

Maximizing Behavioral Health Strategies through the MacArthur Foundation's Safety and Justice Challenge:

CREATING IMPACT IN 17 SITES



INTRODUCTION

The overuse of local jails is one of the leading problems facing America's criminal legal system.

More than half of our national jail population is living with mental health and substance use disorder challenges, many of which may have led directly, or indirectly, to their contact with the criminal legal system. To help combat this issue and create fairer, more effective criminal legal systems, the John D. and Catherine T. MacArthur Foundation created the [Safety and Justice Challenge](#) (SJC). The initiative began in 2015 with a commitment to provide support to local leaders determined to tackle this fundamental driver of over-incarceration in America. The initiative has since grown to include 80 jurisdictions across 35 states.

As part of the SJC, [Policy Research, Inc.](#) (PRI) created the IMPACT Network to provide specific technical assistance to SJC sites on issues related to the over-incarceration of individuals with mental illness and substance use disorders. The IMPACT Network sites engage in a peer-to-peer learning model to accelerate best and promising practices in behavioral health reform and diversion, with an emphasis on local jails, and with a commitment to pursue community-driven race-conscious solutions to reduce harm to populations overrepresented in, or disparately impacted by, the criminal legal system.

The SJC IMPACT Network began in 2021 with a group of 11 jurisdictions and expanded to 17 sites in 2023:



COHORT 1

- | | | |
|---------------------------|---------------------------|---|
| 1. Allegheny County (PA) | 6. San Juan County (NM) | 10. The Texas Health and Human Services Commission (TX) |
| 2. Middlesex County (MA) | 7. Milwaukee County (WI) | 11. West Texas Centers/Howard, Nolan, and Terry County (TX) |
| 3. Eau Claire County (WI) | 8. Orange County (CA) | |
| 4. Charleston County (SC) | 9. Pennington County (SD) | |
| 5. East Baton Rouge (LA) | | |

COHORT 2

- | |
|--------------------------|
| 12. Doña Ana County (NM) |
| 13. Douglas County (NE) |
| 14. Sarpy County (NE) |
| 15. Issaquah (WA) |
| 16. Natrona County (WY) |
| 17. Solano County (CA) |

This report outlines the focuses and strategies of the IMPACT members.

SITE FOCUSES

Allegheny County, PA



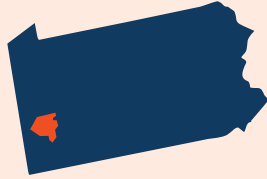
POPULATION:

1,250,578



LEAD AGENCY:

Allegheny County
Manager's Office



Prior to joining the IMPACT Network, Allegheny County advanced a number of strategies to rethink and redesign its criminal justice system so that it is more fair, just, and equitable for all. The county expanded public defender representation at first appearance, developed a plan for more efficient case processing, participated in a research study to determine drivers of racial and ethnic disparities, and implemented new strategies for more efficient resolution and shorter detainers of probation violations. To better serve individuals with behavioral health needs, Allegheny has focused on crisis response and early diversion, overdose prevention strategies, and expediting releases from jail. Through the IMPACT Network, Allegheny shares expertise regarding their dedicated Justice Related Services (JRS), which provides assessment, treatment placement, and service coordination to court-involved individuals with mental health or co-occurring diagnoses. They also focus on balancing risk and needs during decision-making for people with behavioral health needs, developing alternative responses to certain 911 calls, and building out a broader continuum of peer supports.

Charleston County, SC



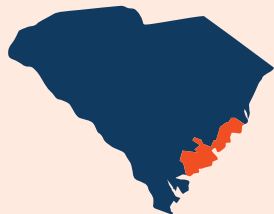
POPULATION:

413,024



LEAD AGENCY:

Criminal Justice
Coordinating Council



Charleston County formed its [Criminal Justice Coordinating Council](#) (CJCC) in 2015 to improve coordination and collaboration across local criminal legal, behavioral health, and other community representatives. Prior to joining the IMPACT Network, the Charleston team focused

on building community engagement, enhancing data tracking through a centralized database of criminal legal information, streamlining their court processes and resource access, increasing opportunities for early diversion and deflection away from jail, and creating a jail population review team to identify defendants who are low-risk and could be released prior to trial. Through the IMPACT Network, Charleston is centering strategies to strengthen local capacity at [Intercepts 4 \(reentry\)](#) and [5 \(community corrections\)](#).

East Baton Rouge, LA



POPULATION:

453,301



LEAD AGENCY:

Criminal Justice
Coordinating Council



East Baton Rouge's [Criminal Justice Coordinating Council](#) (CJCC) formed as a nonprofit organization in 2019 to increase cross-agency communication and efforts toward justice reform and reducing disparities. Prior to joining the IMPACT Network, the East Baton Rouge parish created a Pre-Trial Diversion and Recovery Program to identify people with behavioral health needs who could be placed in treatment in the community instead of remaining in the jail pretrial. They also created new strategies around arraignment and first appearance (known as Call Out), including expedited processes, a Rapid Case Assessment Team with earlier public defender and prosecutor engagement, and Case Navigators for connection to services. In 2021, they opened the [Bridge Center for Hope](#), Louisiana's first crisis stabilization center, which also has a mobile crisis component.

Eau Claire County, WI



POPULATION:
106,452



LEAD AGENCY:
Criminal Justice
Collaborating
Council



Eau Claire County focuses on engaging key community and system partners through their [Criminal Justice Collaborating Council](#) (CJCC) to identify gaps, set goals, and determine relevant strategies. They have implemented early intercept diversion through mobile crisis teams and a co-responder model and a Homeless Outreach Transition Team (HOTT) with the Eau Claire Police Department, as well as screening for mental health needs and data collection at jail booking. Through the IMPACT Network, Eau Claire is working toward building local capacity including through specialty crisis facilities, with the goals of diversion away from the criminal legal system and increased community solutions. In 2023, they implemented a new law enforcement deflection program using opioid abatement funding. The program centers around calls for services that do not rise to the need for an arrest. Officers make referrals to a deflection case manager, who reaches out within 48 hours to offer assessment, services, and referral to a peer support specialist. Current and future focuses include peer support services for people on pretrial monitoring at Intercept 2, developing a forensic navigator position, and creating a rapid case assessment team within the DA's office.

Middlesex County, MA



POPULATION:
1,632,002



LEAD AGENCY:
Middlesex Sheriff's
Office and
Massachusetts
Association for
Mental Health



The [Middlesex County Restoration Center Commission](#) was created in 2018 with the goal of researching and developing a model for diverting people with behavioral health conditions from

arrest or unnecessary emergency department utilization. Following a deliberative process of data collection and collaboration among stakeholders, the Commission designed a model for a Restoration Center pilot in Middlesex County, drawing on best practices and evidence-based programming from around the country. A Restoration Center pilot in Middlesex County will provide urgent and crisis care with core components including triage and assessment with medical clearance, crisis stabilization for both mental health and substance use conditions, respite, and aftercare planning including case management and social determinants of health navigation. In early 2024 the Commission, along with the Executive Office of Health and Human Services (EOHHS), [announced Vinfen](#) as the clinical partner to deliver services at the Center. Through the IMPACT Network, the Commission and its partners, EOHHS, For Health Consulting, and Health Management Associates, are focused on further planning, implementation, and identification of funding sources for the Restoration Center with an anticipated opening date in 2025.

Milwaukee County, WI



POPULATION:
916,205




LEAD AGENCY:
[Milwaukee Community
Justice Council](#)




Milwaukee County has advanced several strategies through the SJC related to individuals with behavioral health needs, including trauma-informed response training for professionals working in the criminal legal system; a countywide co-response Crisis Assessment Response Team; implementation of the [Brief Jail Mental Health Screen](#); and a mental health diversion program centered around a behavioral health liaison that works with designated attorneys from the County District Attorney and State Public Defender's offices to identify people in the jail with mental health needs and connect them to community resources. The momentum behind the SJC led to related investments with American Rescue Plan Act dollars to pilot and staff a Mental Health Treatment Court alongside a psychiatry fellowship through the Medical College of Wisconsin to support this court. In late 2022, Milwaukee

opened a new [Mental Health Emergency Center](#) (MHEC) as a joint venture between Milwaukee County Behavioral Health Services and four of the area's health systems.

Orange County, CA

 **POPULATION:**
3,141,363

 **LEAD AGENCY:**
Orange County District
Attorney's Office

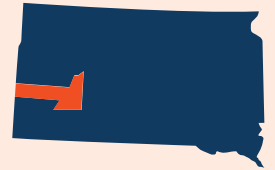


Orange County is engaged in both the IMPACT Network and the SJC California Expansion Network. The county's interagency planning group, the Orange County Criminal Justice Coordinating Council (OCCJCC), has focused much of its work to date at Intercepts 3-5, including enhanced in-custody mental health and substance use treatment services, a coordinated reentry process, and a screening and referral system to connect probationers to their behavioral health services campus, [BeWell OC](#). Through the IMPACT Network, Orange County is focused on further reform at Intercepts 1-2 through a joint effort led by the District Attorney's Office as the connection point to each of Orange County's police departments. In April 2022, Orange County District Attorney's Office launched their [Focused Intervention Route to Services and Treatment](#) (FIRST Point) pre-filing diversion pilot program. The pilot program connects people who have been committed low-level crimes with services to address mental health and substance use issues to ensure a criminal proceeding does not inhibit future work and education opportunities.

Pennington County, SD

 **POPULATION:**
111,806

 **LEAD AGENCY:**
Pennington County
Sheriff and the Seventh
Judicial Circuit Court
of South Dakota

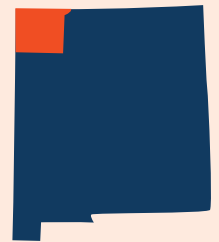


Prior to joining the IMPACT Network, Pennington County initiated several strategies. These included forming a jail population review team, expanding pretrial services, implementing court date text reminders, fostering community engagement, and establishing the [Care Campus](#) to address substance use disorders with over 125,000 admissions since opening in 2018. In addition, Pivot Point, a comprehensive behavioral health facility, opened its doors in 2023. Situated adjacent to each other, these programs offer both voluntary and involuntary admissions, operating as public-private partnerships. Notably, Pennington County is also part of the SJC initiative focusing on mitigating criminal legal disparities affecting Native Americans. Leveraging the IMPACT Network, Pennington aims to strengthen its continuum of alternatives to incarceration by collaborating with other jurisdictions.

San Juan County, NM

 **POPULATION:**
120,993

 **LEAD AGENCY:**
San Juan County
Behavioral Health
Services Department



San Juan County has developed strategies to serve individuals with behavioral health needs across several Intercepts to date, through law enforcement Crisis Intervention Units, early diversion and connection to resources, building the behavioral health provider workforce, and a [Mental Wellness Resource Center](#) with peer mentors. As part of the IMPACT Network, San Juan County is focused on increasing resources available to law enforcement when they are called to individuals in a mental

health crisis. San Juan County has worked closely with community stakeholders and cross-agency representatives through their Sequential Intercept Model (SIM) Mapping process, further identifying gaps in services available to individuals with behavioral health needs. As part of their post-SIM work, the county plans to identify a system for data collection that will assist stakeholders in tracking the county needs and build planning capacity toward the creation of a Crisis Triage Center.

Texas Health and Human Services, TX

 **LEAD AGENCY:**
Texas Health and
Human Services
Commission

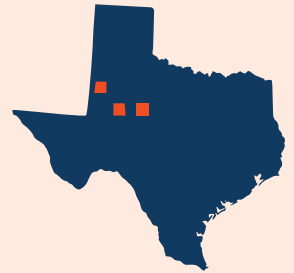


The [Texas Health and Human Services Commission](#) (HHSC) is an agency within the Texas Health and Human Services System and provides services and supports to millions of Texans through the efforts of more than 38,000 employees and more than 220 programs across the state. Through the IMPACT Network, HHSC is collaborating with 10 rural-serving and three urban-serving local mental health authorities (LMHAs) in North and West Texas to support community-based solutions for expanding or strengthening mental health crisis response and jail diversion. The regional groups of LMHAs work together to strengthen mental health care access and services in rural areas, with the goal of reducing mental health crises that result in emergency room use, incarceration, transportation to mental health facilities, and other costs to local government. HHSC supports each LMHA in identifying at least one crisis response or jail diversion strategy that would work most effectively in their community. HHSC is particularly interested in law enforcement drop off or diversion centers, integration of behavioral health crisis staff in 911 dispatch centers, and the use of technology to support crisis services in Texas' most remote areas. Nine of the 10 rural-serving LMHAs received funding for their jail diversion projects, including co-responders, 911 integration, remote crisis assessment, mental health deputies, mobile crisis outreach teams, and a crisis receiving center.

West Texas Centers/Howard, Nolan and Terry County, TX

 **POPULATION:**
60,479

 **LEAD AGENCY:**
West Texas
Centers

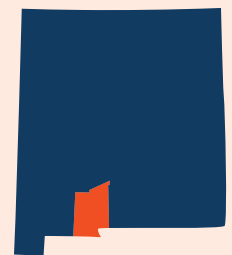


[West Texas Centers](#) (WTC) is a community mental health center located in Big Spring, Texas. Since its inception in 1997, WTC has provided mental health services for individuals in 23 counties covering an area of 25,000 square miles. WTC also implemented quarterly cross-agency Jail Diversion Committee meetings with a variety of stakeholders in four rural counties to increase community awareness and education and share resources and data toward jail diversion. Through the IMPACT Network, WTC builds on existing diversion programs, such as its Mental Health Deputy and Jail Caseworker programs, by expanding across rural communities. They are focused on building specialized court dockets with mental health and substance use disorder training for judges and pre-filing diversion programs for youthful offenders, as well as implementing a crisis receiving and jail diversion. Since joining the initiative, WTC has expanded to include representatives from Howard, Nolan, and Terry Counties.

Doña Ana County, NM

 **POPULATION:**
221, 508

 **LEAD AGENCY:**
Doña Ana County
Health and
Human Services



Doña Ana County is the second largest county by population in New Mexico and shares 64 miles of border with Mexico. Most county residents (66%) identify as Hispanic or Latino, one of the highest proportions in the U.S. In coordination with [Sequential Intercept Model](#) (SIM) Mapping Workshops in 2016 and 2022, Doña Ana County has been working to address gaps with the following programs:

Developing a pre-adjudication Competency Diversion Pilot Project for individuals with frequent contact who may have competence and/or mental illness needs. Individuals meet with a forensic navigator for a warm handoff to services (e.g., housing, transportation, MOUD, medical, behavioral health, Assisted Outpatient Treatment) within 72 hours.

The Detention Center's medication-assisted treatment (MAT) program provides induction, maintenance dosing, withdrawal management, and referral to an MAT provider upon release to the community. The county's Reach, Intervene, Support, and Engage (RISE) program reduces reincarceration and homelessness by creating jail reentry plans and linking to community-based services.

Through support from [SAMHSA's GAINS Center](#) in 2023, Doña Ana County Health and Human Services equipped cross-agency staff to provide trauma-informed response training. Subsequent training was conducted with mental health and substance use disorder treatment providers, detention center cadets, crisis triage center personnel, and the fire department crisis response mobile unit team.

Doña Ana also formed a collaborative SIM Taskforce, creating a strategic plan to build on the workshops by gathering data on individuals with frequent contact with the criminal justice and mental health systems, as well as racial inequities and disparities. Doña Ana County's [LC3 Behavioral Health Collaborative](#) of over 180 representatives across 70 cross-sector agencies meets regularly and works toward building an ideal behavioral health service system. The county also hosts New Mexico's first Certified Community Behavioral Health Clinic (CCBHC) at Families & Youth Innovations Plus (FYI+).

Douglas County, NE



POPULATION:
585,008



LEAD AGENCY:
Douglas County
Department of
Corrections



Together with neighboring Sarpy County and [Region 6 Behavioral Healthcare](#), Douglas County is part of a Criminal Justice-Mental Health Information Sharing Initiative to build data-driven strategies to reduce the

number of people with mental illness in their local jails. Douglas County has been recognized as a [Stepping Up Innovator County](#) due to its robust implementation of validated jail screening for behavioral health, brain injury, and trauma, as well as data utilization and sharing. They have also built ongoing cross-system collaboration through a Familiar Faces Project, meeting the needs of individuals with serious mental illness and frequent jail contact. Through the IMPACT Network, Douglas County focuses on Intercept 2, implementing the Public Safety Assessment (PSA) and a pretrial release program targeted to specific populations with frequent contact and mental health needs. They also plan to partner with Sarpy County to develop a crisis stabilization program as part of a more robust "divert to what" continuum of options.

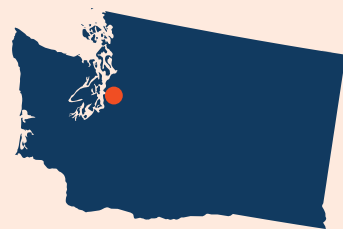
Issaquah, WA



POPULATION:
39,505



LEAD AGENCY:
City of Issaquah



Issaquah is a city in King County, WA, about 17 miles east of Seattle. Prior to joining the IMPACT Network, Issaquah focused primarily on Intercepts 0-3, including establishing and growing a Behavioral Health and Homeless Outreach Program within the Human Services Division, in collaboration with the Issaquah Police Department, as well as a [Homeless Outreach Dashboard](#). Issaquah's problem-solving Community Court supports individuals with low-level charges and social service or behavioral health needs. Through the IMPACT Network, Issaquah prioritizes streamlining cross-system communication and coordination between multiple programs and departments, including Human Services, law enforcement, courts, corrections, fire, parks, and eventually, hospitals and crisis centers. Human Services meets monthly with various organizations, then quarterly as a larger group to share progress. They are also building a Familiar Faces Collaborative to collect data and better meet the needs of people with frequent jail contact.

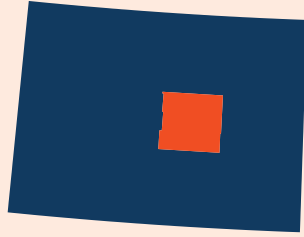
Natrona County, WY



POPULATION:
79,555



LEAD AGENCY:
Natrona Collective
Health Trust



Natrona County is the second most populous county in Wyoming and has actively built on cross-system collaboration and momentum created before and during their 2021 Sequential Intercept Model (SIM) Mapping Workshop. Individuals with lived experience now provide support groups and training within the jail and the county has expanded the number of case managers working on their jail reentry program through the Natrona Collective Health Trust. As part of the IMPACT Network, they focus on Intercepts 0-2, particularly developing a crisis response continuum, a local navigation center for resource connection, and a housing task force. Natrona leadership is also building grant-writing capacity and is partnering with the Wyoming Survey & Analysis Center to perform cost analysis around behavioral health services and incarceration.

Sarpy County, NE



POPULATION:
193,418



LEAD AGENCY:
Sarpy County
Department of
Corrections



Together with neighboring Douglas County, [Region 6 Behavioral Healthcare](#), and Omaha Police Department, Sarpy County is part of a Criminal Justice-Mental Health Information Sharing Initiative to build a data sharing platform to improve the outcome for individuals in a mental crisis by connecting them to care in efforts reduce the number of people with mental illness in their local jails. Sarpy County has also been recognized as a [Stepping Up Innovator County](#) due to its strong implementation of jail data collection and sharing, including through a jail population review team. They have also built ongoing

cross-system collaboration through an active Criminal Justice Coordinating Committee. At Intercept 4, the jail's Specialized Transition Planning team identifies individuals with serious mental illness and high needs and connects them to case management and a reentry plan prior to release to the community. In 2021, Sarpy County established the state's first Mental Health Wellness Court. Through the IMPACT Network, Sarpy County focuses heavily on Intercepts 2-3, implementing pretrial risk assessment and release practices for individuals with mental health needs. Sarpy County and Region 6 Behavioral Healthcare is in the process of developing a crisis stabilization program as part of a more robust "divert to what" continuum of options.

Solano County, CA



POPULATION:
451,715



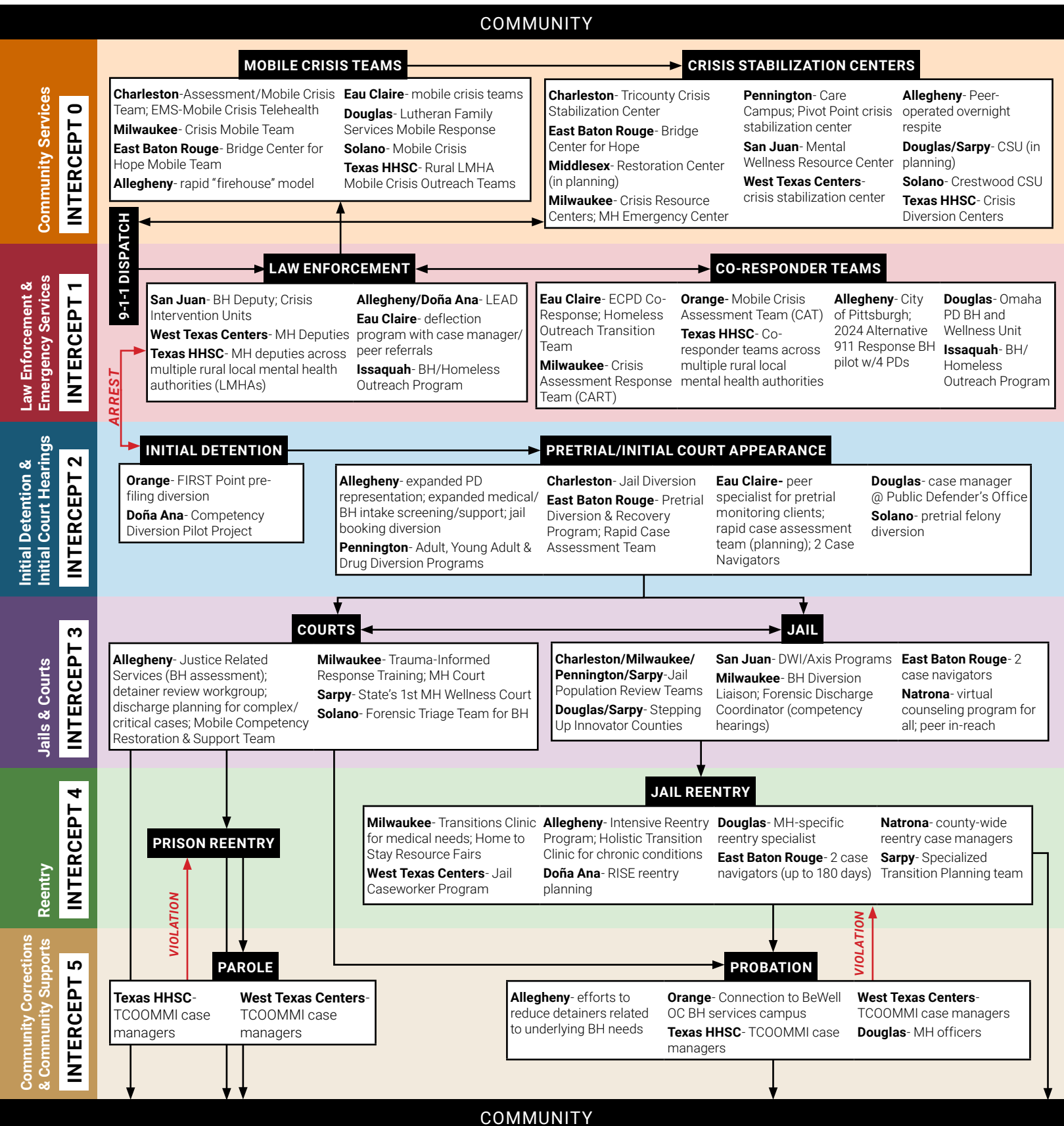
LEAD AGENCY:
Solano County
Department
of Health &
Social Services,
Behavioral
Health Division



Solano County is located at the midpoint between San Francisco and Sacramento and is engaged in both the SJC IMPACT Network and California Expansion Network. Prior to joining the IMPACT Network, the county developed Intercept 0/1 initiatives including CIT training for law enforcement and starting and expanding a county-wide mobile crisis team as well as Intercepts 3/4 with Diversion and Reentry Processes. Solano County has invested in various evidence-based practices and tools to support the justice-involved population with behavioral health needs, including drug and mental health courts, Medication-Assisted Treatment in jails, expansion of Permanent Supportive Housing, peer support, validated screening at Intercepts 2-3, and data collection within the jail. Through the IMPACT Network, Solano County is focusing on building coordination and process clarity across multiple new legislative changes and requirements, including the civil [CARE Court](#) and the recently approved [CalAIM Justice-Involved Reentry Initiative](#) (Medicaid 1115 waiver).

SJC IMPACT Network Sites' Behavioral Health Strategies Along the Sequential Intercept Model (SIM)

(Note: below strategies are not exhaustive but are primarily those associated with the MacArthur Safety and Justice Challenge)



CROSS-INTERCEPT STRATEGIES: Charleston/San Juan/Doña Ana/Douglas/Issaquah/Sarpy- High Utilizers/Familiar Faces; Texas HHSC- Statewide Behavioral Health and Justice Training and Technical Assistance Resource Center; West Texas Centers- Jail Diversion Committees in 4 rural counties; Doña Ana- LC3 Behavioral Health Collaborative; Texas HHSC- Statewide Forensic Strategic Plan

Across the SJC IMPACT Network sites, key strategies to reduce the number of individuals with behavioral health needs in local jails include:

1

Conducting and building on [Sequential Intercept Model](#) Mapping Workshops to identify local gaps and resources, and build consensus around priorities for change

4

Increasing diversion opportunities at initial detention, pretrial services, and first court appearance, which are often overlooked due to shorter timeframes

2

Creating or expanding alternatives to only law enforcement response to individuals with behavioral health, homelessness, or other complex needs

5

Focusing on often-overlooked populations including people with brain injury, intellectual and developmental disabilities, and people who experience frequent contact with jails.

3

Developing [Criminal Justice Coordinating Councils](#) or similar cross-system workgroups

CONCLUSION

The MacArthur Foundation's SJC supports a monumental task: to reduce over-incarceration in America's jails and create fairer, more effective justice systems. The cities, counties, and states currently engaged in the SJC IMPACT Network have become a virtual community with ample opportunities for peer-to-peer sharing through online discussions and exchange, site visits, technical assistance, participation at in-person conferences, and more. SJC Sites continue to make great progress with their strategies to serve individuals with behavioral health and other complex needs.



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www.SafetyandJusticeChallenge.org



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