

## Milwaukee County Safety + Justice Challenge Initiative

### Capstone Executive Summary

In 2008, amid jail overcrowding, the Milwaukee Community Justice Council (CJC) began its work to reexamine use of county jail facilities and increase its use of evidence-based interventions. To expand on those early efforts, in 2015, local leaders applied for support from the John D. and Catherine T. MacArthur Foundation and its Safety + Justice Challenge (SJC) initiative.

Milwaukee County was among 11 sites initially selected by the Foundation to join the SJC Network — a network that has grown into a collaborative of 74 cities, counties, and states. Sites receive funding and technical assistance to address two initiative goals: reduce overreliance on local jails, and address racial and ethnic disparities in the criminal legal system.

The Safety + Justice Challenge has evolved over multiple phases:

- **Phase I** (2015) engaged jurisdictions across the country to plan and develop strategies to meet SJC goals.
- **Phase II** (2016 - 2018) provided funding and technical assistance to implement strategies outlined during Phase I.
- **Phase III** (2019 - 2020) continued support for the county’s work and added community engagement investments.
- **Sustainability Phase IV** (2021 - 2022) deepened focus on racial equity and long-term sustainability.

Strategies for SJC sites are tailored to the unique needs of each community. In Milwaukee, system and community partners worked together to create a broad portfolio of strategies to achieve both SJC goals.

Strategy	Description
<b>Case Processing</b>	Improve efficiency and streamline movement of cases through the criminal legal system
<b>Community Engagement</b>	Involve the wider community in systems change and priority-setting
<b>Expanded Data</b>	Boost capacity to monitor trends, track progress, and inform policymaking with accurate data
<b>Mental Health Diversion</b>	Expand the continuum of care for system-involved persons with mental health needs
<b>Racial Equity</b>	Convene system and community partners to measurably reduce disparities through a decision point analysis, shared priority-setting, and training
<b>Reentry</b>	Launch community-based interventions to support persons who are returning to the community after incarceration and prevent cycling through the system
<b>Trauma</b>	Train system stakeholders to increase recognition and improve response to trauma in the criminal legal system

## CAPSTONE GRANT

**Capstone Phase V** (2023 - 2025) infuses final funding to encourage participation in network activities and support ongoing research, communication, and amplification activities in SJC funded sites. Specifically, sites are expected to:

- Continue active membership in the SJC community by participating in SJC convenings, network expansion/peer learning events, and media opportunities
- Maintain efforts to reduce disparities and center equity, including empowering community members to be active participants in reform
- Provide ongoing data, and participate in initiative research and evaluation efforts
- Document and communicate SJC findings, outcomes, and impact
- Institutionalize SJC strategies, policies, practices, routines, data infrastructure, and collaborative bodies
- Sustain funding for essential personnel
- Ensure data and technology infrastructure is independent and operational

With the CJC serving as lead agency, the county will use its \$570,000 capstone award for the following funding areas:

Funding Area	Description
<b>Community Engagement *</b>	Meaningfully include community members, particularly persons with previous system involvement, in reform efforts and priority-setting
<b>Data Capacity</b>	<p>Conduct research to quantify the impact of COVID-19 on the criminal legal system</p> <p>Provide funding for REST interface access and Tableau licenses to facilitate data sharing through the Medical College of Wisconsin</p> <p>Modify the ePretrial system to track performance metrics for Mental Health Diversion and Domestic Violence Deferred Prosecution Agreement (DV DPA) strategies</p> <p>Fund assistance from County Information Management Services Division to fulfill data requests for SJC research and evaluation</p>
<b>Memorialize SJC Work</b>	<p>Identify an academic partner to complete a return-on-investment analysis, with the goal of fully understanding the impact and cost of SJC strategies</p> <p>Create summative materials and communications to highlight initiative accomplishments</p>
<b>Racial Equity *</b>	<p>Complete a racial equity decision point analysis, bringing together system and community partners to determine where disproportionality exists in the criminal legal system and develop recommendations to decrease disparities</p> <p>Support ongoing dialogues and learning opportunities related to racial equity</p>
<b>Strategic Planning &amp; Sustainability</b>	<p>Bridge Alma Center funding to provide trauma-informed, culturally-specific batterers intervention programming for DV DPA participants until new funding is secured</p> <p>Launch a strategic planning process with system and community stakeholders to identify collective priorities, set benchmarks for accountability, and pursue priority-related funding</p>

\* Broad funding is allocated for the general purpose of achieving community engagement and racial equity objectives