assist in paying for training for justice-involved individuals, highlighting the importance of giving a second chance.

Legislative Affairs Committee

The **Legislative Affairs Committee** works to monitor and communicate with the CJCC regarding proposed legislative and regulatory issues, and to forecast the potential impacts legislative initiatives could have on the Pikes Peak Region criminal justice system. This committee annually develops CJCC Legislative Priorities for consideration and / or approval by the CJCC, works closely with CJCC member lobbyists to provide information regarding those priorities, and monitors proposed legislation to benefit the Pikes Peak Region.

Action: General Monitoring of Criminal Justice Legislation

Objective: Monitor and communicate regularly with CJCC members regarding proposed legislative and regulatory issues that could potentially impact the Pikes Peak Region Criminal Justice System.

Tasks:

- Identify potential criminal justice issues that may generate proposed bills during the next legislative session.
 - **Ongoing:** Bills that are lost or postponed indefinitely during a legislative session are often rewritten to address concerns and are subsequently reintroduced in a later legislative session. The Committee reviews and highlights bills that gained traction during the session but ultimately did not pass, as these are very likely to be reconsidered in the future.
- Track proposed legislation during the legislative session.
 - **Ongoing:** A CJCC Bill Report was generated at the start of the 2019 legislative session, and during the 2020 and 2021 sessions, this report was updated and released weekly to members. The bill tracking sheet provides information on relevant bills that align with CJCC Action Plan objectives. The reports include a link to the Colorado Capitol Watch website for each bill, a general topic area, the bill's title, sponsors, summary, and status. The tracking sheets feature separate tabs for listing bills that are postponed indefinitely or sent to the Governor to be signed into law, allowing members to track the progress of bills and the final decision on the bill throughout the legislative session.
- Provide the CJCC with information and updates regarding the status of bills throughout the legislative process.
 - **Ongoing:** In addition to receiving bill reports weekly, the Committee holds special legislative session update calls with members to discuss bills gaining major traction, which are anticipated to have a significant impact if passed. These calls are valuable for gaining different insights from partners who are expected to be differentially impacted by a bill. Some legislation may benefit some partners, while being a detriment to others, highlighting the importance of systemwide collaboration to continue to promote a holistic approach to justice services.
- Build relationships with El Paso County legislators who focus on criminal justice related issues.
 - **Ongoing:** Local legislators are regularly invited to attend legislative session update calls and CJCC meetings.

Action: Develop Annual CJCC Legislative Priorities

Objective: Identify and monitor legislation of specific interest to CJCC members and partners.

Tasks:

- Review CJCC Committee Action Items within the CJCC 2019-2021 Action Plan and highlight legislation which could impact specific CJCC objectives, including bills related to law enforcement, Pretrial Services, Community Corrections, workforce opportunities for justice-involved individuals, and behavioral health services.

- **Ongoing:** The Action Plan has always served as a guide for maintaining the CJCC Bill Report, with support from members on keeping the focus specific to the agreed upon topic areas outlined in the Action Plan. The Bill Report serves as an informational resource to provide factual updates to partners with the understanding that interests and impacts across partners may vary, and the information provided should avoid bias.
- Work with the CJCC to develop Legislative Priorities for each year’s legislative session that will enhance the Pikes Peak Region’s Criminal Justice System.
 - **Completed:** In quarter 3 of 2020, a Legislative Interests and Priorities survey was distributed to CJCC partners, allowing the Committee to gain insight from local health and service providers, government representatives, law enforcement, officials at the District Attorney’s Office, Parole, and local educators. Overall, respondents stated that collaboration on legislative topics is important but suggested the variety of topics be limited and specific. Topic areas ranked as being of the highest interest were law enforcement, followed by community corrections and behavioral health, and then judicial topics in pretrial and sentencing. This collaboration provides helpful insight into keeping the Criminal Justice Bill Report to legislation relevant to CJCC interests and outlined by the Action Plan.
- Forecast potential effects and impacts of bills highlighted as priority for the CJCC, and provide information relevant to improving positive impacts, and reducing negative impacts, especially regarding unfunded mandates, for all CJCC member interests.
 - **Ongoing:** Legislative update calls have been extremely beneficial in understanding how a bill may impact different partners in different ways. Partners indicate they appreciate the dialogue during these calls as they can hear and consider how a bill will impact a service provider vs. a government agency.
- Monitor implementation of newly passed legislation and/or newly adopted rules that impact CJCC interests.
 - **Ongoing:** As bills are signed into law and come into effect, the Committee reports on the plan for addressing new mandates from each partner affected. This communication allows all partners to be aware of protocol shifts and new operational procedures so collaboration can be maintained and services can continue without major disruption.

Action: Inform On Legislation and Decision-Making

Objective: Provide legislative information and open dialog between CJCC members, partners, and lobbyists regarding proposed legislation.

Tasks:

- Create a forum for communication between agencies differentially impacted by specific legislation.
 - **Ongoing:** Legislative update calls have been a very valuable forum for discussion.
- Provide the CJCC with timely information on bills so members can participate in informed decision-making.
 - **Ongoing:** The CJCC Bill Report is released weekly and uploaded to the CJCC Microsoft Team for easy access.
- Encourage discussion on appropriate responses for a system level approach to proposed legislation, in order to minimize conflicting lobbying efforts by members.
 - **Completed:** Reviewing legislative interests and priorities among CJCC partners during CJCC meetings and through legislative updates has been integral in helping promote awareness of legislative impacts. This review also maintains a collaborative partnership to ensure the community’s best interests are always held as the primary priorities.