



Justice and Governance Partnership

The Vision: The Aspen Institute [Criminal Justice Reform Initiative](#)'s Justice and Governance Partnership (JGP) will support jurisdictions to improve analytical capacity and support policy improvements focused on ending overdependence on the criminal legal system, and will stimulate reinvestment in the local people, institutions and networks most knowledgeable about neighborhood safety and justice. JGP does this by convening collaborations among government and community stakeholders and creation of a **Local Justice Intermediary** to support a **Local Justice Collaborative**, a set of diverse partners who come together across the justice ecosystem to improve justice and safety. Anchored in the annual production of a **Justice Audit**—an extensive account of justice related data held by government agencies, quasi-public and non-governmental organizations, as well as surveys of justice practitioners and neighborhood residents—JGP also enhances these analytical partnerships through **community-based action research methods** which further incorporate the ideas and solutions of those most impacted by the justice system. Ultimately, this enhanced collaboration, armed with better, deeper information will support jurisdictions to improve local justice-related policy through **Justice Reinvestment Plans**, with specific program and policy enhancements based on data and informed by community experience, and backed by a broad coalition.

The Justice and Governance Partnership, over time, will comprise up to 10 jurisdictions and will generate a steady increase of data-driven, community-informed policies and practices that will improve the lives of community members, producing lessons that ultimately the whole country can learn and benefit from. Working with local justice funding collaboratives, each JGP site could receive, depending on funding availability, up to 5 years of support from CJRI, including up to **\$2.85M in funding**, with **additional technical assistance from national partners** and participation in a peer learning group, the **Aspen Justice Network**.

The Impact: The impact envisioned by JGP is the transformation of the local justice ecosystem through collective action, as demonstrated by a reduction in governmental crisis management interventions and a concurrent increase in the well-being of neighborhood residents. To accomplish this, diverse stakeholders will come together to form a collective vision of safety and justice that values the experiences and knowledge of community members and the role that chronic insecurity in housing, health, education, transportation and employment play in shaping safety and justice. The four areas of impact that JGP expects to see are:

- 1. Shared Vision: A shared definition and vision of justice and safety**, including improvements such as: increased commitment by diverse community and government partners to justice transformation; greater, shared understanding of the justice ecosystem via expansive use of data and collaboration.
- 2. New Governance: A new cross-sector and community engaged governing coalition around local justice policy**, including improvements such as: consolidation of 1) big data from government agencies, 2) knowledge of neighborhood networks from community-based organizations, and 3) perspectives and priorities from neighborhood residents and justice practitioners; improved partnerships between criminal justice system agencies and community-based organizations across the criminal justice continuum from arrest diversion and alternatives to incarceration to correctional programming and reentry; emergence of cross-agency, public services planning coalitions around multi-sector crisis-involved neighborhood residents; new or increased braided budgeting from across government, non-profit, and private sectors for pooled neighborhood-specific justice reinvestment; establishment of a Local Justice Intermediary—a sustainable institutional home with the credibility to annually convene and staff a new justice collaborative.
- 3. Community Ownership: Broader community leadership, perspectives, and ownership**, including improvements such as: more inclusive, community-informed local justice policies and practices; increased diverse representation and leadership across the justice ecosystem; more broadly-based public belief in and increased trust in justice system legitimacy, especially among neighborhood residents most negatively impacted by justice system operations; new forms of leadership and improved relationships between neighborhood residents and institutions in the community; more civic associations dedicated to violence mitigation, educational advancement, vocational and career development, health education, and social wellbeing; accompanied by more civic participation in these associations; more equitable community access to increased resources across many sectors, such as education, workforce, health and more.
- 4. Increased Safety & Opportunity: Better lives for neighborhood residents with a focus on equitable outcomes**, including improvements such as: fewer people subject to stops, summons, arrests, probation and jail time; less emergency room use;

fewer family crises such as evictions, child welfare placements, and behavioral health issues; fewer students referred for school discipline, suspensions, and expulsions; decreases in use of TANF, unemployment claims, etc.; increased equity of positive outcomes across the justice ecosystem; reductions in public and private costs of crisis management services, resulting in opportunities for reinvestment in prevention, support and opportunity-focused programs.

The Approach: JGP will support participating sites through three interconnected components:

- Funding of a local justice intermediary, with new staffing focused on collaboration, data analysis, and public education
- Technical assistance from nationally recognized experts, including the production of Justice Audits informed by community-based action research, and formulation of associated Justice Reinvestment Plans
- Participation in a national learning community through the Aspen Justice Network

These components work across a multi-stage, up to 5 year, process:

1. Pre-JGP Stakeholder Engagement | up to 6 months

CJRI will explore the interest and wherewithal of key stakeholders to engage in a planning process. Key stakeholders usually include representation from executive or legislative branches of government; leadership of criminal justice agencies; community-oriented organizations, institutions of higher education, and local philanthropy.

2. Planning Period | 6-12 months | up to \$250K in planning funds

If a Planning grant proposal is accepted, CJRI will provide \$150-\$250K in funding, and provide planning-focused technical assistance to create an initial implementation proposal and select a local justice intermediary to implement JGP. Grantees will be responsible for substantially expanding recruitment of key stakeholders to form their local justice collaborative, particularly to include constituencies engaged in and impacted by crisis management governance. Applicants will also work with the JGP team to find a local justice intermediary to manage implementation, research and assess the landscape germane to criminal justice reform, and prepare for Justice Audit, Community-Based Action Research (CBAR), and Justice Reinvestment Plan processes.

3. Initial Implementation | 18-24 months | up to \$1.3M in funding

If an Initial Implementation grant proposal is accepted, JGP technical assistance providers will work closely with the local justice intermediary and stakeholders to lead development and production of the inaugural Justice Audit, further informed by community-based action research methods, as well as formulate an associated Justice Reinvestment Plan. Stakeholders will be responsible for appointing an agency or organizational point person who will participate in design of the Audit, an iterative data development process, and facilitated convenings and reviews of the completed Audit in aid of formulating and implementing a Justice Reinvestment Plan.

The local justice intermediary will hire key staff, including executive director, senior policy specialist, and lead data scientist. The local justice intermediary staff will be supported by CJRI and TA partners to learn the Justice Audit, CBAR, and Justice Reinvestment planning processes. Alongside the production of an initial Justice Audit, the intermediary will also be building its policy change capacity, as well as planning for financial sustainability of its work after Stage 4.

4. Sustained Implementation | 18-24 months | up to \$1.3M in funding

If a Sustained Implementation grant proposal is accepted, the local justice intermediary will lead production of a second Justice Audit and formulate and implement a second Justice Reinvestment Plan. JGP national technical assistance providers will support but take a back seat to the local justice intermediary operations. Most importantly, the local justice intermediary will, through the Local Justice Collaborative, foster changes to institutional and government discretionary administrative policies and practices that support justice reform and justice reinvestment.

About CJRI and JGP The Aspen Institute's [Criminal Justice Reform Initiative](#) believes that when justice is truly realized, both safety and opportunity are defined and created *by communities themselves*, so that they may become free of the heavy weight of the criminal legal system. CJRI's work is to support and amplify community-level policies and practices that can transform how we think of justice in the United States. The Justice and Governance Partnership was developed by CJRI Director [Dr. Douglas E. Wood](#), and Eric Cadora of [Justice Mapping](#). CJRI and JGP have received initial support from many key institutional funders of justice reform, including Arnold Ventures, The Balmer Group, the Bank of America Charitable Foundation, Chan Zuckerberg Initiative, the Community Foundation for Southeast Michigan, and the Ford Foundation.