



Local Justice Reinvestment

Strategies, Outcomes, and Keys to Success

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Justice reinvestment is a data-driven approach to criminal justice reform that examines and addresses cost and population drivers and generates cost savings that can be reinvested in high-performing public safety strategies.

Over the past decade, state and local jurisdictions across the country have implemented innovative strategies to improve public safety and produce a better return on their public safety investments. The Justice Reinvestment Initiative (JRI) has played a lead role in this reform effort, facilitating a data-driven approach in which jurisdictions examine the factors—or drivers—that contribute to their corrections populations and costs and identify and implement evidence-based reforms to address these drivers, enhance public safety outcomes, and generate cost savings to be reinvested in high-performing public safety strategies. Between 2010 and 2016, the Bureau of Justice Assistance (BJA) funded JRI in 17 local jurisdictions (figure 1). In November 2014, Urban released a brief that summarized interim findings of an assessment of activities and outcomes in these local sites. This brief documents work through the completion of the initiative, identifies common themes across the local sites, summarizes policy strategies implemented, documents outcomes to date, and highlights keys to successful reform.

FIGURE 1

Local JRI Sites



Methodology

The Urban Institute gathered information for this brief using four methods: (1) document review of information from local JRI sites, (2) semistructured interviews with stakeholders and technical assistance (TA) providers in local JRI sites, (3) in-person observations of working group meetings and site programming, and (4) data tracking and analysis. The document review drew information from monthly reports submitted by TA providers, memos and final reports from TA providers and sites, and other data tracking from sites. Urban staff interviewed TA providers, site coordinators, and other site stakeholders involved with JRI, both in person and by phone. These interviews generated information about each stakeholder’s role in JRI, the site’s experience with the initiative, and successes and challenges encountered throughout the process. Additional in-person data collection included observations of working group meetings and site strategies in action.

Local JRI Collaborators

- **Bureau of Justice Assistance:** Funded and oversaw local JRI
 - **Crime and Justice Institute:** Provided technical assistance for local JRI sites
 - **The Center for Effective Public Policy:** Provided technical assistance for local JRI sites
 - **The Urban Institute:** Assessed and coordinated local JRI
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The JRI Model

The local justice reinvestment model is built on collaboration, stakeholder engagement, and strategic planning. The core of this effort is the working group, which consists of key criminal justice leaders such as law enforcement officers, public defenders, prosecutors, pretrial agency staff, judges, probation officers, county commissioners, and representatives from community organizations. This group guides the jurisdiction through its justice reinvestment activities and is led by a site coordinator who is the main liaison between the working group and the technical assistance provider and partners.

The interagency working group collaborates with a technical assistance provider, funded by BJA, to collect and analyze systemwide criminal justice data. Through data analysis, a jurisdiction identifies the drivers that are contributing to its corrections populations and costs then identifies strategies to reduce the impact of these drivers. Once the JRI working group agrees on its strategies, it can request additional seed funding from BJA for implementation. The jurisdiction implements its new policies or programs and documents the related outcomes and savings. The ultimate goal of JRI is for these reforms to reduce corrections populations and generate cost savings that can be reinvested in further effective public safety strategies.

JRI is iterative, requiring ongoing assessment of the implemented strategies to assess whether they are yielding intended results and to make appropriate corrections if not.

Technical Assistance

Technical assistance (TA) providers are essential for laying the groundwork for JRI, cultivating a shared vision for system reform, sharing research and best practices, informing and engaging stakeholders with JRI, and serving as neutral, third-party facilitators. In the early months, TA providers met frequently with stakeholders to build support for the initiative and answer their questions about expectations. They also provided critical insights through the comprehensive data analysis they conducted and facilitated the development of policy solutions based on key findings. During implementation, TA providers led or coordinated trainings, linked stakeholders with subject matter experts, helped sites define performance measures, and monitored outcomes.

Local JRI Policy Strategies

Data analysis identified numerous common population and cost drivers across the 17 jurisdictions that implemented local JRI. Among these were practices that resulted in the excessive incarceration of overlapping groups of people, including those who

- returned to jail time and again, often presenting with significant mental health, substance abuse, and/or housing needs;
- were held before case disposition and had not yet been convicted of a crime; or
- returned to jail for violating the conditions of supervision on probation or parole.

JRI localities implemented various strategies to address the reasons these groups of people were incarcerated (table 1). The implemented strategies are categorized below by four summarized policy goals: address frequent front-end users, improve pretrial strategies, implement evidence-based practices for community supervision, and improve data systems and capacity. Although these domains are not a comprehensive look at local justice reinvestment strategies, they provide an in-depth look at successful reforms and the challenges that accompany them.

TABLE 1

Local JRI Public Safety Strategies

Strategy	Sites identifying strategy	
Address frequent front-end users	Denver City and County, CO	Santa Cruz County, CA
	Mecklenburg County, NC	Travis County, TX
Improve pretrial strategies	Alachua County, FL	New York City, NY
	Allegheny County, PA	San Francisco City and County, CA
	Eau Claire County, WI	Santa Cruz County, CA
	Johnson County, KS	Yamhill County, OR
	Milwaukee County, WI	
Implement evidence-based practices for community supervision	Charlottesville-Albemarle County, VA	Lane County, OR
	Delaware County, OH	San Francisco City and County, CA
	Grant County, IN	Yolo County, CA
Improve data systems and capacity	Allegheny County, PA	Mecklenburg County, NC
	Grant County, IN	New York City, NY
	Johnson County, KS	

Address Frequent Front-End Users

Four local jurisdictions identified particular people who were associated with a disproportionate number of jail bed days each year. Sometimes called “frequent front-end users,” they often struggled with homelessness, mental illness, and drug or alcohol addiction. As a result, they also disproportionately used other local resources, such as hospital emergency rooms and detox centers.

Jurisdictions recognized that by targeting this relatively small group, they could reduce jail bed use and general system costs while providing services and treatment to the people who needed them most. Denver, Mecklenburg, Travis, and Santa Cruz Counties each addressed this population slightly differently, using a combination of supportive housing, case management, mental health and substance abuse services, and community outreach.

IMPLEMENTATION

Addressing the comprehensive needs of people who frequently returned to jail required collaboration among several agencies, including the courts, jails, police, service providers, and housing authorities. In many cases, housing proved the greatest challenge. Travis County proposed to create supportive housing units with integrated services but had trouble both recruiting the targeted people and convincing housing providers to approve them as residents. Denver implemented a housing-first policy but struggled to find available housing that could be converted into appropriate supportive housing. For the first several years of its program, Denver housed many participants in hotels. The jurisdiction is working to build dedicated housing units for this population, funded independently of JRI.

Santa Cruz's Bob Lee Community Partnership for Accountability, Connection and Treatment (PACT) program focused on connecting people to substance abuse treatment and mental health services through intensive community outreach. Providing these services was an important part of the implementation in Denver, Travis, and Mecklenburg Counties as well.

PERFORMANCE MEASURES AND OUTCOMES

Because the people targeted by these strategies have diverse criminal justice, mental health, and substance abuse needs, the four sites faced challenges with recruiting, housing, and retaining participants. Nevertheless, Denver, Mecklenburg, Santa Cruz, and Travis Counties have all tracked performance measures that show progress toward jail bed and cost savings.

- As of the end of March 2016, 50 percent of the 30 people housed by Travis County's program had been rearrested, compared with 81 percent of the 80-person control group.¹
- In the first eight months of Santa Cruz County's PACT program, participants had 70 percent fewer arrests and citations and served 50 percent less jail time than in the eight months before the program started.² These reductions meant the county avoided paying \$76,937 for program participants' jail bed days.³ In 2015, the National Association of Counties granted PACT an Achievement Award in recognition of the county government's work to improve services for residents.
- Mecklenburg County had housed 60 people through its MeckFUSE⁴ program as of December 2015, after 2.5 years of program implementation. During that time, participants were arrested an average of 0.87 times each; they had previously been arrested at least four times over five years, and often much more frequently.⁵

SPOTLIGHT: DENVER'S RECOVERY COURT

Named by its participants to represent a new start after years of addiction, mental illness, and homelessness, Denver's Recovery Court is designed for the 300 most frequent users of jails and other services in Denver City and County. Recovery Court is a collaboration between city attorneys, public defenders, case managers, service providers, and the police, spearheaded by Denver's Crime Prevention and Control Commission, with a dedicated judge as its champion.

People who are arrested for low-level offenses and identified as being in the target group are offered the opportunity to participate in the program, which includes two years of probation in lieu of a jail sentence of up to one year, housing without conditions, wraparound case management provided by the Mental Health Center of Denver (whose case managers also serve as probation officers), and any additional treatment deemed necessary. Since Colorado is a Medicaid expansion state, Denver has been able to enroll every participant in Medicaid and leverage those resources for mental health and substance abuse services.

In its first year of implementation (May 2014–May 2015), the Recovery Court enrolled 64 of the 112 arrestees who were identified as eligible.^a Of these, 40 were still enrolled in and moving through the program as of May 2015. During that year, the Recovery Court reduced jail bed use among the 40 active participants by 76 percent and average system costs per individual, including jail and medical costs, by 67 percent, for a total averted cost of \$1.6 million.^b In May 2016, the Recovery Court was merged with the Mental Health Court to form a larger Behavioral Health Court, which will be positioned to serve a broader group of people with similar needs.

^a Denver City and County, "Justice Reinvestment Initiative: Assessment Technical Assistance and Maximizing Local Reforms" (internal document, May 2015).

^b Ibid.

Improve Pretrial Strategies

Pretrial defendants make up 60 percent of the country's jail population (Minton and Zeng 2015). In local JRI sites, that share reached as high as 84 percent (Cramer et al. 2014). Nine sites found that pretrial populations were a primary driver of jail growth and costs.

Three of these sites—Alachua, Santa Cruz, and Yamhill Counties—determined they had no evidence-based way to reduce their large pretrial populations because they had no pretrial risk assessments in place. San Francisco was using a validated tool that required a lengthy face-to-face interview with qualitative questions. Alachua and Yamhill Counties also found that delays and inefficiencies in case processing contributed to unnecessary pretrial detention. Other jurisdictions, including New York City and Allegheny, Eau Claire, and Milwaukee Counties, found that many pretrial defendants could be deferred from detention altogether with little risk to public safety. Reliance on monetary bail was also identified as a common problem, but it was often difficult for localities to address because of legislative and political constraints. Johnson County was one of the few jurisdictions to address monetary bail, after finding that 70 percent of people awaiting trial and 75 percent of those released pretrial were required to pay monetary bonds (Revicki, Brooks, and Bechtel 2015). The county developed release and detention guidelines that based decisions on defendants' risk factors rather than their ability to pay.

IMPLEMENTATION

Local sites implemented pretrial reform in several ways, including (1) implementing pretrial risk assessment tools and using them to guide decisionmaking, (2) streamlining case processing, and (3) improving pretrial diversion programs. These three main strategies included efforts to review the status of cases for people detained before trial, improve pretrial supervision, reduce reliance on monetary bonds, and implement cite-and-release strategies (i.e., issuing citations instead of arresting and transporting someone to jail).

Implementing pretrial risk assessment tools. Santa Cruz County, San Francisco, and New York City focused on implementing risk assessment tools. San Francisco had an instrument in place but had been unable to fully integrate its results into release decisions without greater stakeholder buy-in and a more efficient tool. JRI support was used to implement a new tool, the Laura and John Arnold Foundation's Public Safety Assessment,⁶ and train criminal justice stakeholders—including judges, defense attorneys, and prosecutors—on how to incorporate risk assessment in their release decisions. Before implementation began in May 2016, a consultant team, the Arnold Foundation and San Francisco stakeholders completed a fidelity check of the Arnold tool and confirmed its utility and implementation readiness. The consultant team is reviewing release decisions before April 30, 2016, and after tool implementation and expects to have an outcomes study drafted in fall 2016. Santa Cruz County also worked with the Arnold Foundation to pilot the Public Safety Assessment; the additional staff support and mobile computer solutions funded through JRI have helped the county increase the number of people recommended for pretrial release fivefold since the tool was implemented in August 2015.⁷ Finally, New York City implemented a pretrial screening tool used by supervised release program providers in all arraignment courts across its five boroughs, aiming to release defendants arrested for misdemeanors and nonviolent felonies who are not high risk for felony rearrest during the pretrial period. This supervised release strategy, launched in March 2016, uses the risk assessment to guide eligibility and the supervision level for people who may otherwise have been placed in jail.

Streamlining case processing. Several sites also focused on improving case processing. Generally, case processing strategies were designed to expedite cases, streamline processing, improve court data capacity, and identify good candidates for pretrial release. Alachua and Yamhill Counties hired a release coordinator to facilitate pretrial release, make case processing more efficient, and connect people to services. Yamhill's pretrial release coordinator was part of a larger pretrial justice strategy in which the county implemented a risk assessment tool, created a decision matrix, and increased its supervision capacity.

Improving pretrial diversion programs. Several sites chose to improve diversion programs as alternatives to detention. Allegheny County funded a treatment coordinator to divert pretrial defendants with substance abuse needs to treatment. From January 2013 to March 2016, 702 people were referred to the diversion program; 399 completed it.⁸ Eau Claire County used JRI funding to implement a voluntary pretrial diversion program for methamphetamine users. Milwaukee County created the Central Liaison Unit to coordinate assessment, supervision, and case management for low- and medium-risk people diverted from detention.

PERFORMANCE MEASURES AND OUTCOMES

Though some sites are still implementing their strategies, several sites have begun reporting outcomes.

- Alachua County hired a jail release coordinator in 2012; from the coordinator's arrival to 2014, the county's average end-of-month jail population declined 14 percent.⁹
- Allegheny County's Drug and Alcohol Diversion Program served 464 clients between January 2013 and March 2016; 81 percent of the 399 who left the program did so by completing inpatient drug treatment.¹⁰
- Eau Claire County's diversion program for methamphetamine users served 34 people between its implementation in June 2015 and the end of March 2016, none of whom were issued bench warrants for failure to appear.¹¹
- Johnson County assessed 1,227 defendants between December 2014 and September 2015. The courts concurred with the recommended release guidelines or were more lenient on release decisions 80 percent of the time, and 93.2 percent of defendants were released on bond, of which 93 percent appeared for their court hearings and 89 percent had no new criminal activity.¹² These figures improve on the Bureau of Justice Statistics' national estimates in 2009, in which 83 percent of people appeared in court and 84 percent had no new arrests on pretrial release (Reaves 2013).
- During the two-borough pilot, the number of people accepted into supervised release programs in New York City increased from 32 in November 2014 to 102 in August 2015, for a total of 602 participants.¹³ In March 2016, New York City expanded supervised release citywide; in the first four months of citywide implementation 962 defendants were diverted to the program, saving an estimated 93 jail beds. Supervised release is on track to surpass its goal of serving 3,048 defendants a year.¹⁴
- Santa Cruz County assessed and released 1,183 people pending trial and found that 88.6 percent appeared in court and 97.2 percent had no new criminal activity,¹⁵ well above national estimates.
- Recent analysis of Yamhill County's pretrial justice strategy (implemented with funds from both JRI and the National Institute of Corrections' Evidence-Based Decision Making [EBDM] Initiative)¹⁶ found the program reduced the county's daily average pretrial population from 45 percent to 36 percent and that pretrial program participants had a 96 percent appearance rate for court dates compared with a 77 percent appearance rate before the project.¹⁷

SPOTLIGHT: MILWAUKEE COUNTY'S PRETRIAL DIVERSION AND DEFERRED PROSECUTION PROGRAM

Before participating in JRI and in part as a result of its work through EBDM, **Milwaukee County** implemented, evaluated, and revised a universal pretrial screening tool that increased the county's pretrial release supervision census from 575 defendants on any given day to 1,385.^a Although the county had funding for the tool, its staffing only allowed for the supervision of 860 defendants and provided limited programmatic services for those released.^b

To provide the appropriate supervision and programmatic services based on assessment results, Milwaukee County's JRI strategies focused on expanding services for people with mental health concerns, collaborating across community organizations to coordinate community engagement for those released, and providing intervention services for all deferred prosecution cases. The county began screening nearly everyone booked into the Milwaukee County Jail with a validated pretrial risk assessment tool to determine placement for early intervention programs; it also created the Central Liaison Unit (CLU) as a foundation for those diversion and deferred prosecution programs. Pretrial diversion refers to diverting low-risk people from the justice system altogether, while deferred prosecution refers to identifying moderate-risk people, expediting delivery of risk-reduction services to them, and decreasing system processing costs (Center for Effective Public Policy 2014).

The CLU, created in April 2014, coordinates diversion for people assessed as low risk and manages supervision and case management services for people assessed as medium risk. Its primary responsibilities include assessment and screening of those identified for diversion or deferred prosecution; coordination and oversight of services, treatment, and program placement; and performance measurement and outcome reporting. In its first two years, the CLU served 808 diversion clients, closing 81 percent of cases successfully, and 331 deferred prosecution clients, closing 77 percent of cases successfully (Carter 2016). As of June 2016, only 2.7 percent of diversion clients and 7.6 percent of deferred prosecution clients had a new arrest during their agreement periods. The CLU program saved 41,726 jail beds and 1,140 prison beds between April 2014 and June 2016.^c

^a Milwaukee County Community Justice Council, "Phase II LOI" (internal document, 2012).

^b Ibid.

^c Madeline M. Carter, "Milwaukee County, Wisconsin, Early Intervention Strategy: A Case Study in Evidence-Based Diversion Practice" (internal document, The Center for Effective Public Policy, Silver Spring, MD, June 2016).

Implement Evidence-Based Practices for Community Supervision

Six localities found that people booked for technical violations of their probation accounted for a sizable portion of jail admissions. Delaware County found probation violations accounted for nearly 14 percent of jail admissions and were the primary reason people with felony convictions were in jail. People in jail for probation violations also had longer stays—more than three times the average length of stay for other people in jail.¹⁸ Charlottesville-Albemarle also found that probation violations were affecting county jail admissions, accounting for 10 percent of the jail population.¹⁹ Likewise, probation violations accounted for 8 percent of bookings in Yolo County²⁰ and 6 percent of bookings in Grant County.²¹

In addition, sites noticed that community supervision resources could be more efficiently allocated based on the risk level and needs of people under supervision. This is important as research has shown that interventions are most effective when targeted to individuals at high risk of recidivating and matched to their unique criminogenic risk and need factors (Andrews, Bonta, and Wormith 2006;

Lowenkamp, Latessa, and Holsinger 2006;). San Francisco found that its standard three-year term of probation supervision exceeded the average time to failure on probation by more than 18 months.²² In Lane County, the rate of felony probation violations was relatively high; 19 percent of people violated their supervision from 2010 to 2011, and 49 percent of those violations occurred during the first year of supervision.²³ San Francisco and Lane County realized that probation officers' time could be better spent focusing on people in the critical 12 to 18 months after release, when interventions can make the most difference.

IMPLEMENTATION

After extensive data and systems analyses, local sites implemented evidence-based practices for community supervision to curb jail overcrowding, respond more effectively to violations, and use resources more efficiently. Local sites adopted several strategies, including risk assessment tools, violation response matrices, increased staff training, and caseload reallocation.

Delaware County pursued policy strategies to reduce probation violations by at least 10 percent each year over four years through several evidence-based practice innovations, including risk assessment, improved supervision, substance abuse intervention, and a violation and incentive matrix. Charlottesville-Albemarle County implemented an administrative response matrix, which listed consistent, neutral, and proportional responses to probation violations, in order to promote behavioral change and reduce jail overcrowding. Lane County developed more specialized supervision practices tailored to risk levels determined by validated assessment tools.²⁴ People at the highest risk level received supervision that included intensive contact standards, exclusion zones, electronic monitoring, and risk-reduction programming, while medium-risk people received programming designed to reduce recidivism, and low-risk people were assigned to the new Reduced Supervision Unit. Its staff use an abbreviated tool (the Level of Service Inventory-Screening Version) to identify stable risk and need factors and inform decisions about supervision strategies with this low-risk population (Ozanne 2015a).²⁵ Grant County similarly reallocated probation caseloads by risk level.

Yolo County and San Francisco County worked with George Mason University's Center for Advancing Correctional Excellence to examine how well available programs matched needs. After seeing the results of this system assessment, Yolo County set out to improve supervision and increase capacity to meet substance use treatment needs. To implement this change, the probation department received training for evidence-based risk assessment and supervision practices. San Francisco expanded its early termination strategy to shape probation terms based on risk while protecting public safety.²⁶ This program is described in the Spotlight box below.

PERFORMANCE MEASURES AND OUTCOMES

As reforms have gotten under way, sites have seen reductions in probation violations and broader positive systems changes.

- Charlottesville saw total unsuccessful terminations for local (mostly misdemeanor) probation cases drop 12 percent between 2014 and 2015. Revocations for state (mostly felony) probation cases supervised in Albemarle and Charlottesville Circuit Courts fell 22 percent.²⁷ Further,

preliminary findings following the first year of implementation of the probation violations response matrix found that jail admissions resulting from both probation violations and revocations declined from fiscal year 2014 to fiscal year 2015 following increases in the previous three years.²⁸ Analyses also documented a precipitous drop in the amount of time individuals spent in jail for violations and revocations in that year. For example, though the total number of jail bed days used for probation violations had been declining between 2011 and 2014, it dropped 75 percent from 2014 to 2015.

- Delaware County reduced probation violations 5.5 percent.²⁹
- In Grant County, the reallocation of caseloads contributed significantly to a 13 percent reduction in the active probation population over the past five years.³⁰
- While Yolo and Lane Counties have not reported concrete reductions in probation violations, both sites trained probation officers and supervisors on risk assessment and are moving toward a more risk-based approach to community supervision.³¹

SPOTLIGHT: SAN FRANCISCO'S RISK-BASED PROBATION TERMS AND UNIFORM EARLY TERMINATION PROTOCOL

After the JRI team and the Reentry Council of the City and County of San Francisco analyzed system drivers, San Francisco learned that its standard three-year probation supervision sentence was twice the average length of time to probation failure. Although only 36.5 percent of those on probation failed to complete their term, 75 percent of those who failed did so within two years, with an average time to failure of 1.4 years.^a This information provided an opportunity to shorten standard probation terms while preserving public safety.

San Francisco's cross-agency policy group decided to introduce a two-pronged initiative based on this finding.^b First is prospective, risk-based probation terms. Under the new protocol, the court assigns probation term length based on a person's score on a validated risk and needs assessment. A couple categories of offense would disqualify a defendant from receiving a risk-based term. Under the protocol, defendants assessed as low risk receive an 18-month probation term, medium risk-defendants receive a 24-month term, and high-risk defendants receive a 36-month probation term with a mandatory review for early termination suitability at 24 months.^c Roughly 30 percent of eligible probation grants have concurred with the risk-based sentencing protocol since its adoption.^c Further interagency conversations are under way to increase the percentage of eligible defendants who receive a risk-based term.^d

The second approach is to conduct early termination reviews for previously sentenced clients in a manner consistent with the prospective sentencing approach, when appropriate. This provides incentives for good performance under community supervision for clients sentenced before the risk-based terms were implemented. Though probation clients are regularly reviewed for early termination, this approach has not been implemented owing to continued discussions among stakeholders.^e

^a Reentry Council, City and County of San Francisco, "Phase II LOI" (internal document, January 2014).

^b Lore Joplin, "Local Justice Reinvestment Initiative Close Out Memo—San Francisco" (internal document, Crime and Justice Institute, Boston, May 2016).

^c Karen Shain, correspondence with Samantha Harvell, July 2016.

^d Ibid.

^e Ibid.

Improve Data Systems and Capacity

A critical component of justice reinvestment is data analysis and data-driven decisionmaking. Many sites found it challenging to efficiently extract, collect, and analyze data from agencies' data systems. To address this cross-cutting challenge, five JRI sites identified strategies to improve their data systems and increase their data analysis capacity.

New York City stakeholders recognized the need to improve data and information sharing among justice agencies and service providers. Greater information sharing, especially about people detained before trial, could help inform and improve pretrial release decisions. One of New York City's strategies, therefore, was to develop a justice provider system intended to

- pull together information across multiple city criminal justice agencies to present a more complete and comprehensive view of defendants and automate calculation of a defendant's pretrial risk score;
- facilitate enrollment of defendants in supervised release, alternative to detention, and alternative to incarceration or other similar programs in New York City by suggesting appropriate program matches for defendants at every point in their criminal case; and
- create a system that provides solutions for more standardized, detailed data collection from program providers regarding client and program outcomes, to help staff in the Mayor's Office of Criminal Justice evaluate current programs and in conducting future planning.

IMPLEMENTATION

To improve data capacity, local sites developed data warehouses, integrated data systems, data dashboards, and jail population and cost-benefit projection tools. Mecklenburg County developed a data warehouse that integrates arrest, jail, court system, and other information from multiple justice agencies. The data warehouse also allows users to generate daily, weekly, and monthly reports and monitor system-level trends such as arrest rates and changes in the jail population. Local stakeholders, from justice and non-justice agencies, use the data and reports to inform and guide policy decisions.

Johnson County stakeholders, who had been using the county's Justice Information Management System to collect and track data on people involved in the criminal justice system, wanted to expand the county's reporting capability and monitor people and system trends in near-real time. To do this, the county purchased IBM Cognos business intelligence software to generate reports and data dashboards on important justice outcomes. The Crime and Justice Institute, in partnership with an economist, developed the Jail Population Policy Impact Tool.³² Johnson County is using the tool to assess and identify population drivers and cost-effective strategies for addressing them. Allegheny County also implemented the tool, adapting it to estimate the value of county recidivism-reduction programs. Allegheny worked with a second consultant to improve the county's data-collection capacity for tracking outcomes and using them to develop and validate a county-based risk assessment.

PERFORMANCE MEASURES AND OUTCOMES

Though the outcomes related to improving data capacity are challenging to quantify, stakeholders have provided anecdotal feedback that speaks to the effectiveness of their strategies. Data capacity strategies have informed stakeholder conversations and decisionmaking about justice issues and policy. The ability to conduct in-depth analysis has allowed stakeholders to better understand and more meaningfully discuss justice population trends. Also, data availability empowers local stakeholders to routinely monitor and evaluate the implemented programs and policies. In addition, stakeholders have found that using performance measurement tools and data dashboards help hold the collaborative accountable to working toward shared goals and outcomes.

SPOTLIGHT: GRANT COUNTY'S DATA DASHBOARD

As one of its JRI strategies, Grant County developed and implemented a data dashboard to allow all stakeholders to access data in near-real time. The dashboard interfaces with three data systems: state courts, local jails, and local correctional services (probation and community corrections). Data include information about the jail population (demographics, average daily population, and length of stay by status, either pretrial or sentenced); court cases (number and age of pending cases) and time to disposition (breakdown by case type and share of cases resolved within established time frames); and probation (active caseloads by risk and supervision levels, active case summaries, and discharge outcomes). Stakeholders can filter the data and generate graphs based on time span and individual characteristics. Stakeholders are also able to “drill down” in the graphs to view more detailed information and can overlay the graphs with the intended goals to assess progress toward outcomes. Grant County envisions gathering data on 17 target areas and incorporating this information in the data dashboard. The Indiana Supreme Court adopted Grant County’s dashboard and plans to implement it statewide. The court considered the county’s dashboard a useful tool to centralize tracking of criminal justice metrics from jurisdictions across the state.

Documenting Outcomes at the Local Level

The local JRI sites have identified and implemented strategies to reduce local corrections populations and costs. However, documenting outcomes—particularly savings and reinvestment outcomes—has proved challenging. Preliminary findings are generally positive, but many localities only began implementation in fall 2014. Thus, though support through JRI has ended for most sites, many sites continue to collect performance metric data and consider their current reported outcomes preliminary.

One key metric of success for JRI is the savings generated by policy reforms and the dollars reinvested in public safety strategies. Most sites have not been able to identify real savings and reinvest those in the system. Nevertheless, many documented success in other forms that will live on well beyond participation in the initiative.

Capture and Reinvest Savings at the Local Level

Local sites faced significant challenges in identifying cost savings and reinvesting those funds. Though specifics varied across jurisdictions, many sites faced similar challenges at each stage of the process. These included (1) identifying savings generated by JRI reforms, (2) documenting those savings, (3) making that information public, and (4) reinvesting any savings in strategies that could further reform efforts.

IDENTIFYING SAVINGS

Capturing savings at the local level attributable to JRI reform is not an easy task. Accurately assessing the impact of a policy requires understanding how the relevant criminal justice outcomes were projected to change without any intervention, developing a method for measuring the fiscal impact of a change in outcomes, and attributing that change to a specific intervention or policy.

The local justice systems of many jurisdictions were projected to keep growing without JRI, so some sites were able to avoid costs they would have incurred if they had not implemented JRI strategies. Eau Claire County, which faced an increasing jail population at the outset of its JRI work, avoided the need to open a new housing unit in its jail.³³

DOCUMENTING SAVINGS

Some sites aimed to identify savings from jail population reductions but struggled to achieve stakeholder consensus on marginal jail bed costs (the actual cost of housing an additional person in a facility) and actual dollars saved. Marginal cost estimates are not routinely available and are critical because average costs typically overstate savings as they include fixed costs (e.g., building operations, maintenance, etc.) that remain stable regardless of the average daily population. Stakeholders often estimate the costs of specific components (e.g., food and medical treatment) differently, further complicating calculation of the actual cost of a jail bed day. Further, marginal costs are typically modest. Significant savings occur only when a locality reduces staff and facility costs by closing a jail unit.

MAKING SAVINGS PUBLIC

Jurisdictions that captured real savings felt political pressure to not publish those savings for fear of future budget cuts or reallocation to other agencies. Many JRI sites planned to reinvest their savings in additional reforms, and they feared losing that opportunity if dollars were reallocated to other county priorities. Despite these political sensitivities, most local stakeholders continued to work toward capturing cost savings.

REINVESTING SAVINGS

Finally, sites that did achieve savings were not always able to reinvest those funds as planned to further JRI priorities. Though Mecklenburg County was able to reduce the jail allocation in the county budget by \$4 million in fiscal year 2016 owing in part to JRI reforms, those savings were absorbed into the budget and were not reinvested in reform strategies (Mecklenburg County 2016b).

SUCCESS DESPITE CHALLENGES

Despite these challenges, some sites identified cost savings related to the implementation of their JRI strategies. Sites that focused their efforts on a specific subset of their jail population were able to better estimate the savings of their policies. Denver's Recovery Court reduced costs for some of the jail's most frequent users by 67 percent during the first 11 months of the program, leading to over \$1.6 million in avoided costs.³⁴ Santa Cruz's PACT program targeted people who frequently violated local ordinances, resulting in \$76,937 of avoided jail bed costs for program participants.³⁵ Preliminary outcomes from the Albemarle-Charlottesville Regional Jail indicate that incarcerations for probation revocations decreased 63 percent, leading to a cost avoidance of nearly \$2.2 million.³⁶

Find Alternative Measures of Success

Though many local JRI sites faced challenges in identifying savings as a result of their reforms, some localities have documented success in other ways. In addition to reducing justice system spending and encouraging reinvestment, JRI has encouraged systems change and the creation of new, collaborative roles within agencies, as well as ongoing data analysis, increased training and capacity, and implementation of evidence-based practices.

For example, sites created staff positions with JRI funds that are now absorbed within agency budgets: Alachua County hired a jail release coordinator, Allegheny County embedded caseworkers, and Yamhill County hired a pretrial officer. Sites also created new programs and programming space: Denver established its Recovery Court, Travis County created a housing program, Alachua County implemented an inmate transition program, and Milwaukee created its CLU as a central location for community services and treatment for program participants and for managing diversion and deferred prosecution cases.

A number of local agencies have also fundamentally changed the way they do business. Community supervision agencies have incorporated evidence-based practices, such as supervision response grids in Charlottesville-Albemarle, Grant, and Delaware Counties and risk assessment in Lane and Yolo Counties. Jurisdictions have also built capacity within agencies by hiring data analysts and focusing on collecting and analyzing data routinely and systematically, as with Grant County's data dashboard, Johnson County's use of Cognos business intelligence software, and Mecklenburg's data warehouse. Further, JRI has facilitated local systems change and helped jurisdictions develop new collaborations between agencies.

SPOTLIGHT: MECKLENBURG COUNTY'S DRIVER'S LICENSE RESTORATION CLINIC

Mecklenburg County identified low-level offenses as one driver of its jail population, with a significant proportion of arrests for people driving with their license revoked. North Carolina law permits license revocation for more than 70 reasons, many of which are unrelated to traffic violations (Denning 2010). To address these license revocation cases and reduce their contribution to the jail population, Mecklenburg County developed an innovative strategy to help people get their licenses reinstated.

Local law school students supervised by attorneys from Mecklenburg County's public defender's office set up a clinic for people who have been arrested for driving with a revoked license. The clinic first addresses any outstanding fines or warrants that could affect clients' driving eligibility through payment plans and negotiation with the district attorney. Then it helps clients navigate the Department of Motor Vehicles to have their licenses restored, an arduous and bureaucratic task. As of March 2016, 225 people have enrolled in the clinic and 24 have had their licenses restored. None of those 24 have been subsequently rearrested for driving with a revoked license.^a

^aMecklenburg County, "Mecklenburg County Justice Reinvestment Initiative Outcomes and Updates" (internal document, May 2016).

Keys to Successfully Implementing Reform

Regardless of the measure of success, application of the JRI process required adaptation at the local level, as site experiences did not always reflect the structure of the JRI model. Each local site formalized the JRI process by convening a working group and comprehensively analyzing the drivers of its local jail population and costs. However, many local sites struggled to use those findings to identify and implement targeted policy solutions in a timely manner. For states, that process is dictated by the legislative cycle; they are forced to identify viable policy strategies and move forward quickly to develop and introduce legislation during the current session. Local jurisdictions did not have comparable external time pressure, and many remained in the policy development phase for a year or more. In fact, most jurisdictions did not finalize their implementation strategies until BJA imposed a deadline for submitting funding requests for support. By that time, the data analysis in many sites was considered outdated, and it was unclear whether selected strategies aligned with the most pressing current drivers.

Ultimately, sites varied significantly throughout the JRI process, and some localities identified and implemented reforms more successfully than others. The mechanism for codifying policy changes inherent in legislation at the state level was also missing at the local level. As a result, some sites were not able to formalize their programs and policy changes sustainably. Despite these challenges, particular elements emerged as keys to successful implementation, including a dedicated site coordinator, a strong champion for reform, ongoing collaboration, internal data capacity, working within the state context, and patience and persistence.

Use a Cross-Agency Site Coordinator

One key element of success in local JRI was a dedicated site coordinator, ideally someone tasked with overseeing implementation and maintaining accountability while working across agencies and building coalitions. In sites with a strong coordinator, the strategies were generally closely managed and monitored, stakeholders demonstrated strong consensus for strategies, and the site coordinator could focus on JRI without neglecting additional job duties. A number of sites used site coordinators well, including Mecklenburg, Johnson, and Milwaukee Counties.

Identify a Champion for Reform

In addition to a site coordinator tasked with monitoring and implementing JRI strategies, a consistent, strong champion for reform from within one or more participating agencies was a key element of success. Several sites, including Yamhill County and Denver, had a prominent judge working with others to implement court-specific strategies. Other sites had district attorneys, court administrators, or probation chiefs as champions. Because JRI required buy-in over a significant period, sites occasionally experienced turnover in either their site coordinator or champion. The most successful sites transitioned responsibilities and authority from one individual to the next. When Denver's Recovery Court judge retired, Denver moved to a new champion by training the incoming judge on the protocols and allowing him to build relationships with participants and other stakeholders. Johnson County transitioned smoothly to a new site coordinator when the original site coordinator, a strong proponent of JRI, retired.

Encourage Ongoing Collaboration

As mentioned on page 2, an initial step of the JRI model is to establish a collaborative, interagency working group. A number of sites with a strong history of collaboration already had such a group in place, from either EBDM or other system reform work. The ability to build from this existing group, rather than develop it from scratch, helped sites move more quickly through data analysis, strategy selection, and implementation. Although it may have required more time, many sites without preexisting working groups were still able to develop strong collaboration to make decisions. And some sites were able to leverage their TA provider as a neutral outside voice to help facilitate collaboration and consensus on divisive strategies.

Build and Maintain Data Capacity

Internal data capacity was an additional key element of reform in local JRI sites. Sites that had an integrated data system in place, such as Johnson County, were able to efficiently collect and analyze data, identify the drivers of their jail populations, and choose and implement policy strategies. They were also well positioned to evaluate the strategies implemented because data were more readily available and accessible. Some sites worked with TA providers or outside evaluators to monitor implementation of the strategies and routinely analyze data in order to identify implementation challenges and make midcourse corrections. Other sites, such as Eau Claire County, Mecklenburg

County, and New York City, hired criminal justice-specific data analysts to provide support and evaluate the JRI strategies.

Work with State-Level Reforms

Because local criminal justice reform does not occur in a vacuum, sites that were able to leverage resources and build on state reforms, rather than simply react to them, were often more successful. Yamhill County developed an exemplar pretrial program and was awarded funding from Oregon's Criminal Justice Commission, through the state's Justice Reinvestment Grant Program, to hire additional pretrial services officers and share its knowledge with other counties in Oregon.

Be Patient and Persistent

JRI is a time-intensive process, requiring both patience and perseverance. Many sites experienced unanticipated challenges, including staff turnover, political obstacles, administrative and funding delays, data challenges, and implementation hurdles. Sites that overcame these challenges had many of the characteristics listed above, but they also were able to adapt quickly, work together, and seek assistance when needed.

JRI in Context

JRI is one of several local justice system reform efforts. In many local sites, JRI built on previous efforts and launched additional reform work. The initiative most closely intertwined with JRI is EBDM, funded by the National Institute of Corrections with technical assistance by the Center for Effective Public Policy.^a Charlottesville-Albemarle, Eau Claire, Grant, Milwaukee, and Yamhill Counties all received both EBDM and JRI grants; many of those sites leveraged the working groups and strategies they developed under EBDM to inform their JRI work.

Other sites were involved with various federally and privately funded local justice system work, such as the Transition from Jail to Community Initiative (Denver), BJA's Smart Suite of programs (Allegheny County, Denver, Milwaukee County, New York City, and Travis County), the Laura and John Arnold Foundation's Public Safety Assessment pilot (Mecklenburg, Santa Cruz, and San Francisco Counties), and the MacArthur Foundation's Safety and Justice Challenge (Mecklenburg County, Milwaukee County, and New York City). Significant investment in these counties across multiple grant programs is beneficial, but it creates challenges in assessing the impact of any one program on core outcomes and determining how best to bring different initiatives to scale nationally.

SPOTLIGHT: SAN FRANCISCO'S STRATEGY TO REDUCE RACIAL AND ETHNIC DISPARITIES

San Francisco's criminal justice partners decided to focus on reducing racial and ethnic disparities across the entire criminal justice system. They commissioned the W. Haywood Burns Institute to conduct a disparity analysis. The analysis found significant disparities at key decision points. For example, compared with white adults, black adults were 7 times more likely to be arrested, 11 times more likely to be booked into jail, and 10 times more likely to be convicted of a crime.^a The analysis also concluded that severe inadequacies in data reporting resulted in unavailable or incomplete data. As a result, the actual disparities are likely even greater than those identified in the analysis. San Francisco developed a two-pronged strategy to address these disparities: (1) the Mayor's Data Officer agreed to develop a proposal for consistent collection and analysis of racial and ethnic data, and (2) five community meetings were held to solicit specific action suggestions from community members. Based on the report's findings and input from the community meetings, San Francisco's criminal justice partners are now creating action plans for reducing racial disparities and improving data reporting so progress can be measured.

^aLore Joplin, "Local Justice Reinvestment Initiative Close Out Memo—San Francisco" (internal document, Crime and Justice Institute, Boston, May 2016).

Next Steps: Maximizing Local Reforms

Justice reinvestment provided an opportunity for many local jurisdictions to implement reforms and integrate data-driven, evidence-based practices in their criminal justice systems. Four sites are able to continue expanding their justice reinvestment efforts through a BJA-funded Maximizing Local Reforms grant. This grant aims to improve upon jurisdictions' reforms and further sites' ability to reinvest savings in high-performing public safety strategies. Denver, Milwaukee County, New York City, and Santa Cruz County were selected to continue honing and improving their justice reinvestment strategies. The Local Maximizing Reforms projects, which will take place over three years, began in October 2015. The four sites are focused on the following strategies:

Denver: Although the Recovery Court has shown it can reduce jail bed days, detox usage, and hospital emergency visits, it has been unable to provide treatment to two types of front-end users who need a higher level of care: those found incompetent to aid in their defense, who are thus released from jail without services; and those who need more substance abuse treatment than the Recovery Court program can provide. Denver will focus on improving services for these two groups by establishing alternatives for people whose competency is likely to be questioned but who are ineligible for civil commitment, increasing civil commitments for those found incompetent as appropriate, providing health insurance enrollment for those who are not currently enrolled, hiring a behavioral health care coordinator, and securing transitional beds for program use.

Milwaukee County: Milwaukee County plans to provide enhanced services for people with mental illness. While the CLU has demonstrated early success, the needs of justice-involved people with mental health concerns were not being met. Milwaukee County will use its funding to obtain technical

assistance from mental-health experts, select a validated mental health screening tool to incorporate in pretrial screening, implement stakeholder and staff training, and hire one full-time CLU case manager and one part-time certified peer support specialist.

New York City: New York City plans to address three main strategies: expand supervised release as an alternative to detention; improve alternative to detention and alternative to incarceration programs through fidelity to evidence-based practices; and develop a data system to track, monitor, and evaluate justice program capacity and performance. In March 2016 the city launched its supervised release strategy as an alternative to detention for people arrested for misdemeanors or nonviolent felonies. Supervised release providers use a risk assessment tool to determine eligibility and guide supervision levels and to provide participating defendants referrals to voluntary services. The strategy is on track to divert more than 3,000 individuals a year.³⁷ The city has also started designing and building the justice provider system, which is projected to launch by the end of 2016.

Santa Cruz County: While Santa Cruz County's PACT program and other pretrial strategies have demonstrated early success, the county's criminal justice system has since been affected by statewide legislative changes. California State Proposition 47 (Prop 47), for example, may significantly alter pretrial reform. Under Prop 47, some low-level crimes are classified as misdemeanors, and people charged for those crimes are issued a court date, not arrested. If they fail to appear in court, they may be arrested, eliminating their eligibility for pretrial release. Santa Cruz County plans to address this issue and enhance its pretrial capacity by hiring a pretrial officer, implementing an automated notification system, and providing more extensive, community-based outreach for a targeted group of Prop 47 defendants at high risk of failing to appear for their court dates. These efforts are designed to significantly expand the number of people recommended for pretrial release.

Conclusion

Over the past six years, 17 local jurisdictions across the country have worked diligently to implement JRI, and it appears these efforts have generally paid off. Sites as diverse as San Francisco, California; Johnson County, Kansas; and Mecklenburg County, North Carolina, have committed to using a data-driven approach to understand how their local justice systems are functioning, identify policy strategies that could produce a better public safety return on investment, implement reforms, and track their progress. These wide-ranging reforms have encompassed everything from improving data capacity to finding better ways to address the needs of frequent front-end users, reforming pretrial processes, and implementing evidence-based supervision practices. This work was not easy, and identifying and reinvesting savings proved particularly challenging for most sites. In this sense, local justice reinvestment has not uniformly generated savings that can be easily quantified and directly reinvested into other public functions. However, findings suggest that many local sites have changed the way they do business and improved their practices in other ways that will long outlive the Justice Reinvestment Initiative.

Notes

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5. Mecklenburg County, “Mecklenburg County Justice Reinvestment Initiative Outcomes and Updates” (internal document, May 2016).
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