

MOTION BY SUPERVISORS SHEILA KUEHL AND  
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September 1, 2020

**Restoring Funding for the Breaking Barriers Program**

In July 2015 the Los Angeles County Probation Department (Probation) launched an innovative pilot program to reduce recidivism for felony probationers experiencing homelessness called the Breaking Barriers program. The program was a collaboration between Probation, the Department of Health Services (DHS), the Conrad N. Hilton Foundation, and community-based organizations including Brilliant Corners, Corporation for Supportive Housing (CSH), and Chrysalis. The Conrad N. Hilton Foundation contributed seed funding, with ongoing funding provided by Probation primarily using the California Community Corrections Performance Incentives Act of 2009 funds, commonly referred to as Senate Bill (SB) 678 funding.

Breaking Barriers is an innovative program that supports individuals on felony probation to reduce future involvement with the criminal justice system by overcoming barriers to housing and employment. The program is a cross-sector solution that realigns the criminal justice, healthcare, and other systems around the critical intervention of service-enriched housing. The Probation Department funded an independent evaluation of the program by the RAND Corporation, which documented

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that Breaking Barriers clients had a significantly lower rate of recidivism (13%) than the broader population of individuals under community supervision in California (22%). Per the evaluation, only 13% of clients housed through Breaking Barriers had a new felony conviction. The evaluation stated that the program's true impact on recidivism is likely higher, given that the California recidivism rate of 22% is for all populations, and national data on homelessness has shown significantly higher rates of recidivism for individuals on probation experiencing homeless.

In addition to reducing recidivism, the RAND evaluation found that the program had very positive intergenerational outcomes, as many of the clients are parents and the program provides the stable housing and employment they need to reunite with their children. While employment remains the greatest barrier many Breaking Barriers clients face, the partnership with Chrysalis provides an employment pathway that has helped many clients and that has been refined over the five years the program has operated to become increasingly effective. Program data from February 2020 demonstrates 60% of clients having secured employment during their time in the program.

This Board of Supervisors has repeatedly committed the County to taking every action possible to improve public safety by providing alternatives to incarceration that assist our County residents to have the community supports they need to abstain from criminal activity. Supporting men and women on felony probation who face homelessness to access stable housing, employment supports, and supportive services is exactly the innovative approach our Board has sought to expand. Despite the Breaking Barriers program having housed 460 individuals and provided case management and employment services to over 600 individuals since its inception, as well as reducing the rate of recidivism for program participants, the Probation

Department has recommended ending the program, which is currently housing 223 individuals and families.

**WE, THEREFORE MOVE** that the Board of Supervisors direct the Probation Department, in consultation with Chief Executive Office and the Office of Diversion and Reentry, to report back in 15 days with a plan to restore funding for the Breaking Barriers program in fiscal year 2020-21 and beyond.

**WE FURTHER MOVE** that Probation Department report back on opportunities to provide more flexible funding that would allow the program to serve a broader probation population and a reconciliation of funding for the program in fiscal year 2019-20.

S:MR/RestoringFundingForTheBreakingBarriersProgram