



The State of the Criminal Justice System

October 20, 2023, 9:00am – 3:00pm
Trident Technical College
North Charleston, SC



Agenda



OVERVIEW



KEY
INGREDIENTS



CONTENT



FEEDBACK



NEXT STEPS

Stakeholders Doing Better Together

-
- Showcase the best and most promising practices for improving public safety, justice, and fairness in South Carolina.
 - First of its kind conference in South Carolina
 - Brought together leaders representing various sectors of the criminal justice system, including the courts, prosecution, defense, law enforcement, city, county and state leaders, medical and behavioral healthcare, the advocacy community.
 - Cultivate a statewide network of individuals working to improve different parts of South Carolina's criminal justice system to:
 - Review system trends, share progress, build capacity, and support the implementation of effective strategies for advancing public safety, justice, and fairness in South Carolina.
 - Elevate the importance of data-guided collaborative bodies that focus on improving local criminal justice systems.

Key Ingredients



CJCC's Experience

Lessons Learned (2015 - 2023)
Staff and Infrastructure
Initial Funding
Partnerships



Conference Co-Chairs

Vision
Leadership
Structure
Management



Diverse Steering Committee

Mission, Goal and Objectives
Traction: 3,360 website hits
Media: 4 Articles
Request for Proposals: 17
Presentations Selected: 10
Registration: 200 diverse stakeholders



Inaugural Conference

Attended: 143
Whova App: 113
Survey: 25% response rate with overwhelmingly positive feedback
Overall Rating: Good/Excellent: 100%
(64% Excellent, 36% Good, 0% Fair, 0% Poor, 0% Very Poor)
Continued participation interest: 100%
(47% 2/year, 25% 4/year, 22% 1/year, 3% 12/year, 3% already involved, 0% Not Interested)

Steering Committee

Met Five Times (July - October 2023)

- Provide strategic guidance, expertise, and leadership in shaping the convening and its initiatives.
- Help ensure representation from all parts of the state and diverse areas of expertise in conference planning and network building.
- Exhibit a shared purpose and collegially support one another, actively participate in event promotion, and network building
- Work closely with event co-chairs on the overall direction of the event and provide guidance to the Charleston Team supporting the event as needed.

Members

- Deborah S. Blalock, Deputy Director, Community Mental Health Services, South Carolina Department of Mental Health
- Jerry Blassingame, Executive Director, Soteria Community Development Corporation
- Tamara C. Curry, JD, Office of the General Counsel, Staff Attorney, South Carolina Department of Mental Health
- Kristy P. Danford, MPA , Criminal Justice Chair, The Charleston Forum, Conference Co-Chair
- Jake Gadsden, Jr., Deputy Director Programs, Reentry and Rehabilitative Services, South Carolina Department of Corrections
- Sara Goldsby, Director, South Carolina Department of Alcohol and Other Drug Abuse Services (DAODAS)
- Ronald Hazzard, JD, Fifteenth Circuit Public Defender
- Nettie Jacobs, Director for Victim Advocacy, South Carolina Department of Probation, Parole, and Pardon Services
- Ellen S. Steinberg, JD, Director, Charleston County Criminal Justice Coordinating Council, Charleston County Government, Conference Co-Chair
- Bryan Stirling, Director, SC Department of Corrections
- Duffie Stone, III, JD, Fourteenth Circuit Solicitor's Office
- Kevin R. Tolson, Sheriff, York County Sheriff's Office

Content Development

Guiding Principles:

- For diverse stakeholders and perspectives... Not a single stakeholder.
- Grounded in research and data... Not about anecdotes and politics.
- Encourage meaningful dialogue... Not a dog and pony show.
- Acknowledge key problems and explore innovative and scalable solutions... Not about business as usual.

Selected presentations from an open call for proposals, based upon a combination of factors:

- Research-informed and data-based,
- Reflective of system issues,
- Representative of diverse perspectives and lived experiences,
- Alignment with the goal of the conference.

Inaugural Conference Agenda

8:30 am – 3:00 pm

22 Diverse
Speakers

- Opening Session
 - Ellen Steinberg, Director, Charleston County Criminal Justice Coordinating Council, Conference Co-Chair
 - Kristy Danford, Charleston Forum Board of Directors, Conference Co-Chair
- Understanding System Intercepts Opportunities for Deflection and Diversion
 - Stacey Rowell, LISW-CP/S, Mobile Crisis Program Manager, South Carolina Department of Mental Health
 - Elise Kratzer, Policing Research Analyst, RTI International
 - Jim Lake, 9-1-1 Coordinator & Director, Charleston County Consolidated Emergency Communications Center
- Community Engagement and the Reduction of Violence
 - Cannon Fulmer, Crime Analyst, City of Columbia Police Department
 - Trevon Fordham, MSCJ, M.Ed., Director, Office of Violent Crime Prevention, City of Columbia
 - Kassy Alia Ray, Ph.D., Founder & CEO, Serve and Connect
- Preventing Deaths in Custody
 - Madalyn Wasilczuk, J.D., Assistant Professor of Law, University of South Carolina School of Law, Director, Youth Defender Clinic
 - Christina Plakas, Doctoral Student, University of South Carolina, Department of Criminology & Criminal Justice
- Confronting Disparities in the Criminal Justice System
 - Tandi Fortier, PMHNP-BC, Psychiatric Mental Health Nurse Practitioner, Department of Veteran Affairs
 - Dr. Delores Dacosta, Executive Director, South Carolina Commission for Minority Affairs
 - Ashley Pennington, Charleston Forum Board of Directors and CJCC Community Representative
- Keynote Address:
 - Dr. Nancy La Vigne, Director, National Institute of Justice
- Networking Lunch Discussions: Criminal Justice Coordinating Councils, Disparities, Deflection and Diversion, Research and Data, Reducing Violence, and Pretrial Justice
- Lived Experiences
 - Jerry Blassingame, Executive Director, Soteria Community Development Corporation;
 - Ramona Stillwagon, Founder/CEO, Unchained Reentry, LLC;
 - Rev. David Truluck, Executive Director, SHIELD Ministries;
 - Pastor James Murray, Field Director, Prison Fellowships (retired)
- Pretrial Challenges and Opportunities for Advancing Safety, Justice and Fairness
 - Kevin Kuehmeier, Senior Associate, Justice System Partners
 - James Austin, Founder, The JFA Institute
 - 15th Circuit Public Defender, Ron Hazzard
 - 15th Circuit Deputy Solicitor Scott Hixson
- Closing Session
 - Ellen Steinberg, Director, Charleston County Criminal Justice Coordinating Council, Conference Co-Chair
 - Kristy Danford, Charleston Forum Board of Directors, Conference Co-Chair

Feedback: Lunch Discussion Group Themes

- **Criminal Justice Coordinating Councils**

- Why: Several CJCCs starting up in need of more information, expertise, support and partnerships (local and state level)
- What: Applied system data analysis, governance and help with interventions for specific issues (pretrial matters, recidivism, SUD/MH, community engagement, etc.)
- How: Gathering in-person, online, email, web platform for sharing resources

- **Disparities**

- Why: Desire to know more about discriminatory practices and various community resources available
- What: Do more to support reentry (e.g., mental health treatment, medication supply, tracking system from SCDC to service providers, community health workers)
- How: Increase stakeholder collaborations and resources available

- **Deflection and Diversion**

- Why: Treatment over incarceration, can't arrest our way out of the problem, even the first few interactions can have devastating consequences, lack opportunities and need for appropriate resources, programs work, reduce calls for service
- What: data collection/need to assess effectiveness, learn more about the existence of diversionary programs and ways to access them without 911
- How: Identify gap in resources/transitional periods, wrap around services after immediate crisis/need, change policy for reimbursement, conduct cost-benefit analysis

Feedback: Lunch Discussion Group Themes

- **Research and Data**

- Why: Objectivity, accountability and transparency, process improvement, inform decisions and funding, doing what you say
- What: Studies on various subjects (i.e., community engagement, recruitment and retention, detention centers, calls for service, recidivism, etc.)
- How: Data discussions with community, partnerships, data access, detention center data, police expectations, mental health response, unifying reporting systems, staffing

- **Reducing Violence**

- Why: High and sustained rates of community violence, especially involving youth
- What: Mental health interventions, specific programs founded on cognitive behavioral therapy, need tools that are most likely to be successful
- How: Programs to reduce youth-involved violence and support reentry

- **Pretrial Justice**

- Why: Desire to better understand the issues, data, research and areas for improvement
- What: Clarify terminology, assess existing practices, find solutions
- How: Keep working at it, do better

Feedback: Additional Survey Themes (Open Text)

-
- Suggestions for future network activities offered by 50% of respondents
 - Spend more time on key subjects (such as mentally ill in detention centers, conditions in facilities, lived experiences, first responder trauma, community helpers)
 - More breaks, more time to dig into topics and problem solve, more breakout sessions, more interaction with one another
 - Make asks of participants such as legislation to advocate for/against
 - Additional feedback offered by 61% of respondents
 - Important to be mindful of trauma, suggested statement to share with speakers and audience:
 - “Given the sensitive nature of the material, information, cases, and experiences we are sharing, let us continue to be mindful that we are not only sharing facts and statistics, but real people's lives, even traumas. There is a face to every story.”
 - “Very engaging and rewarding experience. Networking with other entities in the criminal justice system as well as the community partner was an excellent experience.”
 - “I love the work that this team is doing. Everyone is so dedicated!”
 - “The exchanges among statewide participants can be a great multiplier of data driven local studies.”

Lessons Learned

- The Inaugural Conference was a success
 - Great interest, turnout, content, and feedback
 - Participation varied by stakeholder group and geography
 - Conference app had strengths and challenges
- Leadership is critical
 - It's a lot of work! Co-Chairs and CJCC staff were essential to making it happen
 - Steering Committee members were very helpful; however, in the short timeframe meeting attendance and contributions varied
 - Speaker coordination, support and guidance matters
- Going Forward
 - There is a great need and demand for continued network efforts
 - Clear direction, infrastructure and support required

Next Steps: 2024

Recommendation

Form an updated 2024 Steering Committee
Convene discussion groups throughout the year to further network efforts
Second annual conference in late 2024

Ask

Serve as a Steering Committee member in 2024
Volunteer to serve as the host site and chair the conference in 2024
Be an active participant or leader in a discussion group in 2024
Identify concrete actions you can take to support to the above