



**PRIORITY:** Coordinate a justice system that is efficient, effective, equitable and protects our public safety while holistically addressing the needs of people involved in the system

**BACKGROUND:** Buncombe County Detention Facility housed more than 7,500 people in 2016, and more than 70% of the 13,000 bookings were for low-level, non-violent offenses. In addition, over 670 people return to Buncombe County each year after a period of incarceration in a North Carolina state prison. 51 jail beds a day are occupied by individuals receiving treatment for a serious mental illness, and early 800 inmates were monitored for substance withdrawal in 2016, nearly a 30% increase from 2015. Women are the fastest growing population in local jail – up nearly 30% from 2015 to 2016. Nationally, 95% of women who have been incarcerated have a trauma history. Involvement in the criminal justice system can have lifelong impacts for individuals and their families, including barriers to accessing housing, employment, education and financial assistance. In Buncombe County in 2016, African Americans were 5.6% of the general population yet made up 28% of those jailed in the local detention facility. It is estimated that there are over 3,400 domestic violence victimizations in Buncombe County each year and over 670 people seek services for sexual assault.

**GOALS:**

- Enhance the efficiency and effectiveness of the criminal justice system
- Focus on law enforcement approaches informed by best practices for serving people impacted by mental illness, addiction, homelessness, poverty and trauma
- Offer diversion and alternatives to incarceration for low-level, first time nonviolent offenders and people with mental illness and substance use disorders
- Maximize community based pretrial justice solutions while prioritizing safety and offender accountability
- Support people who are incarcerated and re-entering the community from incarceration
- Offer trauma informed support for victims of crime, particularly domestic violence and sexual assault

**LEAD DEPARTMENTS:** Health and Human Services; Justice Resources; Pretrial Services; Sheriff’s Office; Strategic Partnerships

**ACTIONS:** The following is a summary of activities and investments by Buncombe County Government in support of the goals listed above.





BUNCOMBE COUNTY STRATEGIC PRIORITY:  
**JUSTICE RESOURCE SUPPORT**

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	<i>Completed/Ongoing</i>	<i>Proposed/Upcoming</i>
<i>System Effectiveness</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Commissioners adopted Stepping Up commitment in 2015 to reduce the number of people with mental illness in jail</li> <li>In 2017, Commissioners formed Justice Resource Advisory Council and established Justice Resource Coordinator staff position</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Expansion of dashboards for data-informed resource allocation</li> <li>Scheduled visits to leading jurisdictions</li> <li>Justice Resource Advisory Council to adopt a comprehensive criminal justice plan</li> </ul>
<i>Law Enforcement</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Crisis Intervention Team (CIT) approach to responding to behavioral health crisis</li> <li>Law Enforcement drop-offs at Behavioral Health Urgent Care</li> <li>Focused Deterrence for violent offenders</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Request for Proposals for jail health care, paramedic, and universal screening for mental health and substance use</li> </ul>
<i>Diversion</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Established Justice Resource Center (JRC) in 2017, an access center and place of opportunity for people involved in the justice system</li> <li>JUST Jail Diversion for mental health/substance use impacted individuals</li> <li>Juvenile Misdemeanor Diversion Program</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Incorporating an adult misdemeanor diversion program into the Justice Resource Center</li> </ul>
<i>Pretrial</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Operate Pretrial Services program to allow pretrial defendants to safely and accountably await trial in a community setting</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Increasing use of electronic monitoring for pretrial defendants</li> <li>Implementation of a court date reminder system</li> </ul>
<i>Re-Entry</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Funding for mental health/substance use case managers embedded in the jail</li> <li>Establishment of a jail-based District Attorney Prosecution Unit</li> <li>Funding of Specialty Courts: Adult Drug Treatment, Family Drug Treatment, Sobriety and Veterans Court</li> <li>Administer grant funding for Buncombe County Re-Entry Council</li> <li>Funding to increase access to criminal record expungement</li> </ul>	
<i>Victim Support</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Established Family Justice Center (FJC) in 2016 for people experiencing domestic violence or sexual assault</li> <li>Specialized approaches for domestic violence incidents and cases including Lethality Assessment Protocol &amp; Pretrial DV Protocol</li> <li>Establishment of a FJC-based domestic violence District Attorney Prosecution Unit</li> <li>Public Campaigns: eNOugh, Still Standing</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Development of jail and community-based program tracks for mothers and people with mental health illness to ensure a continuum of care</li> </ul>

