



Justice and Governance Partnership

The Vision: The Aspen Institute [Criminal Justice Reform Initiative](#)'s [Justice and Governance Partnership](#) (JGP) is supporting mid-sized and rural/micropolitan jurisdictions to improve analytical capacity and support policy improvements focused on ending overdependence on the criminal legal system, and to 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 creating a **Local Justice Intermediary** (LJI) to support a **Local Justice Collaborative**, a coalition 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 is working in five jurisdictions currently, 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, JGP mid-sized city collaboratives could receive, depending on funding availability, up to 5 years of support from CJRI, including up to nearly **\$1.5M in funding to a local justice collaboration**, with **additional \$1M in technical assistance provided by expert 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 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 areas such as housing, health, education, transportation and employment play in shaping safety and justice. The four impact goals that JGP expects to attain are:

Goal 1: Local jurisdictions adopt and apply a holistic definition of jurisdictional justice and safety with broad, shared participation and ownership from multiple sectors.

Goal 2: Advocates, justice-involved, and other residents bring community experiential knowledge to participate, shape, and own a shared vision of community safety, justice, and well-being.

Goal 3: Local jurisdictions pursue discretionary and legislative policy improvements to enable and sustain a cross-sector, equitable, and holistic vision of community safety, justice, and well-being.

Ultimate Goal: Individuals in jurisdictions, particularly those negatively impacted within the justice ecosystem, experience less crisis and more social support. This will be evidenced by:

- Neighborhood-level improvements in reductions in the crisis management governance footprint in the criminal justice sector and jurisdictionally-prioritized justice ecosystem, and in expansion of programming, resources, and access to safety and justice.
- Criminal justice sector crisis management governance reductions include reductions in punitive justice (as captured by the Justice Audit).
- Justice Ecosystem crisis management governance reductions might include areas such as: Healthcare (e.g.: emergency room admissions); Education (e.g.: school suspensions/expulsions); and Social Services (e.g.: TANF and SNAP use).
- Safety and justice enhancement might include areas such as: Increased access to CDFI capital; Increased participation in apprenticeship programming; and Increased participation in preventative and 'diversionary' programming.
- Diminishing disproportionalities as determined by race or ethnicity in the jurisdiction within key established indicators and across prioritized areas of crisis management governance and perceptions of safety, justice, and wellbeing.

The Approach:

JGP will support participating sites through three interconnected components:

- Funding of a Local Justice Intermediary, 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. Outlined below is the process and supports for JGP work in mid-sized cities, typically a mid-sized metro in collaboration with the surrounding county. (The JGP approach and supports for rural/micropolitan collaboratives may vary.)

1. Stakeholder Engagement Period

CJRI will explore the interest and wherewithal of key stakeholders to engage in a planning process and support formation of a local Leadership Group. 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. The Leadership Group will select a local organization which will become the LJI, charged with stewarding the JGP work.

2. Planning Period | one year | up to \$250K in planning funds

If a Planning grant proposal is accepted, CJRI will provide up to \$250K in funding to the LJI, and provide planning-focused technical assistance to create an initial implementation proposal. Grantees will be responsible for substantially expanding recruitment of key stakeholders to form a local justice collaborative, particularly to include constituencies engaged in and impacted by crisis management governance. Applicants will also work with the Aspen JGP team to create an initial prototype of the Justice Audit, research and assess the landscape germane to criminal justice reform, and prepare for Community-Based Action Research work. The LJI and stakeholders will participate in design of the Justice Audit, through the prototyping process, an iterative data development process, with facilitated convenings and reviews of the data that are initially available.

3. Initial Implementation Period | two years | up to \$600K in funding

If an Initial Implementation grant proposal is accepted, JGP technical assistance providers will work closely with the LJI and stakeholders to lead development and production of an additional Justice Audit prototype and then a full Justice Audit. This leads to creation of a Justice Reinvestment Plan: an action plan, based in the data of the Justice Audit, to create changes in policy and programs that enhance safety, and reinvest punitive-based justice funds into positive community opportunities for growth.

The local justice intermediary will hire additional staff, and supported by CJRI and TA partners, learn the Justice Audit and Justice Reinvestment planning processes, so as to run these themselves in the final JGP stage of work. Alongside the production of an initial Justice Audit, the intermediary will also be building its policy change capacity, and begin planning for financial sustainability of its work after Stage 4.

4. Sustained Implementation Period | two years | up to \$600K in funding

If a Sustained Implementation grant proposal is accepted, the LJI 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 LJI operations. Most importantly, the LJI 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.