



KALAMAZOO COUNTY GOVERNMENT

In the Pursuit of Extraordinary Governance...

NEWS RELEASE
FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
07/06/2018

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Kalamazoo County and City of Kalamazoo Participates in National Convening to Discuss Young Adults in the Justice System

Kalamazoo, MI -- As a part of the John D. and Catherine T. MacArthur Foundation's Safety and Justice Challenge, the City of Kalamazoo and Kalamazoo County participated in a convening in San Francisco bringing together nearly 50 state and local officials and 10 national experts to discuss policy reform for young adults in the justice system. They were joined by teams from Albuquerque and Bernalillo County, N.M.; Bellingham and Whatcom County, Wash.; Indianapolis and Marion County, Ind.; Kalamazoo and Kalamazoo County, Mich.; Oakland and Alameda County, Calif.; and Overland Park and Johnson County, Kan.

During the convening, local county and city leaders worked with state legislators to develop an action plan to address the needs of young adults in their communities to avoid justice system contact. Leaders had the opportunity to learn from national experts and other city, county and state officials on topics including racial and ethnic disparities, data sharing and integration, diversion and early intervention and reintegration tactics for justice-involved young adult populations. Leaders also had the opportunity to exchange ideas within peer groups.

"I am thrilled to have participated with several other agencies including Chief District Court Judge Haenicke, Mayor Hopewell, and Kalamazoo Department of Public Safety Assistant Chief Boysen," stated County Commissioner Julie Rogers. "We discovered we already have several valuable programs in place here that each other were not aware. Improving communication and beefing up our data analysis should help identify what's working and further reduce the number of young adults in our jail, ultimately saving taxpayer dollars."

The convening kicked off the Intergovernmental Policy Academy: Young Adults and the Justice System. As strategic allies in the Safety and Justice Challenge, the National Association of Counties (NACo), the National League of Cities (NLC) and the National Conference of State Legislatures (NCSL) will support these teams of city, county and state leaders to align local and state policies toward reducing the use of jails for young

adults. In addition, all teams will work to improve information and data-sharing policies and practices across jurisdictions. The Academy is a year-long program that includes the initial intergovernmental convening, technical assistance and a follow up convening in 2019.

Over the next year, Kalamazoo plans to work on implementing evidence-based actions to decrease the number of young adults in our local jail. They hope to improve intergovernmental communication and break down silos to improve collaboration between various agencies.

“As communities, we must do everything that we can to help these young people find a different path in their lives,” said Kalamazoo Mayor Bobby J. Hopewell. “We are grateful for this opportunity to strengthen the relationships with our local partners and learn from other communities and experts across the country. This is a critical piece of our effort to increase prosperity and opportunities in Kalamazoo.”

About the Safety and Justice Challenge:

The Safety and Justice Challenge is providing support to local leaders from across the country who are determined to tackle one of the greatest drivers of over-incarceration in America—the misuse and overuse of jails. With an initial five-year, \$100 million investment by the John D. and Catherine T. MacArthur Foundation, jurisdictions selected through a competitive process receive financial and technical support in their efforts to rethink justice systems and implement data-driven strategies to safely reduce jail populations. The John D. and Catherine T. MacArthur Foundation’s Safety and Justice Challenge recognizes that there are better, fairer, and more effective alternatives to excessive jail incarceration.

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