Introduction to Safety + Justice Challenge

What:
• 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.

How:
• The funding for the Safety and Justice Challenge is part of a $148 million national initiative to reduce over-incarceration by changing the way America thinks about and uses jails.
• 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.
Buncombe County and Safety + Justice Challenge

What:

• The Buncombe County Justice Resource Advisory Council developed a comprehensive plan for local justice system improvement.

• The goal, as part of this grant, is for Buncombe County to reduce the jail population by 15 percent, address racial disparities, and increase community engagement from October 2018 to September 2020.

• The top priorities during the life of this grant include increasing the effective use of pretrial release, and decreasing the length of case pendency.

How:

• There are 7 strategies with various initiatives that are being implemented in Buncombe County with the partnership of the Justice Resource Advisory Council.

• The first 4 strategies have bed days associated with them. A bed day is a performance metric that measures the length of time a bed in the jail is occupied.

• The final 3 strategies are supportive strategies and are incorporated within the first 4 strategies.
Safety + Justice Challenge
Strategies in Buncombe County

31 beds

- Increasing Efficiencies in Case Processing
- Deflection at Arrest & Booking: 10 beds
- Diversion to Behavior Health & Substance Abuse Treatment: 5 beds
- Enhancing Pretrial Services: 12 beds

4 of the 7 strategies have performance metrics tied to bed days

The sum of beds in these 4 strategies equals 58 beds

This translates to 15% of the jail population (excluding contracted beds)