



## **Lake County Advances Local Justice System Reform with funding from MacArthur Foundation Safety and Justice Challenge**

*\$700,000 grant will help build on progress toward eliminating jail overuse and misuse*

**[Lake County, Ill.] October 24, 2018 --** The John D. and Catherine T. MacArthur Foundation today announced a \$700,000 grant to the Lake County Sheriff's Office to continue building on efforts to reform the local criminal justice system and safely reduce the Lake County Jail's population. The grant is part of the [Safety and Justice Challenge](#), a \$148 million national initiative to reduce over-incarceration by changing the way America thinks about and uses jails.

The Safety and Justice Challenge is supporting local leaders in Lake County and across the country determined to tackle one of the greatest drivers of over-incarceration in America – the misuse and overuse of jails. Lake County was first selected to join the collaborative Safety and Justice Challenge Network in 2017 with funding for a targeted project focused on providing intensive case management to high utilizers of the Lake County Jail. Upon release, high utilizers were connected with services, based on the person's needs, with the goal of diverting the group from rearrest and reincarceration.

Lake County is one of 13 jurisdictions selected for additional funding based on its commitment to these reform efforts and the progress being made. With this funding, Lake County joins 20 other Challenge jurisdictions already receiving deep investment from the Foundation to implement local reform, in addition to 12 new jurisdictions joining the Safety and Justice Challenge Network. This new round of funding will provide the Lake County Sheriff's Office and partners with additional support and expert technical assistance to implement strategies that address the main drivers of local jail incarceration, including unfair and ineffective practices that take a particularly heavy toll on low-income communities, and people suffering from mental health and substance abuse.

Lake County Board Interim Chairman Carol Calabresa said, "The Lake County Board strongly believes that by partnering with our justice and community resource agencies, we can have a long-term positive impact on criminal justice involved persons and reduce the unnecessary overuse of our jail. We are excited to receive this additional funding to support expansion of our jail reduction strategies and reduce recidivism."

Sheriff Mark Curran stated, "Our grant proposal to the Safety and Justice Challenge resulted in funding for a successful High-Utilizer Pilot Program within the Lake County Jail. The additional grant money will allow us to expand the scope of the program to include additional strategies to be implemented over the next two years. This is an important step toward ensuring the jail is used to

house individuals who are a threat to the public and not a place to habitually drop off the mentally ill or those suffering from substance use disorders. These folks live among us and in many cases are born into a cycle of poverty, or suffer from mental health disorders, substance use disorders, or both. Linking them to services is the most humane course of action and will lead to a sharp reduction in the jail population as well."

In partnership with public defenders, prosecutors, law enforcement, judges, Nicasa Behavioral Health Services, and other community members, the Lake County Sheriff's Office has developed a comprehensive plan for local justice system reforms with the goal of reducing the average daily jail population by at least 10 percent over the next two years. Key strategies and initiatives to achieve this goal and create a safer, more effective system include expansion of the High-Utilizers Program and enhanced services for people involved in the justice system with mental illness or substance abuse issues.

"Helping individuals receive treatment and other social services they so desperately need will not only help them to better realize their full potential but will also have positive effects on their families and communities," said Bruce N. Johnson, Chief Executive Officer of Nicasa Behavioral Health Services. "This reduces not only recidivism, but crime in Lake County. This is a great example of public safety and community partnerships that thoughtfully provide true cost-saving services to those caught in a sometimes never-ending criminal justice cycle. We look forward to the expansion of these and other innovative efforts in the future."

Three years after its public launch, the Challenge Network has grown into a collaborative of 52 counties, cities, and states modeling and inspiring reforms to create fairer, more effective local justice systems across the country. The jurisdictions involved with the Challenge are already yielding promising initial results toward reducing jail populations and expanding alternatives to incarceration. For example, since joining the initiative, Philadelphia has decreased its jail population by 36 percent and Cook County, Illinois by 26 percent.

"There is growing demand for criminal justice reform across the country, and local jurisdictions are leading the way," said Laurie Garduque, MacArthur's Director of Justice Reform. "MacArthur is increasing our investment because we are seeing promising results and an appetite for more reform as evidenced by the diversity and creativity of the solutions implemented and tested across the Network. While progress is not always easy, and there is no single solution or quick fix, these jurisdictions are proving it is possible to rethink local justice systems from the ground up with forward-looking, smart solutions."

Several of the nation's leading criminal justice organizations will continue to provide technical assistance and counsel to the Lake County Sheriff's Office, Lake County justice partners, and the other jurisdictions involved in the Challenge: the Center for Court Innovation, the Institute for State and Local Governance at the City University of New York, the Justice Management Institute, Justice System Partners, the Pretrial Justice Institute, the Vera Institute of Justice, Policy Research, Inc., and the W. Haywood Burns Institute.

More information about the work underway in Lake County can be found on [www.SafetyandJusticeChallenge.org](http://www.SafetyandJusticeChallenge.org).

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### **About the MacArthur Foundation**

The John D. and Catherine T. MacArthur Foundation supports creative people, effective institutions, and influential networks building a more just, verdant, and peaceful world. MacArthur is placing a

few big bets that truly significant progress is possible on some of the world's most pressing social challenges, including over-incarceration, global climate change, nuclear risk, and significantly increasing financial capital for the social sector. In addition to the MacArthur Fellows Program, the Foundation continues its historic commitments to the role of journalism in a responsible and responsive democracy, as well as the strength and vitality of our headquarters city, Chicago. More information about the Foundation's criminal justice reform work can be found at [www.macfound.org/criminaljustice](http://www.macfound.org/criminaljustice).

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