An initiative to reduce over-incarceration by changing the way America thinks about and uses jails
Our Story Begins with the Problem

Jails are where our nation’s incarceration problem begins.

The Safety and Justice Challenge is an initiative to reduce over-incarceration in America’s jails.

RETHINKING JAILS

The majority of people in jail are presumed innocent. Most are there for nonviolent offenses. Many are simply too poor to post bail. Our overuse of jails carries significant costs—to individuals, families, communities, and society at large. We need solutions to start where incarceration starts: in our nation’s jails.
Why?

ADMISSIONS

There are nearly 12 million jail admissions annually—equivalent to the populations of New York City and Los Angeles combined, and almost 19 times the annual admissions to state and federal prisons.

Local jails
11,700,000

State & federal prisons
631,000
CONVICTIONS

Three out of five people in jail are legally presumed innocent, awaiting trial or resolution through plea negotiations.
Pretrial incarceration by urban-rural
Decades of Growth

- In 1970, almost 75% of jails held not a single woman in jail.
- Since then, the number of women in jails has increased 14-fold—from 8,000 to 110,000.
- This growth has been most dramatic in small counties, increasing 31-fold from 1970 to 2014.
Why?

RACIAL DISPARITIES

Nationally, African Americans are jailed at almost 4x the rate of white Americans.
The 20 Network Sites

- Spokane County, Washington
- Multnomah County, Oregon
- Ada County, Idaho
- Pennington County, South Dakota
- Milwaukee, Wisconsin
- Philadelphia, Pennsylvania
- New York, New York
- Connecticut
- New York, New York
- Cook County, Illinois
- Lucas County, Ohio
- Shelby County, Tennessee
- Mecklenburg County, North Carolina
- Charleston, South Carolina
- Palm Beach County, Florida
- Los Angeles, California
- Pima County, Arizona
- Mesa County, Colorado
- Saint Louis County, Missouri
- Saint Louis County, Missouri
- Harris County, Texas
- New Orleans, Louisiana

Supported by the John D. and Catherine T. MacArthur Foundation
The 40 Network Sites
Initiative Partners

MacArthur Foundation

Amplification

SJC Network

Knowledge Development

Challenge Network Sites

Strategic Allies

Supported by the John D. and Catherine T. MacArthur Foundation
Strategic Allies
Communications

"We continue to build on our past successes in addressing behavioral-health issues."

The Washington Post
As a sheriff, I know that jail is not always the answer

(Nov 2016)

Fast Company
Mass Incarceration Is The Enemy Of Economic Opportunity

(Jan 2017)

Reason
The Fight for Criminal Justice Reform is Moving to the States

(Feb 2017)

Ebony
Poll: Majority of Americans Believe Alternative to jail Should Exist

(Mar 2017)

The Spokesman-Review
Spokane judges have a new tool to decide whether the right people are in jail

(Jan 2017)

The Philadelphia Inquirer
In the race for DA in Philly, reform is all the buzz

(Mar 2017)

Arizona Daily Star
“We continue to build on our past successes in addressing behavioral-health issues.”

(Apr 2017)

The Post and Courier
Jail reform a welcome effort

(Apr 2017)
Network

Amplification

Knowledge

National Impact
The Challenge Network

- 11 Core
- 9 Partner
- 171 Affiliate
The Challenge Network

11 Core
9 Partner
171 Affiliate
The Challenge Network

- 11 Core
- 9 Partner
- 171 Affiliate
“Unfair, ineffective and inefficient justice systems do not increase public safety or the well-being of individuals and their communities. They are inconsistent with American ideals.”

*Julia Stasch, President, MacArthur Foundation*
SAFETY AND JUSTICE CHALLENGE