



# JUSTICE RESOURCE ADVISORY COUNCIL **STRATEGIC PLAN**



**BUNCOMBE COUNTY**  
NORTH CAROLINA

# JRAC STRATEGIC PLAN 2020-2025

Developed by Justice Resources Advisory Council

*The Justice Resource Advisory Council is designed to enhance the efficiency and effectiveness of the Buncombe County criminal justice system, thereby maximizing public safety and increasing community wellness.*

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## INTRODUCTION

The Justice Resource Advisory Council (JRAC) is a collaborative initiative with leadership from Buncombe County and representatives from the criminal justice and court system focusing on systemic planning and coordination for crucial needs in the criminal justice system.

We aim to create a system that values efficiency, integrity, transparency, inclusiveness, collaboration, and equity. To achieve this, we have three strategies that guide the activities in the JRAC strategic plan. The three strategies include: diversion and community wellness, collaboration and community engagement, and equity and resources.



# DIVERSION AND COMMUNITY WELLNESS

The American Journal of Psychiatry has long recognized that co-occurring substance use and mental health disorders associated with behavior that can be criminalized, alongside harsh sanctions for drug-related offenses as primary drivers of justice system involvement among persons with mental health conditions. Additional public health issues in Buncombe County are supporting young people in healthy transitions to adulthood, and reducing gun-violence. Approximately 63-71% of gun violence victims in Asheville are young males. Community members have voiced a desire for community-led approaches to support safety in their communities, and there is strong interest from various SJC partners – including leadership from Asheville Police Department, Asheville Housing Authority, and the County’s Child

Fatality Review Team – to address community safety and violence prevention.

We will focus our efforts to expand diversion options and provide alternatives to incarceration for low-level nonviolent offenders and for individuals with mental illness and substance use disorders. Collectively we will work towards community wellness as well as violence prevention with community members and government partners to develop a long-term approach to create spaces to address community violence, improve community safety, and work towards healing. Lastly, we will work towards the reduction of collateral consequences through projects like expanding access to expungement services and restoring driver’s licenses.

## JRAC GOAL

# Enhancing Pre-arrest Diversion & Prevention Strategies

**ACCOUNTABILITY** *Asheville Police Department, Buncombe County Health and Human Services, Buncombe County Justice Services, Buncombe County Sheriff's Office, NC 28th Judicial District Juvenile Justice, Vaya Health*

## INITIATIVE 1

### Implement Pre-arrest Diversion Strategies

**Action 1.1** - Create community resources for crisis list

**Action 1.2** - Develop cheat sheet for charging decisions

**Action 1.3** - Advocate for Crisis Intervention Team (CIT) in basic law enforcement training

## INITIATIVE 2

### Promote Positive Youth Development

**Action 2.1** - Create custom notification program for gun violence interruption

**Action 2.2** - Implement trauma informed responses for community

**Action 2.3** - Create justice and community partnership to develop youth after school programming

## INITIATIVE 3

### Community Safety and Violence Prevention Initiative

**Action 3.1** - Implement community safety program

**Action 3.2** - Develop comprehensive plan

**Action 3.3** - Create visual project to include equity approach to violent crime mapping

## JRAC GOAL

# Promoting Community Wellness to Avoid Detention

## INITIATIVE 1

### Promoting Community Wellness to Avoid Detention

**Action 1.1** - Expand expunction services

**Action 1.2** - Partner with NC pro bono on project to restore driver licenses

**Action 1.3** - Create bail expedite program



# COLLABORATION AND COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

Collaboration and breaking down silos is necessary to creating system change and improvement. Collaboration creates opportunities to productively problem solve and identify underlying problems that can be addressed to reduce crime at its roots. We recognize our agencies do not operate in a vacuum and engaging system stakeholders in change efforts helps eliminate barriers, increases opportunities for success, enhances the change process and educates stakeholders about the agency's work.

Key to improving system outcomes is strong community engagement. Community engagement includes improving community understanding and perceptions of our criminal justice system as well as moving away from the traditional definition of power as control; towards a definition that allows for shared authority. It is important citizens are aware of the resources available should they or their loved ones become involved with the justice system. Further, if we are to fully understand

how best to assist those individuals impacted by our local criminal justice system, we must learn from their experiences. We will implement several strategies throughout the life of our strategic plan work, bringing in the voices of those impacted by the criminal justice system. Specific outreach will be done to engage BIPOC (Black, Indigenous, and People of Color) communities and justice involved women. Working with internal and external partners we will create public education campaigns, informing our community about how the criminal justice system works and what someone can expect should they encounter the system as a defendant, survivor, or in some other capacity. A key factor in procedural justice is understanding (Tyler, 1990). That is, knowing the process through which decisions are made is critical for building a person's trust of a system. Increasing community understanding will help build confidence in our local criminal justice system and increase public support our efforts.

# Enhancing Collaboration Across The Justice System

**ACCOUNTABILITY**

*Buncombe County Board of Commissioner's and County Manager's Office, NC 28th Judicial District Superior Court, NC 28th Judicial District Magistrates' Office, Local Private Defense Bar Association, NC 28th Judicial District Community Corrections, NC 28th Judicial District Public Defender's Office*

**INITIATIVE 1**

## Ensure Cross System Collaboration

**Action 1.1** - Institutionalize coordinated community response by establishing MOU, website, priority areas

**Action 1.2** - Identify additional partners from social services agencies, behavior health services, other community stakeholders and develop partnerships, communication strategies, and improve service-delivery coordination

**Action 1.3** - Develop community safety and violence prevention comprehensive planning process that engages justice partners in identifying roles and commitments while centering community input and leadership

**INITIATIVE 2**

## Facilitate Statewide Coordination

**Action 2.1** - Identify JRACs or similar organizations across NC with aligned mission/goals/scope

**Action 2.2** - Collaborate with statewide partners to coordinate legislative agendas and other initiatives

# Broadening Opportunities for Community Engagement

## INITIATIVE 1

### Conduct Education and Outreach

**Action 1.1** - Partner with & build on existing organizations, initiatives, and meetings to provide education and outreach through launch of CJ101 video, listening sessions, focus groups, etc.

**Action 1.2** - Create infrastructure to ensure continuous feedback loop for community to be heard and responded to/acted upon and informed of updates to policies, procedures, and practices

**Action 1.3** - Create new methods of communication - e.g. social media

## INITIATIVE 2

### Implement Participatory Decision Making Models

**Action 2.1** - Increase/ensure representation of those most impacted by systems on councils and workgroups

**Action 2.2** - Explore community interest in participatory defense

**Action 2.3** - Create opportunities for continuous authentic community conversations and participation in decision-making



# EQUITY AND RESOURCES

In July of 2020, the Justice Resource Advisory Council and the Buncombe County Commissioners declared Racism a Public Safety Emergency and named reducing racial disparities as essential to ensuring a fair and equitable justice system. In this declaration, JRAC and the Board of Commissioners articulated 12 goals (provided as attachment). In our community, Black individuals have high rates of incarceration and experience longer lengths of stay. We will work towards implementing the goals in the declaration through the objectives and actions described in this plan. Racial Equity efforts will include

expanding data analysis; conducting root cause analyses and developing solutions through a racial equity lens; and continuing to provide education and training opportunities to partners.

In order to meet the pressing needs of our community, we have to ensure we have the necessary resources to deliver high quality programs and services. We must ensure sustainability in our programs and initiatives that improve outcomes for those impacted by the justice system.



# Improving Racial Equity in the Justice System

**ACCOUNTABILITY**

*Buncombe County Board of Commissioner's and County Manager's Office, Asheville City Council and City Manager's Office, Buncombe County Justice Services, Buncombe County Strategic Partnerships, Buncombe County Bureau of Identification, Vaya Health, NC 40th Prosecutorial District*

**INITIATIVE 1**

## Institute Training & Education

**Action 1.1** - Implement Racial Equity workgroup trainings

**Action 1.2** - Partner with community organizations to provide racial equity trainings

**Action 1.3** - Create Diversity, Equity and Inclusion training and Implicit Bias training for law enforcement

**Action 1.4** - Support the creation and implementation of County-wide racial equity training Group 1

**INITIATIVE 2**

## Implement Racial Equity Tool Across Continuum

**Action 2.1** - Identify key decision points across the justice system

**Action 2.2** - Launch of racial equity tool

**Action 2.3** - Create and continuously assess racial equity decision point analysis report

# Optimizing Resources to Maximize Services

## INITIATIVE 1

### Sustainability Planning For Existing Programs

**Action 1.1** - Create sustainability plan for Safety and Justice Challenge

**Action 1.2** - Create sustainability plan for Family Justice Center

**Action 1.3** - Create sustainability plan for Treatment Court Grants

## INITIATIVE 2

### Explore Braided Funding Models

**Action 2.1** - Identify programs and systems initiative

**Action 2.2** - Mitigate the impact of COVID-19 by ensuring necessary resources for case processing

# Utilizing Data to Enhance Decision-Making

## INITIATIVE 1

### Implement Public Facing Justice Dashboards

**Action 1.1** - Develop and maintain Asheville Police dashboards

**Action 1.2** - Develop and maintain Justice Services program dashboards

**Action 1.3** - Develop and maintain Buncombe County Sheriffs Office detention dashboards

## INITIATIVE 2

### Develop Justice Performance Measures and Reporting

**Action 2.1** - Identify of key performance metrics to analyze and drive informed change

**Action 2.2** - Create reporting mechanism

## INITIATIVE 3

### Advocate for Improved Court System Data

**Action 3.1** - Outreach and develop relationships to the Administrative Office of the Courts

**Action 3.2** - Establish memorandum of understanding for data sharing

**Action 3.3** - Develop IT structure to increase data capacity in data warehouse.

**Action 3.4** - Develop performance measure and monitor victim and defendant outcomes

