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SUMMIT COUNTY AND CITY OF AKRON JOIN THE SAFETY AND JUSTICE CHALLENGE TO CREATE A FAIRER, MORE EFFECTIVE LOCAL JUSTICE SYSTEM AND MODEL REFORMS FOR THE NATION

Summit County and Akron among 20 Counties and Cities in the Nation to Receive Grants to Design, Test Innovative Criminal Justice Reforms

The John D. and Catherine T. MacArthur Foundation recently announced that Summit County, in partnership with the City of Akron, is one of 20 additional jurisdictions joining the [Safety and Justice Challenge](#), a national \$100 million initiative to reduce over-incarceration by changing the way America thinks about and uses jails. Summit County and the City of Akron will test innovative local justice reforms designed to safely drive down jail usage and reduce racial and ethnic disparities in their local justice systems.

Summit County was chosen following a highly competitive selection process that drew applications from across the country.

“Local jurisdictions are leading the way on justice reform,” said MacArthur President Julia Stasch. “Demand for reform at the local level is considerable and growing, as evidenced by the number, diversity, and creativity of the applications we received. This momentum is encouraging, particularly as the federal justice reform landscape evolves and shifts.”

Through the Challenge’s [Innovation Fund](#), Summit County will receive support and expert technical assistance in designing and implementing local reforms. Summit County’s innovations will focus on regulating jail population through a process which allows law enforcement officers to summons eligible low level, non-violent felony offenders in lieu of arrest, diverting from jail those individuals who would typically be released by the court on a signature or personal recognizance bond.

“It is a privilege for Summit County to have been selected to participate in this forward-thinking initiative and a testament to the collaborative efforts of our justice system partners who are continually working to develop and implement programs that maximize available resources, all while keeping public safety at the forefront,” said Summit County Executive Ilene Shapiro.

Summit County and the other Innovation Fund jurisdictions will receive short-term support of \$50,000 each, are eligible for future funding opportunities, and have access to the resources, peer learning opportunities, and expertise of the [Safety and Justice Challenge Network](#). The Urban Institute, which is managing the Innovation Fund in partnership with the Foundation, will provide expert technical assistance to the jurisdictions as they implement their plans. Key learnings and resources emerging from the Innovation Fund will be shared with and beyond the justice reform field.



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Summit County and the City of Akron will continue to place an emphasis on community engagement and collaboration among local law enforcement, corrections officials, prosecutors, defenders, judges, and other stakeholders in this work to test, innovate, and drive reform.

“We are eager to partner with the County in implementing this grant and to test innovative reforms that will safely reduce unnecessary incarceration in the greater Akron area,” Akron Mayor Dan Horrigan said. “This program will allow eligible, non-violent low-level—and often low-income—offenders to avoid jail time and reserve limited taxpayer resources and incarceration space for those offenders who pose a danger to the public. These reforms represent the future of community policing and are being implemented as best practices throughout the nation; and Akron is pleased to join these efforts.”

“The Sheriff’s Office staff are constantly working to develop measures for reducing the inmate population while remaining vigilant in our promise to protect the citizens of Summit County. There are times when a person charged with a non-violent, low-level felony offense could be eligible for a summons in lieu of incarceration, which would certainly assist in our current situation at the Summit County Jail,” said Sheriff Steve Barry.

The Innovation Fund jurisdictions expand the Challenge’s reach into new states and deepen its work across the country. They include:

- Adams County, CO
- Allegheny County, PA
- City of Atlanta, GA
- Broward County, FL
- Buncombe County, NC
- Campbell County, TN
- Clark County, NV
- Dane County, WI
- State of Delaware
- Deschutes County, OR
- Durham County, NC
- East Baton Rouge Parish, LA
- Lake County, IL
- Minnehaha County, SD
- Missoula County, MT
- Polk County, IA
- City and County of San Francisco, CA
- Santa Clara County, CA
- Summit County, OH
- Yakima County, WA



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Information about the selected jurisdictions, as well as news, research, and events related to the Safety and Justice Challenge, will be published on www.SafetyandJusticeChallenge.org.

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About the MacArthur Foundation

The John D. and Catherine T. MacArthur Foundation supports creative people, effective institutions, and influential networks building a more just, verdant, and peaceful world. MacArthur is placing a few big bets that truly significant progress is possible on some of the world's most pressing social challenges, including over-incarceration, global climate change, nuclear risk, and significantly increasing financial capital for the social sector. In addition to the MacArthur Fellows Program, the Foundation continues its historic commitments to the role of journalism in a responsible and responsive democracy, as well as the strength and vitality of our headquarters city, Chicago. More information about the Foundation's criminal justice reform work can be found at www.macfound.org/criminaljustice.

About the Urban Institute

The nonprofit Urban Institute is dedicated to elevating the debate on social and economic policy. For nearly five decades, Urban scholars have conducted research and offered evidence-based solutions that improve lives and strengthen communities across a rapidly urbanizing world. Their objective research helps expand opportunities for all, reduce hardship among the most vulnerable, and strengthen the effectiveness of the public sector.

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