



**Dane County, WI**  
210 MLK Jr. Blvd, Madison, WI 53703



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**FOR MORE INFORMATION CONTACT:**  
Colleen Clark-Bernhardt  
Criminal Justice Council Coordinator  
[Clark.colleen@countyofdane.com](mailto:Clark.colleen@countyofdane.com)

## DANE COUNTY CRIMINAL JUSTICE COUNCIL PARTNERS WITH NATIONAL EXPERT ON MENTAL HEALTH

Today the Dane County Criminal Justice Council (CJC) announce a new partnership with the Bazelon Center for Mental Health Law. This partnership highlights the CJC's ongoing commitment to public safety, equity and data driven justice. The technical assistance award is available to the CJC through the partnership with the MacArthur Foundation's Safety and Justice Challenge.

Bazelon's technical assistance will include review of state and national funding streams available to reduce the number of individuals experiencing serious mental health issues in the Dane County jail, as well as innovative alternatives to incarceration (before jail).

"We look forward to working with the Criminal Justice Council to advance the objectives of its Behavioral Health Subcommittee, including to divert and deflect individuals with behavioral health challenges from the criminal justice system, said Lewis Bossing, Senior Staff Attorney at the Bazelon Center. "The Council is considering initiatives, including mobile crisis response and crisis triage that have been found to be effective in increasing diversion from law enforcement and criminal systems in other jurisdictions. We want to help the Council bring these successful programs to Dane County."

In 2019, the CJC created a new subcommittee designed to review current policies and practices and make recommendations to change the dangerous intersection of behavioral health and criminal justice.

"Partnerships like this one, will assist us in our efforts to find community centered recommendations and divert people with mental health challenges out of the criminal justice system", said Anna Moffit, Executive Director of NAMI Dane County. "It's essential to bring the voice of the community—and those directly impacted—to the table.

Dane County is an Innovation Site in MacArthur Foundation's Safety and Justice Challenge. The Safety and Justice Challenge is a five-year, \$217 million investment by the John D. and Catherine T. MacArthur Foundation. Jurisdictions were selected through a competitive process and receive financial and technical support in their efforts to rethink justice systems and implement data-driven strategies to safely reduce jail populations.

"Dane County has engaged national experts, local leaders, and those with lived experience in our work" said County Board Chair Analiese Eicher, "As we move many innovations in the criminal justice system to the forefront, I welcome partners to increase funding options and better outcomes for all residents of Dane County".

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**About the Dane County Criminal Justice Council**

The 13 member Dane County Criminal Justice Council is a collaborative body created in Dane County ordinance to collaborate and improve public safety, racial equity and data driven decisions. For more information please visit [cjc.countyofdane.com](http://cjc.countyofdane.com)

**About The Judge David L. Bazelon Center for Mental Health Law**

The Judge David L. Bazelon Center for Mental Health Law is a national legal advocacy organization protecting and advancing the rights of people with mental disabilities. The Center promotes laws and policies that enable people with mental disabilities to live independently in their own homes and communities, and to enjoy the same opportunities that everyone else does. For more information, visit [www.bazelon.org](http://www.bazelon.org).