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**No Violence Alliance (NoVA) Project:  
San Francisco's Model Adult Case Management Reentry  
Program**

by

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### **The Center on Juvenile and Criminal Justice: An Overview**

Established in 1985 as the Western Regional Office of the National Center on Institutions and Alternatives (NCIA), the Center on Juvenile and Criminal Justice (CJCJ) is a nonprofit nonpartisan organization promoting a balanced and humane criminal justice system through the provision of direct services, technical assistance, public education, and policy analysis. CJCJ maintains a professional staff with diverse backgrounds and expertise. CJCJ's senior staff members possess over 30 years of experience in the criminal and juvenile justice field that includes program operations, policy development and analysis, technical assistance, nonprofit management, program evaluation, and organizational reform. Headquartered in San Francisco, California, CJCJ is among the leading criminal justice agencies in the nation.

## I. Introduction

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Incarceration has become an important issue in America. The incarceration rate in the United States has increased by 264% from 1980 to 2007 (Bureau of Justice Statistics, 2010). In 2008 there were more than 2.3 million people incarcerated in the United States (Pew Center on the States, 2008). Due to the high incarceration rate, more than 600,000 incarcerated individuals are released annually into communities across the United States (Bahr, Armstrong, Gibbs, Harris, & Fisher, 2005; Petersilia, 2004). California specifically has high incarceration rates that have been on the rise since the 1970's.

The most recent data from the California Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation (CDCR) reveals that 142,954 individuals were sentenced to state prison in 2008. Of those admitted, 66% were parolees admitted for a new commitment or parole violation. However, fewer individuals were discharged than admitted in 2008 with 139,535 individuals being released from custody or released conditionally on parole. Of this population 2,362 were paroled to San Francisco County (See Table 1) (California Department of Corrections & Rehabilitation [CDCR], 2009; Department of Corrections & Rehabilitation, 2009).

Table 1

<b>California Department of Corrections &amp; Rehabilitation Annual Population</b>	<b>2008</b>
Admitted	142,954
Released	139,535
Released on Parole to San Francisco	2,362

(Source: CDCR, 2009 and Department of Corrections & Rehabilitation, 2009)

In addition to the state correction population, individual counties also experience high incarceration rates. The most recent data for San Francisco County Jails shows that there was an average daily population of 1,976 in 2007 (See Table 2) (Criminal Justice Statistics Center (CJSC), n.d.[3]). Of the individuals incarcerated in San Francisco jails, 669 individuals were sentenced to state prison and 4,201 were sentenced to jail (CJSC, n.d.[2]), see Table 2. Additionally, as of December 31, 2007 there were 8,875 individuals on adult probation in San Francisco County (CJSC, n.d.[1]), see Table 1.

Table 2

<b>San Francisco County Jail Population</b>	<b>2007</b>
Average daily population	1,976
Sentenced to prison	669
Sentenced to jail	4,201
On Probation in San Francisco	8,875

(Source: CJSC, n.d.[1] and CJSC, n.d.[2] and CJSC, n.d.[3])

Overall, approximately 95% of incarcerated individuals will be released back into the community (Bureau of Justice Statistics, 2010). The transition process from prison or jail back to the community is often referred to as reentry. Different from reentry, reintegration is the process of an individual becoming part of the community to which they are released. As a result of so many individuals returning to the community each year, reentry has become an area of great concern. California has a recidivism rate of approximately 60% (CDCR, 2009). Out of the

individuals paroled to San Francisco in 2008, 75% had paroled more than once. Possible explanations for the incredibly high levels of recidivism are a lack of in-custody programming, individuals released from prison or jail go from a controlled environment to communities where there is little structure, the lack of reentry services, and the lack of aftercare services.

Reentry can be an extremely stressful process for the individual in transition, for those who have a relationship with the individual, and for the community. Stressors during this period may arise because offenders often have no financial savings, no housing, substance abuse issues, and few resources to assist in compliance with parole or probation requirements. In addition to these issues, it has become increasingly difficult for individuals with a criminal record to obtain employment. Due to its importance to communities, the reentry process has been the focus of several studies (Bahr et al., 2005; Cullen & Gendreau, 2001; Zhang, Roberts, & Callanan, 2006).

In the past, much of the research was focused on identifying unsuccessful programs and the negative results of such programs. In the 1970's there was an increase in crime rates and consequently an increase in the prison population. During this time, incarceration was focused on rehabilitation. However rehabilitation was challenged with the idea that punishment would work better to incapacitate individuals from committing further crimes. Martinson (1974) conducted an analysis of 231 program evaluations and concluded that rehabilitation does not work because offenders have a high propensity to be involved in criminal activity.

While early research may have focused on the defects of the individual who committed crimes (Ekland-Olson, Supanic, Campbell, & Lenihan, 1983), more recent studies have explored outside factors that affect reentry, such as visitation and in-prison programming (Bahr et al., 2005). Other research has focused on how a social network can be built through community-based organizations to increase successful reentry (Zhang et al., 2006). Current research on reentry has addressed a wide range of factors; several key factors such as social support, family, education, and employment have been found to positively affect reentry. In addition to education and employment issues, community-based reentry has also been examined as a method to assist previously incarcerated individuals, as there is a greater need to support individuals with their transition post-release.

Recently there has been a focus on "what works." Researchers such as Jeremy Travis argue that there must be a combined effort between corrections, the community, and parole and probation departments. This collaboration is essential if we are to assist released individuals in the reentry process (Travis, 2005). Furthermore, there has been an increase in research on how evidence-based practices promote reintegration and reduce recidivism. State systems such as the CDCR are seeking in-prison programs that can prove their effectiveness by incorporating evidence-based practices into their programs. In addition to evidence-based practices, there has been a focus on model reentry programs, which often incorporate evidence-based practices. States such as Georgia, Michigan, Oregon, New York, and Missouri are incorporating evidence-based practices into their prison systems (Burke, 2008). This movement is central in the development of model systems that reduce recidivism rates and increase public safety.

This report explores the history of releasing individuals from incarceration and how model reentry programs can assist in the reentry process. The benefits to formerly incarcerated

individuals and society are discussed. The report further describes similar qualities between model programs in the United States. Finally, it highlights a San Francisco model reentry project, the No Violence Alliance (NoVA) Project that was initiated by the San Francisco Sheriff's Department in collaboration with the Center on Juvenile and Criminal Justice (CJ CJ) and other community based organizations.

## **II. History**

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Throughout the 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> centuries, the United States' approach to sentencing and transition services has varied. In the early 1800's, individuals were given determinate sentences, a specified time to serve in custody resulting in overcrowded facilities (Allen, Eskridge, Latessa, & Vito, 1985). In an attempt to reduce overcrowding, governors had the power to grant pardons to incarcerated individuals, which they often granted to large numbers of people at one time. Additionally, to help reduce the incarcerated population, New York was the first state to implement good time laws in 1817. This method soon spread to other states (Allen et al., 1985; Bottomley, 1990); however, overcrowding continued to remain a problem. Attempting to reduce prison populations, states shifted to indeterminate sentencing. New York was the first to implement indeterminate sentencing in 1869 (Allen et al., 1985). In the 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> centuries, indeterminate sentencing did not set minimum or maximum terms, instead a parole board was given the discretion to determine whether an individual had reformed and was no longer a danger to society. If the parole board found individuals suitable for release, they were released. It was expected that this change in the release process would motivate offenders to reform.

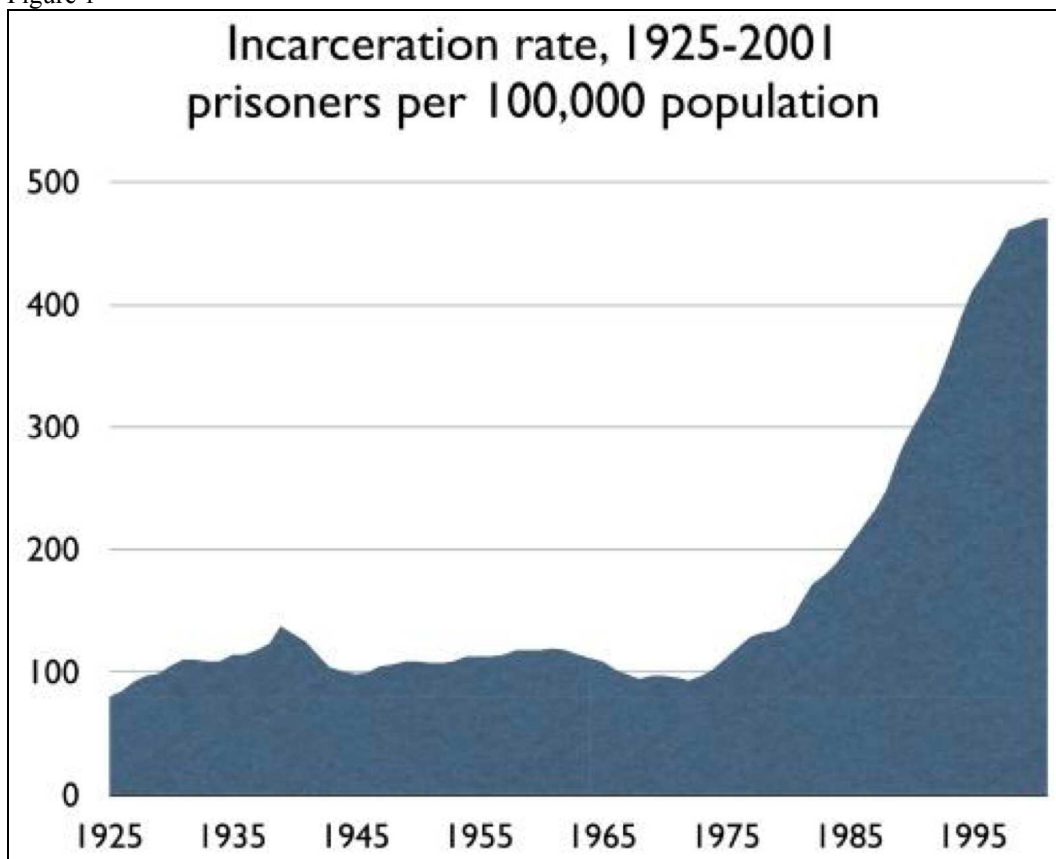
With the implementation of indeterminate sentencing, the concept of parole was created. New York established the Elmira Reformatory in 1876 which was intended for individuals aged 16-30 years old (Allen et al., 1985; Bottomley, 1990; Dressler, 1969). Individuals who exhibited acceptable behavior while incarcerated could receive a conditional release. Individuals remained under state supervision while under this conditional release. However, if individuals did not exhibit acceptable behavior while in the community and did not comply with established rules, they could be returned to Elmira. By 1944, every state had a similar parole system (Allen et al., 1985; Dressler, 1969). With a system now in place to monitor the transition from incarceration to the community, society went through various ideological phases on sentencing, and assisting individuals with the transition.

Through the 1960's to the mid 1970's there was a focus on rehabilitation (Mauer, 2001; Paparozzi, 2003). Community programs were utilized to assist in the rehabilitation of individuals. This began the implementation of services such as vocational training, education courses, therapy, and work release for individuals, either while incarcerated or post-release. Work furloughs occurred where individuals were given a pass to leave the institution and go to the community and search for a job, finalize a job with an employer, or receive services such as vocational training, to assist in obtaining employment. Furloughs were implemented to ease individuals' transition post-release and to help reduce the negative effects of incarceration (Cheliotis, 2008).

Government funding was also provided to halfway houses during this period. Although halfway houses had existed since the early 1800's, they were previously run by private organizations and did not receive government funding (Alarid, Cromwell, & Del Carmen, 2007; Allen et al., 1985). Halfway houses were viewed as a way to ease individuals back into the community from incarceration. Reentry may be difficult because an individual exists from a very structured environment. Halfway houses were a way to provide minimum structure, while allowing individuals freedom and providing access to services such as therapy or job placement assistance. However, even with a focus on rehabilitation, results did not reduce recidivism. This resulted in a shift in the ideological stance.

A crime control model was adopted from the mid 1970's to the early 1980's, with a focus on offender punishment and justice for victims (Paparozzi, 2003). The numbers of incarcerated individuals increased during this time due to harsher laws caused by the tough on crime perspectives of politicians (Mauer, 2001). The drug war began in the 1980's and mandatory minimums for possession and distribution were implemented resulting in a large increase in the incarcerated population.

Figure 1



(Source: Prison Policy Initiative, n.d.)

During the mid 1980's to late 1990's there was a concentration on punishment and treatment intervention (Paparozzi, 2003). States began to receive increased funding for the construction of prisons, while funding to build institutions of higher education decreased. The number of prisons was at an all time high. Due to the expansion of prisons, there was an increase in correctional

staff outnumbering community social service workers (Justice Policy Institute, 2001). While a large number of correctional staff is necessary for prisons to function effectively, an even larger number of social service workers in the community are needed to assist individuals post-release.

In 1986 Willie Horton, a convicted murderer in Massachusetts, was released on a 48-hour furlough and absconded. Horton committed armed robbery, assault, and rape. Governor Dukakis, the governor of Massachusetts at the time, had approved a furlough program for first-degree murderers and was therefore held accountable for Horton's actions. Although studies of work release provided evidence that these programs were effective at reducing recidivism, this incident caused a decrease in furlough use due to the political ramifications that resulted for politicians.

The 21<sup>st</sup> century brought a focus on community involvement, collaboration between different agencies, and reentry programs to reduce recidivism and the number of incarcerated individuals. The budget crisis and unacceptable incarceration rates helped facilitate this shift. Community involvement has become critical since corrections departments lack the funding to assist incarcerated individuals with rehabilitation and reentry. The current shift is focused on reducing the incarcerated population and assisting individuals in successfully reintegrating.

### **III. Model Reentry Programs**

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In fiscal year 2009-2010, the CDCR's budget was cut by \$1.2 billion (CDCR, n.d.). The \$1.2 billion cut spread throughout the CDCR causing a major decrease in available programming within institutions, specifically education, vocation, and substance abuse programs (CDCR, n.d.). Subsequently, there is a greater need for collaboration between outside agencies and corrections to assist incarcerated individuals in pre-release planning.

Model reentry programs have received increasing attention as an effective method to reduce recidivism rates and increase public safety. Effective reentry programs maximize the use of community-based organizations, minimize the use of supervision agencies, and utilize case management services. Collaboration between corrections departments, parole and probation departments, and community-based organizations is vital if a program is to be successful. Collaboration has become an essential component as all stakeholders have an interest in reentry. Furthermore, each of the stakeholders can assist incarcerated individuals to maximize service provision.

The Center on Juvenile and Criminal Justice (CJ CJ) advocates for a model in which two systems, government and non-profits, collaborate to achieve the goals of decreasing incarceration rates, increasing community-based support, and intensifying case management. Nonprofit organizations work with the government at all stages of the judicial process to create best outcomes. This model is effective due to its maximum utilization of community-based resources. This reduces the roles of supervision agencies by providing resources and connecting individuals to specific resources. Additionally, the focus on case management is critical because it aids individuals in successful reintegration.

Case management is the process by which a staff person is given responsibility for the assessment, planning, referral, monitoring, and evaluation of an individual's progress during the reentry process. Case management is effective because an individualized care plan is created for each client. Case managers work directly with incarcerated individuals to determine their specific needs. The case manager identifies agencies in the community where the individual can go to obtain additional needed resources. Case management allows for pre and post-release assistance. Planning pre-release is vital because it provides the individual with a plan to follow upon release. Individuals who have a pre-release plan and have been connected to resources, such as placement in a transitional home, transitional program, or in a treatment program, are more likely to succeed than individuals released without a plan. However, assistance post-release is also important. The individual may have a change in needs and may require assistance in obtaining further resources. One of the important details of intensive case management is that the individual is included in the planning process, therefore increasing client accountability and empowerment. The client essentially creates the plan, and the case manager assists his/her clients in achieving their goals.

While it is important to have supervision agencies involved in the individual's activities and reentry process, these agencies are often not able to provide sufficient case management due to their extremely large caseloads. Alternatively, community based organizations can provide case management while requiring individuals to report to a probation or parole officer. Such a model allows the case manager to have a smaller caseload and therefore permit more quality time with each client. This facilitates a stronger relationship between the client and case manager, creating a higher probability that the client will go to their case manager during a crisis. Programs that offer these services are becoming increasingly important.

Programs throughout the country are working towards becoming model reentry programs to reduce the incarcerated population and lower recidivism. Many model programs are utilizing evidence-based practices. Two such programs are Project Choice in Oakland, California and the Michigan Prisoner Reentry Initiative (MPRI). Programs such as these have similar elements to the No Violence Alliance (NoVA) Project in San Francisco, California.

Each program utilizes case management to assist previously incarcerated individuals successfully reintegrate into society. Initially, Project Choice, MPRI, and NoVA each conduct assessments to determine clients' risks and needs (Hatchuel, Tabernik, & Associates, 2006; Schrantz, 2007). The assessment assists the case manager in determining what services the client requires. MPRI uses the parole officer as a case manager. Project Choice and NoVA, two community-based organizations, utilize case managers who were previously incarcerated or reside in similar communities as the clients. All three programs provide a variety of services for clients to ensure client needs are met. Additionally, collaboration between corrections and community-based organizations is key in all three programs.

Increased attention to and development of model reentry programs shows to be beneficial to society. However such programs vary in their design and implementation. NoVA is a project designed to address the problematic transition from incarceration to society.



## **VI. No Violence Alliance (NoVA) Project**

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In recent years there has been increasing violence occurring in three areas of San Francisco, California: Bayview Hunters Point, the Mission District, and the Western Addition. In five of the past seven years, these neighborhoods combined accounted for at least fifty percent of the homicides in San Francisco. The leading cause of premature death in Bayview Hunters Point is homicide. In addition to homicide, gang violence and high levels of drug sales are present. In 2006, the San Francisco Sheriff's Department (SFSD) initiated the No Violence Alliance Project to address the violence in these neighborhoods.

At the outset, NoVA was created to assist individuals with violent convictions leaving San Francisco county jails and state prison. Due to different funding streams, NoVA shifted its focus away from individuals leaving state prison solely to individuals released from San Francisco county jails. Currently, NoVA assists violent and non-violent offenders leaving San Francisco county jails.

One of the unique aspects of NoVA is the collaboration between different governmental and non-profit entities, which allows for the project's success. In the beginning of the project, SFSD engaged local community based organizations in a dialogue to determine what service delivery model would work best for a violent population. Based on an analysis of needed services, a collective of San Francisco-based organizations came together to provide the necessary services. This collaborative effort is essential to provide a variety of community-based culturally competent services. Each organization provides a variety of services including housing, mental health services, case management, and employment assistance.

NoVA provides pre-release planning to in-custody clients that have self-selected themselves to participate in the voluntary program. San Francisco Pre-Trial Diversion conducts an assessment of individuals who choose to participate. In addition to those in-custody, individuals who are not in-custody can also become NoVA participants. Individuals who are accepted and make a commitment to the program are assigned a case manager. Case managers are assigned based on availability and personalities. Some case managers work better with different personalities, such as senior populations. This is taken into account to maximize the effectiveness of case management. The in-custody population begins the relationship with their case manager while detained. This may be beneficial as it a relationship may be easier to develop with someone while incarcerated because they tend to be more focused. The partnership allows case managers and clients to establish a personal connection and relationship. Clients come to understand that their case manager truly cares about them and their success.

NoVA provides intensive case management services to clients. Case management is a collaborative process where the case manager assists clients by coordinating individualized services and aiding clients in becoming autonomous (San Francisco Department of Children, Youth, and Families, 2006). Case management has been found to be effective in assisting criminal justice populations reintegrate into society (Burke, 2008; Visher & Travis, 2003). Case managers not only assist individuals in receiving a continuum of necessary services, but they also walk clients through the process, which assists in providing social support. CJJ's case managers are available on a daily basis. This is a critical component of the project because it is

important to assist clients immediately when they experience a crisis so they do not revert back to negative behaviors. Case managers agree that the personalized services clients receive contribute to their success. Additionally, CJCJ's case managers have worked with criminal justice populations or individuals with substance abuse issues and have extensive knowledge of community organizations who can assist clients. Case managers also have small caseloads, an average of sixteen clients per case manager allowing for a higher quality of service. A caseload includes clients who are both in-custody and those out of custody. In addition, some clients may be in the initial stages of the project and require intensive services while other clients are close to transitioning out of the project and require less attention.

Education is another important aspect of NoVA as it is a vital component for clients to become self-sustainable. Out of the individuals released from incarceration annually, only about 60% have a high school diploma (Bouffard, MacKenzie, & Hickman, 2000; Zgoba, Haugebrook, & Jenkins, 2008). In order to assist individuals in San Francisco, SFSJ manages the 5 Keys Charter School, which was opened in 2003. The school operates inside two San Francisco county jails and one site in San Francisco. A client with any type of high school record can attend 5 Keys and work towards receiving a high school diploma or GED. Classes are offered in language arts, science, math, and social science. Workplace readiness, basic technology training, drug treatment, and violence prevention counseling are also offered to help prepare individuals for more aspects of life than just basic education (San Francisco Sheriff Department, n.d.). In an interview, one case manager notes that the majority of her clients go back to school, whether it be to obtain a high school diploma or higher education degree (J. Preston, personal communication, May 25, 2010). Clients may attend City College of San Francisco, which has a program to assist formerly incarcerated individuals in their pursuit for higher education. Education is important if clients are to successfully transition out of the project.

To assist clients financially, NoVA has flex funds that allow staff to purchase creative and individualized client services. Flex funds are utilized for a variety of purposes such as tuition, books, and tools for construction work. Funds may also be used to purchase food for clients who live in residential hotels. An individual must be progressing with their treatment plan in order to be considered to receive flex funds, therefore not all clients receive these funds.

Although clients may transition out of NoVA, they are not disconnected from the project. Clients often stay in contact with their case manager along with other individuals they have worked with through the project. This contributes to clients' success because they can always return for assistance if in need. This creates a unique environment since clients are aware that they have a support system to rely on.

Each of these components contributes to the effectiveness of NoVA. Since the project's inception, two evaluations were conducted by Pendergrass & Associates and LaFrance Associates, LLC. In 2007, Pendergrass & Associates evaluated the project's first nine months. The evaluation provides statistical information regarding clients and the services received. Additionally, a process evaluation was done by conducting interviews with clients and case managers. Process evaluations provide essential information regarding the project's progress and recommendations for the future. The initial evaluation found that NoVA was effective in assisting clients staying out of jail longer than they had previously. Case managers also noted that they had seen improvement in the attitudes, involvement, and self-esteem of clients. While this evaluation provided important information

about the project, NoVA was still in the startup phase.

#### Client Case Study

A 43 year-old female client was a heroin user since the age of 13. Since the age of 15 she had been incarcerated intermittently in juvenile hall, jail, and prison. After her last period of incarceration she became a NoVA participant. After participating in the project for 18 months she successfully transitioned out of the program and discharged parole. As a grandmother and mother she regained custody of her three youngest children with the assistance of NoVA. She has been clean for five years and has her own three-bedroom house. She is self-sufficient and obtained employment as a supervisor at Cameo House, which provides transitional housing for previously incarcerated women and their children.

In July 2009 a second evaluation concluded that 36% of NoVA clients were rearrested compared to 68% of a comparison group. The evaluation compared all of the collaboratives performance during two periods: a 23-month period from November 2006 to September 2008 and a 9-month period from October 2008 to June 2009 (see Table 3). Of major importance is the increase of transitioned clients from 14 during the first period to 62 in the second time period. This demonstrates that NoVA has been effective in assisting individuals reintegrate and become self-sufficient.

Table 3

<b>NoVA Clients</b>	<b>Nov 2006 – Sept 2008</b>	<b>Oct 2008 – June 2009</b>
Active clients	237	197
Dropped clients	87	28
Transitioned clients	14	62
Declined clients	126	137
<b>Total clients</b>	<b>468</b>	<b>442</b>

(Source: Anonymous, 2009)

Although NoVA has similarities to other model programs, it differs than other programs for a variety of reasons. The collaboration between SFSD and multiple community-based organizations is unique. SFSD does not collaborate with a single organization, but rather with numerous organizations throughout San Francisco to truly make it a community project. The government, SFSD, and non-profits collaborate with the same goals of decreasing incarceration and recidivism rates, increasing public safety, and assisting individuals in successfully

reintegrating. Maximizing community-based resources allows clients to receive the maximum support and services possible.

NoVA is progressing towards being recognized as a model reentry program. Results thus far have proven it to be effective at reducing recidivism and changing the attitudes of clients. The combination of pre-release planning and intensive case management is one rationale for the success of the project. Another is the dedication of case managers to their clients. Additionally, focusing on all facets of clients' lives, such as education, substance abuse, and housing is critical to client's success.

## **VII. Conclusion**

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Through San Francisco's NoVA Project, a unique partnership between government and community-based entities was developed in response to California's state of mass incarceration. The NoVA Project was a community specific response to reduce the use of incarceration and therefore addresses state and local needs. As reentry has become an increasing concern, the San Francisco Sheriff's Department targeted key neighborhoods in an effort to maximize client specific results and reduce recidivism. NoVA is a unique demonstration project that utilizes the strengths of all partnering agencies to cultivate a community specific approach. The agencies allow clients to receive a continuum of services that assist them in reintegrating as autonomous members of society.

The success of the NoVA Project is demonstrated through the collaborative approach of providing community-based services to high-need individuals. Through this model, each agency's expertise and strengths are utilized to provide individualized culturally competent services. Evaluations have demonstrated NoVA's positive contributions to individuals and the community. The unique collaboration allows the NoVA Project to be an effective reentry program for San Francisco.

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