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CHARLESTON COUNTY  
CRIMINAL JUSTICE COORDINATING COUNCIL  
MIDYEAR REPORT 2021

# STRATEGIC PLAN UPDATE

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FISCAL YEARS 2021-2023

**Report issued August 25, 2021.**

Charleston County Criminal Justice Coordinating Council

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[www.cjcc.charlestoncounty.org](http://www.cjcc.charlestoncounty.org)

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## A MESSAGE FROM THE CHAIRMAN



**CHAIRMAN**  
**CAPTAIN JASON BRUDER**  
**Charleston Police**  
**Department**

I am honored to issue the Charleston County Criminal Justice Coordinating Council (CJCC) 2021 Midyear Report. The report provides an update on the progress achieved over the course of the first year of the FY 21 – FY 23 Strategic Plan.

The Charleston CJCC, in collaboration with community partners, conducted an extensive review of local priorities related to safety and justice during the 2019 ‘Dialogue to Change’ process which engaged over 1,200 community members in setting the course for strategic plan development. The rich information guided workgroups of community representatives and CJCC members to develop and publish *Fiscal Year 2021 – 2023 Strategic Plan in July of 2020*<sup>1</sup>. As Chairman of the CJCC, I am excited to share the progress underway after the first year of plan implementation as we work towards sustainable, data-driven improvements to our criminal justice system and thereby assist in improving public safety and community well-being.

As 2020 brought the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic, the work of the CJCC was also impacted in unpredictable ways. A system inherently slow to change had to change rapidly. Thankfully, we were able to build upon several processes already in place due to prior efforts of the CJCC and its partners. While many challenges persisted and were even exacerbated by the pandemic, throughout this time, the critical mission of improving our local criminal justice system did not slow down. The CJCC continued to make adjustments and move the work forward. One year into the FY 21-23 Strategic Plan, the CJCC is on pace with the twelve initiatives carefully laid out in the Strategic Plan. Key milestones include:

### **Community Engagement and Addressing Inequity**

- Deliberately focused on making information increasingly accessible and available to a broader audience through multiple formats such as social media, Community Justice Forums and targeted community engagement events
- Partnered with Everyday Democracy to launch a qualitative two-year community-engaged research study to better understand racial and ethnic disproportionalities and disparities in the local criminal justice system
- Convened a dynamic group of researchers and community leaders that represent the target audience for the Race Equity Fellowship Program to develop the program proposal

### **Strengthening Jail Diversion and Deflection from the Criminal Justice System**

- Initiated a small scale pilot to engage jail involved familiar faces in wrap around services to help achieve improved outcomes and uncover system gaps
- Launched a study with the Charleston Dorchester Mental Health Center (CDMHC) and Justice System Partners (JSP) to more fully understand how deflecting individuals with mental illness from the criminal justice system and to diversion options (and subsequent treatment) impacts arrest, jail populations and behavioral health outcomes
- Developed and launched regularly occurring data dashboards to monitor trends in crime, diversion and deflection, arrests and jail use activity in the community

### **Focusing on Fairness and Reentry**

- Developed and launched regularly occurring data dashboards to monitor Centralized Bond Court (CBC) practices, pretrial release patterns, and the use of pretrial service reports (PSR)
- Developed and launched a court observation tool to strengthen alignment among CBC practices and national standards to help ensure bond hearings are continually fair, just and meaningful
- Studied current South Carolina statutes, case law and national standards for pretrial release and detention as well as related research studies to guide development of a proposal for pretrial service option(s)
- Partnered with United Ways' SC 211 to secure a one-year assignment of an AmeriCorps VISTA devoted to addressing gaps in reentry information available in the SC 211 platform and implementing strategies to get this information directly to justice-involved populations

### **Case Processing Advancements**

- Developed and launched regularly occurring data dashboards to monitor case processing activity in the Court of General Sessions
- Institutionalized weekly jail population reviews (JPR) with court stakeholders
- Continued to improve the General Sessions Court text reminders
- Conducted reviews of key case processing indicators and convened stakeholders to help problem-solve

During the year, the CJCC also took important steps toward long-term sustainability. The CJCC proposed and was awarded a two-year sustainability grant from the John D. and Catherine T. MacArthur Foundation. In addition, Charleston County Council unanimously passed a resolution in May of 2021 that affirmed its support of the CJCC, as well as its goals, mission and operational function, to improve the overall criminal justice system in Charleston County<sup>2</sup>. Thereafter, Council voted to move the oversight function of the CJCC from the Charleston County Sheriff to the Deputy County Administrator of Public Safety<sup>3</sup>. In the coming year, we will also be revisiting and revising our by-laws to better meet the needs of the community in the years to come.

As you read this report on the first year of Strategic Plan progress, please know we look forward to seeing this plan to fruition. We are as passionate about this work as ever and remain grateful for the numerous tangible and intangible benefits of coming together in a collaborative way. We also encourage you to engage with us, hold us accountable, and support efforts to improve the local criminal justice system and advance equity in the community we proudly call home, Charleston County.

## MEMBERSHIP

There are positional members of the CJCC who are members due to the position they hold. These individuals serve on the CJCC for as long as they occupy the position entitling them to membership and can appoint a designee, listed below. The CJCC also includes a dozen community representatives identified through an open application process. Community representatives serve for a period of two years in staggered terms, and their voices and input are considered by the CJCC in its decision-making process. In addition, the CJCC has dedicated staff with relevant experience to help carry out its mission.

### POSITIONAL MEMBERSHIP

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#### COUNTY COUNCIL

*Rob Wehrman*  
*Councilmember*

#### CHARLESTON COUNTY SHERIFF'S OFFICE

*Kristin Graziano, Sheriff*  
*Joyce Smith, Chief Deputy*  
*Abigail Duffy, Director*  
*Dorothy Harris, Major*

#### CITY OF CHARLESTON POLICE CHIEF

*Luther Reynolds, Chief*  
*Jason Bruder, Captain*  
*A: Wendy Stiver, Director of Procedural*  
*Justice and Outreach*

#### MOUNT PLEASANT POLICE CHIEF

*Mark Arnold, Chief*  
*Tyrone Simmons, Deputy Chief*

#### NORTH CHARLESTON POLICE CHIEF

*Reggie Burgess, Chief*  
*Karen Cordray, Deputy Chief*

#### SOLICITOR

*Scarlett Wilson, Ninth Circuit Solicitor*  
*Charles Young, Director of Case*  
*Management*

#### PUBLIC DEFENDER

*Ashley Pennington, Ninth Circuit Defender*  
*Megan Ehrlich, Chief Public Defender*

#### CLERK OF COURT

*Julie Armstrong, Clerk of Court*  
*Robert Duncan, Operations Manager*

#### DIRECTOR OF SUMMARY COURT

*Junerese Rhodan, Director*  
*Phylis Williams, Deputy Director*

#### CHIEF ADMINISTRATIVE MAGISTRATE

*Ellen Steinberg, Magistrate*  
*Amanda S. Haselden, Magistrate*

#### CIRCUIT COURT CHIEF ADMINISTRATIVE JUDGE

*Deadra L. Jefferson, Chief Judge for*  
*Administrative Purposes*

#### PROBATE COURT JUDGE

*Irvin Condon, Probate Judge*  
*Tamara Curry, Associate Probate Judge*  
*Peter Kouten, Associate Probate Judge*

#### VICTIM ADVOCATE

*Easter LaRoche, Victim/Witness*  
*Coordinator*  
*Martina Johnson, Victim Services*  
*Supervisor Detention*

#### DIRECTOR, CHARLESTON DORCHESTER MENTAL HEALTH CENTER

*Jennifer Roberts, LPC, CPM, Executive*  
*Director*  
*Dennis Puebla, Director of Special*  
*Operations*

#### DIRECTOR, CHARLESTON CENTER

*Dr. Chanda Funcell, Executive Director*  
*Jon Apgar, Program Manager of Clinical*  
*Services*

#### AGENT-IN-CHARGE, SOUTH CAROLINA DEPARTMENT OF PROBATION, PAROLE, AND PARDON SERVICES

*Mitchell A. Ray, Agent-In-Charge*  
*Kescia Holmes, Assistant Agent-In-Charge*

**NORTH CHARLESTON MUNICIPAL COURT**

*Angela Cartrette, Director/ Court Administrator  
Francie Austin, Legal Council*

**CHARLESTON MUNICIPAL COURT**

*Lindsey Byrd, Judge  
Lakesiya L. Cofield, Court Director*

**MOUNT PLEASANT MUNICIPAL COURT**

*Laurie Wilson, Deputy Court Administrator  
Carol Neal, Deputy Court Administrator*

**VETERANS JUSTICE OUTREACH COORDINATOR, VA CHARLESTON**

*Meredith Miller, Veterans Justice Outreach Coordinator  
Shanta Barron-Millan, LISW, Veterans Justice Outreach Coordinator*

**AMERICAN CIVIL LIBERTIES UNION OF SOUTH CAROLINA**

*Frank Knaack, Executive Director  
Vacant, Community Outreach Coordinator*

**ONE80 PLACE**

*Selena Wilson, Program Officer  
Lea Ann Adkins, Paralegal, Legal Services*

**EX OFFICIO MEMBER**

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**CHIEF JUSTICE OF SOUTH CAROLINA**

*Honorable Donald W. Beatty*

**COMMUNITY REPRESENTATIVES**

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**LOCAL CIVIL RIGHTS COMMUNITY**

*Otha Meadows, President & CEO,  
Charleston Urban League*

**LOCAL DEFENSE BAR**

*Lauren E. Williams, Partner, Williams & Walsh, LLC*

**LOCAL FAITH COMMUNITY**

*Rev. David Truluck, Executive Director,  
SHIELD Ministries*

**LOCAL GRADUATE PROGRAM COMMUNITY IN RELATED FIELDS OF STUDY**

*Dr. Anthony Bishara, Professor, College of Charleston*

**LOCAL HISPANIC COMMUNITY**

*Lydia Cotton*

**LOCAL CRIME SURVIVOR COMMUNITY**

*Keith Smalls, Executive Director, My Community's Keeper Mentor Group*

**LOCAL NONPROFIT COMMUNITY**

*Dr. C. Michael Bowman, President of the Board of Directors, Father to Father, Inc., Professor Emeritus, MUSC*

**LOCAL FORMERLY INCARCERATED COMMUNITY**

*Marcus Tyler McDonald, Director, Charleston Black Lives Matter*

**LOCAL HEALTHCARE COMMUNITY**

*Adrian C. Swinton, Project Planner for Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Strategic Plan, MUSC*

**LOCAL COMMUNITY-AT-LARGE**

*Areyonna Keels*

**LOCAL BUSINESS COMMUNITY**

*Adrian Cain, SVP, Leadership and Programs, Charleston Metro Chamber of Commerce*

**ONE DESIGNATED LIAISON FROM ANY OTHER ENTITY DEEMED APPROPRIATE BY THE EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE**

*Alexandra E. Menegakis, Criminal Defense Attorney, Adams & Bischoff, P.C.*

## CJCC STAFF

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**PROJECT DIRECTOR**

*Kristy Pierce Danford, MPA*

**SYSTEM UTILIZATION MANAGER**

*Susanne J. Grose*

**INFORMATION SYSTEMS SPECIALIST**

*Lawton Connelly*

**COMMUNICATION & OUTREACH COORDINATOR**

*Adina Baer Gross, MBA*

**PRETRIAL ANALYST**

*Robert Brimmer*

**PRETRIAL ANALYST**

*Karyn Houston*

**PRETRIAL ANALYST**

*Inara O’Gorman*

**ADMINISTRATIVE ASSISTANT**

*Jessica L. Bauer*



# Charleston County Criminal Justice Coordinating Council

## FY 21-23 Strategic Plan Initiatives

### Community Engagement & Addressing Inequity



Increasingly accessible and available information



Community-engaged research study on the impacts of racial & ethnic disproportionality & disparity

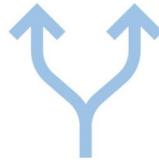


Development of a Race Equity Fellowship program

### Strengthening Jail Diversion & Deflection from the Criminal Justice System



Small-scale pilot program to improve outcomes among familiar faces and uncover system gaps



Research into the impacts of diversion & deflection on criminal justice and behavioral health outcomes



Dashboards of trends in crime, diversion and deflection, arrests and jail use

### Focusing on Fairness & Reentry



Steps to ensure fair, just and meaningful bond hearings such as observations and dashboards



Development of a proposal for better pretrial options



Get Connected. Get Help.  
United Way's 211 / SC211.ORG

Improving information access about available services among justice-involved populations

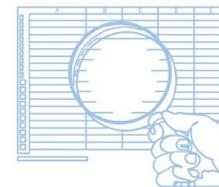
### Case Processing Advancements



Analysis of key case processing indicators in General Sessions Court to help problem solve



General Sessions Court text reminders



Routine jail population review

## STRATEGIC PLAN BACKGROUND

In 2019, the CJCC thoroughly expanded community engagement to better inform and involve the community in improving the local criminal justice system. The CJCC developed and executed a comprehensive community engagement strategy to involve diverse members of the Charleston County community, including those most impacted, in setting the course for this strategic plan. The strategy included an intentional and inclusive effort to grow awareness of the challenges in the criminal justice system (CJS) and better understand community priorities for improving the local criminal justice system in the years ahead. The CJCC utilized a “Dialogue to Change” process founded upon the belief that people and institutions can use an equity lens, connect across differences, share honestly, consider diverse views, and work together to identify and offer actions toward change. Through Dialogue to Change (DTC), the CJCC raised awareness and engaged over 1,200 community members in shaping the CJCC’s strategic plan.

Thereafter, development of the plan was completed by four strategic planning workgroups inclusive of community representatives and CJCC members: community engagement and racial and ethnic disproportionality and/or disparity (R+EDD); diversion and deflection; bond and reentry; and case processing. The workgroups followed a common process and utilized a series of foundational resources to design a strategic plan that includes concrete and attainable goals as well as a foundation for more challenging goals that will necessitate continuing community engagement and support to advance.

The FY 21 – FY 23 Strategic Plan launched in July of 2020. Each workgroup meets regularly to advance their respective initiatives and provides regular updates in monthly CJCC meetings. This report provides a description of progress made in each of the initiatives in the first year of the strategic plan. A brief summary of each workgroup and its strategic initiatives is provided below.

<b>Overarching charge:</b> To help protect public safety, minimize harms and cost-effectively focus limited system resources to promote an increasingly effective, efficient and equitable local criminal justice system.
<b>STRATEGIC INITIATIVES BY WORKGROUP</b>
<b>Community Engagement/ Racial and Ethnic Disproportionality and Disparity (R+EDD) Workgroup</b>
<b>Purpose:</b> Establish specific and innovative community engagement efforts to address R+EDD and support system improvement efforts.
<b>Focus Areas:</b> a) Continuing community engagement, b) Increasing engagement among individuals most affected by the criminal justice system, c) Continuing to examine and address R+EDD in the criminal justice system, and d) Supporting system improvement
<p><b><u>Initiative One: Ongoing Community Engagement</u></b>            Why? The community wants to know more and have more ways to actively engage.</p> <p><b><u>Initiative Two: Updated Analysis of R+EDD</u></b>            Why? There has not been an updated analysis of R+EDD in the local criminal justice system since the 2018 Midyear Report.</p> <p><b><u>Initiative Three: Race Equity Fellowship Proposal</u></b>            Why? There is not a clear-cut blueprint for addressing R+EDD and effective agents of change are needed to increase consciousness among system actors and lead efforts to address R+EDD.</p>

<b>Divert and Deflect Workgroup</b>
<b>Purpose:</b> Update, innovate and improve upon efforts to divert and/or deflect individuals from the criminal justice system as appropriate.
<b>Focus Areas:</b> a) Community partnerships and other means of prevention before criminal justice intervention, b) Law enforcement practices surrounding citation and release, and c) Pre-booking divert/deflect options
<b><u>Initiative One: Familiar face case conferencing</u></b> Why? The cycle of book, release and repeat does not work, particularly among the most active of familiar faces.
<b><u>Initiative Two: Diversion and deflection research</u></b> Why? Research is necessary to more fully understand how deflecting individuals away from the criminal justice system and to diversion centers (and subsequent treatment) impacts arrests, jail population and behavioral health outcomes.
<b><u>Initiative Three: Crime and Jail Use Tracking</u></b> Why? There is not a regularly available countywide crime and jail use tracking mechanism. One is needed to better understand patterns of crime, diversion and deflection, arrests, and jail use activity.
<b>Bond and Reentry Workgroup</b>
<b>Purpose:</b> Update, innovate and improve upon procedural justice and recidivism outcomes for individuals from booking to reentry from incarceration.
<b>Focus Areas:</b> a) Booking, b) Bond court, c) Procedural justice, d) Detention center- based reentry preparations and e) Community-based efforts to reduce recidivism
<b><u>Initiative One: Ensure bond hearings are continually fair, just and meaningful</u></b> Why? While significant strides have been made in Centralized Bond Court, continuing attention is necessary.
<b><u>Initiative Two: Proposal for pretrial service option(s)</u></b> Why? Regardless of the type of bond set, there is minimal oversight of the conditions of the bond setting, let alone feedback about pretrial outcomes and/or which services work best to maximize safety, appearance and liberty.
<b><u>Initiative Three: Widely accessible directory of services</u></b> Why? There is not a common understanding of what reentry services are available, let alone which work best for whom.
<b>Case Processing Workgroup</b>
<b>Purpose:</b> Update, innovate and improve the processing of cases in the court of General Sessions.
<b>Focus Areas:</b> a) Case processing, b) Jail population review (JPR), c) Procedural justice, d) Bond reconsideration and other pretrial matters
<b><u>Initiative One: Jail Population Review</u></b> Why? Absent regular reviews of the jail population, defendants that are not a threat to public safety or a flight risk can be unnecessarily detained.
<b><u>Initiative Two: General Session's Court Reminders</u></b> Why? Losing contact with defendants while cases are pending results in missed court appearances, bench warrants and slower times to disposition.
<b><u>Initiative Three: Research pandemic impacts and institutionalize lessons learned</u></b> Why? Charleston County does not meet the statewide case timeliness standard established by State Court Administration (80% pending less than 365 days) and it will be further compounded by the pandemic.

## Community Engagement and Racial and Ethnic Disproportionality and Disparity

**PURPOSE:** Establish specific and innovative community engagement efforts to address racial and ethnic disproportionality and disparity (R+EDD) and support system improvement.

**CONTEXT:** Community engagement has always been a core aspect of the CJCC’s efforts. By working together, community members and system leaders have the best opportunities for overcoming longstanding, complex criminal justice challenges. It is also evident that the community wants to know more and have more ways to actively engage in improving the local criminal justice system, and much more must be done to advance racial equity. Therefore, the initiatives this workgroup is advancing deliberately focus on:

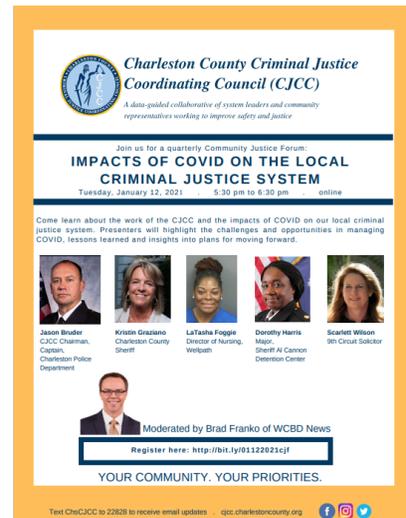
- Making information increasingly accessible and available to a broader audience through social media and community events in order to help inform and engage the community in helping to improve the criminal justice system.
- Collaborating with partners to better understand disparities both qualitatively and quantitatively in order to inform actions that will address disparities. And,
- Developing agents of change in positions of authority to address disparities across a variety of disciplines.

Each of the workgroup’s initiatives were developed providing concrete objectives for moving this important work forward. The initiatives are also intentionally adaptable given the ever-changing environment. For instance, engaging with the community online when in-person is not feasible. The information below provides a summary of milestones achieved in the first year of the strategic plan and lessons learned.

1. ONGOING COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT	
<b>Challenge</b>	The community wants to know more and have more ways to actively engage.
<b>Initiative</b>	Make information increasingly accessible and available to a broader audience through social media and community events.
<b>Year One Milestones Achieved</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ongoing simplification of CJCC reports into graphics and short facts that can be easily digested and disseminated as social media</li> <li>• Ongoing use of simplified graphics and facts</li> <li>• Launched a CJCC Instagram account</li> <li>• Hosted Community Justice Forums (started October 2020)</li> <li>• Conducted targeted community engagement sessions (one with the business community and one with individuals most impacted)</li> </ul>
<b>Lessons Learned</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Community forums that focus on timely issues are well received</li> <li>• Community representative speakers are very effective</li> <li>• The more CJCC members and community representatives help to expand the reach of information and events, the further the information goes into the community</li> <li>• It is important to do targeted engagements in a phased and thoughtful manner</li> </ul>

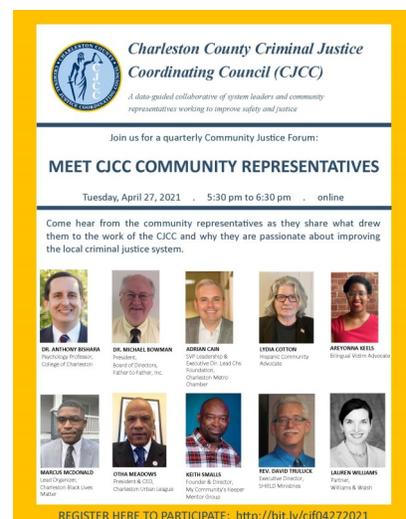
Throughout the year, the CJCC conducted virtual Community Justice Forums and participated in targeted community engagement events. For example, on January 12, 2021 a forum was held titled, “Impacts of COVID on the Local Criminal Justice System.” The forum discussed the work of the CJCC and the impacts of COVID on our local criminal justice system. Presenters highlighted the challenges and opportunities in managing COVID-19, lessons learned, and insights into plans for moving forward. Panelists included:

- Jason Bruder, CJCC Chairman, Captain, Charleston Police Department
- Scarlett Wilson, Ninth Circuit Solicitor
- Kristin Graziano, Charleston County Sheriff
- Dorothy Harris, Major, Charleston County Sheriff’s Office
- Members of Wellpath’s medical staff within the jail:
  - ◊ LaTasha Foggie, Director of Nursing
  - ◊ KellyAnne Lee, RN, MSN, MBA, CCRN, Administrator, Health Services
  - ◊ Dr. Dalsania, Medical Director



The forum was moderated by Brad Franko of WCB news and Lydia Cotton, Hispanic community liaison, was honored with the Community Justice Award. Another Community Justice Forum, “Meet CJCC Community Representatives,” was held on April 27, 2021 and moderated by prior CJCC Community Representative, Samuel Bellamy, Jr. The forum provided a platform for community representatives to discuss systemic challenges with participants. Presenters included:

- Dr. Anthony Bishara, Psychology Professor, College of Charleston
- Dr. C. Michael Bowman, President of Board of Directors, Father to Father, Inc.
- Adrian Cain, Senior Vice President Leadership & Executive Director Lead Charleston Foundation, Charleston Metro Chamber
- Lydia Cotton, Hispanic Community Advocate
- Areyonna Keels, Bilingual Victim Advocate
- Marcus McDonald, Lead Organizer, Charleston Black Lives Matter
- Otha Meadows, President & CEO, Charleston Urban League
- Keith Smalls, Founder & Director, My Community’s Keeper Mentor Group
- Rev. David Truluck, Executive Director, SHIELD Ministries
- Lauren Williams, Partner, Williams & Walsh, LLC



Community Justice Forums are streamed live on Facebook, recorded and posted to the CJCC website<sup>5</sup>

for public viewing at any time.

In addition, the CJCC conducted targeted community engagement events. One, on May 20, 2021 was held with the Charleston Metro Chamber of Commerce as part of the criminal justice section of Leadership Charleston coordinated by CJCC Community Representative Adrian Cain, Senior Vice President, Charleston Metro Chamber of Commerce. The section included a tour of the Sheriff Al Cannon Detention Center (SACDC) and discussions with CJCC members Chief Reynolds, Chief Burgess and Ninth Circuit Solicitor Wilson as well as CJCC Project Director Danford and CJCC Community Representatives, Mr. Keith Smalls and Reverend David Truluck.



*Leadership Charleston presentation by community representatives Smalls and Truluck and Director Danford*

In addition, the CJCC co-hosted a criminal justice roundtable for individuals with lived experience on June 10, 2021 to discuss how

to best engage individuals directly impacted by the criminal justice system in improving it. The event was developed in partnership with Just Leadership USA, Everyday Democracy, Charleston Black Lives

*Leadership Charleston is a year-long program that engages participants in experiences that help them become better community leaders. The Chamber has been running this program for over 45 years – offering an intensive and up-close look at the most challenging issues and opportunities facing the region<sup>4</sup>.*

Matter, South Carolina for Criminal Justice Reform, Father to Father, Inc., ACLU South Carolina, Fresh Start Visions and My Community’s Keeper Mentor Group. It included a brief panel discussion among diverse individuals with lived experiences followed by small breakout rooms to ensure all voices were heard. The insights gathered will shape subsequent engagement efforts.

2. UPDATED ANALYSIS OF R+EDD	
<b>Challenge</b>	There has not been an analysis of R+EDD in the local criminal justice system since the 2018 Midyear Report.
<b>Initiative</b>	Publish and disseminate a report updating and expanding upon the prior report.
<b>Year One Milestones Achieved</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Collaborated with Everyday Democracy to initiate a qualitative two-year community-engaged research study to better understand racial and ethnic disproportionalities and disparities in the local criminal justice system               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◊ Worked with Everyday Democracy to recruit community researchers</li> <li>◊ Everyday Democracy hired three community researchers for the study</li> <li>◊ Community researchers were trained in research ethics, design, data collection, analysis and reporting</li> </ul> </li> </ul>

<p><b>Year One Milestones Achieved</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A small workgroup completed five National Network of CJCC’s Racial Equity Training sessions to help CJCC leaders navigate how to pursue racial equity in local jurisdictions <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◊ Session topics included understanding social systems, structures and the need for change, levels of change and institutional commitments, and institutionalizing change</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Draft dashboard of quantitative R+EDD indicators in development</li> </ul>
<p><b>Lessons Learned</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Importance of increasing awareness, commitment and skill competency to advance racial equity cannot be understated</li> <li>• Technical assistance is very helpful in processing quantitative and qualitative data and guiding workgroup efforts</li> </ul>

By the end of the first year of the strategic plan the CJCC partnered with Everyday Democracy to initiate a study to better understand R+EDD in the local criminal justice system. It includes a qualitative two-year community-engaged research study and is expected to produce findings that will be shared with the CJCC and the Charleston community to provide insights and inform actions to address R+EDD. The results are expected in 2022. During this period, the CJCC, in partnership with Everyday Democracy, helped recruit applicants from the local community to serve as community researchers for this study. Everyday Democracy then selected three individuals, CJCC Community Representatives Mr. Marcus MacDonald and Mr. Keith Smalls, and community member Ms. Geraldine Minter, to join the research team. Thereafter Everyday Democracy conducted five trainings with the three community researchers. Next steps will be to develop the research design and initiate data collection.

***How does community-engaged research differ from traditional research?***

*Community-engaged research differs from traditional research in that community members are partners who are engaged throughout the research process. Community members and researchers play equally important roles and work together to determine research questions, identify participants, collect data and share findings. Using narratives and findings, community advisors and research partners will tell a more in-depth story behind the data at the conclusion of the two-year study.*

In addition, a draft dashboard of quantitative indicators of R+EDD indicators went into development and the CJCC pursued an opportunity for deeper training to help navigate the pursuit of racial equity in local jurisdictions. The training was offered by the National Network of CJCC’s featuring Dr. Dante Bryant. Dr. Dante Bryant is an Assistant Professor in the School of Social Work and College of Health and Human Services, and an Affiliated Faculty member in the Department of Africana Studies at the UNC Charlotte. Dr. Bryant joined the UNC Charlotte faculty after serving more than two decades in community organizing, social activism, social service program evaluation/implementation-development and local governmental policy reform. Participants in the training included CJCC members Dr. Chanda Funcell of the Charleston Center, CJCC Vice-Chair, Magistrate Steinberg, and Director Danford. Survey data from the training series indicated Charleston’s CJCC was tied for having the highest response rate of all participating CJCCs, as well as provided helpful insights into stakeholder preparedness to address racial

inequality that will inform next steps.

3. RACE EQUITY FELLOWSHIP PROPOSAL	
<b>Challenge</b>	There is not a clear-cut blueprint for addressing R+EDD and effective agents of change are needed to increase consciousness among system actors and lead efforts to address R+EDD in the Charleston community.
<b>Initiative</b>	Develop a proposal for instituting a Race Equity Fellowship program for the Charleston community.
<b>Year One Milestones Achieved</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Steering committee formed of dynamic individuals that represent the target audience for the fellowship program</li> <li>• College of Charleston research partners completed their scope of work in consultation with the steering committee               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◊ Completed content and delivery format research</li> <li>◊ Developed cost-estimates</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Budget to develop and pilot the curriculum proposed and awarded</li> <li>• Budget to sustain program beyond the pilot proposed and not awarded</li> <li>• Program proposal drafted</li> </ul>
<b>Lessons Learned</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• There is a lot of interest in the community for this program</li> <li>• Latest grant funds will support developing and piloting the program, thus taking this initiative beyond its initial target to develop a proposal</li> <li>• There is a need to consider sustainability beyond the latest grant</li> </ul>

In the first year of the strategic plan this objective was completed and expanded upon in partnership with a dynamic steering committee and research conducted by the College of Charleston’s Community Assistance Program (along with faculty from the Master of Public Administration (MPA) program and the Joseph P. Riley Center for Livable Communities). Primary members of the research team included:

- Marla Robertson, MPA Program Coordinator & Community Assistance Program Director
- Caitlin Bloger, MPA Candidate and Graduate Assistant
- Kip Watson, MPA Candidate and Graduate Assistant

In addition, members of the steering committee included dynamic representatives from the disciplines targeted to guide proposal development and engage in helping to make the program a reality, including:

- Dr. C. Michael Bowman, Board President, Father to Father and CJCC Community Representative
- LaVanda Brown M.ED, Executive Director, YWCA
- Adrian B Cain IOM, CFRE, Senior Vice President, Charleston Metro Chamber of Commerce and CJCC Community Representative
- Kristy Danford, Project Director, CJCC
- Vicky Ingalls, Director of Programs, Charleston Promise Neighborhood



- Amber Johnson, Racial Reconciliation and Tolerance Manager, City of Charleston
- Anna Lewin, Chief Executive Officer, SC Community Loan Fund
- Renee Linyard-Gary, Director of Health, Trident United Way
- Donna White, Program Administrator, Adolescent and Prevention Services, Charleston Center
- Gwendolyn Wright, Network Consultant, Everyday Democracy

Research and steering committee discussions resulted in a final report of program components most likely to yield desired outcomes, formats most ideal for leadership and people in positions of power, costs associated with implementing and sustaining the program, and recommendations to make the fellowship sustainable. In addition, grant funding was sought and awarded to provide the resources necessary to launch the fellowship program. The next step is to issue a request for proposals and select a vender that will help develop and pilot the Race Equity Fellowship program.

## Divert and Deflect

**PURPOSE:** Update, innovate and improve upon efforts to divert and/or deflect individuals form the criminal justice system as appropriate.

**CONTEXT:** Prior CJCC strategies deliberately prioritized alternatives to jail for lower level charges that were most frequently booked and that disparately impacted communities of color, and supported law enforcement’s increasing use of community-based services like the Tri-County Crisis Stabilization Center so people can get the help they need without falling deeper into the criminal justice system. These changes fundamentally changed jail use in Charleston County. In addition, the CJCC utilized data to better understand drivers of local jail use as well as the familiar face population, individuals who cycle in and out of the local jail frequently. Building on this prior work, the initiatives this workgroup is advancing deliberately focus on:

- Building the infrastructure to wrap services around familiar faces within existing resources and, in the process, learn lessons that can help guide broader efforts to minimize harm and reduce recidivism.
- Conducting research to more fully understand officer decision-making and how deflecting individuals away from deeper involvement in the criminal justice system and to diversionary options (and subsequent treatment) impacts arrests, jail population, and outcomes.
- Instituting a dashboard to monitor patterns of crime, diversion and deflection, arrests, and jail use activity in the Charleston community.

These initiatives were developed to help shape ongoing efforts to uphold public safety and achieve improved outcomes. Each of the initiatives provide concrete objectives for moving this important work forward. In addition, the lessons learned from these initiatives can help inform future policy and/or budgetary steps. The information below provides a summary of milestones achieved in the first year of the strategic plan and lessons learned.

4. FAMILIAR FACE CASE CONFERENCING	
<b>Challenge</b>	The cycle of book, release and repeat does not work, particularly among the most active of familiar faces.

<b>Initiative</b>	Familiar face case conferencing to achieve improved outcomes for the most active familiar faces in the SACDC.
<b>Year One Milestones Achieved</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Received technical assistance from Policy Research Inc.</li> <li>• Engaged community stakeholders in a two-part initiative kick-off</li> <li>• JIFF eligibility determined</li> <li>• Potential JIFF candidates identified</li> <li>• Drafted consent and interagency agreements</li> <li>• Drafted data collection and evaluation metrics</li> <li>• Established a small core group to pilot initiative</li> <li>• Small scale pilot in progress</li> <li>• Joined the Safety and Justice Challenge IMPACT network</li> </ul>
<b>Lessons Learned</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Work is messy, requires flexibility and fast action among partners</li> <li>• While there have been many bumps in the road, the pilot is helping to identify system gaps</li> <li>• Runs the risk of being overly reliant on a “person” vs. common practice</li> <li>• To get to the average of four clients per quarter (or more), JIFF will need a home with dedicated administration, consistent data, finalized protocols and routine practices</li> </ul>

Eligibility for the initial JIFF pilot includes individuals that most actively and disproportionately consume jail resources as identified in prior studies. These individuals have a minimum of 5 or more bookings in the SACDC within the past year. The nature of the charges which bring these individuals into the jail are often symptomatic of underlying factors such as homelessness, substance use disorder(s) and/or mental illness. The primary pilot target population includes defendants presenting summary level charges against public order such as trespassing, breach of peace, public intoxication and disorderly conduct. Eligibility excludes defendants presenting serious, felony offenses and high-level misdemeanors with bodily harm punishable by incarceration in the South Carolina Department of Corrections.

The goal for the JIFF pilot program is to reduce the amount and duration of repeat bookings for these individuals while helping the individual improve her/his quality of life. JIFF case conferencing is intended to help address the underlying factors through a coordinated public health approach rather than traditional criminal justice response. In the first year of the strategic plan, the CJCC engaged Policy Research Inc. to provide technical assistance in building the Jail Involved Familiar Face (JIFF) Case Conferencing pilot. Thereafter, the workgroup took several steps to garner input and feedback from numerous stakeholders and held a two-part kick-off that helped form the basis of next steps. Progress to-date includes the identification of existing resources, defined program eligibility and exclusion criteria, development of informed consent and information sharing agreements, client engagement processes, and data metrics.

Several systems gaps were also identified in the process of working on the pilot. Examples of the gaps experienced include:

- Limited availability of medications upon release from detention,

- Limited access to immediate housing options upon release from detention,
- Required COVID testing limited access to available resources, and
- Automated procedures can limit the ability of persons with social security or disability income to seamlessly continue to receive such supports upon release.



Since these individuals often move through the jail very quickly, it is important for case conferencing system partners to engage clients as soon as possible and have multiple options for connecting with them in the community. It is also recognized that the JIFF Case Conferencing will likely struggle to expand its reach until JIFF has a sponsor agency with dedicated administration, consistent information sharing, data collection and analysis, and finalized protocols in order to institutionalize routine practices.

In addition, due to the work done on JIFF and prior diversion and deflection efforts in the community, Policy Research Incorporated (PRI) recommended the CJCC to the Safety and Justice Challenge (SJC) IMPACT Network. Charleston was one of five existing SJC sites selected from the 51 sites in the SJC Network. The purpose of the network is to engage a diverse group of SJC sites and new communities to maximize what SJC sites have learned about how to reduce the over incarceration of persons with behavioral health needs. The IMPACT Network will last one year and includes peer to peer learning with a commitment to community driven, race conscious solutions and an emphasis on coordinated systemic response/diversion. Guidance and support received as part of this network is expected to help build upon JIFF lessons learned and make systemic improvements when needed.

5. DIVERSION AND DEFLECTION RESEARCH	
<b>Challenge</b>	Research is necessary to more fully understand how deflecting individuals away from the criminal justice system and to diversion centers (and subsequent treatment) impacts arrests, jail population and behavioral health outcomes.
<b>Initiative</b>	Partner with external researchers to study the impacts of diversion and deflection on individuals and the community.
<b>Year One Milestones Achieved</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Research partner established, Justice System Partners (JSP)</li> <li>• JSP research design approved by their Institutional Review Board</li> <li>• Researchers reviewed diversion and deflection materials and aggregate data trends</li> <li>• Research objectives and protocols established</li> <li>• Information Sharing agreements established with the State Department of Mental Health</li> <li>• Researcher interviews with local law enforcement initiated</li> </ul>

<b>Lessons Learned</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Information sharing agreements take time to advance; however the report is still expected to come in on time</li> </ul>
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Much of the work on this initiative to date has been spent defining the details and preparing for data collection. The research partner, Justice System Partners (JSP), was approved by the Safety and Justice Challenge to conduct the research in two sites (Charleston and Pima County, AZ). Similar to the Tri-County Crisis Stabilization Center (TCSC) and related diversion and deflection efforts undertaken in Charleston County, Pima County also implemented initiatives where individuals with serious mental illness (SMI) can be referred or transported for targeted supports instead of arrest/booking in the local jail. Core to this work is to build on gaps in the research to better understand of how police-initiated deflection impacts individuals with SMI (quantitatively) and local police (qualitatively).

Progress to date included convening virtually with the research team and representatives from Pima County to learn more about the research. Researchers also spent time with the workgroup and studied diversion and deflection materials along with aggregate data trends from the Charleston Dorchester Mental Health Center (CDMCH), its TCSC and the CJCC. These steps were taken to help the researchers gain insights into local practice and inform subsequent steps such as data collection and analysis. Additional efforts included obtaining approval from institutional review boards and establishing data collection protocols. Despite some delays in the process of working through the institutional review board processes, the final report is expected in early 2022 as anticipated.

<b>6. CRIME, JAIL USE, DIVERSION AND DEFLECTION DASHBOARD</b>	
<b>Challenge</b>	There is not a regularly available countywide crime and jail use tracking mechanism. One is needed to better understand patterns of crime, diversion and deflection, arrests, and jail use activity.
<b>Initiative</b>	Institute a regularly available county crime and jail use tracking mechanism.
<b>Year One Milestones Achieved</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Developed structure for reporting with assistance from the JFA Institute</li> <li>Developed an agreed upon method for gathering and reporting data</li> <li>Compiled data and drafted report for review and approval</li> <li>Established recurring schedule</li> <li>Finalized report format</li> <li>Report trends on an ongoing basis</li> <li>Quarterly reported cycle started with the first quarter of 2021</li> </ul>
<b>Lessons Learned</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Timely and consistent data are necessary to maintain the quarterly cycle</li> <li>There is not a consistent pattern among local jail use and crime trends (i.e., one does not drive the other)</li> <li>It is important to review trends over long periods of time and stay up to date with research regarding statistically significant factors that influence crime rates</li> </ul>

Efforts in the first year of the strategic plan involved compiling current information and visualizing it on a routine basis to allow for analysis of crimes occurring, diversion and deflection activity, arrests, and jail use. This information is helping the CJCC to better understand how these patterns impact the criminal

justice system as well as the broader community. With assistance of the JFA Institute and local law enforcement agencies, a structure for reporting the information was designed, methods for gathering and compiling the data were established, and a draft dashboard was developed. Thereafter, a finalized dashboard of crime, jail use, and diversion and deflection activity has been reviewed quarterly by the workgroup since the first quarter of 2021 as originally anticipated. The crime, jail use, diversion, and deflection dashboard has been a helpful tool. For example, the data shows there is not a consistent pattern among local jail use and crime trends. In other words, one does not drive the other. It also helps identify next steps in which deeper dives into the data can help to inform development of targeted interventions where needed.

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## Bond and Reentry

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**PURPOSE:** Update, innovate and improve upon procedural justice and recidivism outcomes for individuals from booking to reentry from incarceration.

**CONTEXT:** Unnecessarily incarcerating defendants awaiting court that are not a safety or flight risk results in significant costs to individuals, families and communities<sup>6</sup>. Research has shown a variety of negative impacts from pretrial detention, such as higher rates of conviction and harsher sentences than those released, who have the benefit of demonstrating their ability to behave responsibly in the community<sup>7</sup>. Detained defendants, especially those that pose lower risk of pretrial failure, may become further destabilized and less capable of being healthy, contributing members of society<sup>8</sup>. They can experience loss of housing and income, separation from children or other family members in need of care, untreated mental health and substance use conditions, and develop further needs that place them at elevated risk of future arrest<sup>9</sup>.

By law, a judge must set bond for defendants within 24 hours of arrest (30 days for certain serious cases and repeat violent offenses). Each arrested person has a right to an individualized decision made by a judge about the terms of their release, as pretrial detention is only to be used when other reasonable safeguards cannot assure court appearance or protect the community from harm. Further, the South Carolina constitution strictly limits the cases in which bond can be denied.

As such, there has been a sustained focus on Centralized Bond Court (CBC) practices since the launch of the CJCC's efforts. For example, several pretrial outcome studies were completed, public defenders and State representatives (e.g., law enforcement, victim advocates and/or Assistant Solicitors) were made more consistently available to provide representation in bond hearings, and professional pretrial analysts were instituted to provide the Court pretrial service reports (PSR) on a daily basis. Such steps have helped to limit inappropriate uses of jail in Charleston County, and highlighted the need for systemic changes. For example, current law in South Carolina routinely relies on financial or personal recognizance bonds as the basis for pretrial release decisions and pretrial services that help defendants make it to court and stay out of trouble are not commonplace. Building on this prior work, the initiatives this workgroup is advancing deliberately focus on:

- Instituting consistent mechanisms for monitoring activity in CBC and ensuring bond hearings are continually fair, just and meaningful.

- Diving deep into legal and programmatic research to develop a proposal for pretrial service option(s) that can help address systemic challenges. And,
- Taking an important initial step toward systematically improving reentry from incarceration into the community by partnering with SC 211 to establish a centralized repository of services available in the community that justice-involved individuals, their loved ones, and personnel working with these individuals can easily access.

These initiatives are designed to help shape ongoing efforts to maximize public safety, liberty and court appearance, and achieve improved reentry outcomes. In addition, the initiatives support continuing efforts to ensure the use of jail in the County stays true to its intended purpose (i.e., primary purpose of jail in South Carolina is to hold defendants awaiting court who pose a public safety or flight risk that cannot be reasonably managed in the community and people serving sentences of ninety days or less).

<b>7. INSTITUTE MECHANISMS TO ENSURE BOND HEARINGS ARE CONTINUALLY FAIR, JUST AND MEANINGFUL</b>	
<b>Challenge</b>	While significant strides have been made in Charleston County’s Centralized Bond Court, continuing attention is necessary.
<b>Initiative</b>	Institute routine mechanisms to ensure bond hearings are continually fair, just and meaningful.
<b>Year One Milestones Achieved</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Developed and regularly utilize a Centralized Bond Court Data Dashboard to regularly monitor bonding practices, release patterns, and the use of Pretrial Service Reports (PSR)</li> <li>• Trained workgroup members on the American Bar Association and National Association Pretrial Service Agencies standards</li> <li>• Developed an observation tool to operationalize monitoring alignment among CBC practices and national standards as well as factors contributing to bond decisions</li> <li>• Trained CJCC Pretrial Staff to pilot the observation tool</li> <li>• Developed database to record observation results</li> <li>• Observation result analyzed, findings reported to bond court judges quarterly (started with Q1 2021)</li> </ul>
<b>Lessons Learned</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Dashboards indicate consistent patterns and trends</li> <li>• Adjustments to the bond court observation process were required due to COVID</li> <li>• CBC bond judges are making concerted efforts to review the observation analyses and make adjustments such as making it a point to articulate decision reasoning.</li> </ul>

In the first year of the Strategic Plan, the workgroup accomplished several objectives. The data dashboard was developed to monitor CBC bonding practices, release patterns, and the use of PSRs with the embedded Charleston Pretrial Risk Assessment Instrument (CPRAI). The dashboard is routinely monitored by the workgroup and demonstrates consistent patterns and trends. In addition, a bond court observation tool was developed and implemented following an extensive dive by workgroup members into national standards and state law. For example, the workgroup participated in several trainings to study the American Bar Association (ABA) and National Pretrial Services Agencies (NAPSA) standards regarding Pretrial Release and Detention. This information is also helping to inform the

pretrial service option(s) proposal development initiative.

The observation tool currently monitors the degree of alignment among CBC practices and national standards. Its use was tested and adjusted as needed, and CJCC pretrial analysts were trained to administer it. Protocols were also established and implemented for regular CBC observations and feedback with the Court. As such, observation tool results are compiled and analyzed for review and discussion with CBC

Magistrates on a quarterly basis. Once the pandemic subsides, the workgroup anticipates training volunteers to conduct the bond court observations as initially planned.

**What is a Pretrial Service Report (PSR)?**

*The PSR helps to better inform bond-setting judges and provide a consistent, objective and reliable way to assess for risk of rearrests and/or missing court. The PSR summarizes core information about the defendant and provides the results of a validated pretrial risk assessment. Thus, the Court has an objective, reliable and valid assessment for risk of re-arrest and failure to appear during the pretrial period. It predicts whether a defendant falls into a group that is more likely or less likely to get re-arrested and/or miss court while in the community on pretrial release. It is not capable of predicting future violence or intentional flight from justice.*

8. PROPOSAL FOR PRETRIAL SERVICE OPTION(S)	
<b>Challenge</b>	There is minimal oversight as to the conditions of the bond setting, let alone feedback about pretrial outcomes.
<b>Initiative</b>	Proposal for pretrial service option(s)
<b>Year One Milestones Achieved</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Studied current SC statues and case law</li> <li>• Researched national standards on Pretrial Release (NAPSA/ ABA)</li> <li>• Reviewed consistent and repeated local pretrial outcome study findings</li> <li>• Gathered information on types of conditions ordered locally</li> <li>• Examined pretrial systems in other states, evolving trends in the field and current state of research in the field for maximizing safety, appearance and liberty</li> <li>• Initiated a local research study that will enhance what is known about individual, case and system characteristics that define those who are released (and are not) and those who do not succeed (and do) on pretrial release</li> </ul>
<b>Lessons Learned</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Timeline delayed given depth of research and training necessary</li> <li>• Option(s) must be geared to those least likely to succeed</li> <li>• Likely to require changes at the state level and necessitate broader policy and budgetary discussions</li> </ul>

Workgroup efforts in the first year of the strategic plan took several strides toward thoughtfully developing a proposal that considers experience to-date, current South Carolina law, research on best practices and evolving trends in maximizing safety, appearance and liberty, and recommending viable pretrial service options(s). Building on the training of national standards that led to the development of the bond court observation tool, the workgroup completed several objectives. It conducted a research

study on common release conditions ordered at CBC, and in conjunction with the previous initiative, the workgroup participated in several sessions to research current SC statutes and case law and understand the various limitations in place. Additionally, the group took a deeper dive into local pretrial outcome studies and best practices regarding release pretrial, pretrial detention, and release conditions. The workgroup also studied pretrial systems in other states and the Federal system, and invited national experts with significant experience to share their lessons learned.

Given the statutory framework for the bond setting process South Carolina law provides, there is currently inadequate or insufficient options for judges setting bonds and/or in determining effective bond conditions. In addition, the research is clear and consistent that pretrial service option(s) must be geared to those least likely to succeed pretrial. Therefore, the next step includes conducting a study to advance what is known about local defendants, case and system characteristics that define those that are most and least likely to succeed pretrial. Findings from this study will help guide proposal recommendations. Ultimately, such a proposal will likely require changes at the state level and necessitate broader policy and budgetary discussions.

9. WIDELY ACCESSIBLE DIRECTORY OF SERVICES	
<b>Challenge</b>	There is not a common understanding of what reentry services are available, let alone which work best for whom.
<b>Initiative</b>	Partner with United Way’s 211 to make reentry information more accessible and available to the public and justice-involved populations.
<b>Year One Milestones Achieved</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Partnered with Trident United Way and SC 211</li> <li>• Hosted and shared brief, virtual SC 211 trainings for system stakeholders and ongoing trainings available as requested</li> <li>• Completed an AmeriCorps VISTA application to secure a one-year position to help bolster and increase awareness of the SC 211 directory of services among justice involved populations</li> <li>• Awarded VISTA position, recruited and hired a VISTA               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◊ VISTA year runs from August 2021 – July 2022</li> <li>◊ First half of the year to be spent working closely with SC 211 on the directory and the latter half on locally sustainable marketing and feedback efforts</li> </ul> </li> </ul>
<b>Lessons Learned</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Leverage existing resources and partnerships to avoid reinventing the wheel</li> <li>• Recent community engagement session with individuals most directly impacted reiterated the importance of this initiative</li> <li>• Participants highlighted challenges in connecting with and establishing necessary services upon release</li> </ul>

The first step to systematically improving reentry into the community is to establish a centralized repository of services available. Unfortunately, there is not a common understanding of services available in the community, let alone about which work best for whom. In turn, awareness of programs available in the community varies from person to person and access to information can be clunky and

confusing. The SC 211 platform exists to help remedy these issues around the state for all matter of services.

UNIQUE CAREER BUILDING OPPORTUNITY



AMERICORPS VISTA POSTIION WITHIN THE CHARLESTON COUNTY CRIMINAL JUSTICE COORDINATING COUNCIL (CJCC) AND UNITED WAY ASSOCIATION OF SC TO INCREASE COMMUNITY AWARENESS OF AVAILABLE RESOURCES

In the last year, the workgroup took strides to support training local system stakeholders in SC 211 and identify gaps in information for justice-involved populations on the platform. For example, United Way SC 211 conducted trainings and gathered feedback in the course of numerous criminal justice system training sessions with local system stakeholders (e.g., the Bond & Reentry Workgroup, SACDC, Department of Probation, Parole, and Pardon Services in Charleston County, and Ninth Circuit Public Defenders). In addition, the CJCC’s workgroup, in partnership with SC 211, applied for and was awarded an AmeriCorps Volunteer in Service to America (VISTA) through the Mayor’s Office for Children, Youth, and Families. The AmeriCorps VISTA dedicates one year of full-time service with an organization to create or expand programs designed to empower individuals and communities in overcoming poverty.

The workgroup then conducted an outreach and marketing campaign to identify and select a strong candidate to help advance this initiative. The VISTA will serve with the CJCC and SC 211 from August 2021 through July 2022. The VISTA’s primary role will first be to work directly with SC 211, providers and community members to identify and address gaps in reentry information available on the SC 211 platform. Thereafter, the VISTA will develop and implement a sustainable marketing strategy to help get SC 211 information to justice-involved populations in Charleston County. Periodic surveys will also be conducted to solicit feedback from SC 211 users and service providers to guide ongoing efforts.

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## Case Processing

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**PURPOSE:** Update, innovate and improve the processing of cases in the General Sessions Court of Charleston County.

While there have been improvements in case processing over the years, timeliness of case processing within the Court of General Sessions (GS) has been consistently challenging to impact. In South Carolina, the benchmark has been to have 80% of pending General Sessions cases at or below 365 days and few counties have met this standard. Then, the pandemic exacerbated the challenges. It limited in-person proceedings and jury trials, and case backlogs grew as more new cases came into the system than were disposed. If this trend continues it can lead to growing backlogs and increased jail populations.

**Backlog Defined**

*The proportion of cases in a court’s inventory of pending unresolved cases that have exceeded established timeframes or time standards, as defined by the International Framework for Court Excellence - Global Measures of Court Performance<sup>10</sup>.*

Backlog more simply defined by the National Center for State Courts is the term used to describe the number of cases that are older than the time standard set by the court. A few examples of backlog impacts include overloaded workloads, not enough time to focus on serious cases, increased lengths of pretrial detention, increased time for people to miss court and/or get re-arrested while awaiting court, and longer waits for justice to be served impacting victims, defendants, witnesses and

the community-at-large. Therefore, the initiatives this workgroup is advancing deliberately focus on:

- The institutionalization of a weekly Jail Population Review (JPR) process,
- Making text court reminders available to help maintain contact with defendants and limit missed court appearances, and
- Keeping leadership routinely apprised of key case processing data and backlog projections to aid in problem-solving efforts.

These initiatives are grounded in data and designed to help shape ongoing efforts to achieve improved case processing while remaining adaptable as the COVID-19 pandemic evolves. Center to these efforts is the value of stakeholders coming together to regularly monitor the evolving trends, provide feedback, and creatively problem-solve.

10. JAIL POPULATION REVIEW (JPR)	
<b>Challenge</b>	Absent regular review of the jail population, defendants that are not a threat to public safety or a flight risk are unnecessarily detained.
<b>Initiative</b>	Institutionalize regular jail population review procedures.
<b>Year One Milestones Achieved</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Consistently perform JPR on a weekly basis</li> <li>• JPR lists generated weekly and provided to respective court actors</li> <li>• Continued monitoring and feedback</li> <li>• JPR criteria reviewed on a quarterly basis</li> </ul>
<b>Lessons Learned</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Weekly JPR lists have been institutionalized</li> <li>• Criteria can always be modified as needed</li> </ul>

Absent regular reviews of the jail population, defendants that are not a threat to public safety or a flight risk can be unnecessarily detained. As stated in Standard 10-1.1 of the American Bar Association Criminal Justice Standards on Pretrial Release, “Deprivation of liberty pending trial is harsh and oppressive, subjects defendants to economic and psychological hardship, interferes with their ability to defend themselves, and, in many instances, deprives their families of support”.

Therefore, the workgroup institutionalized a weekly Jail Population Review (JPR) process. The process helps to identify defendants according to objective criteria that remain detained and provides this information to appropriate stakeholders in consideration of potential for release from SACDC via bond modification and/or disposition. While defendants can be released pretrial for a variety of reasons

beyond the JPR process, having this information readily available has become a helpful tool to court stakeholders. Weekly JPR lists are utilized by General Sessions Court, various Magistrate and Municipal Courts, Family Court, Probate Court, as well as the Department of Probation, Parole and Pardon Services. The JPR process will continue moving forward and can be modified as needed.

<b>11. GENERAL SESSIONS COURT REMINDERS</b>	
<b>Challenge</b>	Losing contact with defendants while cases are pending results in missed court appearances, bench warrants and slower times to disposition.
<b>Initiative</b>	Institutionalize court reminder system for all General Sessions defendants to maintain contact and limit missed court appearances.
<b>Year One Milestones Achieved</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Revised court reminder system</li> <li>• Established and tested protocols for jail-based enrollment</li> <li>• Launched jail-based enrollment</li> <li>• Adapted messages to meet COVID expectations</li> <li>• Drafted a dashboard to monitor trends</li> <li>• Actively working to finalize dashboard metrics</li> <li>• Identified potential ways to expand service post COVID</li> </ul>
<b>Lessons Learned</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The reminder system and its related metrics are complex</li> <li>• It is important to increase enrollment rates and effectively evaluate its impact</li> <li>• Creative solutions can help expand the service to help with the backlog</li> </ul>

Losing contact with defendants while cases are pending results in missed court appearances, bench warrants and slower times to disposition. Therefore, a court reminder system is necessary to keep in contact with defendants and remind them of important court information. By the end of the first year of the strategic plan, a more efficient mechanism of receiving defendants’ permission to enroll for service was instituted. Effective September 16, 2020, during the process of preparing defendants for bond court, detention deputies at the SACDC capture the signature and contact information for each person who desires text reminders for upcoming General Session court dates. The court reminder system also resumed the notification process for enrolled defendants. Throughout the pandemic notifications include reminders to keep in contact with their attorneys if they have one and/or information about how to retain counsel if they do not. As trials and in-person proceedings resume messages will be updated as appropriate.

In addition, efforts went into refining the process with the vendor to improve data collection and system functioning. These steps helped the workgroup to identify and draft data metrics, and develop a court reminder dashboard. The workgroup has also been anticipating a need for more creative uses of the reminder system to support the Court in addressing the growing backlog. For example, a web-based self-enrollment component will be made available for the Court to allow additional enrollment opportunities after the bond hearing for those that elect to enroll later, and a communications campaign can be launched to support efforts to boost enrollment at the Court’s direction.

12. RESEARCH PANDEMIC IMPACTS & INSTITUTIONALIZE LESSONS LEARNED	
<b>Challenge</b>	Charleston County does not meet the statewide standard (80% pending less than 365 days) and it will be further compounded by the pandemic.
<b>Strategy</b>	Research pandemic impacts and institutionalize lessons learned.
<b>Year One Milestones Achieved</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Determined indicators to continually monitor</li> <li>• Developed a case processing dashboard that visualizes the indicators</li> <li>• Workgroup reviews and discusses the dashboards on a monthly basis</li> <li>• Produced backlog projections for review on a quarterly basis since December 2020</li> <li>• Monitor progress and adjust as needed</li> </ul>
<b>Lessons Learned</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Moving the dial on the backlog will take a multifaceted approach</li> <li>• Any change to the total pending, number of filings and disposition per month, or time to disposition will change the results of backlog projections</li> </ul>

During the first year of the strategic plan, the workgroup focused on development and use of case processing dashboards. As such, throughout the year court leadership has been routinely appraised of key jail use and case processing trends that provide feedback for discussion among stakeholders to aid in problem solving efforts. A weekly dashboard monitors the use of local jail by General Sessions’s defendants, and a monthly dashboard measures key case processing indicators such as number of cases filed and disposed, case clearance rates, median and average times to disposition, and types of disposition. It also tracks pending cases at the person level and charge level, open cases of those in custody and out of custody, as well as open cases by age of the case and charge type.

Dashboard data is also used to inform backlog projections that have been instituted on a quarterly basis since the end of 2020. Projections improved in the first quarter of 2021 from the end of 2020 and further improved by the end of the second quarter of 2021. For example, the total estimated months to dispose of the current pending caseload reduced from 29 months as of the end of 2020 to 26 months by the end of the second quarter of 2021. In the same period, the estimated number of cases that would accrue in the interim reduced from 18,531 to 16,693. Moving forward, it will be important to dispose of more cases than there are new cases coming in as well as to decrease the average time to disposition. When this happens it decreases backlog projections. The opposite, increased projections, can occur if more new cases come in than get disposed or the average time to disposition increases.

<sup>1</sup> <http://cjcc.charlestoncounty.org/files/2020-Strategic-Plan-FINAL.pdf>

<sup>2</sup> <https://www.charlestoncounty.org/departments/county-council/minutes/2021/05-25-2021-Council-Minutes.pdf>

<sup>3</sup> <https://www.charlestoncounty.org/departments/county-council/minutes/2021/06-22-2021-Council-Minutes.pdf>

<sup>4</sup> <https://www.charlestonchamber.org/career/leadership-charleston/>

<sup>5</sup> <http://cjcc.charlestoncounty.org/get-involved.php>

<sup>6</sup> Pilnik, Lisa. (February 2017). NIC Accession Number: 032831. *A Framework for Pretrial Justice: Essential Elements of an Effective Pretrial System and Agency*. And, Subramanian, R. et al (2015). *Incarceration's Front Door: The Misuse of Jails in America*. Vera Institute of Justice, New York, New York.

<sup>7</sup> Digard, Léon, and Swavola, Elizabeth. (April 2019) Vera Evidence Brief For the Record, *Justice Denied: The Harmful and Lasting Effects of Pretrial Detention*.

<sup>8</sup> Digard, Léon, and Swavola, Elizabeth. (April 2019) Vera Evidence Brief For the Record, *Justice Denied: The Harmful and Lasting Effects of Pretrial Detention*.

<sup>9</sup> Digard, Léon, and Swavola, Elizabeth. (April 2019) Vera Evidence Brief For the Record, *Justice Denied: The Harmful and Lasting Effects of Pretrial Detention*.

<sup>10</sup> *International Consortium for Court Excellence (2020). Global Measures of Court Performance. Third Edition. Sydney, Australia: Secretariat for the International Consortium for Court Excellence: <http://www.courtexcellence.com>. And, the National Center for State Courts ECCM resource *Timely-Justice-in-Criminal-Cases-What-the-Data-Tells- Us.pdf* ([ncsc.org](http://ncsc.org)).*



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