

PRESS RELEASE



Criminal Justice Agencies around Charleston County Join Forces in Combating Crime

Criminal Justice Coordinating Council Formed; More Than a Dozen Agencies Represented

Contact:

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Charleston, S.C. – Numerous state and local agencies around Charleston County have joined forces to revitalize the Criminal Justice Coordinating Council (CJCC) in an effort to improve public safety and the community's well-being.

The CJCC brings leaders together to make sustainable improvements to our local criminal justice system. The key goals of the CJCC are to increase effectiveness and efficiency of the justice system, examine and address issues of disproportionality and/or disparity, maintain and enhance public safety, expand evidence-based options to combat crime and reduce reoffending, effectively utilize detention, increase public confidence in safety and justice, and incorporate proactive, data-driven decision making in the fight against crime.

The CJCC has selected Charleston County Assistant Sheriff Mitch Lucas as Chairman and co-vice chairs, Chanda Brown, Director of the Charleston Center and Deborah Blalock, Executive Director of Charleston Dorchester Mental Health Center. Other members of the CJCC include representatives from the Charleston County Sheriff's Office, Charleston County Government, Charleston County Clerk of Court, 9th Judicial Circuit, Charleston County Magistrate Court, 9th Circuit Solicitor's Office, Charleston County Public Defender's Office, Charleston Police Department, North Charleston Police Department, Mt. Pleasant Police Department, Specialty Courts and SC Department of Probation, Parole and Pardon Services. The CJCC has also established a group of key community representatives and other forums to ensure community engagement and input along the journey ahead.

Initially, the CJCC is focused on a comprehensive analysis of the local criminal justice system and will then identify and implement strategies to improve effectiveness and efficiency. The CJCC was recently awarded a highly competitive Safety and Justice Challenge grant from the MacArthur Foundation to assist in this effort, and is being provided technical assistance by experts from the Justice Management Institute.

"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

PRESS RELEASE



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.”

For more information on the CJCC and opportunities for community engagement, visit our website at <http://cjcc.charlestoncounty.org>.

The Chairman will also be available for interviews at the Law Enforcement Center between 1:30 pm and 2:30 pm on Wednesday, September 9, 2015.