
SENATE COMMITTEE ON PUBLIC SAFETY

Senator Aisha Wahab, Chair

2023 - 2024 Regular

Bill No: AB 2818 **Hearing Date:** June 25, 2024
Author: Mathis
Version: April 16, 2024
Urgency: No **Fiscal:** Yes
Consultant: SJ

Subject: *County jail: available social services*

HISTORY

Source: Author

Prior Legislation: AB 857 (Ortega), Ch. 167, Stats. 2023
AB 3073 (Wicks), Ch. 225, Stats. 2020
AB 683 (E. Garcia), Ch. 45, Stats. 2017
SB 833 (Liu), Ch. 90, Stats. 2014
AB 720 (Skinner), Ch. 646, Stats. 2013

Support: Ella Baker Center for Human Rights

Opposition: None known

Assembly Floor Vote: 71 - 0

PURPOSE

The purpose of this bill is to require each county jail to provide each person being released from custody with the contact information for the local social services agency, a local alcohol or drug abuse resource, local homeless shelters, local mental health resources, and the local county child support agency.

Existing law authorizes the sheriff to temporarily release a person incarcerated in county jail to prepare for their return to the community for a period of not more than three days. (Pen. Code, § 4018.6.)

Existing law authorizes the sheriff to discharge an incarcerated person from the county jail on the last day the person may be confined, as the sheriff considers to be in the best interests of the person. (Pen. Code, § 4024, subd. (a).)

Existing law allows the sheriff to offer a voluntary program to a person incarcerated in county jail upon completion of their sentence that would allow them to stay in the custody for up to 16 additional hours or until normal business hours, whichever is shorter, so that they can be discharged to a treatment center or during daytime hours. (Pen. Code, § 4024, subd. (b)(1).)

Existing law allows the sheriff or other official in charge of county correctional facilities to provide for the vocational training and rehabilitation of incarcerated persons confined in the county jail. (Pen. Code, § 4018.5.)

This bill requires each county jail, beginning January 1, 2026, to, at a minimum, provide each incarcerated person with the contact information for all of the following:

- The local social services agency.
- The local county child support agency.
- A local alcohol or drug abuse resource.
- Local homeless shelters.
- Local mental health resources for counseling or therapy.

This bill requires the contact information to be provided on a physical sheet of paper or other physical document upon release from custody, except as provides.

This bill provides that the contact information may be provided electronically by email or text message to the incarcerated person upon their release if the individual provides the necessary contact information to complete the electronic notifications.

COMMENTS

1. Need For This Bill

According to the author:

It is time for California to seriously address the issue of crime, and the factors that lead our citizens to commit crimes. We must take this step forward together to support Californians struggling to stay out of the justice system in finding a better a life.

2. Reentry Services

According to the National Institute of Corrections (NIC), individuals incarcerated in jails have complex human service needs. Many people released from jails lack community connections to treatment and organizations to assist with their reintegration. (NIC, *Transition from Jail to Community*, available at <<https://nicic.gov/resources/resources-topics-and-roles/topics/transition-jail-community-tjc>>.) Justice-involved individuals who have spent time in jails are at higher risk for poor health outcomes, injury, and death than the general public. (California Department of Health Care Services, *Transformation of Medi-Cal: Justice-Involved*, available at <<https://www.dhcs.ca.gov/CalAIM/Documents/CalAIM-JI-a11y.pdf>>.) They face disproportionate risk of trauma, violence, overdose, and suicide. (*Id.*)

The Steinberg Institute recently reported:

Too many Californians with significant behavioral health needs find themselves languishing in our jails while their illness is left untreated. Counties report that 53 percent of people in county jails have an open mental health case, a figure that has more than doubled since 2010. While state-level information on substance use

disorder prevalence is limited, national estimates find that over 60 percent of incarcerated people have a substance use disorder. These figures likely underestimate the true prevalence of behavioral health conditions among incarcerated individuals due to a lack of standardization in data tracking and reporting.

(The Steinburg Institute, *Misaligned: California's Local Public Safety Funding Doesn't Meet Today's Needs* (Mar. 2024), available at <<https://steinberginstitute.org/misaligned-californias-local-public-safety-funding-doesnt-meet-todays-needs/>>.)

Reducing recidivism and improving reentry outcomes require that jails collaborate with local organizations to meet the needs of incarcerated individuals upon their release. The NIC claims that it is imperative that jurisdictions “use an effective case management process that includes a strong community handoff component, particularly at the moment of release, and that ensures continuity of care between in-jail and community-based programs and services.” (NIC, *Case Management Strategies for Successful Jail Reentry*, available at <<https://s3.amazonaws.com/static.nicic.gov/Library/026912.pdf>>.)

This bill requires county jails to provide each incarcerated person with the contact information for the local social services agency, an alcohol or drug abuse resource, local homeless shelters, local mental health resources for counseling or therapy, and the local county child support agency.

3. Argument in Support

According to the Ella Baker Center for Human Rights:

AB 2818 ... presents a commendable initiative aiming to enhance the reintegration process for individuals leaving county jails. By providing information about social services, this bill fosters a supportive environment for currently incarcerated individuals transitioning back into their communities. ... This proactive approach not only promotes public safety by reducing recidivism rates but also demonstrates a commitment to the well-being and successful reintegration of formerly incarcerated individuals, ultimately contributing to stronger and more resilient communities.

-- END --