

City and County of San Francisco 2018 Safety and Justice Challenge Fact Sheet

We've got a problem to fix:

- Despite a significant drop in San Francisco's incarceration rate and advancements in the county's custodial programs and community-based alternatives, there is still an over-reliance on incarceration of young adults of color and those with behavioral health needs.
- The Department of Public Health estimates that 40% of inmates in San Francisco's jails seek mental health services from Jail Psychiatric Services, making the jail San Francisco's largest behavioral health facility.
- Length of stay is a key driver of the jail population. In 2017, individuals regularly spent up to 120 additional days in jail waiting for a treatment bed at a residential behavioral health facility in the community, which is five times longer than individuals who are not incarcerated.
- Individuals with violent felony charges also have significant lengths of stay between 139 and 350 days.
- The per capita incarceration rate of African Americans is 17 times that of Caucasians. Further, those who remain in custody for the greatest length of stay are young men of color.

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

- Supported with \$2 million from the Safety and Justice Challenge, San Francisco will implement forward-looking, smart solutions, to address the misuse and overuse of jails in the jurisdiction and further reduce the local jail population by 16% over the next two years.
- To continue safely reducing the jail population, the jurisdiction 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 include pre-arrest and pretrial diversion strategies, criminal sentencing and correctional strategies that emphasize rehabilitation and reduce recidivism, improvements to case processing efficiency, enhanced services for people with mental illness or substance abuse issues involved with the justice system, and rooting out disparity and racial bias.
- Strategies will touch all points of the system, ranging from pre-booking diversion to early release for non-violent offenders, and are enthusiastically embraced across public safety partners. These policy-driven innovations will reduce jail bed usage while ensuring the county advances its commitment to having individuals who pose a risk to the community remain in custody while ensuring access to critically needed services for all.
- Over the next two years, the county will develop evidence-based criminal sentencing and correctional strategies that emphasize rehabilitation and reduce recidivism, emphasize fairness, root out disparity and racial bias, prioritize public safety and victim protection, and efficiently use criminal justice resources.

Who is helping to affect change?

- The strategies and initiatives supported by the Safety and Justice Challenge are being led by the San Francisco District Attorney's Office with support from the Superior Court, Sheriff's Department, the Adult Probation Department, Public Defender's Office, and the University of California, Berkeley.



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- Locally, this work is also supported by the San Francisco Sentencing Commission, which focuses on issues ranging from racial and ethnic disparities, to evidence-based practices and technology, and are comprised of various representatives from the legal system, law enforcement, community-based organizations and advocacy groups, including the Ella Baker Center for Human Rights.

