

Missoula County

2018 Safety and Justice Challenge Fact Sheet

We've got a problem to fix:

- Pretrial defendants and behavioral health needs are key drivers of the jail population. The jail pretrial population alone was 34.4 percent in 2017. In 2017, approximately 64 percent of all low- and low-moderate-risk defendants remained detained beyond three days, spending an average of 12.6 days in jail.
- Roughly 30 percent of the jail population has been identified as having a substance abuse or mental health issue. This is higher than the estimate for the general U.S. population that indicates 18.5 percent of adults experience a mental illness in a given year.
 - Native Americans are disproportionately represented in the population of the Missoula County Detention Facility (MCDF). There are four times as many Native Americans incarcerated in the MCDF than Native Americans in Missoula County. Specifically, 14 percent of MCDF inmates identify as Native American, compared with 3 percent of county residents who identify as Native American.
 - Overuse of detention causes disruption in the stability of arrestees' families and communities, leads to higher re-arrest rates and produces worse case outcomes with more back-end incarceration.

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

- Supported with \$700,000 over two years from the Safety and Justice Challenge, Missoula County will implement forward-looking, smart solutions to address the misuse and overuse of jails in the county and further reduce the local jail population by 18 to 22 percent over the next two years.
- To continue safely reducing the jail population, the county plans to implement five key strategies aimed at addressing system inefficiencies and disparities, meeting the needs of those with behavioral health and substance abuse issues, and instituting non-jail options for lower-risk offenders.
- Key strategies that will focus on the front-end of the local justice system include: implementing prosecutor- and law enforcement-led diversion programs, increasing use of a Public Safety Assessment (PSA) tool, providing post-booking stabilization, and providing outreach and education about indigenous cultures and racial disparities.
- Strategies will touch all points of the system, ranging from pre-booking diversion and case processing to post-booking stabilization for offenders with behavioral health needs. Public safety partners enthusiastically embrace these policy-driven innovations, which will reduce jail bed usage while ensuring the county advances its commitment to having the 'right' inmates remain in custody and ensuring access to critical services for all.
- Over the next two years the county will employ: 1) an increased focus on risk assessment and treatment; 2) new prosecutor-led diversion alternatives; 3) improved jail-based mental health intervention; and 4) measures to reduce racial and ethnic disparities.

Who is helping to effect change?



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- The strategies and initiatives supported by the Safety and Justice Challenge are led by Missoula County, with support from the Board of County Commissioners, Missoula City Council, and local law enforcement and criminal justice agencies.
- Other partners include Western Montana Mental Health Center, the Missoula Urban Indian Health Center, Partnership Health Center, the University of Montana National Native Children's Network and other area service providers.

