



DANE COUNTY

Melissa Agard
County Executive

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CONTACT: execmedia@danecounty.gov, 608-800-1127

Dane County Secures Two National Grants for Justice Reform

Madison, WI – The Dane County Office of Justice Reform and the Dane County Community Justice Council have secured two important national grants to enhance the effectiveness, safety, and equity of the criminal justice system:

Intersection of Justice and Behavioral Health:

Dane County has been awarded a technical assistance grant to develop integrated strategies for identifying and addressing the needs of justice-involved adults with co-occurring mental health and substance use disorders. As part of this effort, Dane County stakeholders will participate in the Sequential Intercept Model Mapping workshop, led by Policy Research, Inc. (PRI) in Troy, New York. This workshop is designed to help communities identify existing resources, pinpoint service gaps, and improve coordination and communication among mental health, substance use, and criminal justice professionals.

County Executive Melissa Agard emphasized, "A more just and effective criminal justice system requires collaboration at every level. By strengthening partnerships, closing service gaps, and improving coordination, we can create safer, more equitable outcomes for everyone in Dane County."

Key agency leaders, staff, and peer advocates from Dane County's behavioral health, substance use, housing, EMS, and criminal justice will participate in the Sequential Intercept Model training in early summer 2025.

Housing Solutions:

Dane County has also been selected for the 2025 Housing Justice Peer Network, out of a large pool of candidates. This 16-month initiative is supported by the Charles and Lynn Schusterman Family Philanthropies and the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation. It brings together housing and criminal justice stakeholders from various jurisdictions to strengthen partnerships and initiatives aimed at increasing housing access for justice-involved individuals.

Dane County is one of just eight jurisdictions chosen for this prestigious opportunity. The Center for Justice Innovation, in collaboration with the Housing Solutions Lab at the NYU Furman Center, will offer peer learning, technical assistance, and policy guidance to participating agencies.

Colleen Clark Bernhardt, Director of the Office of Justice Reform, explains, "Though the Office of Justice Reform is a newly established department in Dane County, it has already made a significant impact by bringing valuable resources that help create better and more effective policies and programs for all of our residents. We collaborate closely with the Dane County Community Justice Council,, as well as national and local stakeholders, to co-create effective solutions."

The Dane County Community Justice Council serves as a platform for ongoing discussions and the development of innovative frameworks and practices aimed at improving the justice system, including the two key awards above.

For more information about the Community Justice Council of Dane County, please see: <https://cjc.danecounty.gov/>

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