"We have been given an opportunity to conduct an unprecedented analysis of our system, identify opportunities for improvement, break new ground and improve the impact our system of justice has on this community," said Chairman Mitch Lucas.

"Together, we have the potential to revolutionize Charleston County’s criminal justice system and become an exemplary regional model for others in the Southeast."
SAFETY + JUSTICE CHALLENGE

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CHARLESTON COUNTY AWARDED $2.25 MILLION BY MACARTHUR FOUNDATION TO REDUCE JAIL POPULATION, IMPROVE LOCAL JUSTICE SYSTEM, AND MODEL REFORMS FOR THE NATION

North Charleston, SC—Today announced a $2.25 million grant from the MacArthur Foundation to Charleston County, South Carolina, to apply innovative, evidence-based reforms to the county’s criminal justice system. The purpose of the grant is to improve local justice systems while lowering jail populations, reducing spending, and addressing racial disparities.

The grant is part of the MacArthur Foundation’s Safety + Justice Challenge, which seeks to reduce the nation’s high jail populations, including increasing investments in evidence-based and community-driven initiatives that aim to divert non-violent offenders from jail and improve justice system outcomes.

"We are ecstatic and grateful the MacArthur Foundation chose to invest in our community and the enhancements to our criminal justice system," Criminal Justice Coordinating Council Chairman Mitch Lucas said.
CHARLESTON COUNTY JOINS WHITE HOUSE INITIATIVE IN NATIONAL EFFORT TO USE DATA TO IMPROVE LOCAL CRIMINAL JUSTICE SYSTEMS


NORTH CHARLESTON, S.C., July 1, 2016 – Charleston County’s Criminal Justice Coordinating Council (CJCC) has joined the White House’s Data Driven Justice initiative to implement reforms to safely reduce the jail population and create a more effective local criminal justice system. These efforts were already underway by the CJCC. The White House initiative will now provide even more resources for the group to continue its mission.

The national initiative is a bipartisan coalition of 67 city, county, and state governments who have committed to adopting evidence-based data-driven approaches to reduce the size of local correctional facilities and improve outcomes for all residents. Charleston County is the second South Carolina jurisdiction to join the initiative.

“Since our group had already been working together and laying the ground work for the implementation of our strategies, joining the White House’s efforts was a no-brainer,” said Dr. Chanda Brown, Director of the Charleston Center and CJCC Co-Vice Chair. “We will now have even more access to resources in order to implement our current initiatives and create a more effective local criminal justice system.”
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CHARLESTON COUNTY CRIMINAL JUSTICE COORDINATING COUNCIL (CJCC)
INDUCTS COMMUNITY REPRESENTATIVES

NORTH CHARLESTON, Coordinating Council (CJCC)
in the local criminal justice

After accepting applications,
selected to join the group,
improvements to Charleston
and community well-being.

“Community representatives”
diverse group of individuals

The CJCC confirmed their appointment and they each represent diverse sectors of our community. Below is the list of 2017 members by the specific categories required in the CJCC bylaws:

- Civil Rights, Dot Scott, Charleston Branch President of the NAACP
- Faith, Rich Robinson, Chaplain
- Hispanic, Lydia Cotton, Board Chair of Art Pot Multicultural Group
- Non-Profit, Byron Ray, Intervention Specialist
- Healthcare, Sharon Coleman, Director of Residential Services
- Business, Daniel Brownstein, Director of Marketing and Communications
- Defense, Drew Carroll, Criminal Defense Lawyer
- Graduate Program, April Adams, Graduate Student
- Community-at-large, Brad Crowther, Consultant and Writer
- Executive Committee Appointment, Everard "Rod" Rutledge, Adjunct Professor and retired healthcare executive
The Lowcountry’s News Leader

2016 ANNUAL REPORT

Charleston County Criminal Justice Coordinating Council celebrates the one-year mark and highlights progress: all six strategies trending in the right direction

NORTH CHARLESTON, S.C., April 13, 2016

Progress is being made in reducing jail population and improving public safety.

“I am excited about the progress made in the first year which has led to meaningful reductions in jail incarceration. Working with all of our partners, we have implemented strategies that are creating positive outcomes. It’s exciting to see a 28% decrease in the number of criminal charges, a 14% increase in the use of cite and release, and a 30% decrease in jail admissions. This demonstrates the value of strong partnerships by all members of the criminal justice system and how using alternative methods to jail can address concerns without compromising community public safety” said Chief Mullen, City of Charleston Police Chief.

“What started as a competitive grant application in early 2015 has grown into the most transformative and collaborative criminal justice system improvement effort I have seen in my more than 30 years in law enforcement” said CICC Chairman, Assistant Sheriff Mitch Lucas. “While 2016 was a year to move from planning into action, 2017 looks to be a year of even greater change as more and more of the transformation strategies will be on-the-ground. We are happy with our progress to-date and look forward to continuing progress in 2017.”

Charleston County works to redefine criminal justice system

Jail reform program gets praise in its 1st year
It just makes sense that treatment for addiction & mental illness is more effective than jail time.

That is how we rethink jails.

cpc.charlestoncounty.org

Charleston Dorchester Mental Health Center Reopens

CJC launches Triage Service to provide law enforcement officers alternatives to jail in dealing with individuals suffering from mental illness, substance abuse and homelessness.

Charleston County Criminal Justice Coordinating Council (CJC) announces its collaboration and involvement in the Charleston County Mental Health and Substance Abuse Community Center (CDMH). An effort to diverting individuals from jail. The CJC, which is operated by the South Carolina Department of Mental Health, will be located on Charleston Center Drive in Charleston on a site previously occupied by the mental health center.

New center opens for local mental health patients

By Gail Burd | Tuesday, January 31, 2017

"They might be thinking about harming someone else. They might be psychotic. They might be depressed. They might be manic," explained Deborah Blalock, executive director of the Charleston Dorchester Mental Health Center. "And they need services, but they don't need a hospital and they don't need a detention center. And they don't need to go home. So they need something in between to make sure their needs are met."
Infrastructure in place for changes in Charleston's Criminal Justice System
Criminal Justice Coordinating Council midyear report provides details

NORTH CHARLESTON, S.C., August 31, 2017 – The Charleston County Criminal Justice Coordinating Council (CJCC) is pleased to release the 2017 midyear report providing data findings and updates on six reform strategies. Of note, the CJCC has completed installation of key infrastructure necessary for each of the reforms.

The first major accomplishment was the merging of data from over a dozen different sources into a centralized database to evaluate the local criminal justice system and identify opportunities for improvement. Another significant achievement was the opening of the Tri-County Crisis Stabilization Center with a law enforcement triage service to provide immediate treatment for members of the community in need.

The central database and triage service are two of six strategies helping to improve the way our community uses the jail and how the local criminal justice system serves the people of Charleston County. Leaders from across the local criminal justice system continue to take a data-guided approach to address long-standing challenges such as recidivism, lack of adequate information to accurately assess risk at bond hearings, high caseloads, and few options other than jail. As of June 2017, the average daily population of the jail is 7% lower than it was before the start of implementation of the three-year transformation plan to safely lower the jail population by 35% by the end of 2017.
TRANSFORMING OUR CRIMINAL JUSTICE SYSTEM:
ENGAGING OUR COMMUNITY

The CJCC is pleased to announce the Transforming Our Criminal Justice System conference this Saturday, November 18, at Trident Technical College in Charleston. The conference is sponsored by the Criminal Justice Coordinating Council (CJCC) and will feature keynote speakers, panels, and workshops designed to engage community members in discussions about criminal justice reform.

The conference will include the following:

- 249 attendees registered
- 17 speakers
- 17 exhibiting organizations
- 4 faith leaders introducing panels
- 4 panel presentations
- 3 CJCC films
- 1 objective

For more information, please contact Adria R. Evans, Communications and Outreach Coordinator at 843-521-9320 or evansa@charlestoncounty.org.

The Post and Courier
Charleston-area leaders, officials to discuss criminal justice reform at Saturday event

Hicks column: It takes a village to reform the criminal justice system

By Tim Hicks, The Post and Courier

Published: October 18, 2017

The Episcopal Forum of South Carolina, with support from the Charleston County CJCC and City of Charleston Police Illumination Project, hosted a one-day conference focused on current practices within our community, ways in which areas of weakness are identified, and how the community can constructively engage in promoting efficient and equitable reform. The long-term goal is a criminal justice system that is effective.
CJCC AIMS TO IMPROVE PUBLIC SAFETY AND JUSTICE BY PROVIDING JUDGES WITH MORE INFORMATION AT BOND HEARINGS

NORTH CHARLESTON, S.C., Dec. 18, 2017 — As part of the CJCC’s six-part transformation of the criminal justice system and make it more effective, efficient and secure, judges are being given the tools they need to make informed decisions that will keep our community safe. By law, most bonds are set with a presumption of release on recognizance unless it is shown by clear and convincing evidence that the defendant is a danger to the community. This is a critical factor in setting bond in Centralized Bond Court and its impact on pretrial release or court appearance. The study included all bonds set in Centralized Bond Court over calendar years 2015 and 2016. The study found that the CJCC’s recommendations have made a significant impact on public safety and the overall system of justice.

During a media information session on December 18, 2017, system leaders discussed the results of the baseline pretrial outcome study and the new pretrial service report (PSR) going into practice in 2018. The PSR includes pertinent information about the defendant as a defendant in the state of North Carolina in the community setting as well as an actuarial assessment of risk of flight and new criminal activity during the pretrial period.

“The current system does not serve our community well,” project director Kristy Daniel said during an announcement at the county courthouse. “We can and must do better.”
FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:
January 26, 2018

LOCAL REPRESENTATIVES STRENGTHEN COMMUNITY VOICE IN ONGOING CRIMINAL JUSTICE IMPROVEMENTS

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NORTH CHARLESTON, SC: The Charleston County Community Coordinating Council (CICC) is pleased to announce community representatives appointed to the 2018-2019 term. Representatives are key to the decision-making process on a number of issues. Each selects a representative to the community at-large, ensuring that diverse voices are heard. The term of service is December 2017 to December 2018.

Community representatives appointed to the 2018-2019 term include:

- Professor Jennifer A. Baker PhD, Department of Philosophy, College of Charleston, Graduate Program in Tourism
- Lynn Pagliaro, Investor & Consultant serving SC Commercial & Non-Profit Organizations since 1985
- Community-at-large
- Dick Scott, NAACP Charleston Chapter President, Civil Rights community, reappointed to subsequent term
- Reverend Luciano Soto Jr., Senior Pastor El Lugar De Su Gloria, Hispanic community
- Sandra S. Stedman, Resource Development Director, SC Share, Executive Committee Appointment

The CICC recognizes their contributions to the community at-large. These community representatives have made significant contributions to the community, ensuring that diverse voices are heard and that the needs of all community members are addressed.

We are grateful for the dedication and commitment of these representatives to the community. We look forward to their continued service and the positive impact they will have on the community.
Charleston jail inmate population decreasing

“People at the right time committed to improving our local criminal justice system and making it more efficient, effective, and equitable. I am proud of our progress to-date and anticipate we will continue improving as we move forward,” said Charleston County Assistant Sheriff and CJCC Chairman Mitch Lucas.

“When someone is violent, we have to take steps to ensure that the community is safe,” Wilson said. “So do not be confused by the fact that we are trying to keep a portion of the population out of jail. Keeping someone in jail because they are violent, I'm for (that) all day long. But not because they’re poor.”

CJCC: Charleston Co. jail rates have gone down
Charleston County CJCC Midyear Report Reveals Racial and Ethnic Disparities in the Local Criminal Justice System

A study of racial imbalance in the Charleston County justice system raises more questions than it answers
Criminal Justice Coordinating Council receives $2.4 million to lower Charleston County jail population

Charleston jail reform group awarded additional $2.46 million grant

Lowcountry organization awarded $2.5 million to reduce jail population
FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:
January 31, 2019

SEVEN LOCAL VOICES STRENGTHEN COMMUNITY DEDICATION TO LOCAL CRIMINAL JUSTICE IMPROVEMENT

NORTH CHARLESTON, SC—The Charleston County Criminal Justice Coordinating Council (CJCC) is pleased to announce the appointment of seven community representatives for the 2019-2021 term following the open call for applications. These representatives are a key part of the CJCC’s efforts to improve local criminal justice with unique interests and public safety and community concerns.

Community representatives appointed to the 2019-2021 term include:

- Reverend John Paul Brown, Retired Minister, The African Methodist Episcopal Church, faith community
- David G. Phillips, Professional Fundraising Consultant/Nonprofit Management Consultant, Custom Development Solutions (CDS), nonprofit community
- Samuel Bellamy, Jr., Associate Care Coordinator, Select Health of South Carolina, healthcare community
- Ian Scott, Government Relations, Charleston Metro Chamber of Commerce, business community
- Lauren Williams, Esq., attorney, Williams & Walsh LLC, defense bar community
- Vanessa Halyard, Family Advocate, Dee Norton Child Advocacy Center, crime survivor community
- Keith Smalls, construction, H.R. Allen Inc., previously incarcerated community

"When I was selected to serve as a community representative two years ago, I had no idea what a learning opportunity I was in for. I had a front row seat at the table with local leadership to examine the numerous layers and gears of the local criminal justice system and make improvements. This has truly been an once-in-a-lifetime opportunity and I wish all the best to the community representatives," stated Byron J. Ray, community representative committee.

For more information, visit our website at cicc.charlestoncounty.org.
Money poured into improving Charleston County justice department yields results
Community members have open conversation about racial equity in Charleston County
The Charleston County Criminal Justice Coordinating Council wants to hear from you!

“We embarked on a big plan a couple years ago and made a lot of improvements. Now we’re getting ready to create our next plan and don’t want to do that without having community priorities lead the way.”

-KRISTY DANFORD, CJCC PROJECT DIRECTOR
FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:
January 27, 2020

NORTH CHARLESTON, SC—The Criminal Justice Coordinating Council (CJCC) is pleased to announce the 2020 term following the open call for applications. CJCC is fully committed to improving public safety and community relations. The CJCC is seeking applicants for the 2020-2022 term that include:

• Otha Meadows, President and Chief Executive Officer, Charleston Urban League, civil rights community
• Lydia Cotton, Hispanic community
• Anthony Bishara, Associate Professor of Psychology, College of Charleston, graduate community in related field of study
• Areyonna Keels, Bilingual Victim Advocate, People Against Rape (PAR), community-at-large community
• Alexandra E. Menegakis, Criminal Defense Attorney, Adams & Bischoff, P.C., s designated liaison from any other entity deemed appropriate by the Executive Community

Community representatives appointed to the 2020-2022 term include:

The progress that the CJCC has made since we first sat at the table in 2015 is mind-blowing. The CJCC is in the thick of the work making real changes that are improving Charleston’s local criminal justice system. I am so thankful this work is happening here,” stated Dot Scott, Charleston Area NAACP President and CJCC community representative completing two consecutive terms (2016-2020).

For more information, visit our website at cicc.charlestoncounty.org.
Charleston jail population down 20 percent since 2014 with measures to curb incarcerations

CJCC reports continued improvement to local criminal justice system

"By 2019, jail use in Charleston County was markedly different than it was in 2014. Thankfully, we had this foundation in place prior to COVID-19. Moving forward, we will continue to take a collaborative, data-guided approach to improve our local criminal justice system," stated Stan Gragg, CJCC Chairman and Deputy Chief of the Mount Pleasant Police Department.

Charleston County jailings halved, low-level arrests down since 2014, CJCC study finds
FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
August 3, 2020

INFORMED BY COMMUNITY MEMBERS, CICC 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 CICC, released its Strategic Plan outlining key initiatives for the next three years. The plan was developed on the heels of the CICC’s efforts in 2019 to engage and involve over 125 community members in setting the plan’s focus.

“I am encouraged by the direction that our council has been taking and the strong support we have received from our members. Together, we can continue to improve our criminal justice system within Charleston County,” said Charleston County Sheriff’s Office Chief of Staff, Darrell Braswell. “We are lucky to have community representatives and justice partners working with us which is key to ensuring the plan will be successful.”

The Strategic Plan is focused on the following key initiatives:

1. Strengthening the Sheriff’s Office
2. Strengthening the courts
3. Strengthening the Community
4. Strengthening law enforcement

Charleston County Criminal Justice Coordinating Council hosting virtual forum on revamping the criminal justice system

How the Criminal Justice Coordinating Council will help revamp law enforcement

“We adjust as the community does,” Bruder said. “It's multifaceted. ... We're not siloed, we're part of the community and society ... and we're always willing to listen.”
Conversations continue on racial injustice within the Charleston community

One of the organizations biggest advocates, Keith Smalls, says he is proud of everything CICC has accomplished, but looks forward to more growth and change in the future.

You know, this is something near and dear to my heart. After serving 19 years in prison and losing a son to gun violence in the North Charleston Community, and being a mentor, I look forward to the future with CICC and the all things they’re going to do in Charleston County,” he says.
Criminal justice reform in Charleston County leads to an unprecedented drop in jail bookings

An officer has the discretion to hold someone accused of a misdemeanor in jail; however, Judge Danford said officers can still be held accountable for the choices they make.

"For law enforcement it meant a major change. They still have to appear before the judge, but it's putting the officers back in service and making sure they're not locked up in jail when they could be free," Danford said. "And that compromises their ability to do their job."

Since the law took effect, there has been a 23% reduction in jail population in Charleston County. It's also resulted in a 10% in bookings for simple possession of marijuana. Charleston County Sheriff's Office, Charleston North Charleston, and Mount Pleasant Police Department agree not to automatically bring people accused of five summary level charges to the county jail.

Those misdemeanor charges include simple possession of marijuana, open container, and public intoxication.

In Charleston County, as well as in the City of Charleston, that drop in bookings has resulted in a 75% reduction in jail costs to the city during the past fiscal year. But it's not just about money, it's also about putting a face on the person. When someone is arrested, they're someone's child, someone's brother or sister, someone's mother or father.

That's why the Charleston County Criminal Justice Coordinating Committee is working to make the justice system more equitable for everyone, and their efforts are paying off.

In 2023, the first two major recommendations resulted in an unprecedented drop in the number of bookings at the 4th Cannon Detention Center over the last few years.

"The jail today is far more used for more serious crime and not the misdemeanor," Judge Danford said.

The reason for that is the C4CCC worked with the 'Big C' law enforcement agencies in Charleston County to agree not to automatically bring people accused of these summary level charges to the county jail, the 4th Cannon Detention Center says.