



SAFETY+JUSTICE CHALLENGE

An initiative to reduce over-incarceration by changing the way America thinks about and uses jails

The **problem** we set out to tackle in 2015



In 2015, there were nearly **12 million** annual jail admissions nationwide—the populations of NYC and Los Angeles **combined**.



Annual jail admissions were **19x** that of annual admissions to state and federal prisons.

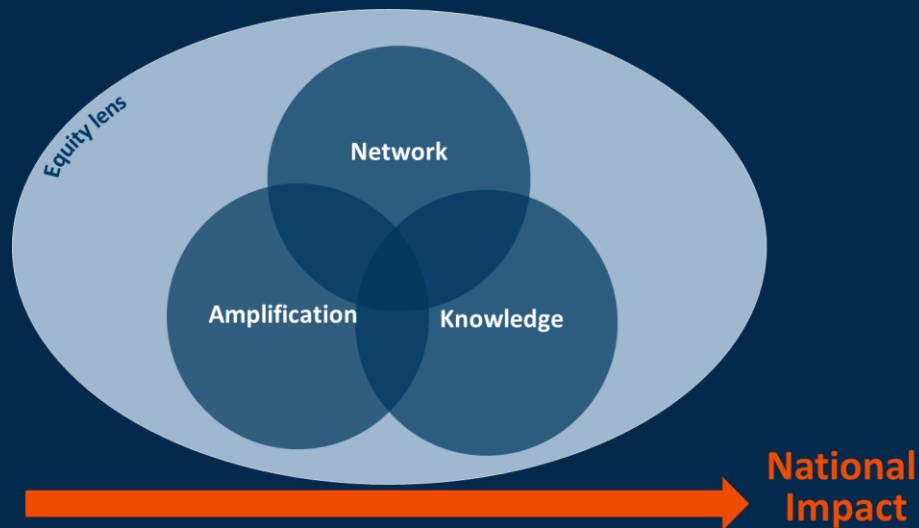


3 out of **5** people being held in jail were legally presumed **innocent**.



Black Americans were being jailed at almost **4x** the rate of white Americans.

THE APPROACH



- Large, multi-year grants to 26 local jurisdictions
- Additional grants to spark innovation in 54 more jurisdictions
- Robust data infrastructure and data capacity building in sites
- Intensive technical assistance support for grantees
- “Big tent” embrace of a diversity of viewpoints about how to effect change
- Strong commitment to centering racial equity and community engagement
- Research and knowledge development for the field

Value Statement

The SJC's value statement uplifts racial equity and justice as the core of the initiative's justice system transformation strategy, guiding program and investment decision-making through commitments to:

- Advance **racial equity** and **justice**
- **Authentically collaborate** with community members, people with lived experiences, and system actors
- Prioritize the **dignity** of all justice-impacted individuals
- Honor the **expertise of directly-impacted communities**
- Leading with an **intersectional perspective**
- **Confronting** the history of **systemic racism**
- Achieving **equitable outcomes** for all people

Efforts to center equity and community engagement

- ✓ **Enshrining commitments through an actionable value statement**
- Establishing equity-focused partnerships
- Funding strategies that empower community voices
- Launching the Racial Equity Cohort

What have we built? A **diverse and far-reaching** Network.



82 sites

35 states

\$388M total investment

332 innovative reform strategies

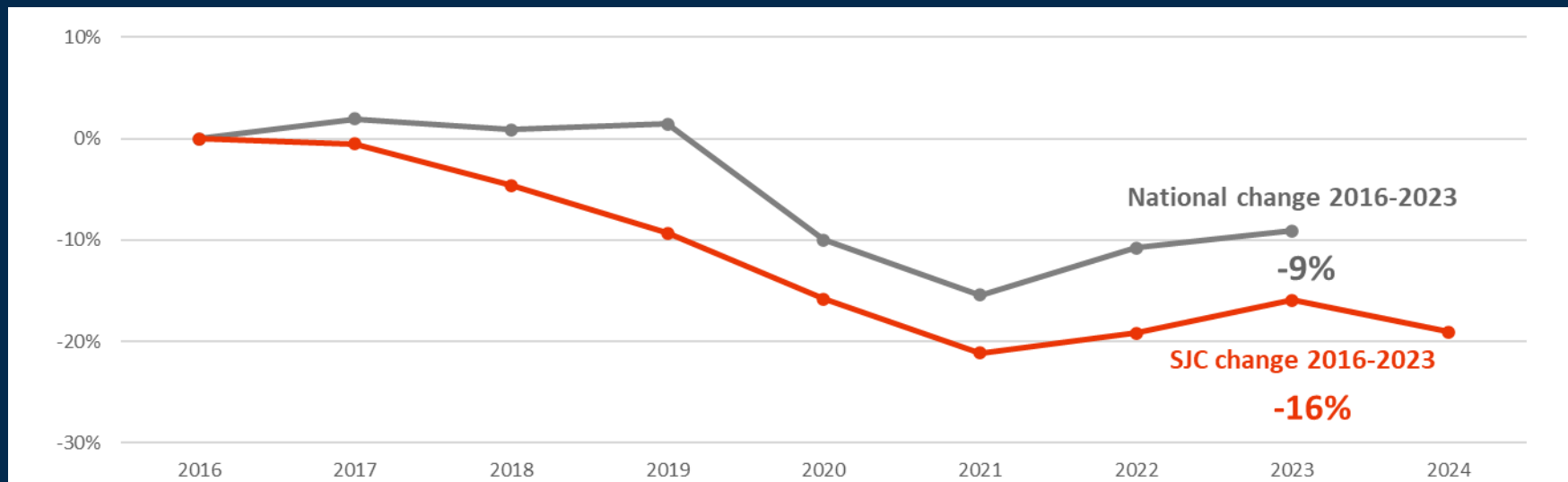
45+ partner organizations



WHAT HAVE WE DEMONSTRATED?

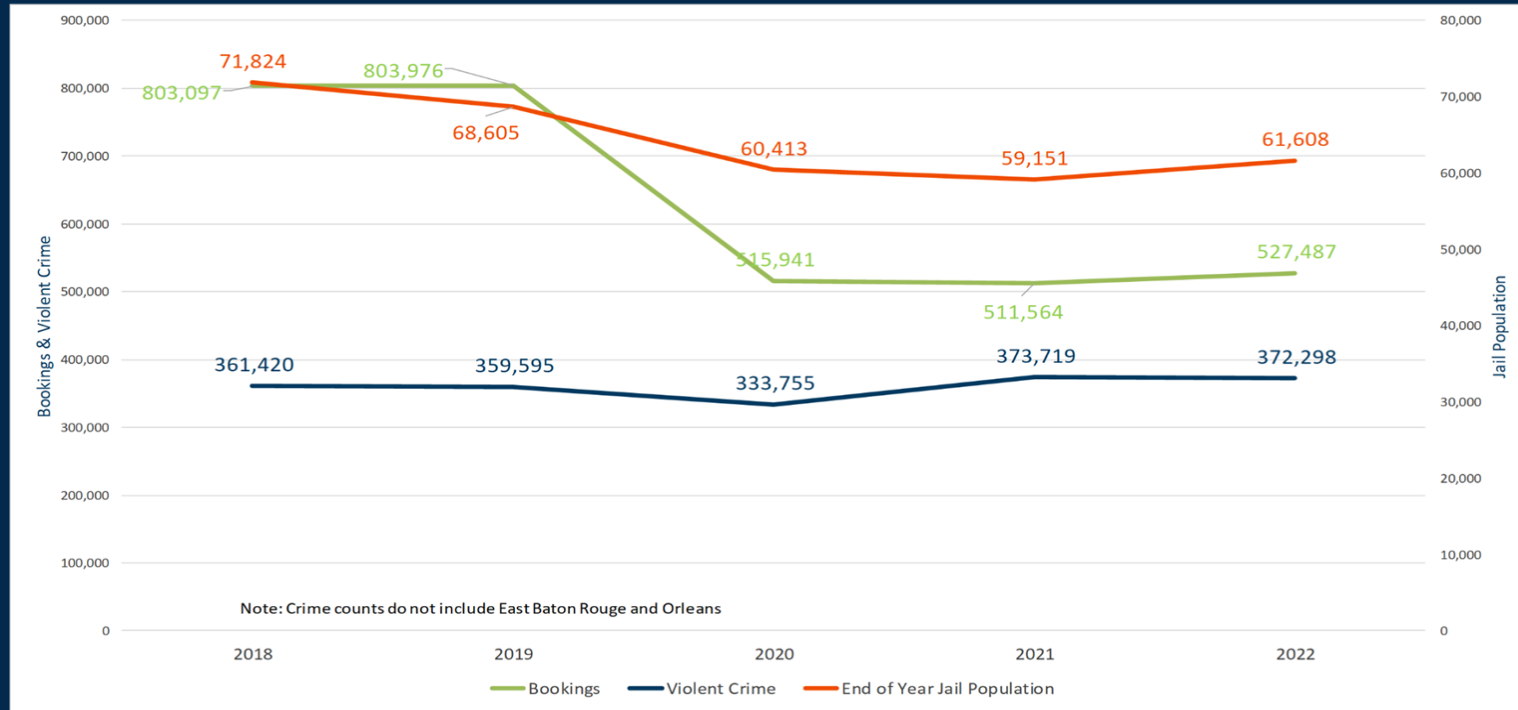
JAIL POPULATIONS CAN BE REDUCED

Percent change in jail population since 2016



Source: Data submitted by SJC sites to CUNY ISLG and Bureau of Labor Statistics Annual Survey of Jails (US Average).

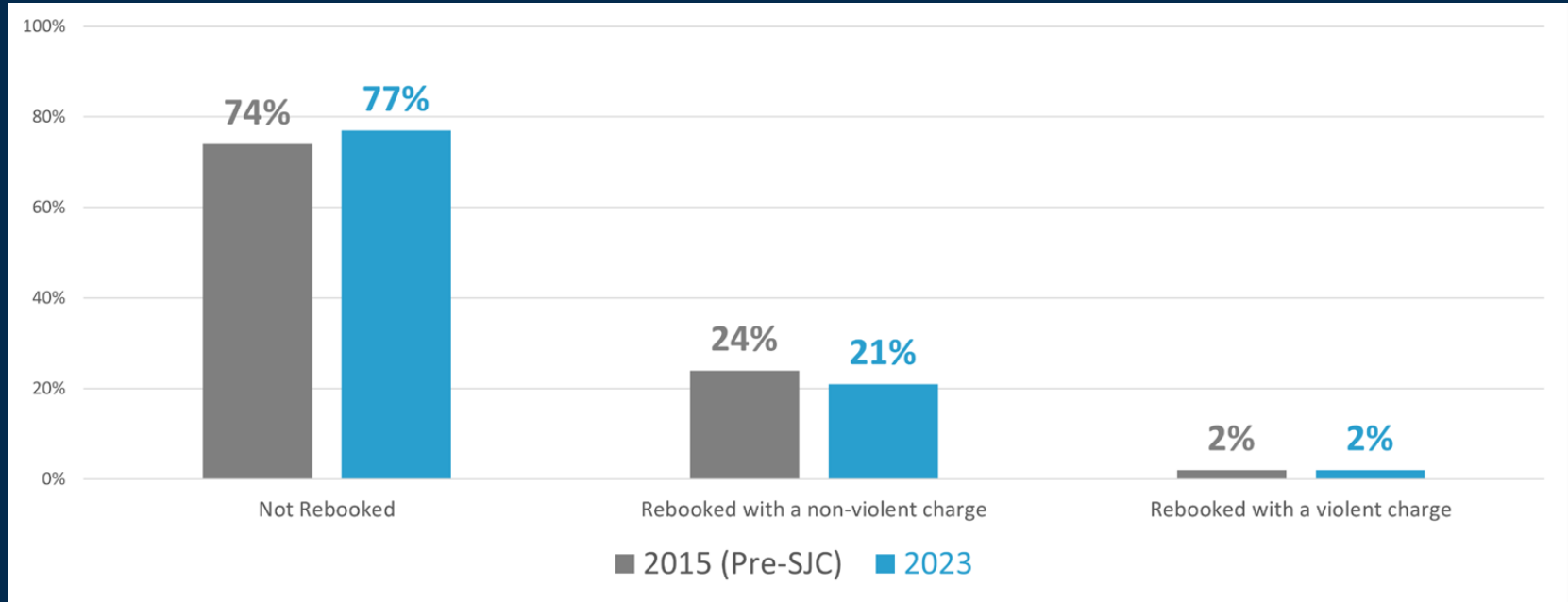
And reduced *safely*.



Individuals released pretrial were unlikely to return on a violent crime charge.



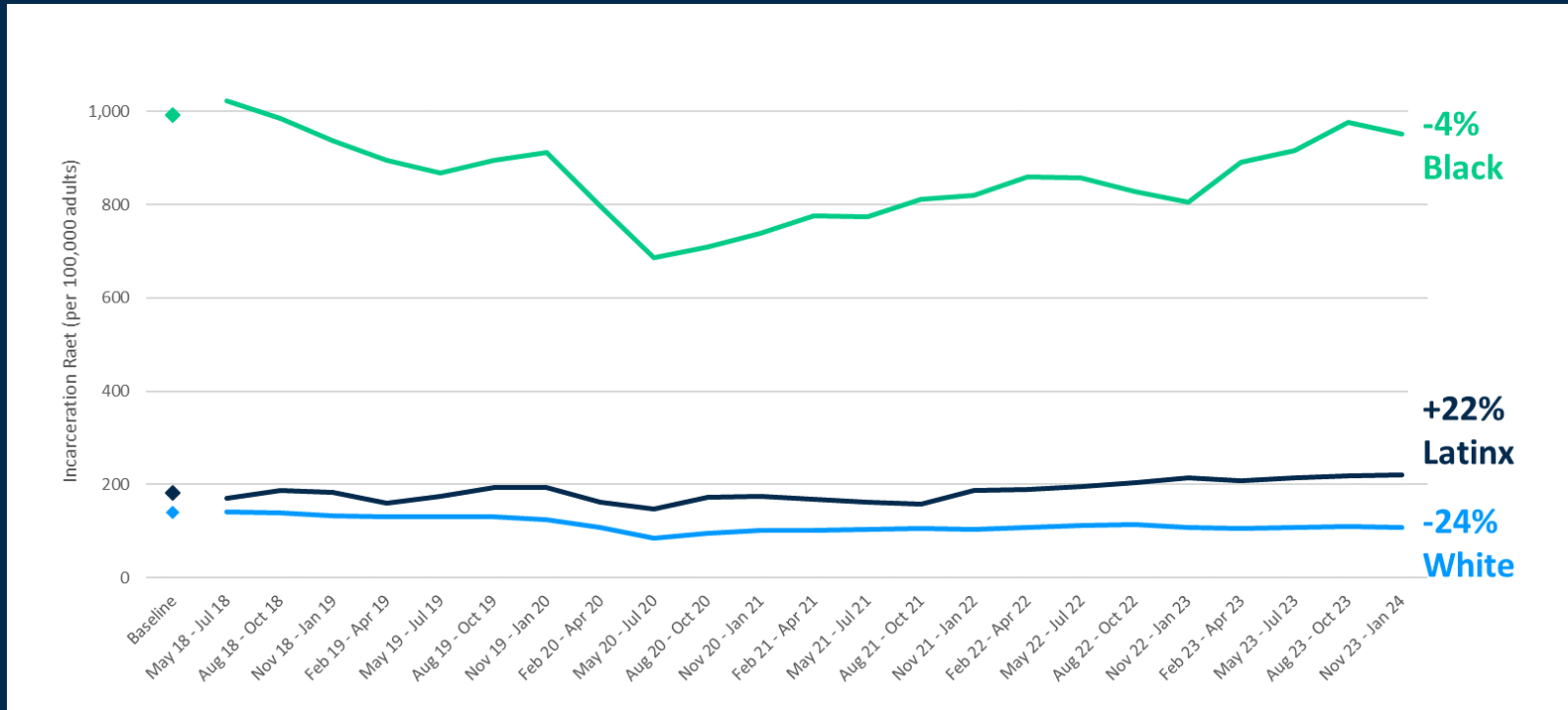
People released pretrial were **unlikely to return to jail for any reason.**



Average across SJC cities and counties (outcomes tracked through April 2023).

Rebooking outcomes of individuals released on pretrial status within six months.

Harm has been reduced for some groups, but **disparities persist.**



Jail incarceration rate across SJC sites



Key takeaways from a decade of the SJC

Takeaway #1

- ✓ SJC sites have advanced a model for creating systems change that safely reduces jail populations.

Takeaway #2

- ✓ SJC sites deploy a range of strategies to reduce jail populations and target racial and ethnic disparities.

Takeaway #3

- ✓ The SJC has launched innovative approaches to confront intractable challenges and address persistent inequities.



Takeaway #1

SJC sites have advanced a model for creating systems change that reduces jail populations

- ✓ Build **durable collaboration** at the local level among agencies, law enforcement, and community stakeholders
- ✓ Center **racial equity**
- ✓ Engage **community voices** authentically
- ✓ Invest in and maintain **robust data infrastructure** and performance management practices
- ✓ Pursue and adopt **evidence-based practices**
- ✓ Develop **strategic planning** capacities



Collaboration at work: Charleston County CJCC

Why does this matter?

SJC sites have identified necessary conditions for advancing local systems change; this model can be adapted and replicated across the U.S. to reduce jail populations safely.

Takeaway #2

SJC sites deploy a range of strategies to reduce jail populations, promote equity, and engage communities.

Total strategies implemented by sites: 332

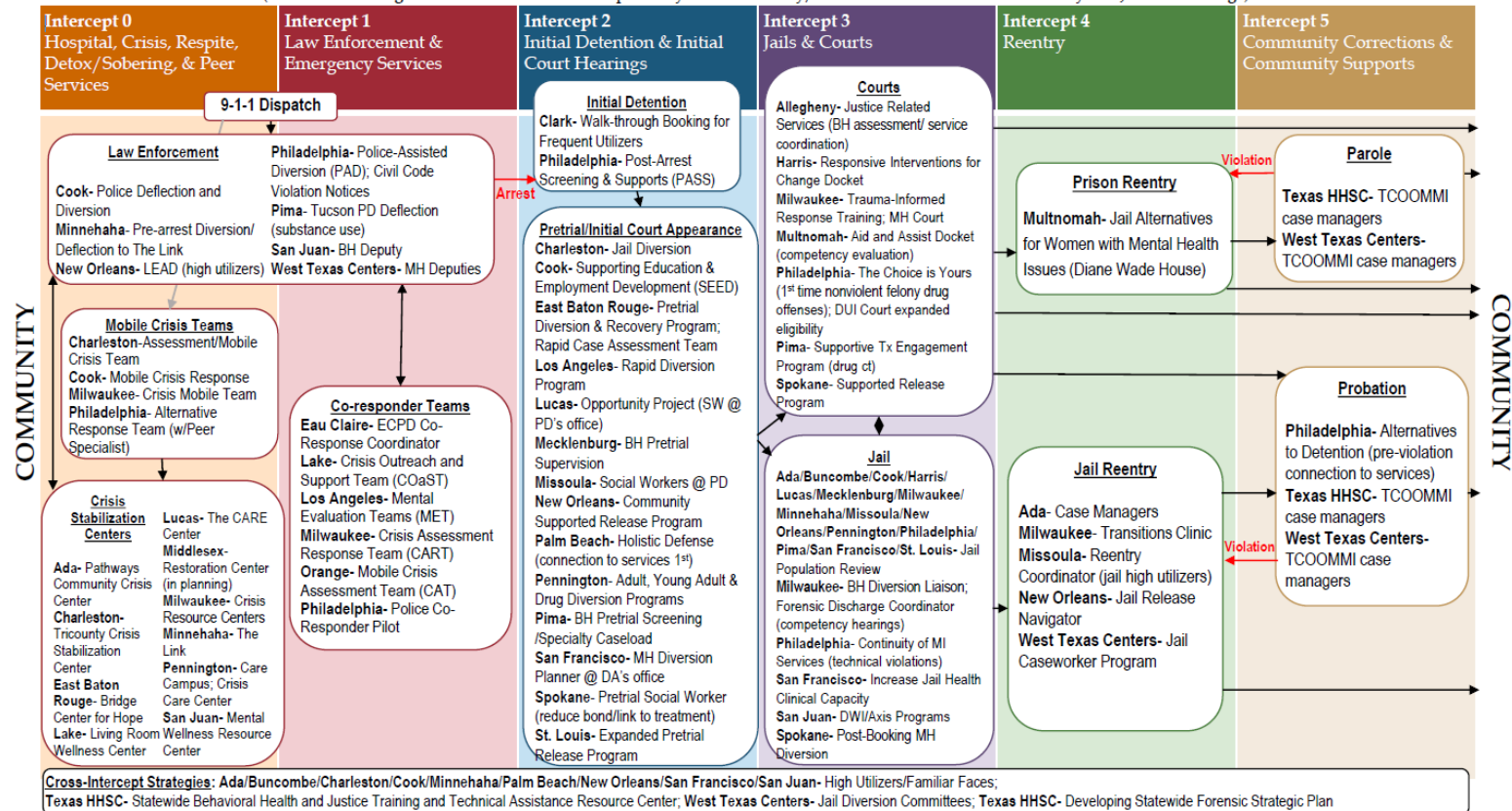


Promising strategies

- Jail population review teams
- Backlog reduction and case processing reform
- Misdemeanor/non-violent felony deflection
- Behavioral and mental health diversion and treatment (e.g., Mobile Crisis Units, co-responder model)
- Attorney representation at first appearance

SJC Sites' Behavioral Health Strategies Along the Sequential Intercept Model (SIM)- 2022 Update

(note: below strategies are not exhaustive but are primarily those funded by/ associated with the MacArthur Safety and Justice Challenge)



Models and innovative strategies have been piloted and tested

Arrest	Case Processing	Pretrial Release	Probation/ Parole	Release of Sentenced Population	Reentry/ Community Support
Increase cite & release	Reduce continuances Limit or postpone certain hearings and trials	Release NV defendants on PR bonds and/or pretrial supervision Public defenders at first appearance	Use alternative sanctions for technical violations Expedite violation processing/reduce detainer LOS	Depopulation Court Order for sentenced individuals based on percentage of sentence served	Provide discharge planning Linkage with wraparound services
Resolve situations in the field to reduce arrests	Suspend specialty courts or continue remotely or by video Prosecutorial diversion	Implement policies to release more people at initial appearance Jail population review teams	Release technical violators from jail Stop filing technical violations	Depopulation Court Order for sentenced individuals with underlying medical and mental health conditions	Temporary self-isolation
Institute summons for non-violent misdemeanor arrests and non-violent low-level felony charges	Prioritize arraignments and preliminary hearings for in-custody defendants	Reassess bail and prioritize for release people likely to be sentenced to time served or probation, and the medically infirm	Suspend drug testing Release from supervision/change to virtual supervision		

Takeaway #3

The SJC has launched innovative approaches to confront intractable challenges and address persistent inequities.

Engaging Special Populations

The SJC has highlighted the unique challenges faced by special populations, including individuals with disabilities, the LGBTQ community, and crime survivors. Specifically, MacArthur aims to uplift the intersection of survivors and jails by:

- Examining the distinct inequities faced by women in jails, particularly women who identify as Black, indigenous, and Latina.
- Centering the voices and experiences of justice-impacted survivors of violence.
- Exploring overlap between domestic violence, safety, and jail systems across the SJC.



Why does this matter?

The SJC has supported new work to **support oft-ignored populations** who experience disproportionate harm through interaction with the criminal justice system.

Housing instability

What we have learned

Housing instability, often worsened by a lack of affordable housing, both increases one's chances of justice involvement *and* exacerbates re-entry challenges faced by those released from jail.



How we are innovating

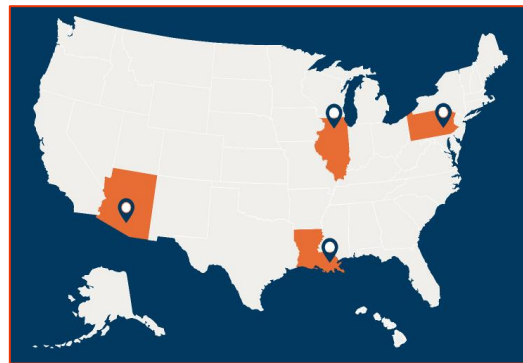
Just Home Project

- Investing in community-driven efforts to break links between homelessness and incarceration in San Francisco, Minnehaha, Charleston, Tulsa, Missoula, Los Angeles, Philadelphia, Allegheny, Milwaukee, & Buncombe
- Supporting development of housing solutions that can end the use of jails and prisons as last resort housing

Racial and ethnic disparities

What we have learned

Though jail populations in SJC sites declined overall, inequities and racial disparities in local jail populations have not—and, in some cases, they worsened.



How we are innovating SJC Racial Equity Cohort

- Deepening efforts to engage communities in Cook, Philadelphia, Pima, and New Orleans
- Funding strategies that center the empowerment of community voices
- Developing new approaches and metrics for tracking and measuring the SJC's impact on racial disparities

Leadership development

What we have learned

Over the past five years, the number of criminal justice job openings has nearly doubled, while the number of applications has fallen by half, creating staffing challenges that threaten the sustainability of reform.



How we are innovating

JLUSA and Volcker Alliance

- Attracting and retaining a more diverse pool of young professionals in justice, policy, and research fields in the public and private sectors.
- Developing practices that address the persistent staffing shortages across disciplines.
- Helping justice-impacted individuals gain the skills and support required for senior leadership positions

Misleading crime and safety narratives

What we have learned

Even as crime rates decline, communities are bombarded with distorted narratives about safety and “get tough on crime” rhetoric that hampers work to implement and sustain comprehensive reform.



How we are innovating

Public safety messaging research

- Capturing public opinion to inform a strategic playbook for reframing messaging around reforms and safety
- Message testing with audiences to inform frameworks for using communications to effectively shift distorted narratives



It's time to #RethinkJails



*Reduce over-incarceration by changing the way America
thinks about and uses jails*



SafetyAndJusticeChallenge.org