

Spokane County 2019 Safety and Justice Challenge Fact Sheet

We've got a problem to fix:

- In Spokane County, the jail's average daily population has increased significantly since 2000, operating at "critical status" almost on a daily basis. In November 2018, the average daily population was 919.
- Pretrial detention and longer lengths of stay continue to drive the jail population. Approximately 72 percent of the jail population was not yet convicted and was awaiting trial in October 2018.
- Operating the jail in critical status uses more than a quarter of the county's budget.
- The misuse and overuse of the jail takes an especially heavy toll on people of color. In Spokane County, the average length of stay in October 2018 was 18 days. Yet for African Americans, the average length of stay for the same month was 21 days; for Native Americans, 24 days; and for Latinos and Hispanics, 24 days.

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

- Over the past four years, Spokane has cultivated support for reforms among diverse systems stakeholders, strengthened community partnerships, and identified key strategies to support the safe reduction of Spokane's jail population, including:
 - Spokane is in the process of implementing the Public Safety Assessment, a data-driven risk assessment tool to support judges in making pre-trial release decisions to ensure that individuals who do not need to be incarcerated before trial are returned to the community, where they can continue to support their families, receive any necessary treatment, and maintain or pursue employment.
 - We look forward to continuing to drive down our Failure to Appear (FTA) rate through a text message notification system implemented in August 2019 through the Spokane County Public Defender's Office. The current FTA rate for individuals receiving notifications is less than 5 percent.
 - Trained over 300 City and County officials in implicit bias, in addition to training 20 stakeholders and community members in facilitating implicit bias trainings.
 - Expanded the Office of Pre-Trial Services to reach all three courts.
- To continue addressing the misuse and overuse of jails in Spokane County, the City and County will be investing \$1.9 million over the next two years from the Safety and Justice Challenge. The County is also investing \$2.4 million in capital funds from the state legislature to build a law enforcement-specific mental health crisis stabilization center.
- The long-term vision behind the region's reform plan is to create a local justice system that serves all of Spokane's residents fairly, equitably, and efficiently. These efforts will utilize multiple strategies, including but not limited to:
 - Improved case processing across all three courts;
 - Improved data collection, analysis, and transparency;
 - Jail and prosecutorial diversion opportunities; and
 - Continued measures to reduce racial and ethnic disparities.
- Moving forward, Municipal, District and Superior Courts are undertaking efforts to ensure that case processing, or the manner in which a case moves through the legal system from arrest to

resolution, follows best practices set by national experts and State standards, with the aim of gaining efficiencies and decreasing the average number of days individuals await trial in jail.

- In addition, Spokane County will hire a data analyst to track, measure, and analyze our performance in our reform efforts, and identify additional opportunities for jail reduction. Data will be shared with system stakeholders to inform and improve reform initiatives and will also be made publicly available.
- Stakeholders at the City and County will also continue to work closely with community leaders to support a community engagement grant, designed to facilitate dialogue between regional officials and community members, and establish training opportunities for formerly incarcerated individuals.

Who is helping to affect change?

- The reforms supported by the Safety and Justice Challenge are being led by the Office of the Criminal Justice Administrator (OCJA), which operates under the Board of County Commissioners.
- The OCJA will continue to work in close cooperation with the core team leading this effort, which includes the Director of Detention Services, law enforcement, Superior, District, and Municipal Court judges, City and County Prosecutors, the County Public Defender, and the Director of the Office of Pre-Trial Services.
- The reform effort also has participation and support from a strong coalition of high-level and elected officials from the City of Spokane and Spokane County.
- Community members and leaders have a critical role to play in the success of our efforts. Indeed, Community leaders will manage a supplemental Community Engagement Grant through the Safety and Justice Challenge, which will facilitate dialogue between community members and system stakeholders. It will also establish a peer navigator training program that will certify formerly incarcerated individuals to provide mentorship and support to individuals presently navigating the criminal justice system.