

ONS Report

March

2012

This report describes the findings of an investigation of the ONS which began in October 2011 out of concern for safety, transparency of program effectiveness and design, as well as a need for clarity in spending and budgeting. It outlines the work of the ONS, current areas for improvement or evaluation, and suggested action steps for the City Council, ONS director and City Manager.

**A Call for
Informed
Decisions,
Practices,
and Safety
Goals for
Richmond**

REPORT CONTENTS

DESCRIPTIONS 2-4

 ASSIGNMENT 2

 ONS WORK (ROLES ONS, RPD LIAISON, RPAL CASEWORKER 3-4

GAPS IN PROGRAM AND CITY WORK 5-12

 EVALUATION 5-6

 HIRING PROCESS 6

 BUDGET 6-7

 COMMUNICATION..... 8

 ORGANIZATIONAL CHART..... 8

 TRAINING 9

 CLIENT PROCESS 10-11

 CONTRACT SERVICE EVALUATIONS 11

SUGGESTED FOLLOW UPS AND RECOMMENDATIONS12

APPENDIX 13-45

 LIFE MAP STIPEND CRITERIA 13-16

 DETAILED BUDGET 17-21, 22

 CONTRACT PROVIDERS23

 ORGANIZATIONAL CHART.....24

 LETTER FROM THE CALIFORNIA WELLNESS FOUNDATION..... 25-27

 NEIGHBORHOOD SAFETY DIRECTOR DESCRIPTION 28-29

 CITY COUNCIL CHARTER SECTION (D) AUDIT STATEMENT.....30

 LETTER FROM THE CALIFORNIA ENDOWMENT..... 31-33

 ONS CAL CARD EXPENSES WORLD HEALTH ORGANIZATION TRIP34

 FEBRUARY 19, 2008 AGENDA REPORT AND DOCUMENTS 35-44

 RECENT NEWS ARTICLE ON ONS EVALUATION.....45

Description of Project and Report Overview

Upon appointment as an intern for the Office of the Richmond City Council, a task was assigned to gather information about the Office of Neighborhood Safety (ONS). This project was assigned by Councilmember Courtland Boozé in response to the incident of violence in October bringing about community concern for safety, transparency of program effectiveness and design, as well as clarity in ONS/Office of Violence Prevention spending and budgeting, which he has worked on for the past six years. The available documentation and paperwork has been reviewed and interviews with city employees who work in some concert with the ONS have been conducted. This report explains the intended role of the ONS, details current gaps in the program's functionality, production and ongoing development. It also discusses the intended roles of the Richmond Police Department (RPD) liaison and the contracted case manager through the Richmond Police Activities League (RPAL), including suggestions for improvement in performance of these roles. The report concludes with specific recommendations to the Richmond City Council, the citizens of the greater Richmond community and the ONS itself on behalf of Councilmember Boozé.

Several challenges were encountered while performing the assigned research. Throughout the investigation a few large gaps within the program and its' direction made it difficult to secure clear information from reliable data sources. Most of the program information lies solely with the individuals who work for the ONS. Their positions within the ONS or one of its directly linked departments afford them the sole privilege of program understanding. The work was severely hindered by a multitude of factors: delayed response to questions, repeated rescheduling and breaking of meeting times or phone calls, delayed responses to emails sometimes for longer than a months time, discrepancies in documentation, incomplete responses to questioning, lack of fact based information, lack of provision of organized documentation of work, programs and budget.

The basic and immediate issues that must be addressed include the following: **(1)**evaluate the RPD and ONS programmatic impact and their ability to meet identified city needs; this will lead to informed decision making by all departments in relation to the ONS and their work, **(2)**clarify the role and purpose of the ONS and it's goals to the larger community, **(3)**improve the communication and documentation capacity within the ONS, between city departments, with funders and with community members, and improve professionalism and culture between and within departments, **(4)**identify key organizations and services in the community to develop in order to enhance program capacity with high needs clientele, **(5)** set clear monthly and annual goals for the city in regards to safety improvement with clear deadlines across all pertinent departments and make those goals transparent to the community, **(6)** place clear deadlines on department evaluation and review to ensure fiduciary responsibility with taxpayer money.

Brief Descriptions of ONS, RPAL and RPD roles

ONS

The city of Richmond Office of Neighborhood Safety (ONS) was created to provide and coordinate targeted intervention services to those identified as most likely to be perpetrators and/or victims of gun violence. Their mission is to eliminate gun violence in Richmond. A priority objective of the ONS is to ensure a greater accessibility and connectivity to culturally competent human, social and economic service opportunities for those who perpetrate gun violence.

While these are the intended goals of the ONS, there is no clear indication to the community that this program is serving or meeting the needs of the intended client population. The ONS website contains postings of monthly activity reports only for January of 2009-September of 2010 and three months in that time frame have been omitted. There are no monthly activity reports posted for more recent dates than September of 2010. This shows the lack of transparency with the community and taxpayers of ONS work. ONS must demonstrate data that various program aspects are being implemented in an effective way and that these methods realize tangible goals and improvements in the opportunities of clients as well as reduction of gun violence in correlation with these services. Although it lies in the director's job description to evaluate the program, there is no evidence that one has been conducted in the past five years. There is also lack of documentation available to detail or describe the day to day work and functioning of the ONS programs themselves. The implications of these findings are detailed in the gaps section of this report.

RPD Liaison

The RPD Liaison is an officer who is assigned to the Chief's office as his/her designee. The Police Liaison is the representative of the Richmond Police Department to the ONS Neighborhood Change Agents (NCAs) program. The liaison serves a vital role in the communication between ONS, RPD and NCAs. The responsibilities include: day to day general communication and correspondence between RPD and ONS, preparation of weekly deployment schedules for NCAs, gathering information regarding possible violent retaliations and identification of potential threats to public safety, creating and delivering a monthly homicide map, responding to reports issued by the ONS director of mediation activities, receiving and responding to incident reports as provided by the ONS director, facilitating the NCA Orientation and the Q&A between ONS staff and the RPD, conducting a limited background investigation on each NCA hiring candidate. There are also specified procedures for orientation, communication, incident reporting, and emergency protocols. These policies are intended to be reviewed as needed by a policy team consisting of the ONS director, the Chief of Police, the Police Liaison, the City Attorney, the Human Resources Director and any other relevant individuals. This

information came from a report in 2008. There is no indication that these protocols or policies have been reviewed or modified since 2008, even though there have been clear indications by previous liaisons for a need for revision. There is no new information on this available in the past 3.5 years.

Rotation of the RPD liaison has occurred at least three times in the past five years (to my knowledge). Concerns have arisen due to instability and inconsistency with this role; most notably, the October incident. These challenges have led to negative media coverage in the city. Clarity in protocols is necessary to communicate and navigate between RPD, ONS and clients, the current rotation cycle may not lend to having a well trained individual who has built connections and trust between both agencies. This is an important consideration that should be reviewed between agencies to find a best practice for placement in the liaison position. With evaluation and review of policies and their strengths and weaknesses, informed decision making could happen with this position. Without evaluation and revision, the city lies at risk to repeat similar unsafe incidences, suffer further negative publicity and ultimately fail to achieve the ultimate goal of decreasing gun violence.

RPAL, Life mapping and Casework

There is currently one caseworker for ONS contracted through the RPAL Project/Case Coordination. This service is intended to provide case management coordination for 50 clients age 16 through 25. The caseworker description is to coordinate the CalGRIP III program and associated client services and staffing, collect relevant client information and data, develop and maintain client files, and develop program guidelines and protocols. The caseworker role is to conduct Life Maps which are intended to support goal setting for clients and to align services to clients in the ONS program. RPAL case management services are performed under contract with the ONS and have been claimed to be more cost effective this way by the ONS Director. The Director provided a statement for why ONS has not hired caseworkers directly through their own budget saying that contracting for case management services within a CBO using grant funds is more cost effective given budgetary constraints and limitations of the ONS budget. The ONS Director and the RPAL caseworker are designated to meet to assess program progress and make needed adjustments. No evidence of these meetings or outcomes has been made available. Case management coordination services are intended to be performed weekly, yet there is no documentation of this available. Life Maps are updated monthly, again, evidence of this is unavailable. The case manager states that client need, interest, availability and motivation informs how often and the length of time of each encounter, this statement is concerning because it indicates that the program decision lies with clients rather than with documented rationale and support.

There is room for growth in this capacity of service to ONS clientele and in programmatic building. High intensity casework is demanding and to reach the needs of all clientele a clear evaluation process should happen to determine and set best practices, caseload size, time, needs, and services of each client. Specified training and support is not currently outlined in this area and could be another potential source for evaluation and program improvement. These issues will be addressed in the following sections.

Gaps in Program and City Work

Evaluation:

Since its start in 2007, the ONS has had one internal budgeting audit but has no other formal evaluation. Since October 2011 there has been a delay in the internal auditing process by the director and the city manager, a bid was sent out for an external independent evaluator through the Finance Department in February but this was then stopped by the City Manager upon request of the Director of ONS. There have been statements from Director of ONS that he would gain outside funding for an evaluation. He is requesting upwards of \$375,000 for an evaluation. An internal audit costs around \$25,000 as stated by the Finance Department. In the evaluation profession a rule of thumb for a good evaluation is 10% of project costs. The \$375,000 request by the Director exceeds this rule of thumb. The rationale for such a large estimate was that the nature of the work is difficult to assess since it is preventative. In conducting interviews with the Director from Measure Y in Oakland they stated that Oakland spends about \$350,000 in federal dollars to evaluate the entire Oakland Police Department including their gun violence prevention program as a smaller subset. Oakland's Police Department is much larger than Richmond's. When I interviewed individuals in the Finance Department they were unable to explain why there would be such a high figure for an evaluation. When I interviewed the National Director for Ceasefire, he stated that evaluation is completely necessary due to the political nature of the work and that evaluation is built into the design of the program since day one. The Director also mentioned that the programs in Boston and Chicago collaborate with Universities who conduct the evaluations. The Bay Area is rich with Universities that could be utilized in the evaluation process such as UC-Berkeley, SFSU, Cal State East Bay, etc.

As of today, neither a scope and sequence for an evaluation nor a rough estimate for a deadline for evaluation has been provided. When Councilmember Boozé requested an audit it was stalled and delayed. Arranged follow ups to help speed the process of defining a scope and sequence for evaluation were also shut down. The implications of this lack of evaluative analysis are many. The ONS is a new program that is considered cutting edge for its approach. This approach must be tracked and documented so as to ensure informed transparent spending, decision making, (which aspects to continue, which to change, and which to monitor) hiring, and goal setting. The ONS has received both criticism and praise from critics and supporters and have received many press opportunities both positive and negative. Having an evaluation would provide a tool for the city to navigate this discussion and to ensure that everyone can partake in informed conversation. In interviews and discussions with Councilmember Boozé, the Director of ONS, Devone Boggan, Julio Marcial of the California Wellness Foundation, Dr. Antony Iton of The California Endowment, RPD Liaison Tom Hauschild, Page Tomlin of Measure Y Oakland and Frank Perez the Director of Ceasefire at the National Office, all stated that an evaluation is needed for the program. These conversations and documents have been transcribed and can be made available upon request.

Additional benefits of performing a comprehensive evaluation are that it can provide long-overdue critical works information to the City from a non-partisan perspective. This would increase trust and understanding, promoting collaboration across City departments while proposing a clearer vision of public safety which the City can use to determine an optimal designation of resources. A more complete evaluation could highlight other safety concerns in Richmond and can indicate what else is needed and who else can work collaboratively to reduce violence in Richmond. Evaluation can lead to improved spending, improved decision-making, clear information to set specific goals, and improved communication of importance and effectiveness of work.

Hiring Process:

The necessary expertise, required staff experience, education and training to work effectively with the specific high needs clientele is continuously being redefined as similar work develops. Organizations like Ceasefire have clearly defined hiring processes and hiring panels. The process involves a panel for hiring with a half dozen people from faith community, Councilmembers, law enforcement and local area individuals, decisions are made through a democratic process. Ceasefire conducts trainings with intensive curriculum for a total of 106 hours of training in the first year of work.

The hiring process for the ONS Director, and NCAs is stated to involve a panel process, while a list of participants was provided, it seems this panel no longer exists. A panel also has not happened for the positions of caseworker or the RPD liaison. This process and the training process should be more clearly defined. There is room for increased transparency and process review for the hiring of ONS Directors, NCAs, caseworkers, contract service providers and RPD liaisons. A clear explanation of who is chosen for hiring, the hiring process, and training procedures could develop trust and buy in within the City.

Members of the council and respected members of the community have stated concerns with the process through which the Director of ONS was hired for the position mentioning he was first intended to find the best candidate and ultimately appointed himself. There is also some concern with the large salary of the position, where previous workers in this field had to submit monthly reports in order to receive pay. Further concern involves the hiring and qualifications of employees. This will be discussed further in the training section of the report.

Budget:

The 2011 ONS Annual Report states a total budget for Fiscal Year 2011-12 as \$2,585,504 and Fiscal Year 2010-11 as \$3,160,824. This budget is further divided between General Fund contributions and Grants and Private Contributions. The provided budgets are listed in the appendix and the most detailed spending budget was reported through the finance department not the ONS Director. No Cal card expense reports were ever provided directly even though detailed travel expenses and reports were requested. Instead a three lined travel and expense report with the overall yearly total was provided.

There is no designated spending for evaluation in the ONS budget even though this was proposed as a reason for the position of Director in the February 2008 City Council Meeting.

Another concern lies in the high end salary provision for the director of \$145,152. A smaller directors' salary could provide for the provision of evaluation services, another hired caseworker, more NCAs to support clients, a grant writer position, or more available spaces for the peacemaker fellowship.

A final concern arising from the investigation lies in the lack of clarity and transparency in the ONS trip to the World Health Organization conference. The conference was attended supposedly by seven ONS affiliates from September 2, 2011-September 12, 2011. There are multiple documents containing different information about this trip. The 2011 Annual Report only speaks about the Directors experience, not all participants, it also only mentions one of the grant providers for the trip. A request for the City Council to authorize the trip was held on September 13, 2011, after the trip already occurred. In the documents attached to the SIRE system, Item H-15 requests authorization for four participants, does not state a total figure, and does not state the specific grant sources. The Agenda Item Request form states that "Funding for this travel is provided by The California Wellness Foundation and grant funds for the Peacemaker Fellowship program." The City of Richmond Administrative Manual, Request for Travel form, states under Name of Employees, "DeVone Boggan + 3 staff & 3 Peace Fellows...The California Wellness Foundation has agreed to reimburse Director DeVone Boggan's Travel costs, and grant funds supporting the ONS Peacemaker Fellowship will be used to cover the cost of the additional staff and fellows participation." The Director states in an email to the City Manager, "I would like to ask permission to take 3 of our Sr. Fellows and 3 ONS staff members. All cost would be paid by grant funds assigned for travel purposes associated with the fellowship. Absolutely no city funds would be used for this purpose." A spending report provided on the WHO trip indicates that these expenses were all paid for through the Chevron Community Benefit Fund. When I asked the Director which organization paid for the expenditures the response was, "Funding from Chevron (CBA), The California Endowment (TCE), and The California Wellness Foundation (TCWF) supported the travel opportunity." The response to the question what funding streams were used was, "See Council Report dated 9/13/2011-01211013-400243-CBA21." None of these documents say the same thing. No provision of Cal card expenses for this trip has been provided by the Director. There is only the statement that \$4,200 was approximately spent per person. There is no indication of spending from TCE or TCWF that has been provided. This is concerning since it only regards one incidence of travel and there is no clear documentation of the event or others available.

Further investigation is needed to evaluate what spending is necessary for the program operation, what is the best division of funds amongst the needs of the program, and how each of the program aspects should be funded. Accountability, efficiency and effectiveness in spending must be developed further. An evaluation and needs assessment would improve spending and budgetary decisions.

Communication:

Many delays and stalls in receipt of information were experienced. Delays were experienced in setting appointments and scheduling interviews, returning phone calls and emails, responding to follow ups and questions, and providing clearly documented information. These delays ranged from multiple days, to a month's duration with no follow up. Another professional communication concern arose when the 2011 Annual Report of the ONS was released containing the questions from the interviews conducted without consulting first for their use. These are also posted on the ONS website as the FAQs. Some of the questions have been posted while others have not. It is also concerning to list the questions asked by a non-resident of Richmond as frequently asked questions. At no point was the use of this work communicated prior to its use. The Director and the City Manager were contacted about this and to this day there has not been a follow up regarding the use of work materials without consultation. This can lead to a feeling of violation and distrust. Although the use of the research has supported the creation of greater documentation and accountability to detailed information, a more collaborative process would have yielded a stronger report and maintained a safe working atmosphere. Sharing the work of the research with the Director out of respect for transparency has led to a more detailed ONS report when compared to previous years. There is still caution that all of this information comes solely from the Director and does not have clear documentation or data to back up the claims.

The effectiveness and reach of the ONS as well as creating stronger collaborative relationships within the city government departments and within the community could be enhanced by the following:

- Improve response time to emails and phone calls, as well as calendaring and keeping appointments
- Set clear timelines, deadlines and scope of work by making both personal and office goals in the short and long term. Make these goals accessible to others so there is increased transparency in ONS work and mission as well as areas under improvement or focus.
- Create cohesive, organized documents that are accessible to city employees, the public, media and other office staff, upon request or need.
- Public education on program work, scope and effect, could happen through a multitude of communicative tools such as pamphlets, websites, news reports, KCRT, etc.

Organizational Chart Update:

The 2011-2012 Organizational Chart for the ONS program simply indicates that there is a Director, a Contracts Services Manager and Neighborhood Change Agents. The organizational chart should include the RPD Liaison position and the Caseworker position. A list of contract providers should also be added to the ONS annual report or budgeting information to increase transparency of work and workers. Without this clearly documented it is not a transparent practice.

Training:

One gap in the program lies in lacking a clear set of goals and needs for staff development and quality improvement. There is no clear understanding available of what training is needed for this type of work, what training people have attended and why, and what impact that training may have had on work outcomes and specifically what benefit has that training had on work with clients and reducing violence. Improving the human capacity to serve high need clients and training could be the difference between life and death. Training services and expenses can also be extremely costly as indicated in the expense report. Trainings should be proven effective or at least documented to inform future decisions. Laying out a set of training criteria before holding a position with the ONS, matching training and development during work with the ONS, and researching who would be the most qualified to deliver training is a need the program has. In mapping out training needs the following must be considered:

For ONS staff:

What training is needed for individual staff members, what are the costs and allocated budget for training purposes, how often should retraining occur, who should provide the training, what capacity should be built for employees to move up or branch out into higher level roles in the community?

For RPD/Liaisons:

Liaisons are an intermediary between the ONS and the RPD. This role is extremely delicate and lack of training and experience in this position has led to problems in the past. Clear protocol training, practice and review before and during work with ONS is needed to ensure that all community members are safe and that clients are held accountable for their actions in the community while towing the line between the ONS relationship and the law.

For Clients:

The trainings and services are not clearly documented, attended or laid out. Reviewing the most common needs of clients and structuring proven trainings with capable trainers is necessary. It is not proven that clients are gaining skills from these or if the work is useful. It is not clear that clients enter the program and leave the program with new useful skills to navigate in society. There is no clear reporting of client gains and benefits of the program. There is also a lack of client voice throughout the program. This is an important area for improvement and growth. It will also be important to look at intake and outtake evaluations as well as which services clients did and did not benefit from and why.

For outside contractors:

Working with a concentrated high needs population is challenging and difficult work. Many service providers and contractors are not trained to effectively work with this client population for a variety of reasons. Training should be mandatory or at minimum a recommended requirement for repeated contractors. Without strong training there can be discouragement, frustration or disempowerment between service providers and clients.

Currently identified qualified trainings and trainers:

This is undocumented as of today the ONS Director has not provided a list of the organizations contracted to state which have been the most beneficial to clients, which would need support serving clients and which have been relatively unsuccessful for clients. This was an intended follow up from the January 5, 2012 meeting held with the Director.

Client Process:**Tracking:**

There exists a need within the program to clearly track the outcomes and service quality provided to clients. Currently a Life Map is created upon entering the program and is reviewed with a caseworker. This caseworker is the only person who is hired to complete this service. The Life Map is the tool used to set goals with each client upon entering the ONS program. Completion of these goals successfully is what determines payment to clients for taking positive steps toward goal completion and for not committing gun violence in the community. This process and intake should be a part of the evaluation process. Currently, decisions on stipend pay are fairly subjective and there are many barriers to completion of goals. With only one case manager to intake all clients, there is no clear indication of manageable work load, efficient and effective uses of tracking tools and support mechanisms. The ONS program could gain more informed support within the community and enhance effectiveness if they tracked their clients and conducted service evaluations with the clients. The following should be tracked and clearly documented for the city:

1. When clients enter the program, what skills do they already have, which do they need, and in what order should they be supported and completed?
2. In order to successfully meet those goals, how much time will they need?
3. Who completes the ONS program?
4. Which goals did they meet?
5. Who does not complete ONS program?
6. Assessment of why participants drop out
7. Where do clients end up after ONS program? Where are they today?

Services:

Some clients have a Life Map reviewed with caseworkers, others do not. During participation in these services there should be a mechanism for feedback from clients as to what was supportive and successful and what needs modification in order that the client and the greater Richmond community is best served. There should also be clear documentation of services received and skills gained. The City should recognize which are the most common services that clients need, which service providers are involved, which ones are not meeting the needs of clients, and what services do not exist within the City of Richmond but should be developed in order to best meet the needs of this clientele.

Developing, training and maintaining clear tracking processes will allow for clear reporting of the results of ONS participation and work. This type of clear data will build trust and clarity in the city and city departments and will make the work of ONS transparent. With this level of transparency more community members can clearly see what is needed to serve this population to reduce violence in the community. By stating outcomes in a clear way it also holds various individuals and systems accountable to this population of clients and clearly documents their needs.

Noting gaps and areas of need for improvement or modification will only increase the effectiveness of the ONS, improve efficiency in spending and budgets, and allow for clear goals to be set that everyone can work towards. In this process it is important to have regular and clear input from the clients and service providers themselves that will create a sense of empowerment, advocacy, and reflection in the process. This type of feedback gives a voice for expression of needs which can also lend its way to honest dialogue between clients and service providers to better meet the needs of all and can lead to improved programs and goal completion.

Contract Service Evaluations:

Attached to this report is a list of contracted service providers. Only one contractor to the program has provided an evaluation of their services, John Muir Behavioral Health, through John Muir Hospital. Through the evaluation process there should be a more detailed organization of this list stating, which services and providers can support in which life map goals, which services have been effective in meeting the needs of clients, which ones have the potential to be effective with training or specialized hiring and which ones are not at capacity to serve this clientele without many modifications. These service providers should have their own documentation and evaluation process to demonstrate a continual working towards improvement. With clear documentation of services, programs and providers, the City and the ONS will have clarity about the effectiveness of its spending and can make informed budgeting decisions. This type of documentation will also illustrate the need for community service providers to engage in program evaluation and reflection about how to better serve this high need clientele.

Necessary Follow Ups and Expectations

In order to strengthen the ONS program and to make informed decisions at the City and Department level in regards to safety the City Manager, ONS, RPD, and the Councilmembers can take concrete actions.

1. First, the city manager and the ONS, need to immediately complete:
 - a. a scope for program evaluation, including a forensic audit
 - b. dedicate funds to evaluation measures, and
 - c. hire an evaluation team

This information will then be available to the city manager, the director of ONS and the council in order to make smarter programmatic decisions and to set strong and clear growth goals in the program as well as reduction goals in violent crime.

2. Set clear goals and create an action plan for training, client recruitment, retention, service providers and tracking after program.
3. Hire and train an ONS office staff or an intern to improve the
 - a. clear organization of documents,
 - b. outlining of procedures,
 - c. detailing and documentation of work by the office and
 - d. support overall communication to speed follow up
4. Collaborate to secure federal and state funding to support the advancement of safety initiatives for the entire city of Richmond.
5. Increase standards for contractors with the ONS detailing:
 - a. training process for working with this specific population
 - b. proven success and completion of program services with clients
 - c. clear budgetary spending and costs
 - d. evidence the program is under evaluation and strong direction
6. Create a plan for the city with clear steps to improve safety such as accessible satellite sites and locations throughout the city where people who are in need can go and receive immediate help.
7. Revisit 2008 policies and protocols for RPAL case coordination, RPD liaison and liaison assignment process.
8. Set clear timelines and deadlines for all action steps and assign individuals who will hold accountable the meeting of these deadlines. Such individuals include the City Manager and the ONS Director.

Immediate action is necessary to ensure a clear nonpartisan evaluation and improved transparency in program work and efficacy.