

Pennington County

2020 Safety and Justice Challenge Fact Sheet

We've got a problem to fix:

- Native Americans are overrepresented in Pennington County jails. Though Native Americans make up between 10-20 percent of the county's population, more than 50 percent of the daily jail population in Pennington County is Native American.
- Pennington County experienced a methamphetamine epidemic, causing felony drug arrests to increase by 200 percent between November 2015 and April 2019.
- Pretrial release is a significant driver of the jail population. The jail pretrial population alone made up roughly 88 percent of the total jail population in September 2019.

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

- With \$1.2 million from the Safety and Justice Challenge, Pennington County will implement forward-looking, smart solutions, to address the overuse of jails in the county and further reduce the local jail population by 22 percent over the next two years.
- To continue reducing the jail population safely, the county plans to implement new strategies aimed at addressing racial and ethnic disparities, reducing system inefficiencies, and expanding non-jail options for lower-risk justice-involved individuals.
- The county will conduct tribal outreach and engagement on reservations and within the Pennington County community to implement several initiatives with the goal of reducing the overrepresentation of Native Americans in the Pennington County jail system and improving relationships.
- Strategies range from increasing alternatives to incarceration to increasing the efficiency of case processing, 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 only holding in custody those who pose a safety risk to the community while ensuring access to critically needed services for all.
- Over the next two years the county will:
 - 1) increase its focus on objective assessment and treatment;
 - 2) maintain and increase alternatives to incarceration;
 - 3) develop and implement measures to reduce racial and ethnic disparities; and
 - 4) expand efficiencies in how cases are processed through the criminal justice system.

Who is helping to affect change?

- Pennington County Sheriff, Seventh Judicial Circuit Court of South Dakota, Rapid City Police Department, Public Defender's Office, State's Attorney's Office, City Attorney's Office, Pennington County Health and Human Services, Pennington County Commission, and key community providers and stakeholders.