



# Dane County Office of Justice Reform

COLLEEN CLARK BERNHARDT, DIRECTOR  
(STARTING END OF JULY 2024)

OVERVIEW FOR PUBLIC PROTECTION AND JUDICIARY: JUNE 25, 2024

# Initializing the Office of Justice Reform

- ▶ Creation: Budget 2023
- ▶ “Through a combination of new staff positions and realigning existing capacity, this new department will be a dedicated, independent resource to bridge agencies within the criminal justice system and lead Dane County’s next steps on data driven reforms. The budget includes funds for the agency to administer a micro-grant program to support community-based reforms.”
- ▶ This budget also allocates \$85,000 for a new re-entry partnership with Dane County and Project Big Step to help those leaving jail with job training that can lead to careers in the trades.

# OJR vision and mission

The source for inclusive and transformational adult justice system improvements using:

- collaboration (stakeholders, community, researchers)
- data driven decisions
- innovation and catalyst funds

01.

Engage and invest in strategies to improve racial equity in Dane County's justice system.

02.

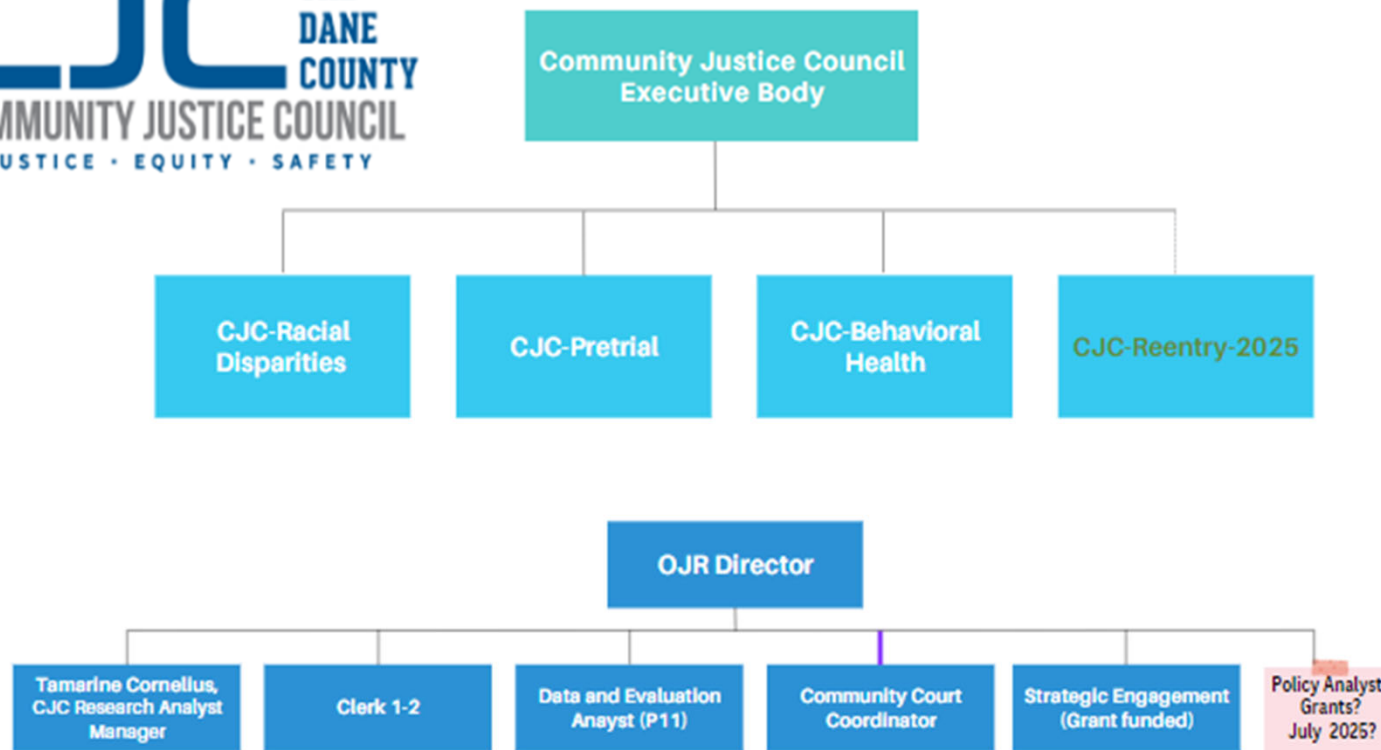
Stop the revolving door of familiar faces (multiple systems involvement) and create strategies that coordinate care for familiar faces--saving time, money in the long term. Short term: better health for respondents and victims.

03.

Engage stakeholders and impacted community members in data transparency, innovations, and increased safety for all residents of Dane County.

# COMMUNITY JUSTICE COUNCIL OF DANE COUNTY

## Organizational Chart





## Specific Overall Objectives---initializing in 2024-2025

Improve health  
outcomes for familiar  
faces

Increase racial, ethnic,  
and gender equity in  
the criminal justice  
system of Dane County

Engage with  
community to seek  
input and partnership  
on justice  
improvement  
strategies

CJC Executive and  
subcommittee re-  
engagement

Save county dollars on  
long term safe and  
equitable justice  
strategies

# Potential forward movement



- **Create pathway for interns-→research fellows.**
  - ▶ *LTE's can help support minutes, agendas, and coordination of CJC subcommittees*
- **Catalyst department for gathering national “better” practices and collaborating cross agencies and community to increase fairness and justice throughout Dane County.**
  - ▶ *Boundary spanning role for overall County justice fairness goals (strategic plan).*
- **Develop strategic engagement specialist (grant funded) position description requesting an individual with lived experience in the criminal justice system.**
  - ▶ *Community court grant funded; liaison to communities most impacted by criminal justice.*
- **Collaborate and win grants that impact overall criminal justice outcomes with a racial equity lens.**
  - ▶ *Catalyst funds for proof of concept; local and national partnerships*
- **Develop with data owners internal stakeholder dashboards.**

# Immediate next steps



- ▶ 1. Develop 2025 Budget
- ▶ 2. Hire staff
- ▶ 3. Comply with all federal requirements for the BJA Community Court grant (train additional staff in BJA specific performance reports)
- ▶ 4. Negotiate and execute Big Step contract
- ▶ 5. Re-engage the CJC of Dane County
- ▶ 6. Develop process for strategic plan development
- ▶ 7. Meet with community, City and County stakeholders

# Questions?

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