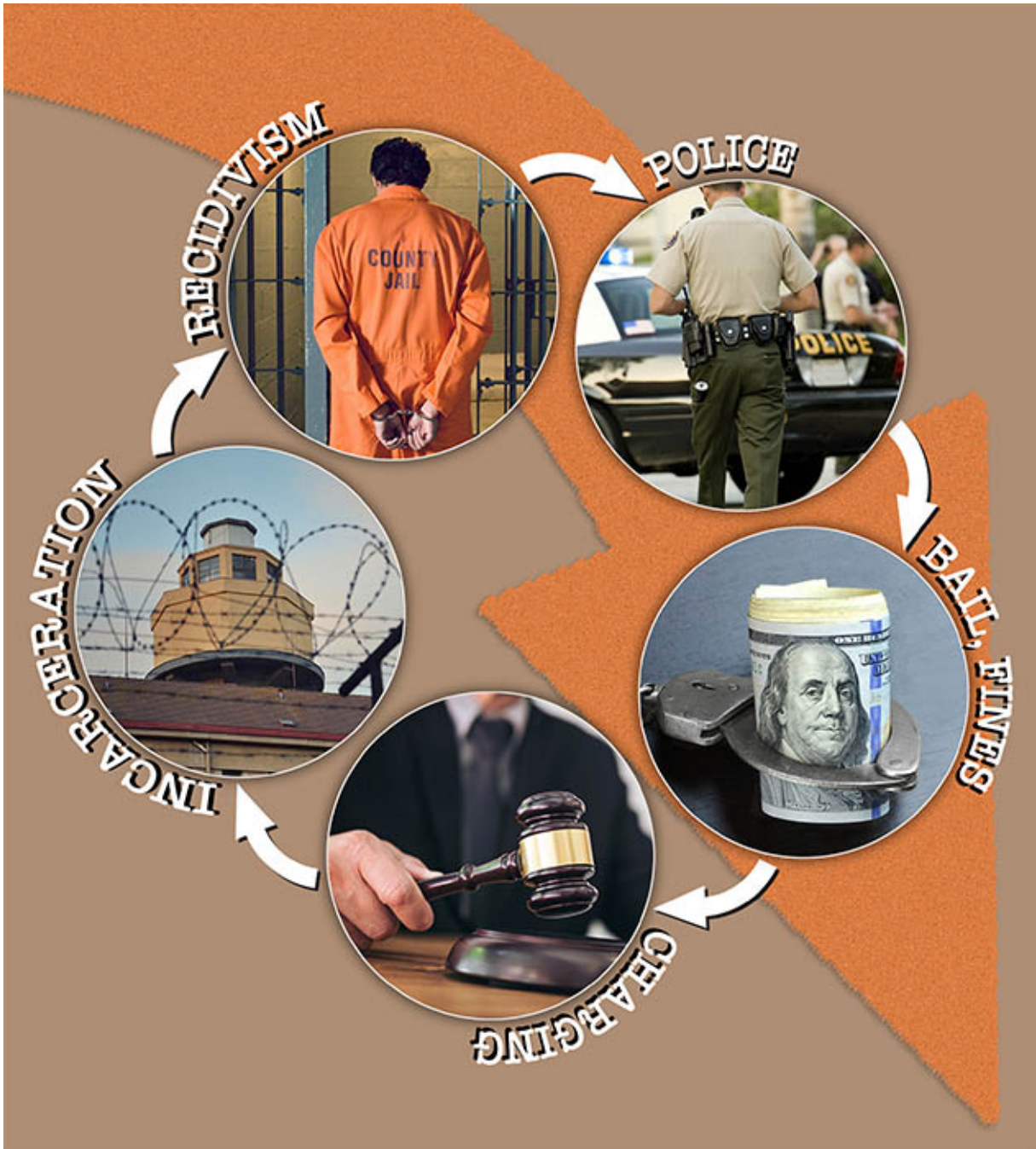


# “Criminal Justice in Arizona”

Flagstaff Community Town Hall Report

Flagstaff, AZ – November 7, 2018



# **CRIMINAL JUSTICE IN ARIZONA**

## **Flagstaff Community Town Hall Report**

### **November 7, 2018 – High Country Conference Center**

Participants of the November 2018 Flagstaff Community Town Hall make the following findings and recommendations. This report reflects the consensus achieved through group discussions by Community Town Hall participants.

#### **GOALS FOR ARIZONA'S CRIMINAL JUSTICE SYSTEM**

Criminal justice in Arizona must begin with a fair, equitable and impartial framework promoting public safety and accountability while simultaneously playing a significant role in prevention. We also need to proactively and systemically provide early intervention and prevention through systems outside of the criminal justice systems including education and healthcare that also address the needs of people with mental health and substance abuse challenges. We need evidence-based, data driven decision-making that starts with early intervention and supportive legislation. We need to understand that one way to assess a community's values is how we prioritize resources and need to use the least intrusive intervention or measure such as diversion to address or promote justice, public safety and return on community investment. We need to move away from ideological and charged thinking.

#### **PRIOR TO INCARCERATION**

One of the most significant issues we face is the need for early intervention and both robust mental health and substance abuse programs that begin with parents and early childhood education. We currently invest significant resources in probation and post-conviction treatment programs but we should be making those investments early to prevent criminal activity. We need to ensure that we include youth in the discussion and need to create and expand public awareness of the importance of treatment and prevention programs to support legislative action and public funding. Our focus should be on community wellbeing increasing funding for education and preventative programs. Annual assessments of all K-12 students could be offered along with providing counseling resources that will lead us to growing healthy kids instead of attempting to fix adults through the criminal justice system.

It is critical for legislation requiring diversion programs and alternatives instead of mandatory incarceration. We should not be relying on the criminal justice system being the social service agency of last resort. We should also consider de-criminalizing, or reducing to misdemeanors, some drug offenses.

We need more transparency in public funding and budgeting is needed, including prioritizing preventative measures. A thousand beds a year are added through the legislative allocation process to the prison system and this needs more thoughtfulness and consideration. Savings in the criminal justice system resulting in reduced incarceration should be tracked and incentives for alternative programs should be offered.

We should require that all prisons have outcome measure that promote a reduction in recidivism.

We need to continue and expand community recidivism and re-entry programs that include families. Family support should also be incorporated in pre-release intervention to foster an environment which promotes accountability and rehabilitation. Expanding community involvement in re-entry will keep recidivism down.

We need to eliminate silos in the criminal justice system and re-allocate resources to address basic needs and expand connections in the community between law enforcement, education, and mental and physical healthcare providers.

## **AFTER INCARCERATION**

Effective re-entry programs are critical to reducing recidivism and should begin at the time of initial incarceration and need to seamlessly include community-based coalitions including government, faith-based organizations, youth, educators and non-profits. We also need to ensure funding and sustainability of these programs, provide shared data systems, and track outcome measures. These programs need to include providing people who are released from incarceration with Arizona identification cards, food vouchers, clothing, counseling, prescribed medication, transportation from jail, a list of employers and trades that will accept them, assistance in establishing credit, behavioral health and social service connections. We need effective pre-planning that also encourages family support and includes appropriate step-downs including halfway houses.

Mental health should be classified as a public health issue and resources allocated accordingly.

We need to remove barriers to employment including creating statewide incentives for fair chance employment and banning the box. Coconino County's decision to ban the box has encouraged private employers to participate.

## **INDIVIDUAL ACTIONS**

Recognizing that the power to change the future begins with each individual, participants committed to take personal actions based on their experience and discussions at the Flagstaff Community Town Hall. Below are individual actions that were shared.

### ***I WILL...***

- Continue to advocate for criminal justice reform.
- Advocate for the people who have been impacted by the criminal justice system by creating an innovative nonprofit that focuses on helping transform the lives and perspectives of those impacted.
- Make it my priority to form my actions based on what's good and right.
- Engage our youth.
- Meet with Board of Supervisors of Coconino County to seek partnership in choosing a location for our residential, educational nonprofit for men who have been convicted.
- Continue to advocate for front-end investments and focus on justice as community wellness.
- Join others to take action based on what I learned or people I met.
- Communicate what I have learned with others.
- Encourage people to vote!
- Continue to keep an eye on policy and legislative opportunities to improve things for people who are entangled in the criminal justice system.
- Work with the Collective Impact Project to help break down silos.
- Participate in future events.
- Actively become involved in my community's engagement and roles of leaders at each level.
- Become more informed of criminal justice and its role in social justice.
- Vote at every opportunity for reforms in regard to criminal justice.

- With the Criminal Justice Coordinating Council (CJCC), lead the initiative in Coconino County to tackle justice reform including: non-monetary alternatives to bail/bond; reduction of recidivism; addressing mental illness in our jails; and discretion for judges to have a variety of options for sentencing, rehabilitation, etc.
- Listen and become more aware of what the justice system is doing and how it impacts my community.
- Continue to advocate for people of color in the criminal justice system by using my privilege and education to change and create policy.
- Continue to establish diversion programs that bring the justice and behavioral health systems together to provide better programs for those trapped in the justice system.
- Continue to advocate for equity and the renewal of justice in the criminal justice system.
- Vote.
- Speak out and educate regarding social injustice.
- Fight against, in small and big ways, the insidious impacts of patriarchy and white supremacy.
- Become informed about the Task Force on Fair Justice for All in order to become involved in this issue.
- Work on technical training and opportunities for young people.
- Engage in transformative acts.
- Champion and provide policy discussions and decisions that will align resource allocation and efforts of criminal justice, behavioral and physical health for outcomes that improve the lives of members of our community.
- Facilitate front line officer training in mental health first aid to educate law enforcement in identifying and successfully dealing with alternative solutions to incarceration.
- Seek and create opportunities to engage the community in dialogue and feedback regarding criminal justice issues, mental health and substance abuse.
- After receiving and digesting final statewide town hall report, I will write my Arizona Legislative District 6 legislators with a succinct request for reflection and action, and make an appointment to visit both the district and Phoenix offices.
- Lobby legislature.
- Show up and continue to be part of the transformative change process.
- Work to break down challenges and silos, and meet the needs of individuals struggling with mental health involved with criminal justice.
- Transfer resources to the front-end of system.
- Continue my work with the homeless community to prevent criminal activity.
- Leverage my position to convene stakeholders for cross-system, integrated, and coordinated improvements.
- Advocate among health system leaders to improve alignment with criminal justice system goals.
- Communicate the ideas forwarded at the Town Hall to policy-makers as opportunities arise.
- Be an outspoken advocate for the value of proactive resources that deal with mental health and substance abuse and support the reduction of barriers to reentry after incarceration.

- Endeavor to work more closely with individuals in the criminal justice system to identify positives and negatives in their lives that may impact that person's ability to be successful post-incarceration.
- Offer opportunities to learn more about how reentry for people in the criminal justice system can be improved.
- Lobby my legislators.

## HOSTED IN COLLABORATION WITH

