



INTRODUCTION (SAFETY + JUSTICE CHALLENGE):

The Safety and Justice Challenge, supported by the John D. and Catherine T. MacArthur Foundation, provides support to jurisdictions across the country to address the drivers of local jail populations. The Challenge Network represents 52 cities and counties, across 30 states. There are 21 implementation sites, including Buncombe County, that have received funding to work towards ambitious reform, making local justice systems fairer and more effective.

IMPLEMENTATION SITE (SAFETY + JUSTICE CHALLENGE IN BUNCOMBE COUNTY):

In October 2018, Buncombe County was awarded \$1.75 million from The John D. and Catherine T. MacArthur Foundation to implement strategies to reduce jail numbers by addressing the main drivers of Buncombe County’s jail population. The grant is part of the Safety and Justice Challenge, a \$148 million national initiative to reduce over-incarceration by changing the way America thinks about and uses jails.

THE NEED:

Over the last ten years, the Buncombe County jail population has seen periods of growth as well as decline. Most recently, the population has grown rather consistently, with a current average daily population of 534.¹ While individuals are detained in the detention facility for a range of reasons, the growth of the pretrial population is most significant to population trends. This is due to the fact that it comprises nearly 75% of the population. Between 2015 and 2018, the pretrial population grew nearly 15%, from just over 300 to 350. In addition to the increase pretrial population, African-Americans make up 21 percent of the jail population, despite making up 6.4 percent of the local population. African-Americans and Latinx have significantly higher lengths of stay as compared to Caucasians.

THE GOAL & STRATEGIES (SAFETY + JUSTICE CHALLENGE IN BUNCOMBE COUNTY):

The Buncombe County Justice Resource Advisory Council developed a comprehensive plan for local justice system improvement. The goal, as part of this grant, for Buncombe County, is to reduce the jail population by 15 percent, address racial disparities, and increase community engagement from October 2018 to September 2020. In order to reduce the jail population by 15 percent, our top priorities during the life of this grant include increasing the effective use of pretrial release, and decreasing the length of case pendency.

Strategy 1: Deflection at Arrest and Booking	Strategy 2: Diversion to BH and SA Treatment	Strategy 3: Enhance Pretrial Services	Strategy 4: Efficiencies in Case Processing
Implement Public Safety Assessment at Magistrate	Improve law enforcement drop off process	Examine pretrial supervision assignment practices	Expand jail based case processing
Review local booking processes	Enhance supportive services for familiar faces	Utilize Public Safety Assessment	Implement automated court date reminder system
Review use of criminal summons	Continued collaboration between BH and CJ partners	Modify violation policy and supervision practices	Implement a bail alert report
			Create alternatives to custody for civil non-support
Strategy 5: Improve Data Utilization			
Strategy 6: Increase Community Engagement			
Strategy 7: Address Racial and Ethnic Disparities			

For more updates on the progress of the grant:

<https://www.buncombecounty.org/SJC>