

SJC Community Engagement Supplemental Grant Overview

In 2008, facing an average daily jail population (ADP) of 3079, the Milwaukee Community Justice Council (MCJC) launched reforms to reexamine use of the local jail. Expanding on initial efforts, the County requested support from MacArthur Foundation and its Safety & Justice Challenge (SJC) initiative. This nationwide initiative has three goals:

- Reduce overreliance on local jails
- Address racial and ethnic disparities (RED) in the criminal justice system
- Engage the wider community in system change

SJC Phase I (2015) engaged communities across the country, including Milwaukee County, to participate in the planning and development of site-specific improvements. Phase II (2016 to 2018) provided technical assistance and funding to implement the strategies that were identified in Phase I.

Since joining the SJC Network, Milwaukee has seen a 9% decline in its jail population¹, a 33% drop from 2008.

Community Engagement Supplemental Grant

In 2018, Milwaukee was invited to apply for a third SJC phase. The MCJC submitted an application for overall continuation funds and a separate proposal to support community engagement.

The SJC supports a model of community engagement that builds trust, enhances problem-solving, and ensures mutual accountability. Network sites are encouraged to uphold 4 pillars in their community engagement work: (1) authenticity, (2) accessibility and transparency, (3) respect for diversity, and (4) commitment to ongoing engagement.

With these pillars in mind, Milwaukee County put forth a community engagement proposal, seeking to strengthen relationships with stakeholders, include diverse perspectives, and incorporate community priorities into MCJC work.

During Phase III, the MCJC will develop a long-term plan to advance an intentional community engagement effort. Other local initiatives will be involved to align efforts and coordinate resources. The Council will retool its structure and meetings to increase access and invite a broad range of voices, including individuals from communities of color and persons with previous system involvement. The MCJC is committed to fostering two-way communication by providing new tools for stakeholders to inform criminal justice policy and system change. Finally, the MCJC will offer learning opportunities and subgrants to encourage ongoing stakeholder involvement and invest in community assets.

¹ Based on monthly aggregate jail data, a baseline ADP of 2272 was set for Milwaukee County in May 2016. As of December 2018, the ADP was 2063.

| Community Engagement Proposal Components | Description |
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| Coordination | The Milwaukee Community Justice Council will retain an AmeriCorps Public Ally to implement a coordinated community engagement plan. This position will oversee communications, conduct outreach, and collect stakeholder input to inform criminal justice policy and practices. |
| Community Subgrants | Local organizations have trusting relationships and a unique knowledge of the community, positioning them to meaningfully engage residents. In recognition of these assets, Milwaukee will offer subgrants to fund community-led work in priority areas that complement SJC goals. |
| Engagement of Impacted Individuals & Communities | The MCJC will host facilitated discussions with persons who were formerly incarcerated to learn from their experience and identify opportunities to improve the criminal justice system. |
| Reentry Success | <p>The MCJC created the Reentry Council to align reentry service providers, resources, and input from persons who have lived experience. Staff will be hired to expand outreach and coordinate Reentry Council efforts.</p> <p>This proposal supports resource fairs to help individuals and their families, as they navigate the challenges of returning home.</p> <p>The grant will fund a train-the-trainer session to build a cohort of peer support specialists to assist persons returning to the community and prevent cycling through the system.</p> |
| Community Policing Improvements | The SJC will promote initiatives through the Milwaukee Police Department to improve police - community relations. |
| Community Meetings, Trainings, & Conferences | The Community Engagement grant will sustain ongoing efforts, such as strategic planning and learning opportunities. This includes criminal justice system coach-ups for residents as well as racial equity, procedural justice, implicit bias, and trauma trainings for criminal justice system professionals. |