

DHS News

Newsletter of the Allegheny County
Department of Human Services



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Allegheny County receives \$2M to reduce the county jail population

Recently, the John D. and Catherine T. MacArthur Foundation awarded Allegheny County a \$2 million grant to continue building on efforts to reform the local criminal justice system and safely reduce the county jail population. This 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 county was first selected to join the Safety and Justice Challenge Network in 2017.

Allegheny County was one of 13 jurisdictions selected for additional funding based on the promise and progress of work to date. This new round of funding will provide additional support and 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 people of color, low-income communities, and people with mental health and substance abuse issues.

In partnership with the Courts and the District Attorney's Office, and including departments under the executive branch, Allegheny County has developed a comprehensive plan with the goal of reducing the average daily jail population by 20 percent over the next two years. Key strategies to achieve this goal include expanding public defense, diverting individuals to behavioral health and substance abuse treatment, expediting the resolution of cases involving people detained for probation violations, improving case processing efficiency, expanding and enhancing pretrial services, and increasing community engagement.

More information about Allegheny County's work to reduce over incarceration can be found at www.SafetyandJusticeChallenge.org.