



Strengthening Connections & Expanding Horizons

2023 Year in Review

2023 Community Justice Council Members: Carlo Esqueda, *Clerk of Courts, Chair of CJC*; Ismael Ozanne, *District Attorney, Vice Chair of CJC*; Calvin Barrett, *Sheriff*; Jerome Dillard, *Community Representative*; Judge John Hyland, *Courts*; Myra McNair, *Community Representative*; Patrick Miles, *County Board of Supervisors*; John Jay Miller, *Community Representative*; Joseph Parisi, *County Executive*.

Advisory Members: Richelle Andrae, *Public Protection and Judiciary Committee*; Catherine Dorl, *Public Defender*; Troy Enger, *Department of Corrections Regional Chief*; Todd Meurer, *Municipal Judge*; John Patterson, *Assistant Chief of Madison Police Department*; Brent Plisch, *Chiefs of Police Associations*; Satya Rhodes-Conway, *Mayor of Madison*; Heidi Wegleitner, *Human Health and Needs Committee*.

Reflections from Chair Carlo Esqueda

2023 was an exciting and productive year for the Community Justice Council. As Dane County plotted a course forward in establishing a Crisis Triage Center and a Community Court, CJC members and staff took advantage of opportunities to visit our counterparts in several cities around the country who have moved forward on such initiatives so that we may learn from their experiences and advice.

We continued our outreach to the community on issues of interest, as we facilitated a Community Conversation on pretrial policies and procedures with the help of Advancing Pretrial Policy and Research, a project group run by the Center for Effective Public Policy.

Based on research initiated by Judge Nicholas McNamara, the CJC has continued to examine and refine our understanding of how bail decisions are made in our Circuit Court, particularly with regard to how often cash bail is imposed in relation to signature bonds.

The data dashboards accessible via the CJC website benefited from further enhancement this year through the hard work of CJC staff and data owners. The CJC has always prioritized data transparency, and these dashboards provide the public with ever-improving access to information spanning every aspect of the justice system in Dane County.

Finally, the membership of the CJC and its committees was enhanced this year by the addition of several community members with lived experience in the criminal justice system. This came as a result of County Board action to amend the ordinance that established the CJC, and provides us with voices and input that will inform and improve our work for many years to come.

Welcome to new CJC members!

Jerome Dillard; Myra McNair; John Jay Miller (CJC)

Tamra Oman (CJC-Behavioral Health)

Shar-ron Buie; Deborah Mejchar (CJC-Pretrial)

Carmella Glenn; Aaron Hicks (CJC-Racial Disparities)

Lisa Burrell; Anthony Cooper; Evelyn Cruz; Brandi Grayson; Kirbie Mack (CJC-CCAC)



On a personal note, I have gratefully served as CJC Chair from April, 2022, and that tenure will end with my retirement in January 2024. In this role, I have been witness to champions for criminal justice improvement and reform doing important and meaningful work. This includes community members, Dane County staff and elected officials. The Dane County CJC will continue to evolve and grow, yet will hold steadfast to our common ideals of equity, fairness and justice for all.

Dane County CJC Wins \$600k National Grant



CJC-Community Court Advisory Committee chaired by Sup. Dana Pellebon and Linda Ketcham

After years of work in data driven justice, restorative practices, and community engagement , the CJC of Dane County applied for – and won—a \$600K federal Bureau of Justice (BJA) planning grant for a community court, and ultimately a community justice center.

Nationally, community courts embrace the following principles: restoring the community; bridging the gap between communities and courts; knitting together a fractured criminal justice system; helping offenders deal with root problems that may lead to crime; providing courts with better information; and ultimately building a physical structure that reflects these ambitions.

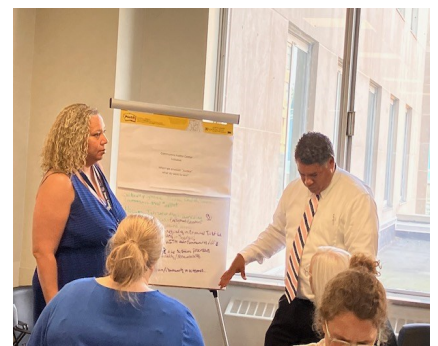
Successful community courts and community justice centers address root issues, increase partnerships for action among justice stakeholders and local residents, and enhance community safety and well being of respondents (offenders) and victims.

The CJC created a planning committee that included membership from the CJC-Racial Disparities subcommittee and members of advocacy organizations, people with lived experience, victim advocates, municipal judges and community leaders to work collaboratively and develop recommendations for the community court. The committee completed intensive reviews of potential offenses, service arrays, demographics, and potential location(s) for a community court of Dane County.

Members of the planning committee visited peer community courts including: Cook County, IL; and in the near future will visit Reno, NV; and Eugene, OR. A report of recommendations reflecting the planning committee’s work is expected in early 2024. All meetings are available to review via video/meeting minutes at countyofdane.com (public meetings/agendas).

The CJC continues a long term partnership with the Center for Justice Innovation (CJI), previously the Center for Court Innovation, as our research partner and technical assistance provider. There are 10 grantees in the Dane County cohort, ranging from Delaware to San Francisco. BJA continues to support the community court expansion with additional grantees added in 2023-2024.

Thank you to all members of the Community Court Advisory Committee. Your hard work and dedication was witnessed as the committee met twice per month for several months. The CJC continues to learn about community courts across the country, while embracing the recommendations of our local champions.

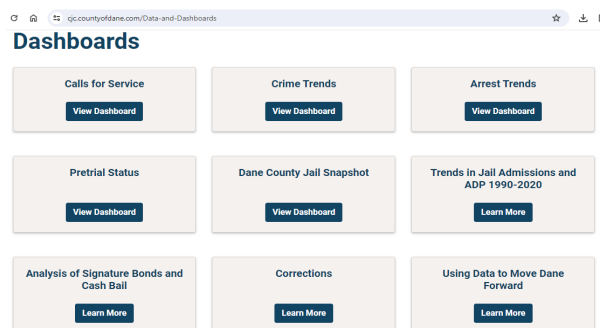


New Data Developments

The Community Justice Council continued its dedication to advancing justice improvements through data-driven insights, building on previous achievements and undertaking new initiatives. In 2023, CJC members continued to support its mission by establishing successful collaboration models that enhance the power of data.

Key data developments in 2023 include:

- **Data-sharing agreement strengthened:** CJC data owners reaffirmed their commitment to maintaining and expanding mechanisms to share data between agencies, by establishing an updated and revised data-sharing agreement.
- **Continued Collaboration with Harvard University:** The CJC neared the conclusion of a long-term collaboration with Harvard University's Access to Justice Lab. This collaboration focused on evaluating the results of a randomized control trial for the Public Safety Assessment, a pretrial risk assessment tool. Access to Justice staff are scheduled to share results in early 2024.
- **Transparency through new dashboards:** The CJC developed several new dashboards as part of its ongoing commitment to enhancing transparency on criminal justice matters. These dashboards are designed to provide tools and data to system stakeholders and community members, allowing them to customize data to fit their need, including accessing data disaggregated by race, gender, and age. Explore the dashboards at <https://cjc.countyofdane.com/Data-and-Dashboards>.
- **Enhanced deliberations by the Community Court Advisory Committee:** Extensive data played a central role in the discussions of the Community Court Advisory Committee. The committee utilized information from CJC data owners to shape conversations on potential target populations, offenses, and services.
- **Success in high jail utilizer notification system:** The CJC successfully developed and implemented a flag that notifies system human service partners via email when a high jail utilizer is booked into the jail. This initiative was further expanded to send information to an additional partner, the Public Defender's Office.



Visit <https://cjc.countyofdane.com/> for more data

CJC-Behavioral Health Subcommittee

The CJC-Behavioral Health subcommittee is focused on improving the intersection of behavioral health and criminal justice along the continuum of justice involvement. A long term effort of the CJC includes the **Familiar Faces Initiative**. Familiar Faces are people who experience behavioral health challenges that lead them to cycle through multiple systems and agencies, including the jail, homeless shelters, emergency departments, and other public social services without the opportunity to gain full stability. Dane County was accepted to a national cohort of counties committed to support Familiar Faces and keep them out of the jail through innovative practices. Through this initiative run by the National Association of Counties (NACo), CJC members have had the opportunity to meet with national technical assistance providers and connect with other counties that are approaching this same issue.

Recently, the CJC Behavioral Health subcommittee piloted a lived experience survey, attempting to gather critical information from our residents who have behavioral health, substance use, and other challenges in the system. Although it was a small sample, it was a great first start into incorporating the thoughts and experience of those residents with lived experience in behavioral health issues — and often times—interactions with law enforcement and jails. The subcommittee was led in this work by Judge Susan Crawford, and joined by all committee members. A special shout out to Tamra Oman, a new subcommittee member with a wealth of experience and energy which was the catalyst for this pilot survey. We hope it will be the start of incorporating more voices into our work. [See the survey results here.](#)

The Future: the Office of Justice Reform

In the 2023 budget, County Executive Parisi created the new Dane County Office of Justice Reform. Through a combination of new staff positions and realigning existing capacity, this new department will be a dedicated, independent resource to bridge agencies within the criminal justice system and lead Dane County's next steps on data driven reforms. The budget includes funds for the agency to administer a micro-grant program to support community-based reforms.

The budget also allocates \$85,000 for a new re-entry partnership with Dane County and Project Big Step to help those leaving jail with job training that can lead to careers in the trades.

Additionally, a community court coordinator position was budgeted to coordinate the ongoing community court efforts.

As of this publication, a Director has yet not been chosen. Due to staffing challenges, the CJC and its subcommittees are on temporary hiatus.



CJC-Pretrial Subcommittee

The Dane County CJC continues to be a leader in Wisconsin for innovative pretrial practices. The CJC was selected by **Advancing Pretrial Policy and Research (APPR)**, a national expert on pretrial justice, as one of the sites to receive targeted training and technical assistance on pretrial justice initiatives. APPR assisted Dane County in community engagement, review of the pretrial release matrix, as well as communications around local and national pretrial improvements. APPR also co-hosted a **community conversation and town hall on pretrial justice**. This event was held on January 31st, 2023 (for more information, please subscribe to the CJC calendar or visit our website).

In addition to the CJC's work, in 2022 Dane County established the **Office of Pretrial Services (OPS)**. The Office of Pretrial Services is its own department (whereas previously, pretrial services was part of the Office of the Clerk of Courts). It balances two objectives: providing services that minimize unnecessary pretrial detention and ensuring public protection while awaiting trial.

For more information, please visit: <https://courts.countyofdane.com/Alternatives/Pretrial-Services>.

Special Session of the CJC : Jan 25, 2024!

Join us on January 25 at 12:15 pm for a special session of the CJC of Dane County. Listen and learn as our research partner, Access to Justice (Harvard University) reviews the findings of a multi-year study of the Dane County pretrial risk assessment and any changes in jail stays, racial equity, and fairness outcomes. [Access the agenda here](#).