



Dane County
Community Justice Council

Strategic Plan

2026-2028

DRAFT

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Each participant brought a unique perspective, grounded in experience and a shared belief that collaboration can create a fairer and more effective justice system. Their time, expertise, and care for the people of Dane County were essential to producing a plan that reflects both local realities and a vision for meaningful progress.

CJC Members

Melissa Agard*
Dane County Executive

Richelle Andrae
Public Protection and Judiciary Committee Chair

Kalvin Barrett*
Sheriff

Jerome Dillard*
Community Representative

Judge John Hyland*
Circuit Court Judge/CJC Chair

Jay Laufenberg
Department of Corrections Regional Chief

Sabrina Madison
City of Madison Mayor Designee

Myra McNair*
Community Representative

Judge Todd Meurer
Municipal Judge

Peter Middleton
Public Defender

Patrick Miles*
Dane County Board of Supervisors, Chair



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CJC Members (Continued)

John Jay Miller*

Community Representative

Jeff Okazaki*

Dane County Clerk of Courts

Ismael R. Ozanne*

District Attorney/CJC Vice Chair

John Patterson

Chief, Madison Police Department

Brent Plisch

Chief, UW Police Department

Heidi Wegleitner

Health and Human Needs Committee Chair

Office of Justice Reform/CJC Staff

Colleen Clark Bernhardt

Director

Shar-on Buie

Data and Evaluation Analyst

Tamarine Cornelius

Research Analyst

Chee Yang

Analyst

* Voting CJC member

Planning Team Members

Ashley Ballweg

Carousel Bayrd

Todd Campbell

Rob Csencsics

Emelia Currin

Jael Currie

Don Dudley

Natalie Flores

Dan Grupe

Gilberto Gutierrez

Abigail (Abby) Hean

Sarah Henrickson

Shelton James

Rebekah Jones

Awais Khaleel

Linda Ketcham

Sarah Krahm

Shanita Lawrence

Jeanne McLellan

Hon. Nicholas McNamara

Chloe Moore

Diana Nachtigal

Christopher Nygaard

Stephanie Njeri

Marianne Oleson

Hon. Ann Peacock

Shannon Pierce

Chad Pronschinske

Johneisha Prescott

Jaclyn Shelton

Jan Tetzloff

Sarah Wampole-Maciejeski

Peter Zallar



Dane County Community Justice Council

Introduction

The Dane County Community Justice Council (CJC) developed this strategic plan to guide its collaborative efforts to improve justice outcomes, strengthen coordination, and promote fairness across the local justice system. This plan represents a shared commitment among county leaders, justice agencies, and community partners to work together toward a system that is effective, equitable, and focused on both accountability and opportunity.

The strategic plan was shaped through collaboration among justice system leaders, county officials, and community members who care deeply about improving how justice is delivered. The CJC brings together representatives from law enforcement, the courts, prosecution, defense, corrections, human services, and the community to identify shared priorities and build coordinated solutions. The conversations that informed this plan focused on what is working well, where gaps remain, and how Dane County can continue to move toward a more equitable and transparent system.

The plan is not intended to be a static document. Instead, it is a working guide that the Council will revisit and update regularly as conditions, challenges, and opportunities evolve. It provides direction while leaving room

for adaptation as new information becomes available and as the needs of the community change.

Finally, the strategic plan is grounded in the belief that lasting progress comes from collaboration. Each agency represented on the CJC plays an important role, but meaningful change depends on their willingness to work together, share data and ideas, and hold themselves accountable to the people they serve. This plan sets the course for that continued collaboration and outlines the strategies that will help the CJC move forward with a unified purpose.

Each section of the plan builds on the work that Dane County and its partners have undertaken to date. The following pages provide an overview of Dane County and its justice system, describe the CJC, explain the process used to develop this plan, and outline the strategies and performance measures that will help move the county toward its goals.



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Overview of Dane County Justice System

Dane County is located in south-central Wisconsin and includes the state capital, Madison. The city sits between Lakes Mendota and Monona, giving the county a distinctive setting and sense of place. The University of Wisconsin–Madison adds to this character, drawing students and residents from around the world and influencing the county's economy, culture, and community life. The mix of city, campus, suburban, and rural communities makes Dane County one of the most dynamic areas in the state. It is also the fastest growing county in the State of Wisconsin, creating even more need for strong strategies in justice.

As of 2024, Dane County's population is about 588,000 residents.¹ The county covers roughly 1,200 square miles.² It includes more than 60 cities, villages, and towns, along with unincorporated areas.³ Madison is the county seat and largest city, followed by Sun Prairie, Fitchburg, Middleton, Verona, Waunakee, McFarland, Stoughton, and Oregon. Dane County has a relatively young population, with a median age of about 36 years.⁴ The median household income is around \$88,000, which is higher than the state average.⁵ Housing values and rents are also above state averages.⁶ While the population is mostly White, communities of color continue to grow. Black or African American, Asian, Hispanic, and

multiracial residents now make up an increasingly important part of the county's diversity.⁷

Because the county combines urban, suburban, and rural areas, the justice system must respond to a wide variety of needs. The large student population, the growing diversity, and the economic differences between neighborhoods all shape how public safety and justice services are delivered.

The Dane County justice system consists of multiple independent but interrelated entities that work together to promote justice and public safety.

Key agencies include:

Dane County Sheriff's Office

Manages law enforcement services in unincorporated areas and operates the county jail.

Police Departments in Dane County

Enforces laws within municipal boundaries, coordinate with county agencies, and work on public safety in their jurisdictions. Dane County has 22 municipal police departments, including the University of Wisconsin–Madison Police Department.



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Dane County Attorney's Office

Reviews and prosecutes criminal cases, emphasizing both accountability and fairness.

Dane County Clerk of Court

Maintains court records, maintains case filings, and supports courtroom operations in the Circuit Court.

Dane County Circuit Court

Handles felony, misdemeanor, civil, juvenile, and family matters for the county.

Municipal Courts in Dane County

Presides over ordinance violations, minor traffic issues, and city-level infractions. There are 17 independent or joint municipal courts in the county.

State Public Defender's Office

Provides legal representation for individuals unable to afford private counsel.

State Department of Corrections

Supervises offenders on probation, parole, and extended supervision, monitors compliance, and supports reintegration into the community through evidence-based programs.

Together, these agencies form an interconnected system that must balance individual rights, public safety, and community well-being. The County Executive and Board of Supervisors also play a critical role in this system through their powers over county budgets, administrative oversight, and policy direction. They are responsible for approving funding for sheriff's operations, court facilities, human services, and other departments that support justice-involved populations. As members of the CJC, they bring decision-making authority and accountability to the table. Their involvement ensures that strategic reforms have the institutional support needed to be implemented and sustained.

To improve coordination across this complex network, Dane County established the CJC as a forum for collaboration among justice and community leaders. The next section describes the Council's structure, purpose, and role in advancing system-wide reform.



Dane County Community Justice Council

About the CJC

The Dane County Community Justice Council (CJC) was established by the County Board of Supervisors through County Ordinance 15.46 in 2006 to bring together justice system leaders in a shared effort to make the system fairer, safer, and more responsive to the community. When first created, it was known as the Criminal Justice Council, reflecting its focus on justice system operations. Over time, as its mission expanded to include a stronger emphasis on prevention, treatment, and community collaboration, it became the Community Justice Council—a name that better represents its inclusive and forward-looking approach.

What began as a council of six executive members has grown into a broad and active body that includes representatives from across the justice system and the community. Membership expanded to include leaders from the State Public Defender's Office, the Department of Corrections, local law enforcement, and the City of Madison. In 2022, the County Board further amended the ordinance to add community members to both the Executive Council and each of the three standing subcommittees, ensuring that residents have a voice in justice system discussions and decisions. The Dane County CJC has also been recognized nationally for its progress and was accepted into the National

The Dane County Community Justice Council (CJC) was established by county ordinance 15.46 to perform the following duties:

(a) provide an ongoing forum for collaboration and coordinated leadership among criminal justice agencies;

(b) facilitate the implementation of effective, efficient, and data-driven criminal justice policies and practices that promote justice, equity, and public safety;

(c) monitor and ensure accountability within the criminal justice system; and

(d) provide program oversight for criminal justice initiatives.

Network of Criminal Justice Coordinating Councils (NCJCC) as a best-practice site.

Today, the CJC serves as a forum where representatives from the courts, law enforcement, prosecution, defense, corrections, county government, and the community work together to identify challenges, share information, and develop practical solutions. Its mission is to promote a justice system that is fair, efficient, and reflective of Dane County's values. Voting members include the District Attorney, Sheriff,



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Clerk of Courts, Presiding Judge, County Executive, a County Board Chair, and three community representatives. The Public Defender, Mayor of Madison designee, and several police chiefs participate as advisory members, ensuring diverse perspectives are represented.

The Council organizes its work through standing subcommittees focused on key aspects of the justice system. The Behavioral Health Subcommittee examines how mental health and substance use intersect with the justice system and works to connect people to care rather than incarceration. The Pretrial Committee evaluates policies and practices affecting release, supervision, and alternatives to detention. The Racial Disparities works to reduce inequities across the system and strengthen community engagement in the Council's work. Each subcommittee includes both system partners and community members to ensure that conversations are informed by a wide range of experiences and insights.

In 2022, the CJC paused operations due to limited staff capacity. In response, the County staffed the Office of Justice Reform (OJR) in

2023 to provide dedicated staff, policy and program research, meeting coordination, and overall support of the CJC and its subcommittees. The OJR manages data-sharing agreements established in 2016 and leads the Council's research and evaluation efforts. With this renewed structure and capacity, the CJC began developing a new strategic plan to guide its next phase of work.

Since resuming operations, the CJC has focused on collaboration, transparency, and measurable outcomes. It continues to support programs such as the Community Restorative Court, promote data-driven decision-making, and provide guidance on improving facilities and community-based services. The Dane County CJC remains a forum where justice leaders and residents work together toward a shared goal: building a justice system rooted in fairness, accountability, and shared responsibility.⁹

The next section explains how this plan was developed through a structured, collaborative process.



Dane County Community Justice Council

Development of the Strategic Plan

The development of this strategic plan was guided by collaboration, research, and reflection. The Justice Management Institute (JMI) worked closely with the Dane County Community Justice Council and the Office of Justice Reform to gather information, facilitate planning sessions, and support local stakeholders in defining shared priorities.

The planning process began with individual interviews of CJC members to better understand their perspectives on the Council's strengths, challenges, and opportunities for growth. Members were asked to identify potential priorities for the Council's future work and to share ideas for improving collaboration across agencies.

Based on the interviews, JMI conducted a survey to help the Council rank potential priority areas by importance. Three topics emerged as the top priorities: behavioral health, pretrial alternatives, and reentry and reintegration. Through the RFP process, JMI was also asked to identify strategies that would help align Dane County's work with national standards for high-functioning criminal justice coordinating councils. This resulted in a fourth priority area: CJC operations.

To develop strategies within each of these priority areas, JMI and the OJR convened three planning teams. Each team consisted of local subject-matter experts, practitioners, and community members with direct experience in their respective fields. The planning teams met in-person for several hours across July, August, and September 2025.

Each team received a customized planning guide that outlined the steps for developing clear goals, objectives, and tactics. These sessions produced the draft action plan that now forms the core of this strategic plan.

Throughout this process, JMI and the OJR also reviewed findings from previous county studies and assessments, many of which are available through the CJC website. The process was further informed by a Sequential Intercept Mapping (SIM) workshop held in June 2025, facilitated by Policy Research Associates, Inc (PRA). The SIM exercise helped participants identify critical decision points and service gaps across Dane County's behavioral health and criminal justice systems.¹⁰ The strategies enumerated in that report, as well as the consensus of the more than 65 participants was considered in the overall strategic plan.



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Following the completion of the planning team sessions, the draft strategies were presented to the full CJC for review and discussion.

Feedback from Council members was incorporated to refine objectives, clarify, and ensure that each strategy aligned with both local priorities and national best practices.

This inclusive process ensured that the final plan reflects a broad range of perspectives, balances data and experience, and creates a roadmap that is both actionable and sustainable. The next section introduces the structure of that roadmap.



Dane County Community Justice Council

Strategic Framework & Structure

The Dane County Community Justice Council Strategic Plan is organized around four priority areas that reflect the most pressing opportunities for system improvement:

1. Behavioral Health
2. Pretrial Alternatives
3. Reentry and Reintegration
4. CJC Operations

Each priority area contains a clear goal, several supporting objectives, and detailed tactics that describe how the objectives will be achieved. This structure helps translate broad ideas into actionable steps that can be implemented, measured, and refined over time. The goals represent the overarching results that the Council seeks to accomplish, while the objectives describe specific areas of focus within each goal. The tactics identify the concrete activities, programs, or policy changes needed to carry those objectives forward.

When developing these strategies, the CJC and its planning teams gave careful consideration to reducing racial and ethnic disparities across the justice system. Equity was treated as a central value guiding all discussions, ensuring that each goal and objective supports a fairer and more inclusive approach to justice in Dane County.

The plan also establishes performance measures for each goal area. These measures will help the CJC and its committees track progress and evaluate whether strategies are producing meaningful results. The Office of Justice Reform plays a key role in coordinating data collection, reviewing progress with the CJC's committees, and reporting outcomes to the full Council and the public. Performance measures focus on both quantitative data, such as the number of individuals served or program participation rates, and qualitative data, such as community feedback, interagency collaboration, and participant satisfaction.

This strategic plan was designed to be flexible and adaptable. The CJC recognizes that priorities may evolve as new information emerges, community needs shift, or opportunities arise.

The following sections describe each priority area in detail, beginning with Behavioral Health.



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Priority Area #1:

Behavioral Health

Goal: **Improve behavioral health outcomes by expanding diversion, enhancing coordination, and connecting people to timely, appropriate care.**

Behavioral health continues to be one of the most pressing and complex challenges facing the Dane County justice system. Individuals with mental health or substance use challenges are disproportionately represented in the jail and court system. Addressing these needs requires coordinated responses that connect people to care, reduce unnecessary incarceration, and improve outcomes for individuals and the community.

This priority area focuses on improving behavioral health outcomes through expanded diversion opportunities, better coordination, and timely access to appropriate services. The objectives and tactics below reflect the collaborative efforts of the CJC Behavioral Health Committee and its community partners.



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Behavioral Health

Objective #1:

Improve criminal competency and civil mental health processes.

Tactics:

01

Form a workgroup of attorneys, judges, and mental health experts on criminal competency and civil mental health processes.

02

Research best practices across the court, jail, evaluators, and mental health systems.

03

Establish an interagency workgroup to improve coordination between the criminal justice system and involvement under Chapters 51, 54, and 55.

04

Develop standardized procedures to identify and flag individuals with prior competency findings or involvement under Chapters 51, 54, and 55.

05

Explore potential for earlier evaluation for Orders to Treat specifically for individuals in the jail.

06

Train stakeholders on civil commitment and competency processes.

Performance Measures:

- Partners report increased clarity in how to handle cases involving competency or civil commitment.
- Agencies begin using a shared approach to flag individuals with prior competency or Chapter 51/54/55 involvement.
- Stakeholders report fewer delays or confusion in obtaining needed evaluations.



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Behavioral Health

Objective #2:

Implement data sharing & interagency coordination.

Tactics:

01

Determine data necessary to improve current system, enhance coordination of care, clarify scope and purpose, and assess return on investment.

02

Address legal barriers to information exchange (e.g., HIPAA).

03

Convene a data governance working group to draft a universal data-sharing MOU.

04

Build an internal centralized data platform for care coordination and service strategic planning; draft and award RFP if necessary.

05

Develop a data integration pilot between two high-priority partners.

Performance Measures:

- Partners report fewer barriers to exchanging information during case coordination.
- Number of agencies participating in a shared data agreement increases.
- Partners can identify at least one case example where shared data improved coordination.



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Behavioral Health

Objective #3:

Collaborate with jail and contractors on behavioral health services.

Tactics:

01

Assess current medication delivery practices and gaps, including a survey of national practices.

02

Clarify legal requirements around court-ordered treatment and formulary limits.

03

Convene stakeholder group to develop local solutions.

04

Pilot revised protocols (e.g., intake, verification, external pharmacy use).

05

Evaluate pilot and recommend systemwide changes.

Performance Measures:

- Partners report improved connection or verification of medications at jail intake.
- New or revised intake protocol is used consistently in pilot setting.
- Lessons learned from pilot are documented and shared.



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Behavioral Health

Objective #4: **Expand and integrate peer support.**

Tactics:

01

Inventory current peer support programs and contracts across behavioral health and justice systems.

02

Review cross-system training curriculum and certification for justice-involved peer support.

03

Research embedded peer support roles in pretrial, jail release, and court diversion programs.

04

Establish referral protocols and communication handoffs across agencies.

05

Secure sustainable funding sources for peer support expansion.

Performance Measures:

- More programs begin referring individuals to peer support using the shared referral approach.
- Partners report improved collaboration between peer support programs.
- Peer support role sustainability options discussed and prioritized.



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Behavioral Health

Objective #5: **Adopt countywide warm handoffs.**

Tactics:

01

Map existing handoff points across jail release and court deflection.

02

Create warm handoff protocol, define agency responsibilities and address legal barriers to information exchange.

03

Assign agency to lead navigation and coordinate handoffs across systems.

04

Train staff and partners on the protocol using real case scenarios.

Performance Measures:

- Agencies report clearer responsibilities during transitions.
- Warm-handoff approach is used more consistently at one or more key transition points.
- Staff report improved confidence in making transitions



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Behavioral Health

Objective #6:

Promote and educate the public and partners about the potential triage center.

Tactics:

01

Develop a public-facing information hub or website to share updates about the proposed triage center.

02

Create and maintain a distribution list to keep strategic partners informed of developments.

03

Support Dane County Department of Human Services in identifying and addressing system gaps that could delay the center's opening.

04

Clearly define and communicate the triage center's purpose, capabilities, and limitations.

Performance Measures:

- Stakeholders report improved understanding of triage center purpose.
- Distribution list to strategic partners grows over time.
- Website or materials viewed and accessed regularly.



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Priority Area #2:

Pretrial Alternatives

Goal: Reduce unnecessary detention and improve equity by streamlining diversion, standardizing screening, and expanding community-based options.

Pretrial justice plays a critical role in maintaining fairness, safety, and efficiency within the criminal justice system. Dane County's Community Justice Council (CJC) recognizes that unnecessary detention before trial can have lasting negative effects on individuals, families, and communities. Detaining people for low-level or nonviolent offenses often leads to housing instability, employment loss, and an increased likelihood of re-offending without improving public safety.

This priority area focuses on reducing unnecessary detention, improving equity, and expanding diversion opportunities. It builds on Dane County's longstanding efforts to use risk-based pretrial assessments, community-based programs, and early interventions that promote fairness and accountability.



Dane County Community Justice Council

Pretrial Alternatives

Objective #1:

Strengthen and streamline diversion and deflection pathways through standardized screening and referral protocols.

Tactics:

01

Review utilization rates and outcomes for all current deflection/diversion programs to ensure eligible participants are offered opportunities for programming.

02

Produce shared diversion/deflection eligibility guidelines for law enforcement, prosecutors, and defense, and distribute to all stakeholders.

03

Standardize risk, needs, and responsivity screening tools at early stages.

04

Launch training series on deflection/diversion pathways and screening protocols for frontline staff.

05

Develop a referral tracking system to measure diversion rates and equity impacts.

Performance Measures:

- Partners report clearer understanding of diversion eligibility and referral pathways.
- Shared screening and referral approaches are used more consistently.
- Staff confidence in using diversion pathways increases over time.



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Pretrial Alternatives

Objective #2:

Explore alternatives to incarceration for low-level offenses, including Disorderly Conduct charges.

Tactics:

01

Map current diversion options available at each decision point (arrest, charging, court).

02

Develop a matrix of alternatives by charge and decision point for officer and prosecutor use; explore expanding program services countywide.

03

Identify potential alternatives to jail bookings for low-level offenses.

04

Monitor outcomes by race, gender, geography, and program completion rates.

Performance Measures:

- Partners reference shared diversion and response options more consistently.
- Agencies report increased awareness of alternatives to custody.
- Use of alternatives expands beyond initial settings.



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Pretrial Alternatives

Objective #3:

Quantify nonappearance and address failures to appear (FTAs).

Tactics:

01

Gather baseline FTA data disaggregated by charge type, race, court location, calendar type, and prior notification attempts; review data entry accuracy.

02

Survey or interview system-involved individuals to understand common reasons for nonappearance.

03

Consider pilot projects to assist clients with court attendance and evaluate outcomes.

04

Review judicial use of bench warrants and assess alternative practices (e.g., grace periods, reschedule policies).

Performance Measures:

- Partners share a common understanding of why nonappearance occurs.
- At least one court attendance support strategy is tested among partners.
- Stakeholders report improved coordination related to appearance support.



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Pretrial Alternatives

Objective #4:

Reevaluate Public Safety Assessment (PSA) utilization and decision framework.

Tactics:

01

Conduct a PSA training needs assessment across judiciary, defense, prosecution, and pretrial staff.

02

Convene a cross-agency workgroup to co-develop a Pretrial Release Decision Matrix.

03

Develop and deliver a standardized PSA training curriculum (in-person or video-based).

04

Collect feedback and refine matrix based on consistency, fairness, and outcomes.

Performance Measures:

- Partners report clearer understanding of how PSA informs release decisions.
- PSA is applied more consistently in similar case types.
- Stakeholders identify training needs and feel supported in using PSA guidance.



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Pretrial Alternatives

Objective #5: **Advance the Community Justice Center.***

Tactics:

01

Convene a design team of key stakeholders to define core services and ideal co-location partners; review prior planning efforts.

02

Develop an operating model, including staffing, eligibility, and referral pathways.

03

Identify space needs and explore co-location or shared-space collaboration.

04

Research seed funding for implementation planning and early operations.

05

Launch pilot version with limited-service menu and evaluate usage and outcomes.

Performance Measures:

- Partners agree on the core functions and priorities of the Community Justice Center.
- Referral pathways into the center become clearer among partners.
- Community partners identify roles they may play in the center's future services.

* A Community Justice Center is a collaborative space where justice agencies, service providers, and community partners work together to support individuals at various points in the justice system. Its goal is to reduce reliance on incarceration by connecting people to treatment, housing, employment, and other resources that promote stability and accountability. The center serves as a hub for coordination, problem-solving, and community engagement aimed at improving safety and fairness for everyone.



Dane County Community Justice Council



Priority Area #3:

Reentry & Reintegration

Goal: **Support successful reintegration by strengthening coordination, expanding peer and navigation supports, and improving access to housing, care, and services.**

Successful reentry is critical for individual stability and community safety. When people return to the community after incarceration, they face significant challenges obtaining housing, employment, and access to healthcare or behavioral health treatment. Addressing these needs requires coordination among justice agencies, social services, and community organizations.

The CJC and the Office of Justice Reform identified reentry and reintegration as a strategic priority to strengthen coordination, expand peer and navigation supports, and improve access to essential services. This effort reflects the county's commitment to ensuring that individuals leaving custody have the tools and opportunities needed to succeed.



Dane County Community Justice Council

Reentry & Reintegration

Objective #1:

Strengthen reentry coordination through cross-system collaboration and continuity of care.

Tactics:

01

Establish recurring reentry coordination meetings for providers, justice stakeholders, and county departments.

02

Develop a shared reentry process map showing transition points and handoffs.

03

Share and communicate release notification protocols (e.g., Victim Information Notification Everyday–VINE) to support service coordination.

04

Review service provider RFPs to ensure they meet service demands at least six months prior to release.

05

Research creating a community-based coordinator position to support high-need cases and identify a core reentry coordination team with defined partner roles.

Performance Measures:

- Reentry coordination meetings occur regularly with active participation.
- Partners share a clear understanding of reentry transition points.
- Partners report clearer roles in coordinating release planning.



Dane County Community Justice Council

Reentry & Reintegration

Objective #2:

Enhance reentry navigation and peer support services in the community.

Tactics:

01

Inventory existing reentry services and identify geographic and demographic gaps.

02

Design a peer navigator or trusted messenger model to improve engagement.

03

Coordinate with organizations employing staff with lived experience to provide pre- and post-release support.

04

Create an employment pathway for individuals with lived experience who want to serve as peer mentors.

05

Collaborate with the CJC Behavioral Health Subcommittee to align peer support services across programs and providers.

Performance Measures:

- A shared understanding of how peer navigation fits within reentry is established.
- Partners identify where peer support is available and where gaps remain.
- Coordination among agencies offering peer support improves.



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Reentry & Reintegration

Objective #3:

Improve reentry service continuity and warm handoffs post-release In partnership with the CJC Behavioral Health Subcommittee.

Tactics:

01

Map current jail discharge practices and identify gaps in transitions.

02

Prioritize coordinated release planning for people with unexpected releases.

03

Create or coordinate transportation assistance protocols to support first appointments to community providers.

04

Connect clients to care coordination or case management prior to release.

05

Establish structured referral protocols for immediate post-release services.

06

Explore the idea of a short-term release transition space.

Performance Measures:

- Partners report fewer disruptions during transitions from custody to community care.
- Warm handoffs occur more consistently at reentry points.
- Providers and jail staff report clearer coordination roles.



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Reentry & Reintegration

Objective #4:

Provide thought partnership and collaboration on housing access and stabilization options for returning residents.

Tactics:

01

Coordinate with Dane County Health & Human Services, housing providers, and existing County and City of Madison committees leading this work.

02

Assist in establishing a coordinated entry or “justice touchpoint” into the homeless system.

03

Help inform efforts to increase access to temporary stabilization beds or short-term housing.

04

Support the pursuit of funding and policy options that expand housing options for justice involved individuals.

Performance Measures:

- Partners develop a shared understanding of housing barriers affecting returning residents.
- Agencies coordinating housing access report improved communication.
- Opportunities to expand stabilization housing options are discussed and prioritized.



Dane County Community Justice Council



Priority Area #4:

CJC Operations

Goal: **Strengthen the CJC's effectiveness by fully aligning operations with national standards and improved governance, structured planning, and community engagement.**

An effective Community Justice Council depends on clear governance, inclusive membership, and transparent communication. Strengthening the CJC's internal structure ensures that it can operate efficiently, coordinate across agencies, and maintain accountability to both partners and the public.

This priority area focuses on improving governance, committee operations, and communication practices to align the Council's work with national standards for high-performing criminal justice coordinating councils.



Dane County Community Justice Council

CJC Operations

Objective #1:

Define how the CJC is organized and how it carries out its work.

Tactics:

01

Adopt bylaws to provide a clear framework for CJC operations.

02

Revisit the CJC vision and mission statements to keep current.

03

Review bylaws periodically to ensure alignment with goals and revise as necessary.

Performance Measures:

- Council members report clearer understanding of roles and decision processes.
- Vision and mission are referenced in agendas or materials for planning and decisions.
- Scheduled bylaw review occurs and any changes are communicated to members.



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CJC Operations

Objective #2: **Strengthen the membership structure of CJC.**

Tactics:

01

Revise the county ordinance to add key justice system professionals as voting members, including the Dane County Department of Human Services Director.

02

Establish a structured onboarding process for new members.

03

Clearly define the responsibilities and duties of CJC officers.

Performance Measures:

- Membership roster matches positions identified in the ordinance.
- New members complete onboarding within their first quarter.
- Meetings achieve quorum more consistently.



Dane County Community Justice Council

CJC Operations

Objective #3:

Improve committee operations and monitor progress on the strategic plan.

Tactics:

01

Revisit committee purpose and membership and establish charters for each.

02

Empower committees to execute the strategic plan under the guidance and support of the CJC.

03

Review committee progress on strategic initiatives annually and adjust the strategic plan as necessary.

04

Track progress on strategic plan performance measures and report to the community.

Performance Measures:

- Committees meet on a regular cadence with agendas and recorded action items.
- Committee work follows approved charters.
- Annual strategic plan review identifies adjustments and documents follow-up actions.



Dane County Community Justice Council

CJC Operations

Objective #4:

Share information with the community about the work of the CJC, including system performance.

Tactics:

01

Proactively educate and inform the community about CJC activities, progress, and challenges in the criminal justice system.

02

Identify key system performance indicators and monitor progress; share results with the community.

03

Develop a CJC communications plan outlining protocols for media, community outreach, and crisis response.

Performance Measures:

- Community updates are issued on a set schedule and posted publicly.
- Key indicators are identified and shared in at least one public update.
- Partners and community participants report clearer understanding of CJC priorities.



Dane County Community Justice Council

Performance Measurement & Evaluation

To ensure accountability and continuous improvement, the Dane County Community Justice Council will use performance measurement and evaluation as key tools for tracking progress. Each objective in this plan includes performance measures that describe what success will look like. These measures focus on outcomes that are both meaningful and achievable, allowing the CJC to monitor impact and make adjustments as needed.

Performance measurement serves several purposes. It helps confirm whether strategies are being implemented as intended, whether desired outcomes are being achieved, and whether changes are improving system performance. It also ensures transparency for the community and strengthens trust between justice partners and the public.

The Office of Justice Reform will assist the CJC subcommittees with collecting and analyzing data associated with each performance measure. Regular updates will be provided to the full Council to support informed decision-making. Over time, this information may also be shared with the community through public reports, dashboards, and presentations.

Evaluation may occur on both short- and long-term cycles. Short-term reviews will focus on tracking activities and outputs such as meetings held, trainings completed, or

programs launched. Long-term evaluations will assess the broader effects of these efforts, including reduced jail populations, improved behavioral health outcomes, and greater equity in justice processes.

As part of the OJR/CJC data sharing agreement, comprehensive analysis and evaluation, require CJC endorsement (if using data elements from CJC data sources).

By embedding performance measurement and evaluation into its operations, the CJC ensures that the strategies outlined in this plan remain active, data-driven, and adaptable. This approach allows the Council to celebrate successes, identify challenges, and refine its work to create lasting system improvements.

Plan Review and Updates

The strategic plan should be reviewed annually to assess progress on key goals and objectives. Every two to three years, the Council should conduct a comprehensive evaluation to determine whether goals remain relevant, whether objectives should be adjusted, or whether new strategies are needed. This regular review will keep the plan dynamic and ensure it continues to reflect both best practices and the evolving needs of the Dane County justice system.



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Conclusion

The Dane County Community Justice Council has developed this strategic plan to serve as a living framework for collaboration, accountability, and system improvement. The plan represents the collective commitment of county and community partners to create a fair, effective, and equitable justice system that promotes safety, healing, and opportunity for all residents.

The strategies outlined in this plan build on a foundation of shared responsibility and partnership. By focusing on behavioral health, pretrial alternatives, reentry and reintegration, and strong council operations, the CJC will continue to advance policies and practices that reflect both evidence and community values. The work will require persistence, coordination, and open dialogue among agencies, stakeholders, and residents.

Implementation of this plan will depend on the active participation of every partner represented on the CJC. The Office of Justice Reform, county departments, justice system leaders, and community organizations each play a vital role in carrying the plan forward. Together, they will use the performance measures and evaluation framework to track progress, celebrate achievements, and make informed adjustments when needed.

The CJC is committed to transparency and will continue to engage the public in this work. Through ongoing communication, shared learning, and measurable outcomes, Dane County can demonstrate what is possible when justice system partners and the community work together toward a common purpose.



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Dane County Community Justice Council

Appendix A: Summary of 2026-28 CJC Strategies

PRIORITY AREA	BEHAVIORAL HEALTH	PRETRIAL ALTERNATIVES	REENTRY & REINTEGRATION	CJC OPERATIONS
GOAL	Improve behavioral health outcomes by expanding diversion, enhancing coordination, and connecting people to timely, appropriate care.	Reduce unnecessary detention and improve equity by streamlining diversion, standardizing screening, and expanding community-based options.	Support successful reintegration by strengthening coordination, expanding peer and navigation supports, and improving access to housing, care, and services.	Strengthen the CJC's effectiveness by aligning operations with national standards and improved governance, structured planning, and community engagement.
OBJECTIVE #1	Improve criminal competency & civil mental health processes.	Strengthen and streamline diversion and deflection pathways through standardized screening and referral protocols.	Strengthen reentry coordination through cross-system collaboration and continuity of care.	Define how the CJC is organized and how it carries out its work.
OBJECTIVE #2	Implement data sharing & interagency coordination.	Explore alternatives to incarceration for low-level offenses, including Disorderly Conduct charges.	Enhance reentry navigation and peer support services in the community.	Strengthen the membership structure of CJC.
OBJECTIVE #3	Collaborate with jail and contractors on behavioral health services.	Quantify non-appearance and address failures to appear (FTAs)	Improve reentry service continuity and warm handoffs post-release.	Improve committee operations and monitor progress on the strategic plan.
OBJECTIVE #4	Expand & integrate peer support.	Reevaluate Public Safety Assessment (PSA) utilization and decision framework.	Provide thought partnership and collaboration on housing access and stabilization options for returning residents.	Share information with the community about the work of the CJC, including system performance.
OBJECTIVE #5	Adopt countywide warm handoffs.	Advance the Community Justice Center (CJC).		
OBJECTIVE #6	Promote and educate the public and partners about the potential triage center.			



Dane County Community Justice Council

Appendix B: CJC Action Plan

The following pages contain the CJC Action Plan. The Action Plan provides detailed guidance for carrying out the strategies identified in the Strategic Plan. While the Strategic Plan outlines the Council's priorities, goals, and direction for system improvement, the Action Plan describes the specific steps, and responsibilities needed to move that work forward. It breaks each priority area into objectives and associated tactics, and identifies the partners, resources, and coordination required for implementation. The Action Plan is intended to support committees and workgroups as they translate the Strategic Plan into practice, and it will be reviewed and updated as progress continues and community needs evolve.



Dane County CJC: 2026-28 Action Plan

2026-28 Priority Areas:

<i>Priority Area 1</i>	<i>Behavioral Health</i>
<i>Priority Area 2</i>	<i>Pretrial Alternatives</i>
<i>Priority Area 3</i>	<i>Reentry and Reintegration</i>
<i>Priority Area 4</i>	<i>CJC Operations</i>

Priority Area #1	Behavioral Health			
Goal	Improve behavioral health outcomes by expanding diversion, enhancing coordination, and connecting people to timely, appropriate care.			
Objectives	Tactic(s)	Champion(s)	Resources Needed	Outputs/Deliverables
1. Improve criminal competency & civil mental health processes.	1. Form a workgroup of attorneys, judges and mental health experts on criminal competency and civil mental health processes.	Community Justice Council (CJC) CJC Behavioral Health Subcommittee workgroup	Staff time Justice and county stakeholder collaboration	• Formal interagency workgroup charter and meeting schedule. • Best-practice research report on competency and civil mental health processes. • Standardized procedures for identifying/flagging individuals with prior competency or Chapter 51/54/55 statuses. • Protocol for earlier evaluation for jail-based Orders to Treat. • Training curriculum and records of stakeholder trainings.
	2. Research best practices across the court, jail, evaluators, and mental health systems.			
	3. Establish interagency workgroup to improve coordination between criminal justice system and Chapters 51, 54, and 55.			
	4. Develop standardized procedures for identifying and flagging individuals with prior competency or Chapters 51, 54, and 55.			
	5. Explore potential for earlier evaluation for Orders to Treat specifically for individuals in the jail.			
	6. Train stakeholders on civil commitment and competency processes.			
2. Implement data sharing & interagency coordination.	1. Determine data necessary to improve current system; enhance coordination of care, scope, purpose; and assess return on investment.	CJC Behavioral Health Subcommittee Office of Justice Reform	Staff time Legal counsel Information Technology Support Technical experts Funding Collaboration between Dane County Social Service Network	• Data requirements and ROI analysis report. • Legal analysis addressing HIPAA and other barriers. • Data governance working group charter and universal data-sharing MOU. • Specifications and, if needed, RFP for centralized data platform. • Pilot data-integration project plan and evaluation.
	2. Address legal barriers to information exchange (e.g., HIPAA).			
	3. Convene a data governance working group to draft a universal data-sharing MOU.			
	4. Build an internal centralized data platform for care coordination and service strategic planning; draft and award RFP if necessary.			
	5. Develop a data integration pilot between two high-priority partners.			

3. Collaborate with jail and contractors on behavioral health services.	1. Assess current medication delivery practices and gaps: include survey of national practices.	Dane County Sheriffs Office Dane County Corporation Counsel Office	National experts Community Justice Court/Office of Justice Reform Support Local mental health experts	• Medication-delivery assessment report including national practice survey. • Legal requirements summary for court-ordered treatment and formulary limits. • Stakeholder-developed local solutions plan. • Revised intake and verification protocols piloted and documented. • Pilot evaluation report with systemwide recommendations.
	2. Clarify legal requirements around court-ordered treatment and formulary limits.			
	3. Convene stakeholder group to develop local solutions.			
	4. Pilot revised protocols (e.g., intake, verification, external pharmacy use).			
	5. Evaluate pilot and recommend systemwide changes.			
4. Expand & integrate peer support.	1. Inventory current peer support programs and contracts across BH and justice systems.	CJC Behavioral Health Subcommittee Office of Justice Reform	Staff time Funding Community partnerships	• Countywide inventory of peer support programs and contracts. • Review and recommendations on cross-system peer training and certification. • Analysis of embedded peer roles in pretrial, jail release, and diversion programs. • Standard referral and communication handoff protocol. • Funding plan and agreements securing sustainable resources.
	2. Review cross-system training curriculum and certification for justice-involved peer support.			
	3. Research embedded peer support roles in pretrial, jail release, and court diversion programs.			
	4. Establish referral protocols and communication handoffs across agencies.			
	5. Secure sustainable funding sources for peer support expansion.			
5. Adopt countywide warm handoffs.	1. Map existing handoff points across jail release and court deflection.	CJC Behavioral Health Subcommittee Office of Justice Reform	Staff time Funding Community partnerships	• Comprehensive map of existing handoff points. • Standardized warm handoff protocol with defined agency responsibilities. • Designation of lead navigation agency. • Training materials and session records for staff and partners.
	2. Create standard warm handoff protocol and define agency responsibilities.			
	3. Assign agency to lead navigation and coordinate handoffs across systems.			
	4. Train staff and partners on the protocol using real case scenarios.			
6. Promote and educate the public and partners about the potential triage center.	1. Develop a public-facing information hub or website to share updates about the proposed triage center.	Dane County Department of Human Services	Staff time	• Public-facing triage center information hub/website with regular updates. • Active email distribution list of strategic partners.
	2. Create and maintain a distribution list to keep strategic partners informed of developments.			

	3. Support Dane County Department of Human Services in identifying and addressing system gaps that could delay the center's opening.	CJC Behavioral Health Subcommittee	Information Technology Support	• Public materials clearly defining the center's purpose, capabilities, and limitations. • Documentation of system gaps and recommendations to support timely center opening.
	4. Clearly define and communicate the triage center's purpose, capabilities, and limitations.		CJC Behavioral Health Subcommittee	

Priority Area #2	Pretrial Alternatives			
	Reduce unnecessary detention and improve equity by streamlining diversion, standardizing screening, and expanding community-based options.			
Objectives	Tactics	Champion(s)	Resources Needed	Outputs/Deliverables
1. Strengthen and streamline diversion and deflection pathways through standardized screening and referral protocols.	1. Review utilization rates and outcomes for all current deflection/diversion programs to ensure eligible participants are offered opportunities for programing.	CJC Pretrial Subcommittee	Staff time Collaboration with diversion programs Information Technology support Office of Justice Reform support	• Comprehensive utilization and outcome review of all diversion/deflection programs. • Shared eligibility guidelines for law enforcement, prosecutors, defense, and other stakeholders. • Standardized risk, needs, and responsivity screening tools adopted countywide. • Training series and materials for frontline staff on diversion pathways and screening. • Referral tracking system with dashboards to monitor diversion rates and equity impacts.
	2. Produce shared diversion/deflection eligibility guidelines for law enforcement, prosecutors, defense and to be shared with all stakeholders.			
	3. Standardize risk, needs, and responsivity screening tools at early stages.			
	4. Launch training series on deflection/diversion pathways and screening protocols for frontline staff.			
	5. Develop a referral tracking system to measure diversion rates and equity impacts.			
2. Explore alternatives to incarceration for low-level offenses, including disorderly conduct charges.	1. Map current diversion options available at each decision point (arrest, charging, court).	CJC Pretrial Subcommittee	Law enforcement Office of Justice Reform support Community Resource Court	• Countywide diversion map showing available options at each decision point (arrest, charging, court). • Decision-point matrix of alternatives by charge for officer and prosecutor use. • List of potential jail-booking alternatives with feasibility assessment. • Ongoing equity-focused outcomes report tracking race, gender, geography, and program completion rates.
	2. Develop a matrix of alternatives by charge and decision point for officer and prosecutor use: explore expanding program services county wide.			
	3. Identify potential alternatives to jail bookings for low-level offenses.			
	4. Monitor outcomes by race, gender, geography, and program completion rates.			
3. Quantify non-appearance and address failures to appear (FTAs).	1. Gather baseline FTA data disaggregated by charge type, race, court location, calendar type, and prior notification attempts; review data entry accuracy.	CJC CJC Pretrial Subcommittee	Office of Justice Reform support Data sharing Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) stakeholders	• Baseline FTA dataset disaggregated by charge, race, court location, and calendar type. • Survey/interview report on reasons for nonappearance. • Pilot projects to assist clients with court attendance and related evaluation reports.
	2. Survey or interview system-involved individuals to understand common reasons for nonappearance.			
	3. Consider other potential pilots for assistance requested by clients to help with appearances.			

	4. Review judicial use of bench warrants and assess alternative practices (e.g., grace periods, reschedule policies).		Judiciary input State Public Defender's Office	• Bench-warrant policy review and recommended alternative practices. • Countywide implementation plan for successful FTA reduction strategies.
4. Reevaluate Public Safety Assessment (PSA) utilization and decision framework.	1. Conduct a PSA training needs assessment across judiciary, defense, prosecution, and pretrial staff.	CJC Pretrial Subcommittee	Pretrial	• Training needs assessment report across judiciary, defense, prosecution, and pretrial staff. • Cross-agency workgroup charter and Pretrial Release Decision Matrix. • Standardized PSA training curriculum (in-person and video). • Feedback analysis and refinement report ensuring consistency, fairness, and improved outcomes.
	2. Convene a cross-agency workgroup to co-develop a Pretrial Release Decision Matrix.		Judiciary & Commissioners Collaboration	
	3. Develop and deliver a standardized PSA training curriculum (in-person or video-based).		Information Technology support	
	4. Collect feedback and refine matrix based on consistency, fairness, and outcomes.		Clerk of Courts Technical assistance Office of Justice Reform support	
5. Advance the Community Justice Center (CJC).	1. Convene a design team of key stakeholders to define core services and ideal co-location partners; review prior planning efforts.	CJC	Private/public partnerships	• Stakeholder design team charter and summary of core services and co-location partners. • Detailed operating model with staffing plan, eligibility criteria, and referral pathways. • Space plan exploring co-location or shared-space collaboration. • Funding plan for implementation and early operations. • Pilot service menu launched with evaluation report on usage and outcomes.
	2. Develop an operating model, including staffing, eligibility, and referral pathways.		Funding	
	3. Identify space options needs: explore colocation or shared space collaboration.		CJC Pretrial Subcommittee	
	4. Research seed funding for implementation planning and early operations.			
	5. Launch pilot version with limited-service menu and evaluate usage and outcomes.			

Priority Area #3	Reentry & Reintegration			
	Support successful reintegration by strengthening coordination, expanding peer and navigation supports, and improving access to housing, care, and services.			
Objectives	Tactic(s)	Champion(s)	Resources Needed	Outputs/Deliverables
1. Strengthen reentry coordination through cross-system collaboration and continuity of care.	1. Establish recurring reentry coordination meetings for providers.	Office of Justice Reform	Staff time Community partner support Dane County Health and Human Services collaboration	• Regular reentry coordination meeting schedule and participant list. • Shared reentry process map with transition points and handoffs. • Release notification protocol guide (VINE). • Service provider RFP review summary to ensure pre-release support. • Bridge coordinator role description and reentry coordination team charter.
	2. Develop a shared reentry process map showing transition points and handoffs.			
	3. Share and communicate release notification protocols to support service coordination (VINE).			
	4. Review service provider RFPs to ensure they are meeting service demands six months before release.			
	5. Research “bridge coordinator” role to support high-need cases and identify a core reentry coordination team and define partner roles.			
2. Enhance reentry navigation and peer support services in the community.	1. Inventory existing reentry services and identify geographic and demographic gaps.	CJC Office of Justice Reform	Staff time Community partner support Dane County Health and Human Services collaboration	• Countywide inventory of reentry services with geographic and demographic analysis. • Peer navigator/trusted messenger model and implementation plan. • MOUs with organizations employing staff with lived experience for pre- and post-release support. • Employment pathway framework for individuals with lived experience to serve as peer mentors.
	2. Design a peer navigator or trusted messenger model to improve engagement.			
	3. Coordinate with organizations employing staff with lived experience to provide pre- and post-release support.			
	4. Create an employment pathway for individuals with lived experience who want to serve as peer mentors.			
	5. Collaborate with the CJC Behavioral Health Subcommittee to align peer support services across programs and providers.			
3. Improve reentry service continuity and warm handoffs post-release in partnership	1. Map current jail discharge practices and identify gaps in transitions.	OJR	Staff time	• Jail discharge process map and gap analysis. • Coordinated release planning protocol for unexpected releases.
	2. Prioritize coordinated release planning for people with unexpected releases.	Reentry workgroup		

with the CJC Behavioral Health Subcommittee.	3. Create or coordinate transportation assistance protocols to support first appointments to community providers.		Community partner support Dane County Health and Human Services collaboration	• Transportation assistance protocol for first post-release appointments. • Pre-release care coordination/case management protocol. • Structured referral system for immediate post-release services. • Feasibility assessment for a short-term release transition space.
	4. Connect clients to care coordination or case management pre-release.			
	5. Establish structured referral protocols for immediate post-release services.			
	6. Explore the idea of a short-term release transition space.			
4. Provide thought partnership and collaboration on housing access and stabilization options for returning residents.	1. Coordinate with Dane County Health and Human Services, housing providers, and existing County and City of Madison committees leading this work.	CJC Office of Justice Reform Dane County Health and Human Services	Justice and community collaboration	• Summary of housing barriers experienced by people returning from custody, developed with justice and housing partners. • Coordinated entry or “justice touchpoint” process established with homeless services system partners. • Recommendations for improving coordinated entry and stabilization supports. • List of funding and policy opportunities to support expanded housing access.
	2. Assist in establishing a coordinated entry or “justice touchpoint” into the homeless system.			
	3. Help inform efforts to increase access to temporary stabilization beds or short-term housing.			
	4. Support the pursuit of funding and policy options that expand housing options for justice involved individuals.			

Priority Area #4	CJC Operations			
	Strengthen the CJC's effectiveness by aligning operations with national standards and improved governance, structured planning, and community engagement.			
Objectives	Tactic(s)	Champion(s)	Resources Needed	Outputs/Deliverables
1. Define how the CJC is organized and how it carries out its work.	1. Adopt bylaws to provide a clear framework for CJC operations.	CJC	Staff time	• Adopted CJC bylaws with defined governance structure and decision processes. • Updated vision and mission statements approved by full Council. • Bylaw review schedule and documentation of revisions when adopted.
	2. Revisit the CJC vision and mission statements to keep current.		Board of Superintendents support	
	3. Review bylaws periodically to ensure alignment with goals and revise as necessary.		Office of Justice Reform support	
2. Strengthen the membership structure of CJC.	1. Revise the county ordinance to add key justice system professionals as voting members, including the Dane County Department of Human Services Director.	CJC	Staff time	• Approved ordinance revision updating membership provisions. • Onboarding guide and orientation schedule for new members. • Officer roles and responsibilities description adopted into bylaws and shared with membership.
	2. Establish a structured onboarding process for new members.		Office of Justice Reform Coordination support	
	3. Clearly define CJC the responsibilities and duties of CJC officers.			
3. Improve committee operations and monitor progress on the strategic plan.	1. Revisit committee purpose and membership and establish charters for each.	CJC	Staff time	• Committee charters outlining roles, responsibilities, and expectations. • Committees empowered to advance strategic plan priorities under Steering Committee guidance. • Annual review process established for committee progress and plan updates.
	2. Empower committees to execute the strategic plan under the guidance and support of the CJC.		Office of Justice Reform Coordination support	
	3. Review committee progress on strategic initiatives annually and adjust the strategic plan as necessary.			
	4. Track progress on strategic plan performance measures and report to the community.			
4. Share information with the community about the work of the CJC, including system performance.	1. Proactively educate and inform the community about CJC activities and progress and challenges in the criminal justice system.	CJC	Staff time	• Regular community presentations and forums on CJC progress and justice-system challenges. • Key system performance indicators identified and tracked. • Public-facing performance report on strategic plan.
	2. Identify key system performance indicators and monitor; share indicator performance with community.		Office of Justice Reform support	

	3. Develop a CJC communications plan outlining protocols for media, community outreach, and crisis response.		Stakeholder support	
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