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PALM BEACH COUNTY AWARDED ADDITIONAL \$875,000 BY MACARTHUR FOUNDATION SAFETY AND JUSTICE CHALLENGE TO SUSTAIN PROGRESS REFORMING LOCAL JUSTICE SYSTEMS

Funding Aims to Grow and Support Initiatives to Safely Reduce Palm Beach County's Jail Population and Advance Racial Equity

PALM BEACH COUNTY, FLORIDA, February 8, 2023 –Palm Beach County through the Criminal Justice Commission has been selected to receive a \$875,000 grant by the John D. and Catherine T. MacArthur Foundation to sustain its progress toward safely reducing Palm Beach County's jail population and addressing racial inequities in collaboration with community members. The grant marks a total of \$4,350,000 invested in Palm Beach County, to date, as part of the [Safety and Justice Challenge](#); a \$323 million national initiative to reduce over-incarceration and eliminate racial inequities in local criminal justice systems by changing the way America thinks about and uses jails.

Today, Palm Beach County was one of 11 jurisdictions selected for additional funding based on the promise and progress of work to date. This new round of funding will provide the Palm Beach County Criminal Justice Commission and partners with continued support and expert technical assistance to sustain key strategies that address the main drivers of pretrial incarceration and racial inequities in the local justice system.

The Safety and Justice Challenge is supporting local leaders, people most impacted by the justice system, and the broader community in Palm Beach County to address one of the greatest drivers of over-incarceration in America – the misuse and overuse of jails. Palm Beach County was first selected to join the Safety and Justice Challenge Network in 2015 and has since used resources provided by the initiative to implement innovative, evidence-based strategies to transform Palm Beach County's justice system.

As a result, Palm Beach County has safely reduced the jail population by 20.3% and jail admissions by 26%. Palm Beach County has developed a comprehensive plan for sustaining its strategies and initiatives over the next two years to invest in a safer, more effective, and more equitable system. These include:

- Expansion of the Text Reminder System to reduce Failure to Appear;
- Probation Bus to reduce violations of probation;
- "Next Steps" Frequent Utilizers Pilot to reduce recidivism and address individuals with complex behavioral health needs from recycling through the jail system;
- Advance systems change through community engagement - Dialogues to Change;
- Develop a system-wide strategic plan;
- Increase equity and justice among racial and ethnic populations
- Pretrial Release Project to support Public Defender clients with housing, peer mentoring and other community resources;
- Pretrial Service support for supervision of the Supervised Own Recognizance (SOR) level; and
- Enhance data research systems to improve decision-making, outcomes and collaboration.



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“Partnering with our community is key to rethinking criminal justice in Palm Beach County. The additional support from the MacArthur Foundation Safety and Justice Challenge will help us continue to put the voices and experiences of people most impacted in the center of conversations around reform to ensure our work is reflective of the community’s needs.” Regenia Herring, Executive Director, Criminal Justice Commission

More than seven years since its public launch, the Safety and Justice Challenge has grown into a collaborative network of 74 sites in 33 states modeling and inspiring reforms to create more fair, just and equitable local justice systems across the country.

“I am proud to celebrate and reflect on the progress made by the Safety and Justice Challenge cities and counties over the past seven years. This initiative shows that communities can bridge their differences in pursuit of a more equitable and just response to people in conflict with the law,” said Laurie Garduque, MacArthur Foundation’s Director of Criminal Justice. *“With innovative and evidence-based solutions now in place, the next phase of the initiative must look to sustain that progress moving forward. We look forward to supporting these jurisdictions as they continue to pursue smart, data-driven strategies to safely reduce jail populations and eliminate racial and ethnic disparities in jails.”*

More information about the work underway in Palm Beach County can be found on <http://discover.pbcgov.org/criminaljustice> as well as on www.SafetyandJusticeChallenge.org.

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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.

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