

## **MacArthur Foundation Safety & Justice Challenge Phase 2 Proposal Overview: Milwaukee County, Wisconsin**

On April 13, 2016, The John D. and Catherine T. MacArthur Foundation announced a \$2 million grant to Milwaukee County to implement reforms to safely reduce Milwaukee's jail population and address racial and ethnic disparities in the justice system. Milwaukee County is one of 11 jurisdictions in the country chosen to receive significant funding and access to expert technical assistance to implement a plan for reform over the next two years. In total, nearly \$25 million was awarded in support of ambitious plans to create fairer, more effective local justice systems across the country.



Supported by the John D. and Catherine T. MacArthur Foundation

Milwaukee County's reform strategies were developed collaboratively by the Milwaukee Community Justice Council over the course of seven months in 2015 by: gathering data, analyzing criminal justice system decision-points and collective stakeholder and community participation. Milwaukee County's reform strategies focus on changing key drivers of entry into the jail, care and length of stay of individuals with significant trauma and mental health issues within the jail, as well as providing law enforcement with an expanded toolbox for responding to individuals with mental health issues.

With the support of Phase 2 funding from the MacArthur Foundation, the Milwaukee Community Justice Council (MCJC) will implement the following strategies over the next 2 to 3 years:

### **Strategy 1: Book and Release**

The Milwaukee Police Department will begin a pilot "book and release" model from the District 1 police station to divert individuals being charged with non-violent, low level-misdemeanors (criteria and officer discretion to be determined) to a district station for booking and release, which occurs in the 18 other municipalities throughout Milwaukee County. Current practices include booking at a district station, transportation to the county jail, and re-booking into the jail. The Milwaukee Police Department has had IT challenges to allow for its systems to communicate with the Milwaukee County Jail, so SJC resources will enable the police department to build the interface needed to support this process.

Given that 40% of all arrests by the Milwaukee Police Department are for misdemeanor crimes, this strategy will enable MPD to expedite processing time and reduce the number of Milwaukee County Jail bookings, which will result in a significant reduction of bed days spent within the Milwaukee County Jail. A more consistent arrest and booking approach throughout our notably segregated city and county will markedly reduce the racial and ethnic disparity within our jail and criminal justice system.

### **Strategy 2: Strategic Utilization of CMT, CART and Crisis Resource Centers**

Nationally, jails have become repositories for individuals with mental illness, and Milwaukee County is no exception. 35% of individuals within the Milwaukee County Jail and House of Correction receive psychotropic medications while in-custody, and we have a significant number of individuals in pretrial status with competency raised as a concern.

We seek to broaden the options for law enforcement so that jail is not the first or only choice. With the support of the MacArthur Foundation, Milwaukee County will expand both Crisis Mobile Services (licensed behavioral health clinicians reporting on-scene to assist LE in determining treatment need), as well as CART – Crisis Assessment Response Team, which pairs an officer with a clinician and only responds to calls pertaining to complex mental health crisis situations. There will also be expanded outreach, marketing and non-admission resources provided by the Crisis Resource Centers for law enforcement. MCBHD is also in the process of expanding its

walk-in centers to include a north and south side “assessment center,” which would allow officers to transport individuals to these locations and receive triage services related to their mental health situation. These services will allow law enforcement to deflect individuals from their respective situations into appropriate community-based services rather than a jail setting.

### **Strategy 3: Post-booking Mental Health Diversion & Stabilization**

Milwaukee County also intends to implement a stabilization model for individuals who are booked on low-level offenses related to their mental health issues. Partners will develop a protocol for identifying eligible individuals, based on risk and need, who could be quickly stabilized through case management and monitoring, housing and peer support before a charging determination is made by the District Attorney’s Office. The successful stabilization of these individuals will improve the likelihood of diversion into Milwaukee County’s Early Intervention program and avoid further decompensation while in-custody and the need for competency restoration.

### **Strategy 4: Trauma and Family Violence Education**

It is increasingly recognized that there is a correlation between traumatic experiences and criminal justice system involvement. Within the juvenile justice system, trauma has been widely studied on the impact it has on juveniles and the criminal justice system. As an advanced jurisdiction, Milwaukee County would like to begin to implement best practices learned within the juvenile system nationally, to our adult system. Milwaukee County will work with national experts to develop a trauma-informed training system for all stakeholders (i.e. Judges, Court Staff, ADAs, PDs, jail staff, pretrial staff, DOC agents, etc.), as well as conduct a trauma-informed audit/survey of the current practices in place. MCBHD will also increase the requirements for contracted vendors to provide evidence-based, trauma-informed care.

Secondly, Milwaukee County will expand the Early Intervention program to allow for diversions and deferred prosecution agreements to individuals involved in family violence. We recognize that often in situations of family violence, despite potential jail time and/or time apart, families often reunite. As part of a pretrial or pre-charging agreement, we would like to require evidence-based, trauma-informed care for those situations so that treatment is offered and provided to those individuals with the goal of increasing the number of families living free of violence.

### **Strategy 5: System Heavy Utilizers**

In 2013, the MCJC Mental Health Committee began taking a deeper look into who was utilizing the highest volume of police resources in relation to mental health crises and explored how our system could provide more comprehensive and cohesive mental health services for those individuals instead of unnecessarily jailing them. It was determined that 85 people, who were consuming a large number of police calls and resources, also consumed \$4.8MM worth of treatment services from the MCBHD in one year’s time. From that data, the Mental Health Committee has continued to analyze and evaluate heavy utilizers within the criminal justice system as well as the City of Milwaukee’s Municipal Court. Through the SJC, Milwaukee County will further formalize and expand this project.

### **Strategy 6: Expanded Data Capacity/Information Sharing**

Milwaukee County and the MCJC are committed to expanding our data capacity by way of integration and analysis. With SJC resources, we seek to further integrate MCBHD data, as well as Heavy Utilizer Data, into the Milwaukee DataShare, for the purposes of disseminating to law enforcement and potentially, the medical systems in our region. The sharing of this information would enable all systems that potentially intersect with individuals with mental illness to better understand the respective histories of these individuals to produce a more thoughtful and coordinated response to them. This enhanced system of information sharing will reduce repeated jailing of individuals experiencing a mental health related episode and improve the likelihood that these individuals will be directed into a coordinated system of care better designed to treat the root cause of an encounter with law enforcement.

These six strategies will combine to develop a trauma-informed jurisdiction with a multi-faceted community-based mental health system. It will also reduce our local jail population by at least 18%.