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520.724.7855

**CONTACT:**

Danna Whiting,

Pima County Behavioral Health

Terrance Cheung, 520.724.8770

Pima County Safety & Justice

**Obama Administration recognizes Pima County  
in its Data-Driven Justice Initiative**

PIMA COUNTY – The Obama Administration has recognized Pima County as a model jurisdiction for its efforts in adopting proven strategies that reduce unnecessary arrests and incarceration, and using data collection and exchange efforts to break the cycle of recidivism.

The Administration has launched the Data-Driven Justice Initiative (DDJ) with a bipartisan coalition of 67 city, county, and state governments committed to using data-driven strategies to divert low-level offenders with mental illness out of the criminal-justice system and to change approaches to pre-trial incarceration so that low-risk offenders no longer stay in jail simply because they cannot afford a bond.

Pima County efforts to reduce the cycle of incarceration have been highlighted through this initiative, particularly through their utilization of data to identify and proactively break the cycle of incarceration, equip law enforcement and first responders with the tools they need to respond and divert, and use data-driven, validated, pre-trial risk assessment tools to inform pre-trial release decisions.

“It is exciting that Pima County Behavioral Health has been recognized by the Obama administration for the creative and innovative work we have done on behalf of Pima County in the last several years in the areas of criminal justice and behavioral health,” said Danna Whiting, Pima County Behavioral Health Administrator. “With the support of County Administrator Chuck Huckleberry and the Board of Supervisors, we continue to try to find ways to safely reduce the jail population and link behavioral health initiatives with criminal justice. Participating in this initiative allows us to showcase what we have learned to help other jurisdictions, while we continue to learn from others how to continue to innovate in these areas.”

In 2013, the [Pima County Behavioral Health Department](#) created a data exchange that allows Pima County Jail personnel to access real-time information about individuals at time of incarceration, specifically, mental health treatment history, Medicaid status and mental health category.

The data system allows jail personnel and behavioral health professionals to coordinate inmate care and share consented behavioral health information with justice partners to help coordinate effective and safe discharge planning back into community behavioral health care.

Funding for the data system was provided through a 2013 grant from SEARCH, the National Consortium for Justice Information and Statistics under the Bureau of Justice Assistance.

The DDJ initiative corresponds to other Pima County criminal justice reform efforts, specifically, the recent development of jail population reduction strategies funded through a \$1.5 million grant from the John D. and Catherine T. MacArthur Foundation's [Safety and Justice Challenge](#).

Pima County was among 11 jurisdictions to receive funding to implement strategies to safely keep nonviolent, low-level offenders with substance abuse and mental health conditions out of jail and divert them into treatment.

"This acknowledgement from the Obama Administration shows that Pima County is in the forefront of the growing national effort to use real data to make fairer incarceration decisions and reinforces the importance of such work," said Ellen Wheeler, Pima County Assistant County Administrator.

Pima County will continue to enhance evidence-based and data driven initiatives to reduce the cycle of recidivism through jails, emergency rooms, shelters and other public systems, where individuals often receive fragmented and uncoordinated care at great cost, and often with poor outcomes. Through participation in the White House DDJ initiative and the Safety and Justice Challenge, Pima County's Behavioral Health Department and a wide array of County and City of Tucson criminal justice agencies have coordinated their efforts to reduce incarceration, safely divert to appropriate treatment or crisis options and to use data to enhance criminal justice and health outcomes.

To find out more about the White House Data-Driven Justice Initiative, visit the [White House website](#).

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