

**PRESS RELEASE**  
**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**  
**February 9, 2021**



**Charleston County Criminal Justice Coordinating Council (CJCC) Awarded Additional \$1,460,000  
by MacArthur Foundation Safety and Justice Challenge**

**New Funding Will Help Support Sustainability and Continue Momentum in Improving the Local  
Criminal Justice System and Advancing Racial Equity**

February 9, 2021 – The Charleston County Criminal Justice Coordinating Council (CJCC) is pleased to announce a \$1,460,000 Safety and Justice Challenge (SJC) grant by the John D. and Catherine T. MacArthur Foundation. The CJCC will utilize the funding to continue building on past progress, institutionalize lessons learned throughout the SJC and the pandemic, and strengthen a coalition of support for advancing racial/ethnic equity and criminal justice system (CJS) improvements for years to come. The CJCC is a data-guided collaborative of system leaders and community representatives committed to safety and justice working together to improve the local criminal justice system and advance racial equity.

The CJCC was first selected to join the Safety and Justice Challenge Network in 2015 and has since used the resources and funding provided to develop and implement evidence-based solutions within the local criminal justice system such as:

- Building a robust data warehouse combining data from across the criminal justice system;
- Supporting law enforcement’s use of jail alternatives such as cite and release for low-level charges like open container and simple possession of marijuana;
- Expanding real-time access to services other than jail for individuals living with mental illness, substance use disorders and homelessness;
- Providing text message reminders to defendants with upcoming court appearances in General Sessions Court;
- Launching efforts to support fair and meaningful bond hearing practices such as pretrial service reports and more consistent representation by the state and defense counsel;
- Accelerating front-end aspects of case processing, such as timelier assignments of prosecution and defense counsel, technology to efficiently process the delivery of discovery, and the first-ever initiation of public defender representation in Centralized Bond Court for defendants that qualify;
- Issuing bi-annual reports to inform and update the community about progress and challenges in the local criminal justice system;
- Engaging the community in local reform efforts through various forums, dialogues, surveys and regular meetings; and,
- Developing and launching a community-informed and data-guided, three-year strategic plan in 2020.

To date, the local average daily jail population in Charleston County declined 42% from 1,111 in calendar year 2014 to 639 as of February 1, 2021 (local figures exclude non-local uses of jail such as federal detainees and out-of-county holds).

“We are incredibly grateful for the continued support of the Safety and Justice Challenge. The new round of funding will help us sustain these efforts and gives us the opportunity to strengthen and expand key strategic initiatives with community support,” said CJCC Chairman, Captain Jason Bruder, Charleston Police Department.

Today, Charleston County was one of 15 jurisdictions nationally selected for additional funding based on the promise and progress of work to date. More than five years after its public launch, the SJC has grown into a collaborative of 51 jurisdictions in 32 states modeling and inspiring reforms to create more fair, just, and equitable local justice systems across the country.

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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 advancing global climate solutions, decreasing nuclear risk, promoting local justice reform in the U.S., and reducing corruption in Africa’s most populous country, Nigeria. In addition to the MacArthur Fellows Program and the global 100&Change competition, the Foundation continues its historic commitments to the role of journalism in a responsive democracy as well as the vitality of our headquarters city, Chicago. More information about the Foundation’s criminal justice reform work can be found at [www.macfound.org/criminaljustice](http://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. More information about the CJCC can be found at [www.cjcc.charlestoncounty.org](http://www.cjcc.charlestoncounty.org).

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