

Los Angeles County 2017 Safety and Justice Challenge Fact Sheet

We've got a problem to fix:

- Individuals with mental health issues are overrepresented in Los Angeles County jails and are in need of alternative services and community-based options. In 2016, 25 percent of the inmate population was receiving some level of mental health treatment.
- Los Angeles County jails are critically overcrowded and inmates with mental health issues are often too ill to be safely housed in a multi-person cell, causing further crowding in general population housing areas.
- Approximately 40 percent of the inmate population was comprised of pre-trial inmates; those awaiting trial or sentencing. The partially sentenced population, those who were sentenced on one or more cases and maintained open charges in another case(s), made up approximately 20 percent of the overall population. This leaves very little jail capacity to hold people actually convicted of criminal activity and hampers in-custody rehabilitative efforts.

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

- Supported with \$350,000 from the Safety and Justice Challenge, Los Angeles County will implement forward-looking, smart solutions to provide alternatives to incarceration and reduce the risk of recidivism.
- The county plans to implement strategies aimed at expanding non-jail options for lower-risk offenders and meeting the needs of those who cycle between medical and/or mental health facilities and custody environments, with a focus on the homeless population.
- The county will select and develop a validated risk assessment tool for release evaluation of pretrial defendants, and expand the collaborative Mental Evaluation Teams (MET) which divert mentally ill individuals to community treatment programs.
- The county will partner with the city of Los Angeles to emphasize community level engagement and decision making within the justice system through the Los Angeles City Attorney's Neighborhood Justice Program (NJP). NJP's goals are to divert certain offenders away from the criminal justice system; engage members of communities where the offenses occurred to determine offenders' obligations to victims and neighborhoods; and provide interventions to turn around offenders' lives and reduce recidivism.

Who is helping to affect change?

- The strategies and initiatives outlined in the Safety and Justice Challenge are being led by the Los Angeles County Sheriff's Department in partnership with the Los Angeles County Board of Supervisors, the Superior Court, the District Attorney and City Attorney Offices, the Public Defender, the Probation Department, and the Departments of Mental Health and Public Health.
- This work is supported by the Countywide Criminal Justice Coordination Committee, which is supporting Safety and Justice Challenge efforts in Los Angeles through a dedicated subcommittee and is comprised of various representatives from the legal system, law enforcement, community-based organizations and advocacy groups.