

The Dane County Office of Justice Reform

Colleen Clark Bernhardt, Director

Presentation to Public Protection and Judiciary

future date

<https://justicereform.danecounty.gov/>

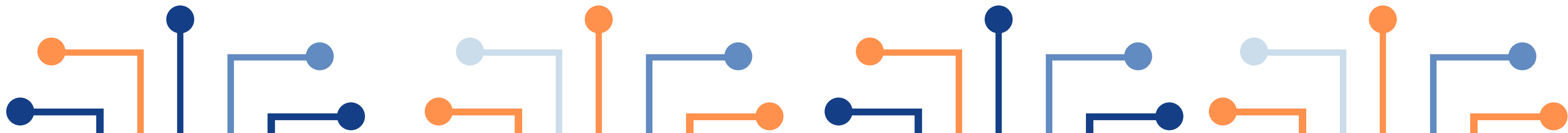
DANE COUNTY OFFICE OF JUSTICE REFORM

Vision and Mission

Staffing Structure

Funding

Workload structure





Dane County

Office of Justice Reform

Office of
Justice
Reform



SYSTEM COLLABORATION

Strengthening partnerships across justice, health, and community organizations



A CATALYST FOR INNOVATION

Shaping future-focused solutions that deliver impact



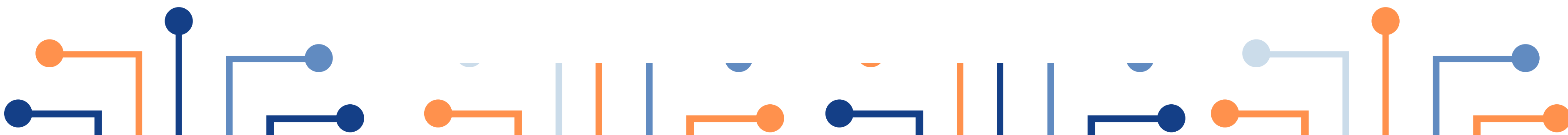
PROGRAM DESIGN AND DEVELOPMENT

Advancing initiatives grounded in data and guided by community voice, with a focus on equity and fairness



DATA-DRIVEN DECISIONS

Addressing local needs, leading with research and accurate data



OJR MISSION:

- The mission of the Dane County Office of Justice Reform is to marshal and coordinate resources within and beyond the county's criminal justice system to improve public safety, advance data-driven justice, and reduce disparities across the system. These efforts depend on strong partnerships with essential stakeholders, including agency directors, local elected officials, researchers, and individuals with firsthand experience of the impacts of the criminal justice system.



Organization Chart-2026

Office of Justice Reform

DIRECTOR

(1.0)

**COMMUNITY COURT
CASE MANAGER
(PROJECT POSITION)**

sw18

**RESEARCH
ANALYST**

(1.0)

**COMMUNITY
COURT
COORDINATOR**

P11
(1.0)

**DATA &
EVALUATION
COORDINATOR**

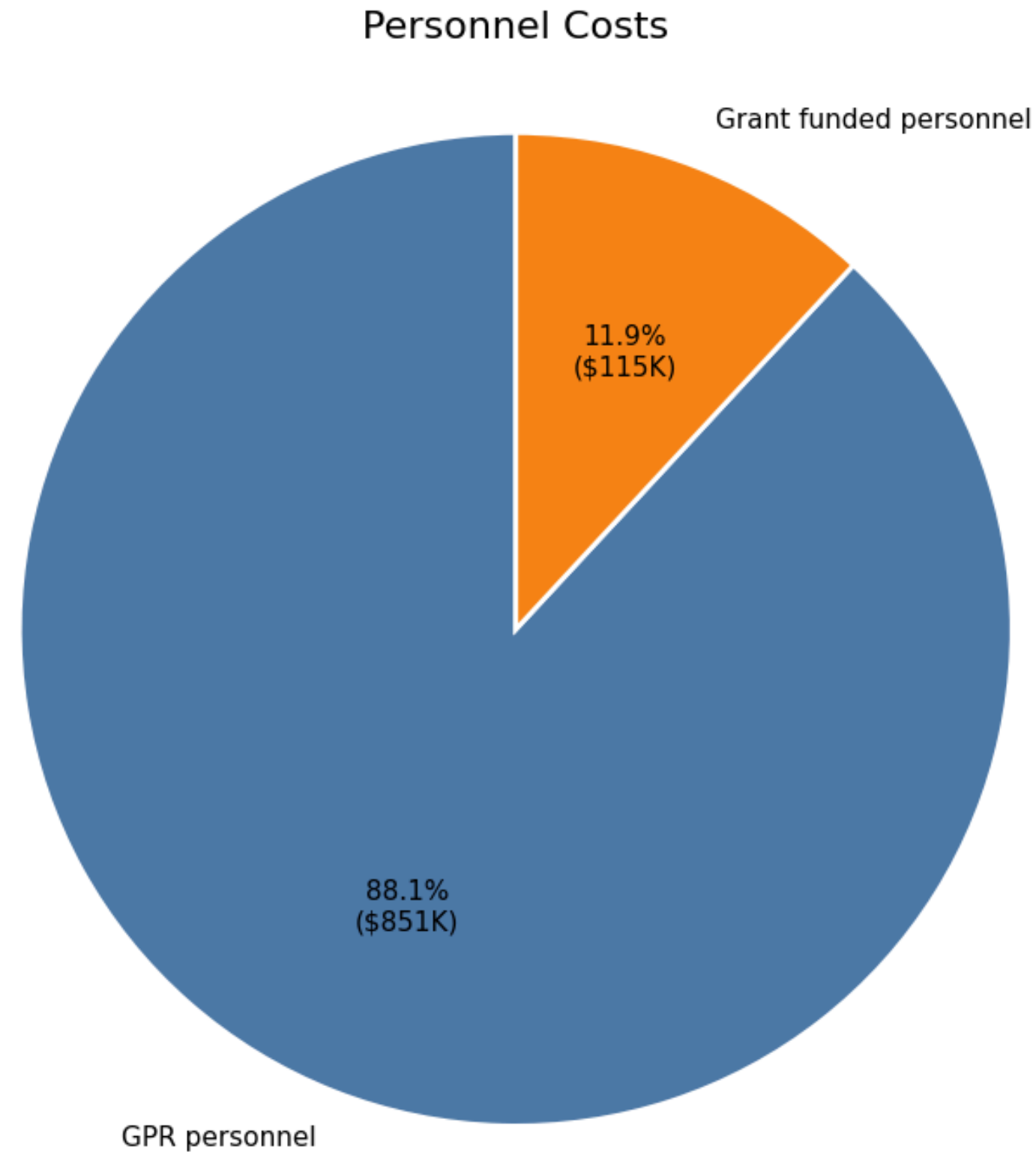
P10
(1.0)

CLERK I-II

G 7-10
(1.0)

Internships (academic calendar)

Funding OJR - STAFF



Office of Justice Reform

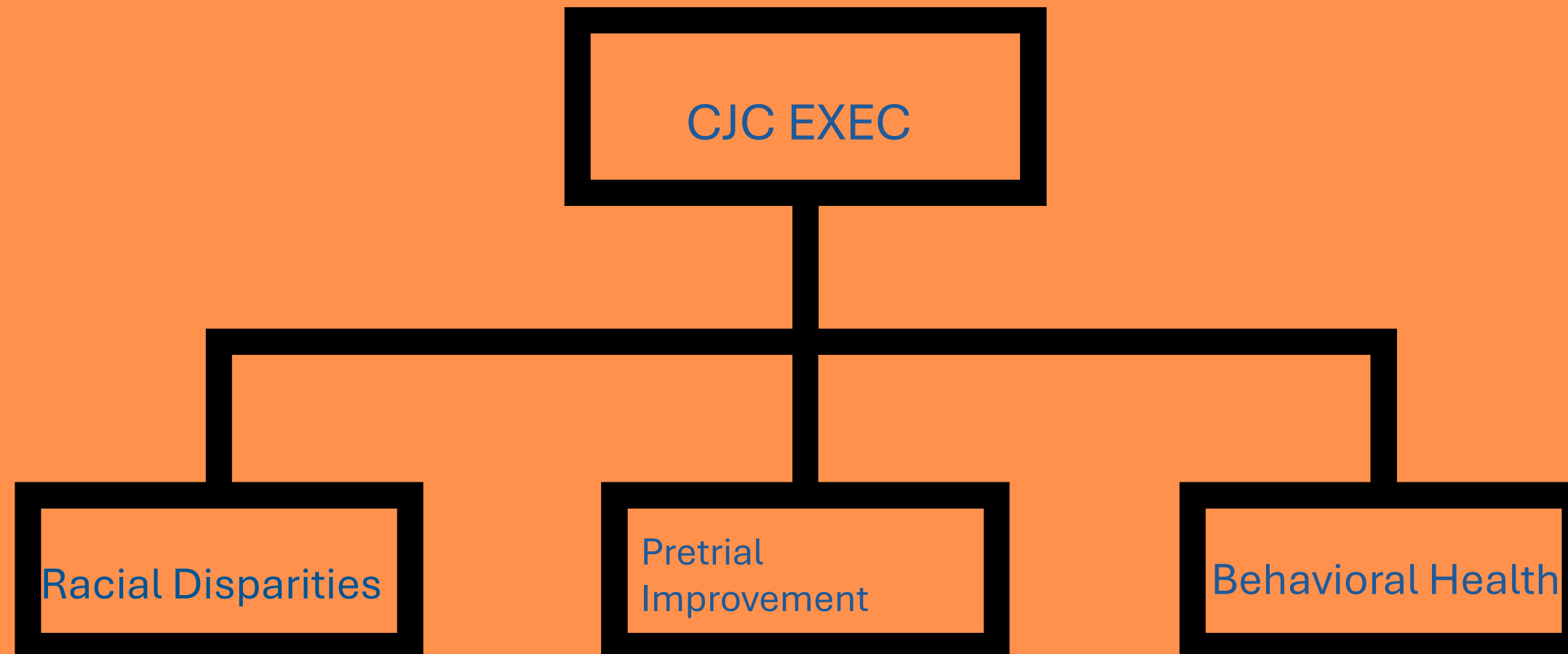


WORKFORCE
MAKE UP AND
WORK LOAD



Justice. Equity. Safety.

The Dane County Criminal Justice Council shall: (a) provide an on-going forum for collaboration and coordinated leadership among criminal justice agencies, (b) Facilitate the implementation of effective, efficient, data-driven criminal justice policies and practices that maximize justice, equity, and the safety of the public, (c) Monitor and ensure accountability of the criminal justice system, (d) Provide program oversight for criminal justice initiatives



CJC Strategic Plan

The Dane County CJC is recognized as a best-practice site nationally through JMI's National Network of Criminal Justice Coordinating Councils.

The CJC Executive Body has delegated many of the key strategies to the CJC subcommittees for further policy, data, and stakeholder collaboration and analysis.

CJC Subcommittee Chairs then present action to the CJC Executive Body on a bi-annual basis.

Link to Strategic Plan:

<https://cjc.danecounty.gov/documents/pdf/Dane-County-CJC-Strategic-Plan-December-2025-Accepted-by-CJC-1.22.26.pdf>

- "A goal without a plan is just a wish."

— [Antoine de Saint-Exupéry](#)





Dane County Community Justice Council
**PRETRIAL SERVICES
SUBCOMMITTEE**

HISTORY

The Subcommittee started in 2014. Community members were added with 2022 Ordinance Amendment 28.

MISSION

The Subcommittee supports Dane County’s goal of promoting effective pretrial services, by identifying and promoting best practices.

MAJOR INITIATIVES

- ✓ Worked with Harvard’s Access to Justice Lab to implement and evaluate the effects of the Public Safety Assessment, a tool designed to estimate the likelihood that people will appear in court and remain arrest-free while on pretrial release. The study determined that in Dane County, the PSA did not have an effect.
- ✓ Hosted Community Conversations with local and national pretrial justice experts.
- ✓ Collaborated with a national policy group to develop a descriptive analysis for individuals with pretrial status.

FIND CJC-PRETRIAL SERVICES INITIATIVES, RESOURCES, AND REPORTS VIA THE QR CODE

Dane County ordinance 15.46 specifies that the Pretrial Services Subcommittee should:

- Identify approaches to lowering the pretrial population
- Analyze court appearance rates and publish findings
- Investigate local and national best practices regarding peer supports and community engagement at pretrial
- Report quarterly to the Community Justice Council

MEMBERS

- District Attorney*
- Clerk of Courts*
- Presiding Judge*
- Sheriff*
- County Executive*
- Office of the Public Defender**
- WI Dept of Corrections**
Director, Office of Pretrial Srvcs
- CJC Coordinator
- Two people who have been impacted by the justice system

* or designee
** representative



RACIAL DISPARITIES SUBCOMMITTEE

HISTORY

The Subcommittee started in 2014. Additional community members were added with 2022 Ordinance Amendment 28.

MISSION

The subcommittee examines disproportionate minority contact with the criminal justice system in Dane County by examining different intercepts in the criminal justice system.

MAJOR INITIATIVES

- ✓ Co-Created the Dane County Community Restorative Court (CRC). The CRC is a pre-charge diversion program for 17-25year olds with a misdemeanor offense. It is a restorative justice approach to repairing the harm done to community, restoring trust, and rebuilding community.
- ✓ CJC-RD was instrumental in the planning of the community court of Dane County. As the first community court in Dane County, and the State of Wisconsin, the CJC-Racial Disparities subcommittee will continue to be a guiding subcommittee as the court evolves.
- ✓ Supported the ongoing collection of data disaggregated by race, age, and gender.

RESOURCES



Dane County ordinance 15.46 specifies that the Racial Disparities Subcommittee shall:

- Research best practices to identify criminal justice approaches to decrease and eliminate disparities
- Analyze data to identify racial equity gaps throughout the criminal justice system
- Lead inclusive engagement of communities most impacted by the criminal justice
- Report quarterly to the Community Justice Council

MEMBERS

District Attorney*
County Board Chair*
Presiding Judge*
Sheriff*
Office of the Public Defender**
Director of the Office of Equity and Inclusion
Juvenile Court Administrator
Youth Justice Manager
Dane County Human Services
Community Programs Manager
Madison Police Department Chief of Police*
Two persons of a diverse background who have lived experience with incarceration or criminal justice system impact.

* designee

** representative



Dane County Community Justice Council BEHAVIORAL HEALTH SUBCOMMITTEE

HISTORY

The Subcommittee started in 2019. Community members were added with 2022 Ordinance Amendment 28.

MISSION

The subcommittee focuses on the intersection of behavioral health conditions and the criminal justice system in Dane County by using evidence-based, innovative, and collaborative policy and program solutions.

MAJOR INITIATIVES

- ✓ Worked with National Association of Counties (NACo) to launch the Familiar Faces Initiative. Familiar Faces refer to people who are frequent utilizers of multiple systems who are experiencing serious mental illness.
- ✓ Created a Lived Experience Survey to ascertain best practices for targeted interventions for criminal justice impacted persons experiencing behavioral health issues.
- ✓ Conducted the Sequential Intercept Model (SIM) Mapping to assist in identifying resources and gaps in services for vulnerable populations and divert people from the justice system into treatment.

Dane County ordinance 15.46 specifies that the Behavioral Health Subcommittee shall:

- Review the intersection of Behavioral Health and criminal justice
- Analyze data and set goals for criminal justice involvement reduction
- Investigate local and national best practices regarding crisis continuum of care
- Report quarterly to the Community Justice Council

MEMBERS

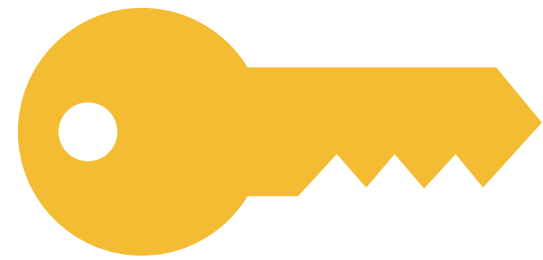
- District Attorney*
- Corporation Counsel*
- Presiding Judge*
- Sheriff*
- Office of the Public Defender**
- WI Department of Corrections**
- National Alliance on Mental Illness**
- Dane County Human Services**
- Madison Police Department**
- Public Safety Communications**
- Chief of Police*
- One public member who has behavioral health expertise.

* or designee
** representative

FIND CJC-BEHAVIORAL HEALTH INITIATIVES, RESOURCES, AND REPORTS VIA THE QR CODE.



National and Local Partners



Harvard Law School-Access to Justice Lab

Policy Research Associates

Center for Justice Innovation

Council of State Governments

UW Law School Restorative Justice Project

UW Social Work



Key to local and national research collaboration is local data owners: these include Dane County Sheriff, District Attorney, Clerk of Courts, Pretrial Services and more. The CJC of Dane County is one of a few in the State and Nation with a data sharing MOU.

Current Research Projects

National technical assistance award: **Advancing Pretrial Policy and Research**

Pathways to Pretrial Advancement is a 12-month strategic planning and technical assistance initiative designed to help jurisdictions assess and strengthen their pretrial systems. Through this initiative, Dane County will partner with APPR to evaluate current pretrial practices, identify opportunities for improvement, and develop a clear, actionable implementation plan. With support from the Wilson Sheehan Lab for Economic Opportunities (LEO) at the University of Notre Dame, Dane County will also explore opportunities to incorporate rigorous research and evaluation into its priority improvement areas.

Initial Priority Areas for Dane County:

Reducing Failure to Appear (FTA) rates

Strengthening the diversion continuum



Harvard Kennedy School (HKS) Government Performance Lab (GPL) has been asked to assist Madison and Dane County in conducting an evaluation of the CARES program.



Th

The evaluation has two primary functions:

Tell the story of the CARES program and the work of CARES units by describing the types of 911 calls responded to and services provided by the CARES team

Measure the impact of the CARES program on key emergency system and criminal justice outcomes, such as transportation to emergency rooms and jail bookings.

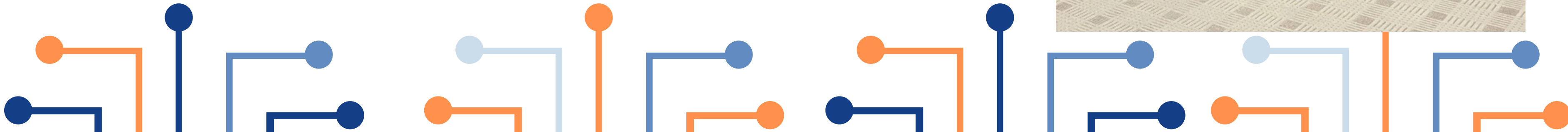
Dane County Community Court

A SUPPORTIVE PATH FORWARD

MISSION - Dane County Community Court provides a supportive and accountable path forward by connecting individuals to resources, addressing underlying needs, and promoting meaningful change through collaboration, restorative practices, and individualized justice.

VISION - We believe meaningful change happens when people are treated with dignity, held accountable in constructive ways, connected to support, and engaged in collaborative solutions that strengthen the community.

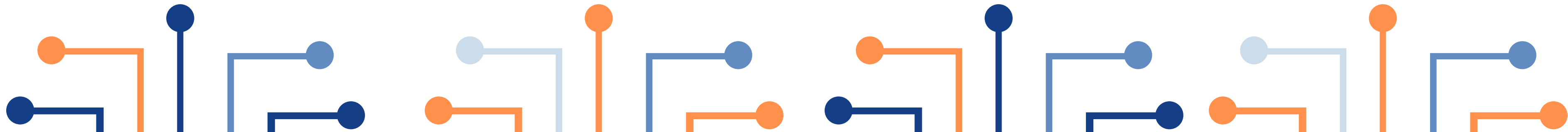
- Serves adults ages 17-35
- Individuals charged with non-violent misdemeanors and felonies not eligible for other diversion programs
- Post charge, post-plea, non-jury defendants
- Timely identification and linkage to supportive services and treatment
- Short term intervention



Wraparound Service Array

Services and dosage (proposed length of participation) will be dependent on individual need, risk, and assessment

- Peer support and/or mentorship
- Restitution/community services
- Community Comprehensive Services
- Restorative justice processes (victim-offender dialogue, peacemaking circle)
- Employment/vocational training and placement
- HSED/GED or higher education classes
- Shoplifting accountability class
- Know your rights & responsibilities clinic
- Mental health/substance abuse/trauma assessment and counseling
- Alcohol and substance use treatment
- Driver's license attainment/recovery
- Housing supports (i.e., housing search and placement)



Referral Process

01

Eligible case(s) identified by DA's Office

02

Victim notification & conferring

03

Community Court offered at initial appearance hearing

04

First Community Court appearance in front of Judge Trammell

05

Community Court staff complete screening, assessment, and participant agreement

06

Court plan is ordered. Upon successful completion, charges are reduced/dismitted



Questions?

Office of Justice Reform:
Community Justice Council

justicereform.danecounty.gov
cjc.danecounty.gov

**Office of
Justice
Reform**



608-283-1425



ojr@danecounty.gov



Room 210, City County Building
210 Martin Luther King, Jr Blvd
Madison, WI 53703