

Pima County

2019 Safety and Justice Challenge Fact Sheet

We have a problem to fix:

- With Pima County's jail population averaging 2,136 inmates a day in 2014, very close to its full capacity of 2,377 inmates, the county is proactively working to avoid the potential overuse or misuse of jails. With local jail expenditures amounting to roughly \$66 million a year, this crisis has a direct impact on taxpayers.
- Snapshots of Pima County's jail population in 2011-2014 show that more than 80 percent of inmates in the jail are typically in pretrial status. The main drivers of the pretrial jail population, based on 2014 data, include warrants for failures to appear in court (93 percent of which relate to underlying misdemeanor charges), misdemeanor charges like shoplifting and DUIs, and lower-level felony charges, such as possession/use of a dangerous or narcotic drug, possession of drug paraphernalia and aggravated criminal damage.
- 2014 data shows 9.6 percent of the inmates in jail in pretrial status were African-American, compared with 3.3 percent of the county's total population; and 40.7 percent were Hispanic, compared with 35 percent of the county's total population.
- Mental illness and substance use affect an estimated 60 percent of the jail population in Pima County.
- A heavy toll is also felt by the county's tribal communities. Native Americans make up only 2.4 percent of the county's total population, but they represent 6.75 percent of the pretrial population, and 8 percent of those held in jail on failure to appear charges.

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

- To safely lower the jail population, the MacArthur Foundation is investing a total of \$3.3 million in Pima County by 2021.
- In 2015, Pima County employed a number of innovative strategies, such as expanding risk screening to all misdemeanor defendants to increase post-booking releases from jail; adding substance abuse and mental health screenings before the initial court appearance to provide judges safe options for release to treatment instead of jail; enhancing its automated call, text, and email court date reminder system that is expected to reduce failure to appear rates; creating a Community Collaborative to address racial and ethnic disparities within the justice system; and hosting warrant resolution courts in communities with the highest number of failure to appear warrants.
- Building on the multi-agency, criminal justice partnership that was created as a result of the initial Safety and Justice Challenge funding, Pima County's new efforts include the creation of a Probation Jail Reduction Committee to reduce the over-reliance of jail sanctions within the post-sentence supervision population.

- Efforts include the elimination of the use of automatic holds, issuing fewer and shorter coterminous sentences, and lowering the number of petitions to revoke. Additionally, a multi-disciplinary City/County committee including the courts, prosecution, defense, pretrial, and probation will launch a Jail Population Review Committee to identify misdemeanants and non-violent felony inmates held on pretrial or probation status who may be eligible for early release.
- Other efforts include the assembly of a criminal justice and behavioral health data team, continued support of the successful 33-member Community Collaborative, additional efforts to deepen community engagement to support leadership development among formerly incarcerated community members, and outreach to the region's tribal nations utilizing a restorative justice model.
- The county aims to safely reduce its overall jail population to a 1,574 average daily population by 2021.

Who is helping to affect change?

- Leaders in the criminal justice system across the county have come together to develop the reforms. These include Pima County Administrator Chuck Huckelberry, Arizona Superior Court in Pima County Presiding Judge Kyle Bryson, Pima County Probation Chief David Sanders, Pima County Sheriff Mark Napier, Pima County Attorney Barbara LaWall, Public Defense Services Director Dean Brault, Pima County Behavioral Health Director Paula Perrera, and Tucson Police Chief Chris Magnus.
- In 2016, Pima County impaneled a 33-Member Community Collaborative of justice system stakeholders and community representatives including formerly incarcerated men and women, service providers, victim advocates, and tribal nation representatives to review data, study the progress of reforms, and propose strategic changes as needed.