

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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## **LOCAL CRIMINAL JUSTICE COORDINATING COUNCIL MAKES STRIDES TOWARD CRIMINAL JUSTICE REFORM WITHIN FOUR PRIORITY AREAS IDENTIFIED BY COMMUNITY MEMBERS**

### **Charleston County Criminal Justice Coordinating Council (CJCC) on Track with Strategic Plan Goals**

**NORTH CHARLESTON, S.C.** Today, the Charleston County Criminal Justice Coordinating Council (CJCC) released its [2021 Midyear Report: Strategic Plan Update \(Fiscal Years 2021-2023\)](#) to update the community on the progress underway towards sustainable, data-driven improvements to Charleston's criminal justice system. One year into the implementation of the [Strategic Plan](#), the CJCC is on pace with the twelve initiatives in the plan. Additional details about each of the twelve initiatives within the strategic plan are found below.

The CJCC engaged over [1,200 community members in 2019](#) to inform the development of its [Strategic Plan in 2020](#), which focuses on the following core areas: community engagement and addressing inequity, strengthening jail diversion and deflection from the criminal justice system, focusing on fairness and reentry and case processing advancements.

"While we've had to be flexible with changes due to COVID-19, our work remains guided by data and collaboration, our plans are deliberate, and we are making progress towards the goals laid out," stated CJCC Project Director Kristy Danford. "As the CJCC moves into its second year of implementing the strategic plan, we are excited to keep moving forward and seeing this strategic plan to fruition."

Also significant, the CJCC has taken important steps toward long-term sustainability and to strengthen its mission. The CJCC proposed and was awarded a two-year [sustainability grant](#) from the John D. and Catherine T. MacArthur Foundation. In addition, the Charleston County Council passed a resolution affirming its support of the CJCC as well as the CJCC's goals, mission and operational function. As of July 1, 2021, Charleston County Council moved the oversight function of the CJCC to the Public Safety Directorate of Charleston County to better examine a more holistic approach to public safety. In the coming year, the CJCC will also revisit and revise its by-laws to better meet the needs of the community and to enhance collaboration.

"Community engagement is crucial to our ongoing efforts to improve the local criminal justice system and advance equity in the community we proudly call home," said Lauren Williams, CJCC Community Representative, Partner, Williams & Walsh, LLC. "As leaders within the criminal justice system, we're humbly requesting the community to continue engaging with these issues, sharing their thoughts with us, and joining us as we hold ourselves accountable to advancing meaningful change."

To read the complete 2021 Midyear Report: Strategic Plan Update (Fiscal Years 2021 – 2023) or for more information about the CJCC, visit [cjcc.charlestoncounty.org](http://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 and Justice Challenge grant from the John D. and Catherine T. MacArthur Foundation. For more information, visit [www.cjcc.charlestoncounty.org](http://www.cjcc.charlestoncounty.org).*

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### **2021 Midyear Report: Strategic Plan Update (Fiscal Years 2021 – 2023) Highlights:**

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#### **Community engagement and addressing inequity**

- *Deliberately focused on making information increasingly accessible and available to a broader audience through multiple formats such as social media, Community Justice Forums and targeted community engagement events*
- *Partnered with Everyday Democracy to launch a qualitative two-year community-engaged research study to better understand racial and ethnic disproportionalities and disparities in the local criminal justice system*
- *Convened a dynamic group of researchers and community leaders that represent the target audience for the Race Equity Fellowship Program to develop the program proposal, and secured funding to develop and pilot the program*

#### **Strengthening jail diversion and deflection from the criminal justice system**

- *Initiated a small scale pilot to engage individuals living with homelessness, mental illness and/or substance use disorders that most often cycle in and out of jail in wrap-around services to help achieve improved outcomes and uncover system gaps*
- *Launched a study with the Charleston Dorchester Mental Health Center and Justice System Partners (JSP) to more fully understand how deflecting individuals with mental illness from the criminal justice system and to diversion options (and subsequent treatment) impacts arrest, jail populations and behavioral health outcomes*
- *Developed and launched regularly occurring data dashboards to monitor trends in crime, diversion and deflection, arrests and jail use activity in the community*

#### **Focusing on fairness and reentry**

- *Developed and launched regular dashboards to monitor Centralized Bond Court practices, pretrial release patterns, and the use of pretrial service reports (PSR)*
- *Developed and launched a court observation tool to strengthen alignment among Central Bond Court practices and national standards to help ensure bond hearings are continually fair, just and meaningful*

- *Studied current South Carolina statutes, case law, and national standards for pretrial release and detention as well as related research studies to guide the development of a proposal for pretrial service option(s)*
- *Partnered with United Ways' SC 211 to secure one-year assignment of an AmeriCorps VISTA devoted to addressing gaps in reentry information available in the SC 211 platform and implementing strategies to get this information directly to justice-involved populations*

***Case processing advancements***

- *Developed and launched regular dashboards to monitor case processing activity in the Court of General Sessions*
- *Institutionalized weekly jail population reviews with court stakeholders*
- *Continued to improve the General Sessions Court text reminders*
- *Conducted reviews of key case processing indicators and convened stakeholders to help problem-solve*

**MEDIA CONTACT FOR CHARLESTON COUNTY CJCC:**

Adina Baer Gross, Communications & Community Outreach  
843-259-9820; [abgross@charlestoncounty.org](mailto:abgross@charlestoncounty.org)