

Reducing Jail Use through Diversion and Deflection

Speaker Biographies

Lisa Burns is a Licensed Clinical Social Worker with the East Baton Rouge Criminal Justice Coordinating Council's Pretrial Diversion and Recovery Program. She began her career in the criminal justice system at the Public Defender's Office, where she worked her way from secretary to paralegal. Driven by a desire to provide direct clinical support, Lisa returned to school to earn her master's degree in social work and subsequently became a Licensed Clinical Social Worker. Following her clinical training, Lisa served as the sole social worker at the East Baton Rouge Parish Prison for 16 years. She joined the Pretrial Diversion and Recovery Program just prior to the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic, helping to adapt services during a critical period of limited jail access. In her current role, Lisa assesses eligible participants, develops individualized case plans, and coordinates appropriate treatment placements. She also serves in the District Attorney's Office pilot Retail Theft Program, working collaboratively to connect participants with resources aimed at addressing underlying behavioral health needs and reducing repeat offenses.

Niles Haymer is the Deputy Director of the East Baton Rouge Criminal Justice Coordinating Council (CJCC). A native of Baton Rouge, he earned his bachelor's degree in political science from Southern University in 2000 and his Juris Doctor from Southern University Law Center in 2003. Over the course of his legal career, Niles served as an assistant public defender, assistant prosecutor, and law professor bringing a well-rounded perspective to criminal justice reform and system coordination. Niles joined the CJCC in 2020, first as an Assistant City Prosecutor assigned to the Rapid Case Assessment Team (RCAT) Program (a CJCC initiative that sought to resolve cases for individuals with minor offenses within 72 hours of arrest). In 2022, he joined the CJCC staff as Deputy Director, where he also serves as Program Director for the Pretrial Diversion and Recovery Program. In this role, Niles provides oversight of the Pretrial Diversion and Recovery Program, supervising program operations and working collaboratively with justice system and treatment partners to ensure eligible individuals are appropriately screened, referred, and supported through diversion options addressing substance use and behavioral health needs.

Jesse Jannetta is a senior policy fellow in the Justice and Safety Division at the Urban Institute, where he leads projects on gun violence reduction initiatives, prison and jail reentry, local justice reform, and community supervision. He directs Urban's work as a partner in the Safety and Justice Challenge, is co-principal investigator for the Evaluation of Oakland's Measure Z Services, and is a member of the leadership team for the Prison Research and Innovation Initiative. He was previously principal investigator for the Developing a Research-Based Practice Guide to Prevent Youth Gun and Gang Violence project, co-lead for the Community Violence Intervention Research and Evaluation Training and Technical Assistance Center, project director for the Transition from Jail to Community initiative, process and fidelity assessment lead for the evaluation of the National Initiative for Building Community Trust and Justice, and co-principal investigator for evaluations of the Los Angeles Gang Reduction and Youth Development strategy and the Chicago Violence Reduction Strategy. He applies mixed-methods approaches to process and impact evaluations and provides technical assistance to state and local jurisdictions. Before joining Urban, Jannetta was a research specialist at the Center for Evidence-Based Corrections at the University of California, Irvine. He evaluated GPS monitoring for parolees, analyzed parole discharge and violation response policies, measured the scope of correctional control in California, and assessed inmate and parolee programs against evidence-based program design principles. Jannetta

holds a BA in political science from the University of Michigan and an MPP from the Harvard Kennedy School.

Debbie Norwood is the Resource Coordinator for the East Baton Rouge Criminal Justice Coordinating Council's Pretrial Diversion and Recovery Program. She earned a Bachelor of Arts in Sociology with a concentration in Criminology from Louisiana State University in 1994 and is a graduate of the LSU Basic Training Academy. Debbie brings a strong academic foundation and decades of hands-on criminal justice experience to her role. Debbie's career spans more than 20 years in law enforcement, corrections, and court operations. She has served with the East Baton Rouge Sheriff's Office in multiple capacities, including Central Booking supervision, uniform patrol, communications, and courtroom security. She also worked with the Baton Rouge City Constable's Office in the city jail and warrants division. Since joining the CJCC in 2018, Debbie has played a key role in connecting participants to critical resources and supporting successful outcomes within the Pretrial Diversion and Recovery Program and the District Attorney's Office pilot Retail Theft Program.

Lori Pesci is the Director of Public Safety for Summit County (OH), where she provides strategic leadership on criminal justice, homeland security, and emergency management issues. As Director, Lori oversees the Summit County Emergency Management Agency along with the County's Justice Affairs, Public Safety Communications, and Animal Control Divisions. Over her career, Lori has directed several major modernization and system-reform initiatives focused on improving efficiency, access to justice, and public safety outcomes. These include leading the Virtual Court project, which equipped the Common Pleas Court and three municipal courts with technology to expand virtual hearings, as well as the implementation of a regional CAD system and the successful consolidation of multiple emergency dispatch centers—efforts that significantly improved coordination, efficiency, and service delivery across the county. Lori assisted in creating the Jail Operations Advisory Commission, established to review jail finances and operations, identify best practices, and recommend improvements for both staff and inmates. She is a member of the Criminal Justice Advisory Board (the County's Criminal Justice Coordinating Council), has chaired the Jail Overcrowding Subcommittee and CAD Oversight Committee, served on the Summit County Reentry Network Executive Committee, and participated in the Criminal Justice and Mental Health Forum. In addition, she has managed multimillion-dollar grant programs, served as a peer reviewer for the U.S. Bureau of Justice Assistance, and advised local, regional, and state policymakers on justice and public safety matters. Since 2017, Lori has been actively involved in the Safety and Justice Challenge, helping to advance data-driven, evidence-based strategies to safely reduce jail populations while maintaining accountability and community safety. Through this work, she has supported the development, implementation, and sustainability of innovative pretrial and diversion initiatives, including efforts to secure innovation funding for programs such as Summit County's Felony Summons Program. Her involvement has emphasized cross-system collaboration, policy development, stakeholder buy-in, and the use of data to inform decision-making and demonstrate program impact. Lori began her career as a Deputy Sheriff with the Mahoning County Sheriff's Office, gaining experience in patrol, investigations, and jail operations, and earning certification as an Ohio Peace Officer Training Academy Instructor. She holds a B.S. and M.S. in Criminal Justice from Youngstown State University, a J.D. from Cleveland State University's Cleveland-Marshall College of Law and attended the Naval Postgraduate School's Center for Homeland Defense and Security. She is currently on the Board of Directors for the National Criminal Justice Association and participates on several volunteer boards for local organizations, where she contributes her expertise to strengthen community resilience and public safety partnership.