Update on the Allegheny County Safety and Justice Challenge Project

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Agenda

Introduction to the Safety and Justice Challenge goals and partners

Why reduce the Allegheny County Jail population?

Allegheny County's Safety and Justice Challenge strategies

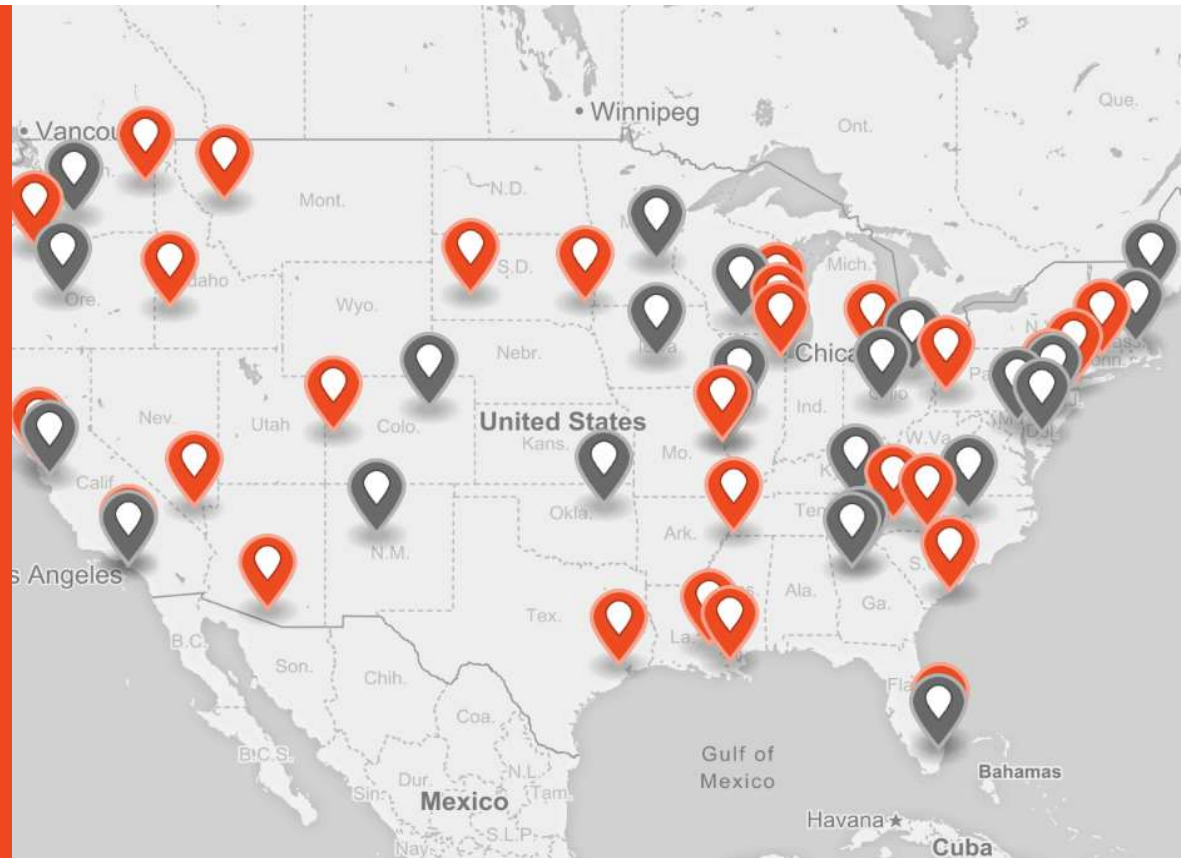Project outcomes

Q&A

Safety and Justice Challenge Network

Allegheny County's Safety and Justice Challenge Team

Fifth Judicial District Court Administration

- Criminal Division
    - Adult Probation and Parole
    - Pretrial Services

Allegheny County government - Executive branch, including:

- Department of Human Services
- Jail
- Office of the Public Defender

Allegheny County District Attorney's Office
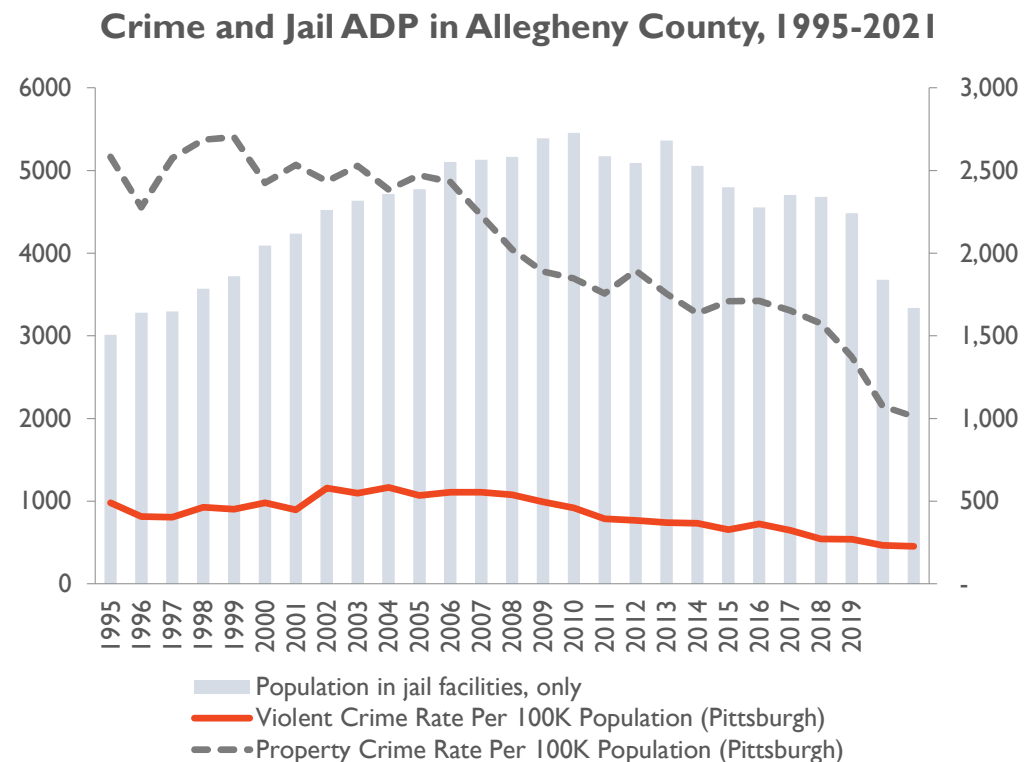
The National Problem

- The U.S. has the highest incarceration rate in the world with nearly **2 million** people in correctional facilities

- Jails are the front door to incarceration with over **10 million** admissions annually

- Most people in jails are not yet convicted

Sources: U.S. incarcerated population from Prison Policy Initiative, *Mass Incarceration: The Whole Pie, 2019*; Institute for Crime & Justice Policy Research, *World Prison Brief* ; Bureau of Justice Statistics, 2019; Bureau of Justice Statistics *Jail Inmates in 2018.*

Jail has grown while crime has fallen

The ACJ opened in 1995 at the height of crime. Since then, crime dropped but the jail population grew significantly until 2010.

The jail population has been on a downward trend since 2010 but has not kept pace with the crime rate.

Crime and Jail ADP in Allegheny County, 1995-2021

Population in jail facilities, only
Violent Crime Rate Per 100K Population (Pittsburgh)
Property Crime Rate Per 100K Population (Pittsburgh)

Why reduce the Allegheny Jail Population?

CAN DECREASE PUBLIC SAFETY

Holding low-risk defendants in jail while awaiting trial (even for just 2-3 days) has been found to *increase* the likelihood that they will commit new crimes in the future.

HIGH COST TO TAXPAYERS

The county spends **32%** of its direct expenditures on criminal justice including **$91 million** annually on the jail.

DISRUPTS COMMUNITIES

The affects of incarceration extend beyond the person who is in jail to families, employers, and communities.

DISPARATE IMPACT

Despite making up only **13%** of the local population, African Americans make up **67%** of the jail population.

Roughly **75%** of the jail population has a mental health or substance abuse issue.

Allegheny County's SJC Strategies

The average daily population of the jail is a function of **admission rate** and **length of stay**.

Allegheny County's SJC Strategies

CRISIS RESPONSE
DHS, 911, providers, and law enforcement develop ways to get people in crisis help sooner and avoid criminal justice involvement.

REDUCE BOOKINGS AT FIRST APPEARANCE
Provide representation at first appearance, implement a revalidated Pretrial assessment

EXPEDITE COURT PROCESSING
Reduce the amount of time people spend awaiting trial by moving two separate hearings to one day and shifting timeline for preparatory work

REDUCE THE NUMBER AND LENGTH OF DETAINERS
Manage detainer population through policy and detainer workgroup and resolve probation violations and new charges together.

JAIL REDESIGN
Obtain community and stakeholder input to develop a new design for the physical structure of the jail to increase safety, improve rehabilitation, and reflect a smaller jail population.

CRISIS RESPONSE

✓ Crisis Response Stakeholder Group convened

✓ Recommendations and action plan created

Implementing action plan

- Improving response from central crisis numbers
- Expanding mobile response options
- Developing peer-operated respite centers
- Supporting LEAD pilots

REDUCING BOOKINGS AT FIRST APPEARANCE

✓ Pretrial assessment made available to all MDJs

✓ Revalidated local pretrial assessment and redesigned report implemented

✓ Pretrial qualification for PD instituted at preliminary arraignment

✓ PD representation at evening and overnight preliminary arraignments reduced use of monetary bond by 39%

EXPEDITING COURT PROCESSING

✓ Formal arraignment continuances lowered from 44% to average of 21%

Proposal to combine formal arraignment and pretrial conference is in planning

    Eliminates one opportunity for FTA

    Reduces time between hearings

    Offers opportunity for meaningful hearing and option resolve the case

REDUCING THE NUMBER AND LENGTH OF DETAINERS

✓ Detainer population lowered from 1,060 to 630

✓ Collaborative detainer workgroup created for complex detained cases

✓ Early probation termination policy created and roughly 70% of motions granted

✓ Early probation violation policy (EPV) policy created and nearly 500 early probation violation hearings were held saving an average of 84 days in jail per person

JAIL REDESIGN

✓ Solicitation released for consultant to lead stakeholder engagement and design process

Next steps will be engagement process and generation of design options

Racial Equity and Community Engagement Work

Building a shared understanding of racial equity through training

Partnering on research studies

Utilizing technical assistance to develop internal strategies through a Racial Equity Working Group
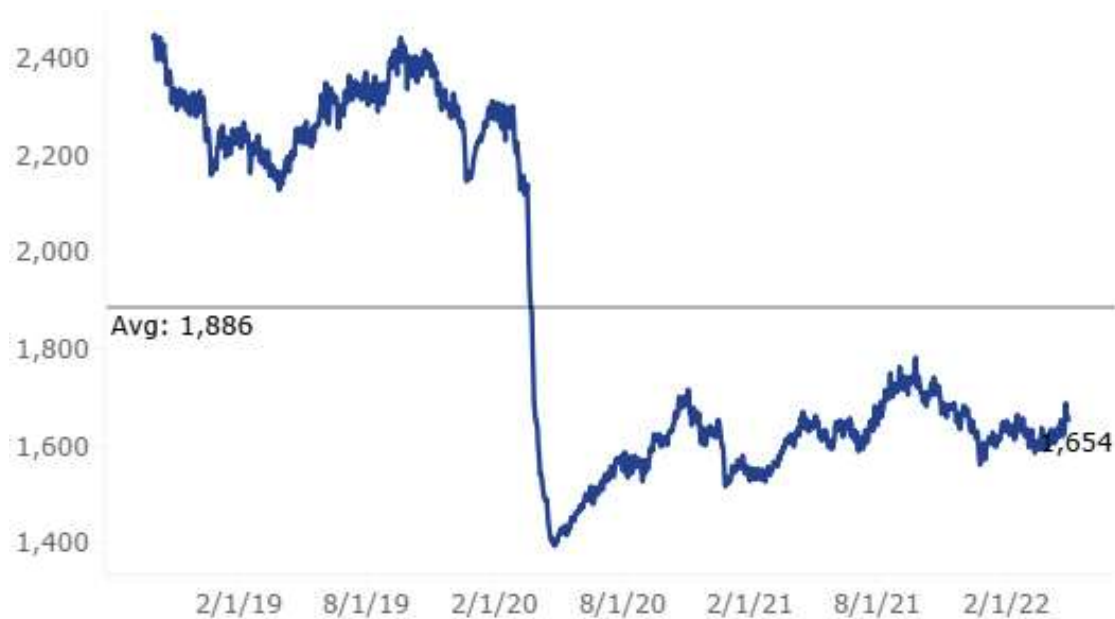
Feedback sought through listening sessions

Community Advisory Committee created to learn about strategies and provide recommendations

Grant funds will be distributed to community-based projects

Jail Population Trend

Baseline period:
11/1/2017 – 4/30/2018

The jail population is down 36% from the baseline population

Rearrest rates of people released during the grant period are lower than rates of people released prior to the grant

Reports and Resources

Criminal justice reports, including SJC annual reports: Publications Archives – Allegheny County Analytics: Reports, Visualizations and Datasets

Live jail population dashboard: Allegheny County Jail Population Management: Interactive Dashboards – Allegheny County Analytics: Reports, Visualizations and Datasets

Allegheny County Safety and Justice Challenge website:
Safety and Justice Challenge (alleghenycounty.us)

MacArthur Safety and Justice Challenge website:
Safety and Justice Challenge

Questions