

**MILWAUKEE COMMUNITY JUSTICE COUNCIL AWARDED ADDITIONAL \$2.3 MILLION BY
MACARTHUR FOUNDATION SAFETY AND JUSTICE CHALLENGE
TO ADVANCE LOCAL JUSTICE SYSTEM IMPROVEMENTS**

MILWAUKEE – January 30, 2019 – By way of the Milwaukee Community Justice Council, Milwaukee County has been selected to receive a \$2.3 million grant from the John D. and Catherine T. MacArthur Foundation to continue efforts to safely reduce overreliance on the use of jails by advancing local criminal justice system improvements, reducing racial and ethnic disparities, and strengthening community engagement in Milwaukee County. This funding brings the Foundation’s total investment in Milwaukee County to \$4.45 million since 2015. The grant is part of the Foundation’s [Safety and Justice Challenge](#), a \$166 million national initiative to reduce over-incarceration by changing the way America thinks about and uses jails.

The Safety and Justice Challenge is supporting local leaders in Milwaukee County and across the country determined to tackle one of the greatest drivers of over-incarceration in America – the overreliance and misuse of jails. Milwaukee County was first selected to join the collaborative Safety and Justice Challenge Network in 2015 and has since used the resources and funding provided by the Challenge to implement bold system improvements, including expanded pre-jail deflection strategies; improved wraparound responses for individuals who suffer from mental illness and come in contact with the criminal justice system; the elimination of jail incarceration due to unpaid citations; rethinking fines and fees; a systemwide commitment to being trauma-informed; and improved data integration and analytic capacity. Milwaukee County has seen a 9 percent reduction of their local jail population since 2015, and a 33 percent reduction since 2008, when the county launched significant system improvements.

Milwaukee County was selected for continued funding based on a robust commitment to ongoing system improvement and progress to date. This new round of funding will provide local partners with additional support and technical assistance to strengthen and expand strategies that address the main drivers of local incarceration while fostering stronger relationships with the community and addressing racial and ethnic disparities within the justice system.

Chief Judge Maxine Aldridge White of Wisconsin’s First Judicial District shared, “We are proud of the progress we have made in safely reducing Milwaukee County’s jail population and acting as a model for others across the country to show that bold, collaborative system change is possible. By using data and listening to our staff and community, we have been able to enhance our criminal justice system to be more trauma-informed, better educated around mental health, and more data-driven. We look forward to continuing our partnership with the MacArthur Foundation and expanding our efforts to create a fair and effective justice system that works for everyone.”

Milwaukee Community Justice Council leadership and partners have developed a comprehensive plan for system improvements and strategies and aim to safely reduce the average daily jail population by an additional 5 percent over the next two years. Key strategies and initiatives to achieve this goal include:

- Refined case processing;
- Enhanced mental health diversion;
- Improved reentry coordination and support;
- Expanded, integrated data capacity and analysis across the criminal justice system;
- Investments to engage community members.

Three years after its public launch, the Challenge Network has grown into a collaborative of 52 cities, counties, and states. Together, these jurisdictions are modeling and inspiring reforms to create fairer, more effective local justice systems across the country.

“There is a growing demand for criminal justice reform to bend the curve of incarceration in the United States and achieve fairer, more equitable outcomes for our families and communities,” said Laurie Garduque, MacArthur’s Director of Justice Reform. “While progress is not always easy, jurisdictions across the country are proving it is possible to rethink local justice systems from the ground up with forward-looking, smart solutions that address racial and ethnic disparities while engaging communities in reform efforts. MacArthur is increasing our investment in these cities and counties, because we are seeing promising results and an appetite for more reform as evidenced by the diversity and creativity of the solutions implemented and tested across the Challenge Network.”

“The overarching goal of this work is to eliminate unnecessary incarceration,” said Milwaukee County District Attorney John Chisholm. “Our participation in the Safety and Justice Challenge has been crucial in helping us make headway toward this goal. The additional support will help us continue our work while pushing our justice reform efforts further.”

Several of the nation's leading criminal justice organizations will continue to provide technical assistance and counsel to Milwaukee Community Justice Council partners and the other jurisdictions involved in the Challenge: the Center for Court Innovation, the Institute for State and Local Governance at the City University of New York, the Justice Management Institute, Justice System Partners, the Pretrial Justice Institute, the Vera Institute of Justice, Policy Research, Inc., and the W. Haywood Burns Institute.

More information about the work underway in Milwaukee County can be found on www.milwaukee.gov/cjc as well as on www.SafetyandJusticeChallenge.org.



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

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 over-incarceration, global climate change, nuclear risk, and significantly increasing financial capital for the social sector. In addition to the MacArthur Fellows Program, the Foundation continues its historic commitments to the role of journalism in a responsible and responsive democracy, as well as the strength and vitality of our headquarters city, Chicago. More information about the Foundation's criminal justice reform work can be found at www.macfound.org/criminaljustice.

About the Milwaukee Community Justice Council

Created by Milwaukee County Board resolution in 2007, the Milwaukee Community Justice Council (MCJC) is made up of Milwaukee-area criminal justice agencies, local governments, and residents working collaboratively to ensure a fair, efficient, and effective justice system that enhances public safety and quality of life in our community. Though initially created to enhance coordination and collaboration among criminal justice agencies, local leadership included "community justice" in the MCJC name to emphasize the importance of including community and community priorities in its work. The Council is committed to fostering opportunities for diverse perspectives to be heard and establishing collaborative, transparent decision-making around criminal justice policy.

The Council is governed by an Executive Committee, comprised of the leadership from participating criminal justice organizations. Milwaukee County Circuit Court Chief Judge Maxine Aldridge White is the current MCJC chair. The Council hosts bi-monthly meetings, which are open to the public. More information on the Council can be found at www.milwaukee.gov/cjc.

MILWAUKEE COMMUNITY JUSTICE COUNCIL MEDIA CONTACT: Mandy Potapenko
414-276-8240 x6 (office) | mpotapenko@milwaukeeecjc.org

COUNTY EXECUTIVE MEDIA CONTACT: Karina Henderson
414-278-4216 (office) | karina.henderson@milwaukeecountywi.gov