May 20 & 21, 2019

Spokane Community Town Hall

Spokane, Washington

Alex Boldin, Kaitlin Kall, Chris Mai & Liz Swavola
Vera Institute of Justice
Agenda

- Introductions & ground rules
- Vera’s process
- Jail 101: What are jails and how do they impact community wellbeing?
- Hearing from community: Visioning and break-out listening sessions
Introductions & ground rules
Vera Institute of Justice

Vera is an independent, nonpartisan, nonprofit organization.

- Study & analyze problems in justice systems
- Produce & utilize evidence to drive effective policies & practices
- Pilot solutions
- Engage diverse communities

Vera’s Center on Sentencing and Corrections partners with state & local systems to advance justice policies that promote fairness & protect public safety.

- Improve outcomes for justice-involved individuals by advancing access to high quality college education behind bars & reducing solitary confinement
- Close incarceration’s front door by reducing the overuse of jails
Vera Institute of Justice

Vera’s Center on Victimization and Safety works to improve access to healing services for all victims of crime:

- Work with victim services, advocates, and culturally-specific organizations to ensure that people from communities with higher rates of victimization but less access to services get the help they need to heal
  - People with disabilities and Deaf people
  - Incarcerated and formerly incarcerated people
  - People from other marginalized/under-served communities
Process

- Three phases over six months
  - Qualitative & quantitative data gathering
  - Data sharing & collective analysis
  - Recommendations
Ground rules

- Approach meeting with creativity & collaboration to solve problems
- Assume best intentions of all who are present
- Everyone shares ownership & responsibility in this process
- Give everyone an opportunity to weigh in
- Engage in thoughtful, honest, & respectful dialog
- Hold each other accountable to these rules & commitments made throughout the process
- Others?
Jails 101
Jails

- **Jails are locally operated facilities:**
  - Pretrial defendants
  - People with a sentence of 1 year or less for a misdemeanor conviction
  - People on holds for probation and other violations
  - Holds for other jurisdictions (U.S. Marshals, DOC)

- **Jails are rarely long-term facilities:**
  - National length of stay (2017) = 26 days
  - Local length of stay (current) = 18.5 days
Jails nationally

- 745,000 people in jails on any given day; 2/3 pretrial
- **8.2 million men & 2.5 million women** enter jail each year (17x prison admissions)
- Nationally, jail populations have risen sharply despite declining crime

While the country has grown safer since the early 1990s, an ever-larger proportion of the population is being sent to jail.
Rising pretrial populations

U.S. Jail population, by conviction status
Incarceration rates, 1970 - 2015

Source: U.S. Bureau of Justice Statistics
6 local decision points influencing jail populations

1. Arrest & Booking
2. Charging
3. Pretrial Release/Bail
4. Case Processing
5. Disposition & Sentencing
6. Post-conviction

Admissions + Length of Stay
Arrest & booking

Will someone be arrested and taken to jail?

Contact with law enforcement:
- Warning
- Citation
- Diversion
- Arrest & jail booking (sometimes mandatory); book & release

Local reforms:
- SCSO & SPD co-deployed mental health teams
- Mental health crisis stabilization center (forthcoming)
- Spokane Resource Center
Charging

Will someone be charged with a crime? Which charge(s)?

Prosecution:
- Decline to file charges
- Prosecutorial diversion
- File charges (and which ones)

Local reforms:
- Post-booking mental health diversion (5177)
- First-time felony prosecutorial diversion
Pretrial

**Will defendant be in jail or the community before sentencing?**

**Court commissioner or judge:**
- Release on recognizance (OR)
- Pretrial supervision & other conditions
- Bond (not an in/out decision)

Informed by risk assessment & interviews conducted by **Pretrial Services**, arguments made by **Prosecutor & Defense Attorney**

**Local reforms:**
- Expanded Pretrial Services capacity
- Implementation of Public Safety Assessment & decision-making matrix
- Uptrust: court date reminder system
How long will it take for the defendant’s case to be resolved?

Judges, court administrators, prosecutors, & defense counsel:
- Number of court hearings
- Time between court hearings
- Productivity of court hearings
- Special docket/court (e.g., drug court)

Local reforms:
- Case processing plans in all 3 courts
- Pre-disposition therapeutic courts
Disposition & sentencing

What will be the outcome of the case?

**Judge, prosecutor, jury (rarely) influence disposition:**
- Finding of no guilt
- Defendant enters a plea (sentence agreed to by prosecutor & defense)
- Finding of guilt

**Sentencing ultimately decided by judge:**
- Fine/fee
- Probation
- Post-conviction alternative
- Jail (including time-served)
- Prison

**Local reforms:**
- Post-disposition specialty courts
Post-conviction supervision

What are the terms & conditions of probation, including payment of fines & fees? What happens if someone does not comply?

Probation office influences policies for compliance; prosecutors may respond to non-compliance; judges decide outcomes to non-compliance.

Local reforms:
- Property crime supervision legislation
- Bureau of Justice Reentry Pilot
- Spokane Resource Center
Impacts of jail
Who is most impacted by jail?

Jails disproportionately impact people from marginalized communities:

- People of color
- Low income people
- People with disabilities
- LGBTQ people
- People with histories of victimization & trauma
- People with behavioral health needs (mental health, substance use, co-occurring)
Jail’s limitations

- 18.5-day average LOS: short window to provide substantive treatment & rehabilitation services
- Jail is not a therapeutic setting, limiting the effectiveness of even the best programming
- Even a short stay in jail disrupts what is going right in one’s life; places burdens on family and community
- Collateral consequences (~900 in WA State) can last a lifetime
Hearing from community
Vision

- What 2-3 core values or principles are central to your community?
- What 2-3 core values or principles should be central to Spokane’s justice system?
- If Spokane’s criminal justice system were working ideally, what would it look like?
Break-out listening sessions

Ice-breaker: When did you first become aware of the criminal justice system?

Discussion questions:

1. Do you have concerns about the current county jail facilities—what are they?
2. Where do you see solutions or opportunities?
3. What would you advocate for regarding the future of jail facilities in Spokane?
4. What does a healthy community look like?
5. How can the criminal justice system support that vision?
6. What other community resources are needed to support the vision?
Thank you!