

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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INFORMED BY COMMUNITY MEMBERS, CJCC RELEASES THREE-YEAR PLAN FOR CONTINUED IMPROVEMENT OF LOCAL CRIMINAL JUSTICE SYSTEM

NORTH CHARLESTON, S.C. Today the Charleston County Criminal Justice Coordinating Council, or CJCC, released its Strategic Plan outlining key initiatives for the next three years. The plan was developed on the heels of the CJCC's efforts in 2019 to engage and involve over 1,200 community members in setting the plan's course.

"I am encouraged by the direction the plan provides and the continuing commitment of CJCC members. Together, we can continue our collaborative, data-guided approach to improving the justice system within Charleston County," said CJCC Chairman, Deputy Chief Stan Gragg of the Mount Pleasant Police Department.

Four collaborative working groups of community representatives and justice system leaders developed a dozen initiatives for the next three years drawing upon identified community priorities, system trends, and more recent lessons learned—from the COVID-19 pandemic and the growing movement for racial justice. Highlights include:

Community engagement and addressing inequity

- Make information about our criminal justice system increasingly accessible through social media and community events.
- Publish an updated report on racial equity within the local justice system.
- Partner with the College of Charleston's Community Assistance Program to develop a proposal for instituting a research-based Race Equity Fellowship program to increase consciousness among system actors and lead efforts to address inequities in Charleston.

Strengthening jail diversion and deflection from the criminal justice system

- Inter-agency case conferencing to achieve improved outcomes for people that most often cycle in and out of the Sheriff Al Cannon Detention Center.
- Commission external research on the individual and community impacts of diversion and deflection.
- Develop a county-wide crime and jail use tracking mechanism to better understand patterns of crime, diversion and deflection, arrests, and jail use activity.

Focusing on fairness and reentry

- Administer routine monitoring of Centralized Bond Court to ensure bond hearings are continually fair, just and meaningful.
- Partner with [United Way's SC 211](#) to expand access to reentry information.

- Develop a research-based proposal for pretrial service option(s) to help maximize safety, appearance and liberty.

Case processing advancements

- Conduct regular reviews of the jail population to identify defendants that remain unnecessarily detained pending trial (for reasons other than safety or flight risks).
- Expand court reminders in the Court of General Sessions to help maintain contact and limit missed court appearances.
- Research impacts of COVID-19 on the local justice system and institutionalize lessons learned.

“I am excited about the CJCC’s upcoming initiatives and how they range from the concrete and attainable goals to the more challenging future aspirations. It gives me hope and reminds me how important it is for everyone to work together for the health, safety and well-being of our community,” said Areyonna Keels, Bilingual Victim Advocate with People Against Rape and CJCC Community Representative.

To read the complete Strategic Plan or for more information about the CJCC, visit cjcc.charlestoncounty.org.

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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. The CJCC is currently funded by a Safety + Justice Challenge grant from the John D. and Catherine T. MacArthur Foundation. For more information, visit www.cjcc.charlestoncounty.org.

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