



STATE OF DELAWARE
DEPARTMENT OF CORRECTION
OFFICE OF MEDIA RELATIONS
245 MCKEE ROAD
DOVER, DELAWARE 19904
Telephone: (302) 739-5601

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Contact: Jayme Gravell | jayme.gravell@state.de.us | 302.857.5232

STATE OF DELAWARE JOINS THE SAFETY AND JUSTICE CHALLENGE TO CREATE A FAIRER, MORE EFFECTIVE LOCAL JUSTICE SYSTEM AND MODEL REFORMS FOR THE NATION

The State of Delaware is one of 20 Counties and Cities to Receive Grants to Design, Test Innovative Criminal Justice Reforms

Dover, Delaware – The John D. and Catherine T. MacArthur Foundation today announced that the State of Delaware Criminal Justice Council (CJC) is one of 20 additional jurisdictions joining the [Safety and Justice Challenge](#), a national \$100 million initiative to reduce over-incarceration by changing the way America thinks about and uses jails. The CJC will manage the funds and the Delaware Department of Correction (DOC) is the beneficiary. The State and the other jurisdictions will design and test innovative local justice reforms designed to safely drive down jail usage and reduce disparities in their justice systems.

The State of Delaware was chosen following a highly competitive selection process that drew applications from across the country.

“Local jurisdictions are leading the way on justice reform,” said MacArthur President Julia Stasch. “Demand for reform at the local level is considerable and growing, as evidenced by the number, diversity, and creativity of the applications we received. This momentum is encouraging, particularly as the federal justice reform landscape evolves and shifts.”

Through the Challenge’s [Innovation Fund](#), Delaware will receive support and expert technical assistance in designing and implementing local reforms. The Criminal Justice Council and Department of Correction’s innovations will focus on enhancing services for mentally ill (MI) and seriously mentally ill (SMI) individuals who are preparing to exit correctional facilities and to plan for their discharge into the community. Grant funds will be used to hire a Mental Health and Justice Fellow to assist the DOC Behavioral Health Unit.

“We are thankful for the MacArthur Foundation and pleased to work with the Criminal Justice Council on this important initiative to enhance the services provided to mentally ill and seriously mentally ill individuals preparing to re-enter the community,” said DOC Commissioner Perry Phelps. “The addition of a Mental Health and Justice Fellow will allow the Department to improve upon existing discharge

planning, transition practices, and information sharing which will decrease recidivism rates among this under-served population.”

The State of Delaware and the other Innovation Fund jurisdictions will receive short-term support of \$50,000 each, are eligible for future funding opportunities, and have access to the resources, peer learning opportunities, and expertise of the [Safety and Justice Challenge Network](#). The Urban Institute, which is managing the Innovation Fund in partnership with the Foundation, will provide expert technical assistance to the jurisdictions as they implement their plans. Key learnings and resources emerging from the Innovation Fund will be shared with and beyond the justice reform field.

As in most jurisdictions, 24% (1,374 inmates) of the DOC population is receiving some type of mental health treatment, with 15% (816 inmates) having serious mental illness. Additionally, the State experiences an estimated 78% rate of recidivism, but a specific recidivism rate is unknown for inmates who suffer from MI/SMI. The funds from the MacArthur Foundation will help to create a strategy for measuring the baseline recidivism for MI/SMI individuals leaving prison; create enhanced partnerships with the Division of Substance Abuse and Mental Health to plan for discharge of mentally ill and seriously mentally ill inmates; and create best practices in the DOC’s Behavioral Health Unit and with the DOC’s behavioral health service provider surrounding discharge of individuals with mental illness and serious mental illness. A baseline report would allow the Department to gauge the effectiveness of discharge planning efforts on reducing recidivism rates among the MI/SMI population.

The State of Delaware will continue to place an emphasis on community engagement and collaboration among local law enforcement, corrections officials, prosecutors, defenders, judges, and other stakeholders in this work to test, innovate, and drive reform.

“The Criminal Justice Council is proud to work with the MacArthur Foundation and our partners in the DOC to address the needs of the mental health population. These funds provide a new opportunity to continue improving the lives of Delaware citizens,” said CJC Executive Director Christian Kervick.

The Innovation Fund jurisdictions expand the Challenge’s reach into new states and deepen its work across the country. They include:

- Adams County, CO
- Allegheny County, PA
- City of Atlanta, GA
- Broward County, FL
- Buncombe County, NC
- Campbell County, TN
- Clark County, NV
- Dane County, WI
- State of Delaware
- Deschutes County, OR
- Durham County, NC
- East Baton Rouge Parish, LA
- Lake County, IL
- Minnehaha County, SD
- Missoula County, MT

- Polk County, IA
- City and County of San Francisco, CA
- Santa Clara County, CA
- Summit County, OH
- Yakima County, WA

Information about the selected jurisdictions, as well as news, research, and events related to the Safety and Justice Challenge, will be published on www.SafetyandJusticeChallenge.org.

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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 Urban Institute

The nonprofit Urban Institute is dedicated to elevating the debate on social and economic policy. For nearly five decades, Urban scholars have conducted research and offered evidence-based solutions that improve lives and strengthen communities across a rapidly urbanizing world. Their objective research helps expand opportunities for all, reduce hardship among the most vulnerable, and strengthen the effectiveness of the public sector.

Media Contacts:

Department of Correction
Jayme Gravell
302.857.5232
jayme.gravell@state.de.us

Criminal Justice Council
Valarie Tickle
302.577.8713
valarie.tickle@state.de.us

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