

SAFETY AND JUSTICE CHALLENGE INFORMATION SHEET

Missoula County is pleased to be awarded a second round of funding under the MacArthur Foundation Safety and Justice Challenge Grant. Funding over the next two years will total \$700,000 and support several strategies to safely reduce the county jail population and address racial and ethnic disparities in Missoula's justice system. This proposal was created with significant stakeholder and community input gathered through surveys, focus groups, and meetings. The following is a summary of strategies and activities that will be supported.

Missoula County will support and expand on current initiatives to achieve the following goals:

- 1) Reduce rates of defendants failing to appear at required court proceedings;
- 2) Reduce probation violations;
- 3) Reduce pretrial violations;
- 4) Reduce pretrial length of stay in jail for defendants who have not been convicted of a crime;
- 5) Evaluate and reduce racial and ethnic disparities within the legal justice system.

Strategies and staff positions include:

- Fund a SJC Program Coordinator to implement all program goals and objectives. The SJC Coordinator will also coordinate an implementation team comprised of stakeholders and agencies funded by this grant.
- Create a community supported release program. Fund two staff members to provide pretrial defendants with support, information, referrals, and resources.
- Create a re-entry coordinator position in Missoula County Detention Facility (MCDF) to provide support to individuals leaving MCDF for successful, independent reentry into the community.
- Fund a dually licensed social worker to conduct chemical dependency evaluations for Probation and Parole to increase access to needed services for those with a substance use disorder.
- Create a Native American Peer Support Specialist position, housed at the Office of Public Defender, to create meaningful connection and support of Indigenous defendants.
- Evaluate the continued use of the Public Safety Assessment tool, explore alternative pretrial risk assessment options, and ensure conditions of release are relative to risk level..
- Create a data dashboard to identify and analyze racial and ethnic disparities in the legal justice system from the initial point of contact to adjudication.
- Improve justice system processes, decrease barriers for defendants to participate in court proceedings, increase predictability and consistency across the continuum of services for defendants (i.e. identify and address backlogged cases, improve court calendaring processes, support remote hearing attendance where possible, establish a uniform drug testing policy, and audit and review established policies across the legal justice system).

Please contact Community Justice Department Director Shantelle Gaynor for additional information at sgaynor@missoulacounty.us.