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CHARLESTON COUNTY CRIMINAL JUSTICE COORDINATING COUNCIL (CJCC) AWARDED ADDITIONAL \$2.467 MILLION BY MACARTHUR FOUNDATION SAFETY AND JUSTICE CHALLENGE TO SUPPORT CONTINUED LOCAL JUSTICE SYSTEM IMPROVEMENT

New Funding Will Help Further Strategies Aimed at Safely Reducing Charleston County's Jail Population and Improving the Local System.

Charleston, SC, October 24, 2018 – Today, Charleston County was one of 13 sites from across the country selected for additional funding from The John D. and Catherine T. MacArthur Foundation based on the promise and progress of work to date. The funding allows Charleston to continue advancing local criminal justice system improvements and safely reduce Charleston County's jail population. This brings the Foundation's total investment in Charleston to \$4.95 million between 2015 and 2020. The grant is part of the [Safety and Justice Challenge](#), a \$148 million national initiative to reduce over-incarceration by changing the way America thinks about and uses jails.

The Safety and Justice Challenge is supporting local leaders in Charleston County and across the country determined to tackle one of the greatest drivers of over-incarceration in America – local jail use. Today, the local jail population in Charleston County is 18% smaller than it was when the Criminal Justice Coordinating Council (CJCC) got started (1,111 detainees in CY2014 to 909 detainees in October 2018, local figures exclude non-local uses of jail such as federal detainees and out-of-county holds).

“We have been able to secure the right mix of people at the right time who are all committed to improving our local criminal justice system and making it more efficient, effective, and equitable. We have strengthened our ability to develop a more refined, data-guided approach to the reforms we're implementing, and we want to build on that progress and continue improving as we move forward,” said Assistant Charleston County Sheriff and CJCC Chairman, Mitch Lucas.

The CJCC includes high-level leaders from across criminal justice, treatment, and advocacy organizations along with diverse community representatives. The CJCC members regularly utilize data and collaboration to guide the work underway. With the support of The John D. and Catherine T. MacArthur Foundation grant, the CJCC has accomplished several notable milestones. This includes:

- Built a robust data warehouse combining data from across the criminal justice system to provide ongoing analysis and identification of areas for improvement;
- Supported law enforcement's use of jail alternatives, such as citation-and-release for individuals charged with five, low-level non-violent crimes, including simple possession of marijuana, open container, misdemeanor shoplifting, trespassing, and public intoxication;
- Collaborated with multiple local agencies to reopen the Tri-county Crisis Stabilization Center. The center provides an immediate connection to treatment for those living with mental illness, substance use disorders, and/or homelessness rather than placing them in jail or costly emergency departments;
- Started providing text message reminders to defendants with upcoming court appearances to help improve the use of valuable court time and reduce bench warrants for missing court;
- Implemented a pretrial services report to inform bond-setting judges and provide better information regarding the risks to safety and/or failing to appear;
- Accelerated key aspects of case processing with the implementation of cost-effective technology for a more efficient process for delivery of discovery; improved the timeliness of assignment of prosecution and defense counsel; and implemented the first-ever initiation of public defender representation in Central Bond Court for poor defendants that qualify;

- Provided funding for personnel to support the Administrative Order and Langford, effectively placing docket management under the court; and
- Issued several comprehensive reports to inform and update the community about its criminal justice system, progress to-date, and areas for further improvement.

“We are extremely grateful for the partnership and funding provided by the SJC. It is helping to make our system better for safety, justice and the taxpayers. The combination of grant resources, data-guided leadership, and community engagement represents tremendous potential for Charlestonians. In addition to building on past progress to improve our local justice system and safely lowering the jail population, the new investment will go into deepening community engagement, advancing racial and ethnic disproportionality and/or disparity reduction efforts, and deliberately focusing resources in increasingly impactful ways,” said the CJCC’s project director, Kristy Danford.

“There is growing demand for criminal justice reform across the country, and local jurisdictions are leading the way,” said Laurie Garduque, MacArthur’s Director of Justice Reform. “MacArthur is increasing our investment because we are seeing promising results and an appetite for more reform as evidenced by the diversity and creativity of the solutions implemented and tested across the Network. While progress is not always easy, and there is no single solution or quick fix, these jurisdictions are proving it is possible to rethink local justice systems from the ground up with forward-looking, smart solutions.”

Three years after its public launch, the Challenge Network has grown into a collaborative of 52 counties, cities, and states modeling and inspiring reforms to create fairer, more effective local justice systems across the country. The CJCC and other jurisdictions involved in the Challenge will continue to receive technical assistance from experts in the field. Experts involved in supporting the Challenge sites include The Center for Court Innovation, The Institute for State and Local Governance at the City University of New York, The Justice Management Institute, Justice System Partners, The Pretrial Justice Institute, The Vera Institute of Justice, Policy Research, Inc., and The W. Haywood Burns Institute.

More information about the work underway in Charleston County can be found at www.cjcc.charlestoncounty.org as well as on www.SafetyandJusticeChallenge.org.

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About the MacArthur Foundation

The John D. and Catherine T. MacArthur Foundation supports creative people, effective institutions, and influential networks building a more just, verdant, and peaceful world. MacArthur is placing a few big bets that truly significant progress is possible on some of the world’s most pressing social challenges, including over-incarceration, global climate change, nuclear risk, and significantly increasing financial capital for the social sector. In addition to the MacArthur Fellows Program, the Foundation continues its historic commitments to the role of journalism in a responsible and responsive democracy, as well as the strength and vitality of our headquarters city, Chicago. More information about the Foundation’s criminal justice reform work can be found at www.macfound.org/criminaljustice.

About the CJCC

The CJCC is a collaboration of elected and senior officials, law enforcement leaders, judicial and court leadership, behavioral health professionals, victim and legal advocates, and various community leaders working in service of the Charleston community. The mission of the CJCC is to assist in making sustainable, data-driven improvements to Charleston County’s criminal justice system and thereby improve public safety and community well-being.

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