

Lucas County

2016 Safety and Justice Challenge Fact Sheet

We've got a problem to fix:

- The Lucas County Jail has been beset by overcrowding for decades, subject to a federal court order since its opening in 1978.
- Lucas County is committed to reforming its over-reliance on jail by ensuring individuals are held based on their threat to public safety and risk of flight as opposed to their charge.
- Racial and ethnic disparities exist at nearly every point in Lucas County's local justice system. African Americans make up 19 percent of the county population, yet represent 58 percent of custodial arrests over the last five years.
- In Lucas County, three charges – drug possession, disorderly conduct and obstructing official business offenses – represent the largest volume of all jail bookings while maintaining the greatest racial disparities: African Americans make up 57 percent of those held for these three offenses.
- An estimated 30 percent of Lucas County's sentenced jail population is incarcerated due to technical violations of probation. Many of Lucas County's technical violations can be attributed to offenders reporting to multiple probation officers with conditions of probation which may be duplicative and/or conflict in standards and time obligations.

There are proposed solutions to create a fairer, more effective local justice system:

- Lucas County will implement five data-driven reform strategies over the next two years across four decision points: arrest, pretrial release, case processing and post-conviction. To support these reforms, the county will receive \$1.75 million from the Safety and Justice Challenge.
- The county will target diversion programming for drug possession, disorderly conduct and obstructing official business at arrest and case processing that, upon completion, would allow an individual to avoid charges and detention.
- To reduce racial and ethnic disparities at various decision points, Lucas County will partner with the Ohio Peace Officer Training Commission to host ten sessions for law enforcement on implicit bias and other issues, such as community-policing relations and procedural justice.
- Lucas County will also facilitate an innovative, crisis de-escalation training for law enforcement personnel to learn how to divert individuals with mental illness toward community-based services instead of jail, screen for behavioral health issues during booking, and expand law enforcement access to a new Behavioral Health Urgent Care Center.
- The county will establish a new Population Review Team, comprised of prosecutors, public defenders, pretrial services, community mental health personnel, and corrections representatives, to conduct weekly reviews of the entire pretrial population and identify individuals on a case-by-case basis who are suitable for release or expedited case resolution.

Who is helping to affect change?

- The reforms outlined in the Safety and Justice Challenge are being led by the Lucas County Commissioners with support from a broad network of stakeholders in its justice system, including the County Sheriff, Chiefs of Police, County and Municipal Court Judges, County and Municipal Prosecutors, Mental Health and Recovery Services Board, and various community leaders.