

OKLAHOMA COUNTY
**CRIMINAL
JUSTICE**
ADVISORY COUNCIL

Oklahoma County Criminal Justice
Advisory Council
Annual Report to the Interlocal Partners

4th Annual Report for FY 2021-22
September 2022



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BACKGROUND

In response to the growing concerns about chronic overcrowding in Oklahoma County's jail facility, the Greater Oklahoma City Chamber announced in December 2015 the creation of a special task force to evaluate Oklahoma County's criminal justice system. With collaboration and input from a diverse group of community members, the Chamber contracted with the Vera Institute of Justice to complete an initial analysis and make recommendations for reform of the Oklahoma County criminal justice system. Vera released their recommendations in December 2016. As a central recommendation of the report, an interlocal agreement between Oklahoma County, the City of Oklahoma City, the City of Edmond, and the City of Midwest City created the Oklahoma County Criminal Justice Advisory Council (CJAC) in November 2017. The Advisory Council continued to evolve with the hiring of a full-time executive director in February 2018 to provide support to the CJAC's efforts. The creation of this permanent oversight body is key to implementing the proposed criminal justice reforms which can be summarized in these six key recommendations:

1. Create oversight and accountability mechanisms for the local justice system.
2. Reduce jail admissions for municipal violations and low-level misdemeanors.
3. Create a fair and efficient pretrial release process that safely reduces unnecessary pretrial incarceration.
4. Identify and address district court case processing delays that increase jail admissions and length of stay.
5. Expand meaningful diversion program options, focusing on individuals with mental illness and substance abuse disorders.
6. Reduce the impact of justice system fines and fees as a driver of jail growth and recidivism.

Although each of the six recommendations carry numerous challenges and barriers to improvement, the good news is that, because of the cooperative effort of the Advisory Council's stakeholders, progress continues to be made on each of the six recommendations.

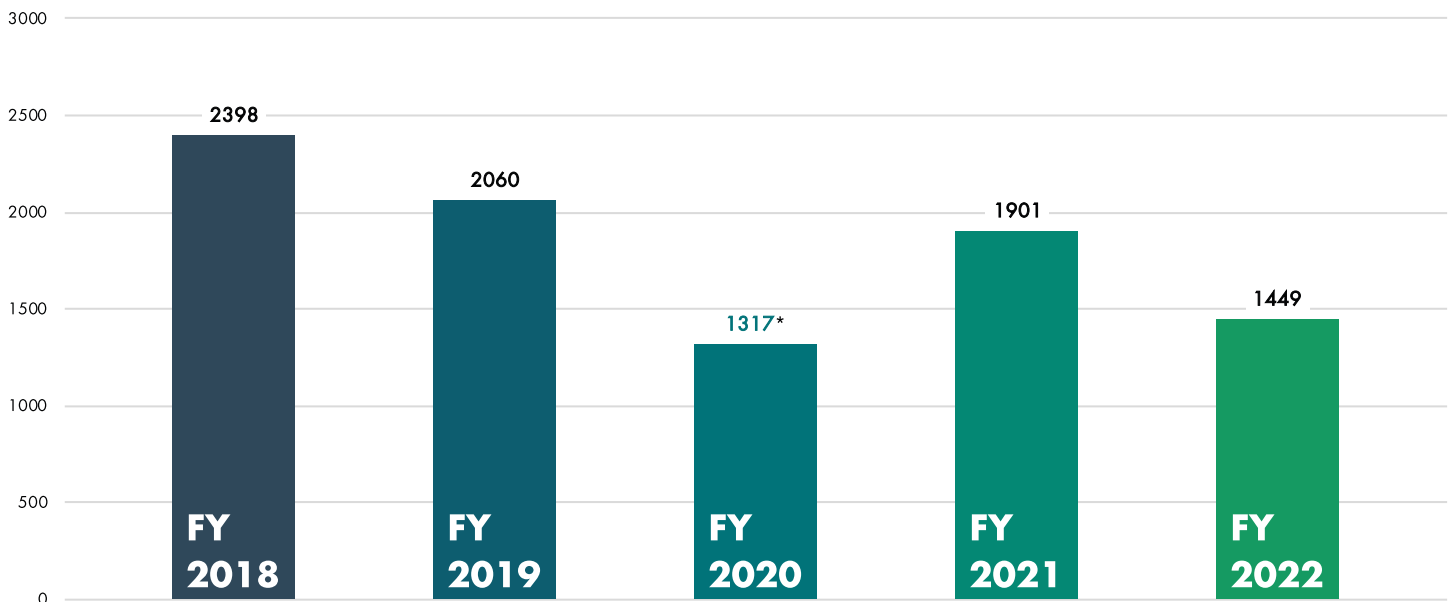
The CJAC completed its fourth fiscal year on June 30, 2022. The year was marked by major progress on several fronts: the beginnings of MAPS 4 implementation of justice-related projects, OKCPD law enforcement policy reforms, continued jail population decline due to diversion programs, fair chance hiring education, continued detention center process improvements and, of course, voter approval of a new jail bond. Nevertheless, just as various system improvements advance, constant vigilance is required to keep building on the foundations of progress toward more advanced system change.

4TH ANNUAL REPORT HIGHLIGHT— DOC INTAKE FROM OK COUNTY CONTINUES TO DROP

One result of the declining OK County Detention Center population that has occurred over the last five years is a notable reduction in the number of people from Oklahoma County ending up in prison in the Department of Corrections. As the chart below shows, since Fiscal Year 2018, the number of people from Oklahoma County who end their court process with a prison sentence to

DOC dropped by 949 people or 39%. Although state law changes play a factor, a major contributing factor to this remarkable reduction is the expansion of diversion programs in OK County, including pre-trial release programs and alternative sentencing programs. For the Governor and the Legislature, this sends a strong signal that a critical way to reverse prison overcrowding is to move state resources to county diversion programs.

DOC Receptions from Oklahoma County



*FY 20 count lower due to Covid

MAPS 4 PROJECTS ON MENTAL HEALTH, ADDICTION, DIVERSION HUB AND HOMELESSNESS MOVE FORWARD

Oklahoma City's successful MAPS 4 campaign included several projects that will continue to expand the community's focus on justice-related issues. Of the 16 projects included in the MAPS 4 package, the following are ones that will positively impact the county's justice system:

- \$45 million for mental health and addiction facilities and services.
- \$19 million for the Diversion Hub.
- \$50 million-plus to reduce homelessness.

Additionally, another project to fund youth centers will provide future prevention efforts to assist youth in healthy lifestyle choices, redirecting them away from incarceration.

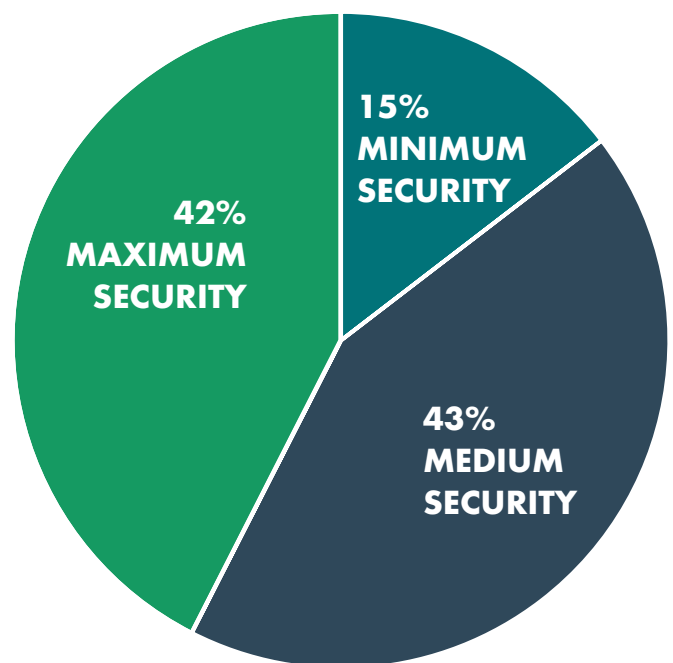
MAPS 4 implementation progressed in FY22 with several projects going out to bid and moving closer to launching. The mental health component consists of two new mental health crisis centers at a cost of at least \$12 million. The first mental health crisis center went out for bids in 2022 and an operator is expected to be selected in the fall of 2022. Both mental health crisis centers will include urgent recovery beds as well as crisis stabilization beds which will allow additional time for crisis services to be provided.

The Restoration Center project, at a cost of approximately \$22 million, will focus on the overlap in people with both mental health and substance abuse addiction needs, including detox services. The Restoration Center is on the same timeline with the first mental health crisis center for the fall of 2022. To assist both the mental health crisis centers and the Restoration Center, MAPS 4 also includes at least \$7 million for temporary housing for people transitioning out of the facilities. However, this \$7 million for temporary transitional housing is in addition to the more than \$50 million project specifically focused on homelessness and the city's adoption of the Housing First model.

While both new projects move forward, an existing project that works closely with CJAC is also receiving funding for a permanent location. The Diversion Hub, operating out of a temporary location for two years, provides justice navigators and case managers to guide clients through the justice system to keep them out of incarceration. A justice navigator's focus is keeping a client in compliance with pre-trial release conditions and/or probation requirements if they are already further into the court process. A case manager works with the justice navigator to identify what other needs the client has to move them toward stability and self-sufficiency.

Each of these projects on their own would be helpful to efforts to divert people from jail incarceration. However, combining all these new projects will build much needed infrastructure to ensure the fifth recommendation of the Vera Institute becomes a reality: Expand meaningful diversion program options, focusing on people with mental illness and substance use disorders.

Security Classification FY22



21ST CENTURY POLICING SOLUTIONS

REPORT APPROVED BY OKC CITY COUNCIL

In May 2020, as the world was reeling from the early stages of the pandemic, another major event entered the world stage—the tragic death of George Floyd. The shocking video was a catalyst for cities across the country to start a period of self-reflection that has led to numerous recommendations for changes in policing. In Oklahoma City, Mayor David Holt and City Manager and CJAC member Craig Freeman launched two companion efforts to reimagine policing in Oklahoma County's largest city. Still in his first year as Oklahoma City's chief of police, CJAC member Wade Gourley welcomed the review.

The Mayor's Law Enforcement Policy Task Force (LEPT) included more than 40 community members and focused on the OKC Police Department's (OKCPD) de-escalation policy, as well as the need to restructure the OKCPD's Citizen Advisory Board. The task force members included a broad swath of leaders, including four OKC City Councilpersons, two state senators, two state representatives and more than 30 other community leaders. Former OKC Assistant City Manager M.T. Berry facilitated the task force.

The companion review was conducted by the city manager's Community Policing Working Group (CPWG), focusing on how to expand and increase effective programs in the following six areas:

- Training for police officers in crisis response.
- Officer access to mental health services.
- Alternative responses to mental health calls.
- Youth outreach.
- Expansion of homeless outreach initiatives.
- Creation of a neighborhood safety/violence interruption program.

The CPWG concept was authored by OKC Councilman

James Cooper and was made up of 12 community leaders, including Chief Gourley.

To assist both groups, the city conducted a public bidding process to select a consultant. 21st Century Policing Solutions (21 CP) was selected to facilitate community discussions, policy reviews and help develop reform recommendations for the OKC City Council. 21 CP regularly works with cities and communities to effectively tackle the challenges of delivering safe, effective, just and constitutional public safety services in the 21st century. The organization is led by former police chiefs, lawyers, social scientists, academics and community leaders who have turned around troubled police departments and renewed the community's confidence in their agencies.

After several months of work with both the LEPT and CPWG, 21 CP submitted their report to the OKC City Council. Some of the highlights of the report include:

Short-term goals, those that can be accomplished in 3-6 months:

- Requiring officers to provide verbal warnings before any use of force, if possible.
- Creating additional transparency of the Citizens Advisory Board through public reports on its activities. Additionally, changing the makeup of the CAB to reflect each of the city's wards.
- Creating a web-based platform for filing complaints against an officer which could be anonymous.
- Creating a Youth Advisory Board with direct access to the chief of police.

Mid-range goals that can take 6-12+ months:

- Prohibiting officers involved in shootings and other critical incidents from viewing bodycam footage before providing an interview.

- Creating a new public data dashboard on the department, including use of force events.
- Increasing number of crisis intervention trained officers.
- Creating a Crisis Intervention Committee that focuses on mental health response across the city.

Long-term goals that take more than a year to implement:

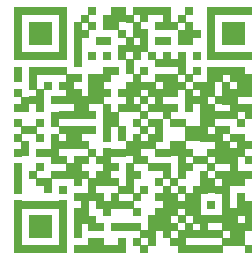
- Interviewing officers involved in shootings and other critical events by the end of their shift, rather than the current waiting period of 48 hours or more.
- Considering preference for new applicants to the department with "mental health experience, certifications, or degrees, or social work experience."
- Conducting a public information process to evaluate what community resources are present or could be developed to expand OKCPD's capacity for alternative mental health responses to calls.
- Consider modifying city ordinances to address quality of life crimes that include situations like homelessness which call for a different response.

The city has embraced the report and already embarked on an implementation strategy, continuing the contract with

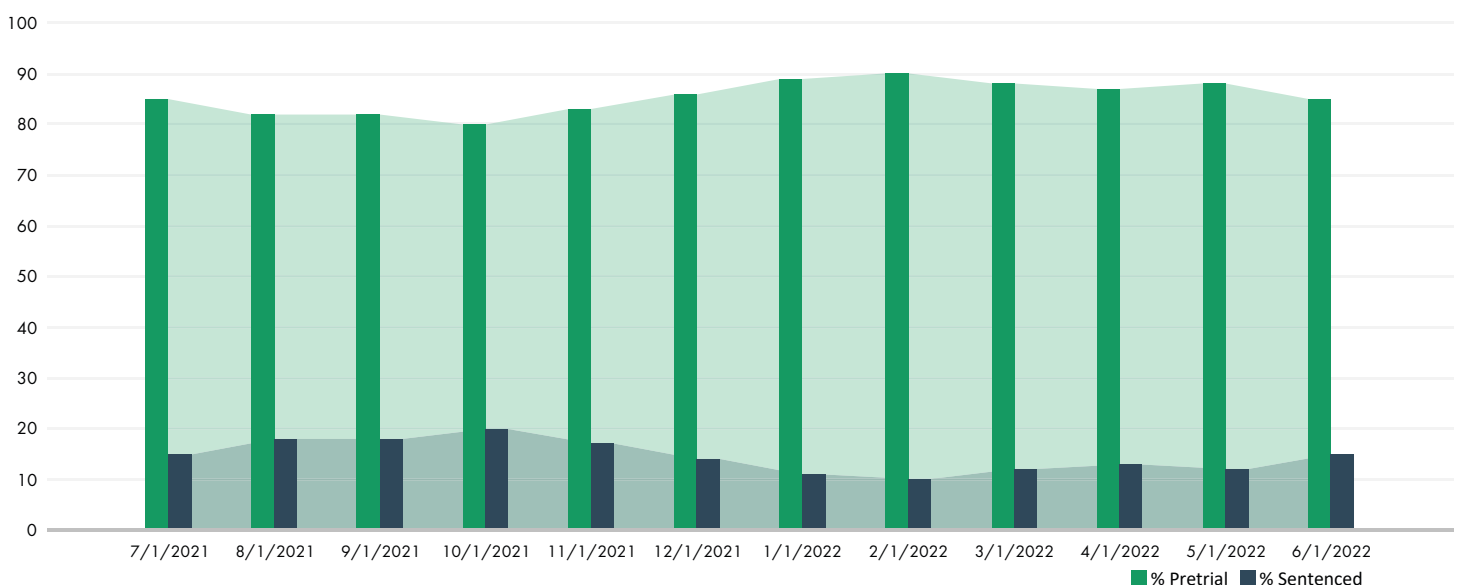
one of the 21 CP consultants to oversee implementation. Additionally, the city has taken a significant step to set aside \$1.3 million in the upcoming fiscal year budget for program implementation.

Despite the city's work to move forward on improvements and implementation, community partners that were closely involved in the process know that change is not always easy but also knew the process and recommendations were significant. Grace Franklin, member of both the task force and working group, told *The Oklahoman*, "What's on the table could transform Oklahoma City. These recommendations are not a bunch of left-wing, hippie people sitting around, like, 'Burn down the police,'" Franklin said. "That wasn't the discussion. The discussion was, 'How do we make it better?'"

CJAC was involved with both the task force and working group and looks forward to working with OKC to assist implementation efforts. To view the report, scan the QR code below or visit okc.gov/government/law-enforcement-taskforce:



Pretrial vs. Sentenced Percentages FY22



JUSTICE CHAMPION: LARRY STEVENS, FORMER EDMOND CITY MANAGER

The CJAC stands on the shoulders of numerous justice champions who served and toiled on previous commissions, task forces and working groups for more than a decade. More specifically, the CJAC is a direct result of the Vera Institute's first recommendation that Oklahoma County needed to create "oversight and accountability mechanisms for the local justice system" embodied "in a standing regional criminal justice coordinating body with sufficient staff and research capacity." Since the majority of CJAC members are appointed or elected officials, the makeup of the 19 members fluctuates from year to year. Yet each year, CJAC's progress continues because of the work of the members and the numerous valued partners. In FY22 one of those appointed officials retired—Larry Stevens, former Edmond city manager.

Mr. Stevens began his work even before the Vera Institute report was released as he served on the original Greater OKC Chamber Criminal Justice Task Force. He played a leading role in creating the CJAC and keeping the City of Edmond involved as a critical player. Additionally, Stevens assisted the Facilities Subcommittee in the jail study that eventually resulted in the voters approving a bond package for a new jail.

Stevens recently retired after 20 years as city manager. In a review of his tenure, a local Edmond publication, Edmond Life and Leisure, noted that 20 years is a remarkably long tenure in the city manager business. They went on to note Stevens' professionalism that CJAC members and staff knew all too well: "When a hard decision has to be made, he makes it. Larry doesn't put it on others. He takes the blame if there is any and never takes credit for himself. ... Larry is a "we" person and you never hear him use the word "I" when talking about projects in Edmond that are so successful. He has the back of his employees as well. ... His work can only be described as a true professional."

The CJAC and community express our deepest appreciation for Mr. Stevens' important service. His insight and hard work are reflected in the progress being made in our county toward more fair and effective justice.

SHERIFF ROLLS OUT NEW BODY-WORN CAMERAS

When the new Sheriff Tommie Johnson III was campaigning for the job, he promised to do things differently. One of those areas he wanted to change was the fact that the OK County Sheriff's Office (OCSO) was not equipped with body cameras. Sheriff Johnson made good on his pledge during FY22 by securing funding to purchase 40 Axon body cameras along with data storage and a maintenance package. The Sheriff's office did not use any taxpayer appropriated funds. Instead OCSO utilized revenues generated through various fees like fingerprinting as well as drug seizure proceeds. Any Sheriff's officer that has regular contact with the public will be wearing the body cams, and the system is equipped with sensors that will activate anytime a deputy turns on their emergency lights or draws their gun. Additionally, the cameras can be turned on remotely which could be critical if a deputy is on a foot chase, or has gone missing in a pursuit, investigation or when issuing a warrant. In this current era where law enforcement officers are under intense scrutiny, the Sheriff was glad to provide this extra level of transparency to the community.

NO TRIPLE CELLS, GREEN TAG APPROVAL HIGHLIGHT MAJOR JAIL IMPROVEMENTS AS STAFFING CHALLENGES PERSIST

As the Oklahoma County Criminal Justice Authority (Jail Trust or Trust Authority) begins its third year operating the Oklahoma County Detention Center (OCDC), the Trust Authority continues to make major improvements to infrastructure and policies while also focusing on the most important, necessary improvement—increasing staffing.

One of the major accomplishments in the last year was the total elimination of triple-celling, having three people in a cell, in the detention center. For several years, triple-celling was a chronic symptom of the dramatic overcrowding at the jail that was a hallmark of numerous other problems. Triple-celling meant that at least one person in the cell had to sleep with their mat on the floor or in a plastic “boat.” Due to the continued lower population and maintenance efforts to rehab defective cells, the Trust Authority announced a major milestone with the elimination of all triple-celling. “Our goal since the beginning has been to make sure every detainee has a bunk. This is significant

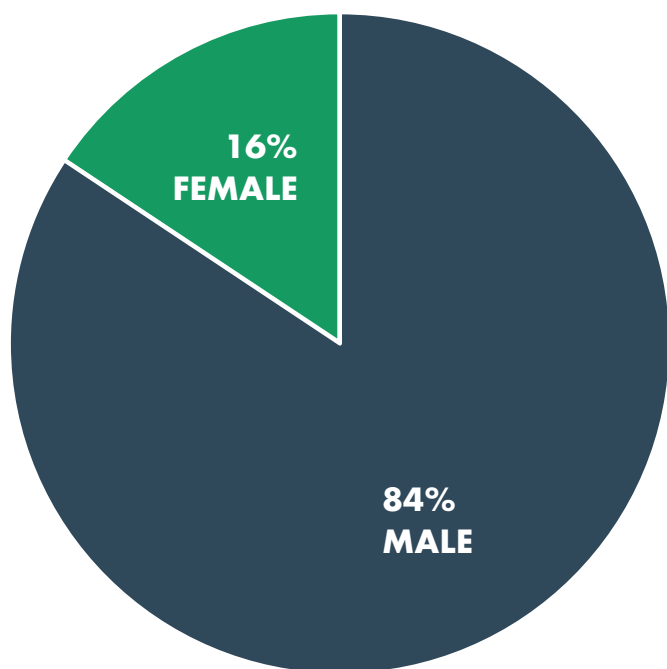
because it reduces stress on detainees and staff,” said Greg Williams, jail administrator.

Another major accomplishment was the OCDC accomplishing “green tag” status for the emergency fire system, which means the fire system is in full compliance with appropriate National Fire Protection Association standards. The jail was not in green tag compliance when the Trust Authority took over operations. “This is a significant and important achievement for the jail and the county. The green tag is a testament to the hard work and dedication of our staff and independent contractors, and we now know the jail is much safer for detainees and staff,” noted Williams.

Other improvements include:

- Continued installation of new cell door locks, including remote opening capability.
- New full-body scanner for intake and court transport to detect hidden foreign objects in detainees.
- Electronic jail control system upgrades to control all slider doors, elevators and entry gates.
- Created a fast-track booking process to allow OK County residents to clear an outstanding warrant in less than 30 minutes without having to be booked into the secure area of the jail.
- Launched a new nine-member Citizen’s Advisory Board to bring more citizen oversight to jail operations, policies, community interaction, and recruitment/retention.

**Gender Breakdown of Jail Population
1 Year Average for FY22**



Despite the various improvements which makes the Detention Center a better place to work, the Trust Authority continues to see mixed results with its most persistent problems: staff recruitment and retention of new staff. One

recruitment success story occurred when Ebenezer Baptist Church in Northeast OKC hosted a job fair. The church’s efforts resulted in 21 new hires with most of those still being retained months later. Although OCDC offers one of the best benefit packages in the region and competitive pay rates, other correctional organizations and the State Dept. of Corrections have recently increased their pay rates. The Trust Authority is hopeful that a pay raise will occur before

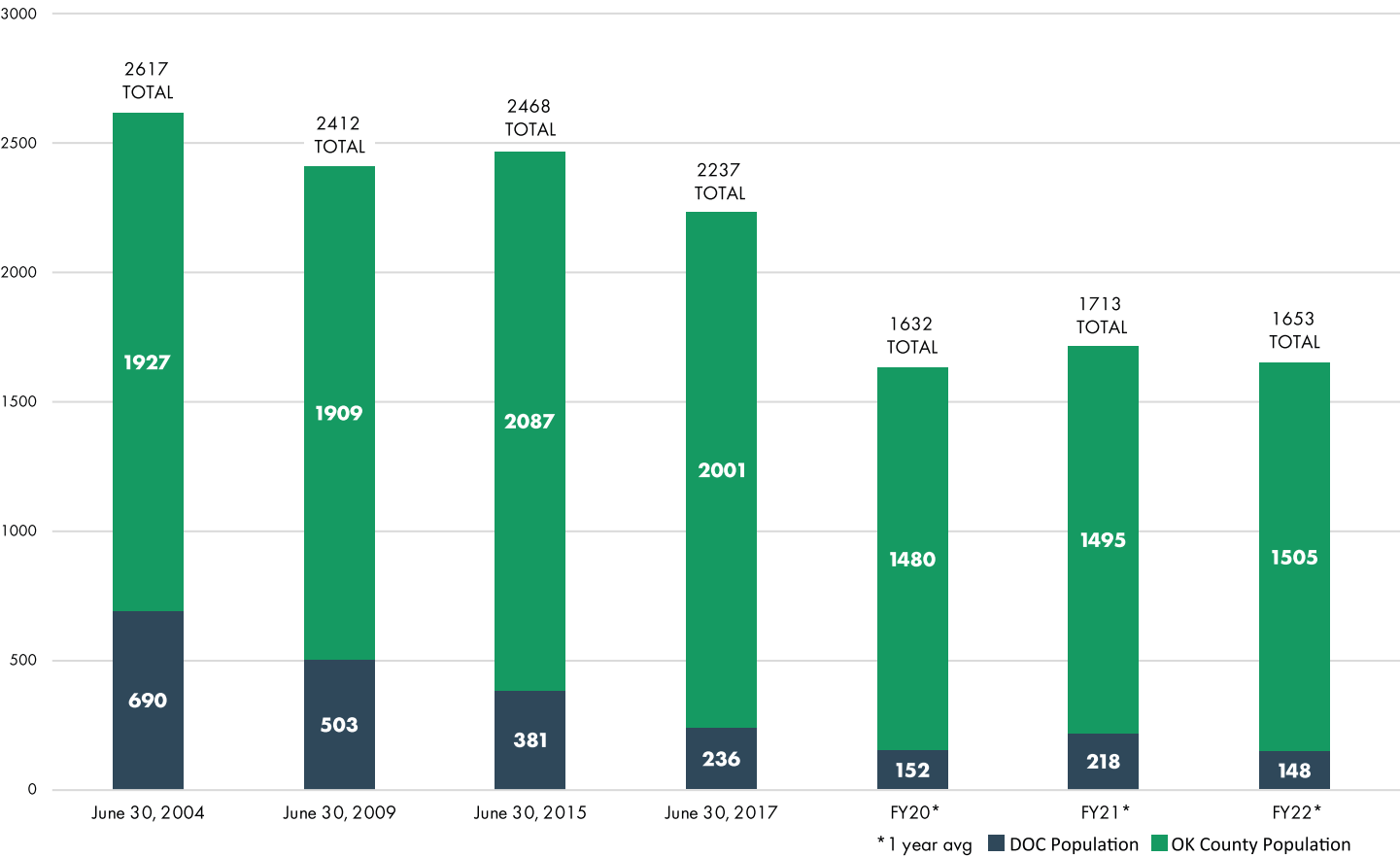
the end of 2022 to further bolster their recruitment chances. Additionally, the Trust Authority offers a quick pay increase structure and generous bonuses. For example, if a current or new employee brings in a new recruit that stays six months, the employee will receive a bonus of more than \$1,000. Increased staffing levels are the most certain way to improve the jail’s health and safety standards in the upcoming year and beyond.

LOWER JAIL POPULATION FOR FY22 CONTINUES RECENT, HISTORIC TREND

As the chart shows, the concerning and chronic jail overcrowding of the last two decades has receded to a new trend at or under 1,700 (FY20 count of 1,713 was inflated because of high DOC counts due to COVID.) This new, historic trend works well with the capacity of the new

jail. The good news is that the various pre-trial release and alternative sentencing programs believe they have more capacity. Such expanded capacity signals that future jail detainees won’t have to endure the overcrowding that has plagued the community.

Oklahoma County Jail Totals
Total Average Population



NEW JAIL ON THE HORIZON AFTER VOTERS STRONGLY ENDORSE BOND PACKAGE

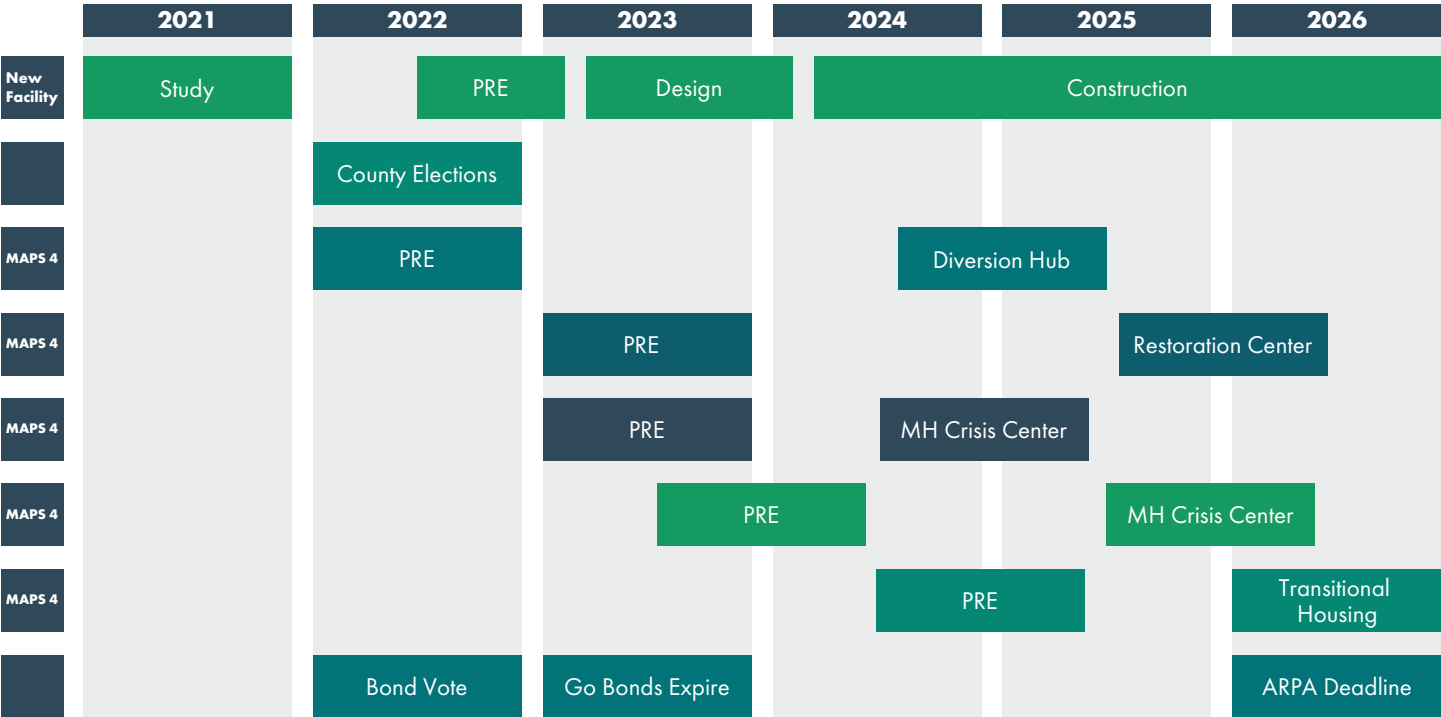
Finally.

After three decades, numerous taskforces, committees, studies, and multiple proposals, Oklahoma County voters finally took control of a chronic community problem: the OK County jail. On June 28, 2022, Oklahoma County voters strongly approved a \$260 million bond proposal for a new jail with nearly 60% voter support.

The process of getting to the ballot box began over a year ago when CJAC’s Facilities Subcommittee worked with CJAC consultant Frankfurt Short Bruza (FSB) to study the jail facility with a goal of answering the seminal question: Should the county build a new jail, renovate the old jail, or build an annex to the old jail to facilitate program and health services that are not possible in the current jail? The answer is a new jail that is not a high-rise, includes proper medical and mental health facilities and services, is designed for direct supervision, and facilitates the diversion of populations that are better served with mental health, addiction, and job training services.

Now that the voters have approved the bond package, which will keep the same average tax rate as existing bonds, the work of actual design and building commences. One of the first steps will be appointing a citizen’s oversight committee to provide accountability and transparency to the process of site selection, construction and fiscal management. This oversight committee will provide advice and assistance to county commissioners as they authorize the numerous necessary steps needed to go from the new jail concept, to being ready to turn ground, to opening the doors. As for timeline, the graphic below shows a proposed timeline under ideal conditions. Any changes in bond market rates, supply chain, trades workforces, site selection/sale, etc. will delay the timeline. As the graphic

Jail and MAPS 4 Construction Timeline



PRE - Preliminary project definition, site selection and designer engagement



Rendering of the OK County Jail’s proposed medical and mental health treatment area.

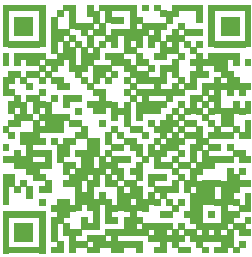
shows further, MAPS 4 projects that are discussed elsewhere in this report will be opening prior to the new jail’s opening, which should increase the ability to safely reduce the jail’s population. This synergy of timing between expiring county bonds, MAPS 4 justice-related projects, steady and safe reduction of the jail population through the expansion of diversion programs, and a community ready to solve this problem on their own terms, conspired to make this long overdue victory possible.

Special thanks should be given to the CJAC Facilities Subcommittee, which is co-chaired by CJAC members Sue Ann Arnall of the Arnall Family Foundation and Dan Straughan of the Homeless Alliance along with support from CJAC member Rev. Theodis Manning of TASK, Teaching and Saving Kids, and numerous other community partners, including someone with lived experience in the jail who graduated from ReMerge during the study process. Thanks should also go to all CJAC members for cultivating the atmosphere to make this victory possible.

CONCLUSION

Has Oklahoma County’s justice system finally turned the corner towards a new sustainability? The answer might be yes. The preliminary indicators are there to support the conclusion: voter approval of a new, better jail; implementation of policing measures to provide safe alternatives to arrest for those in mental health/addiction crisis; the continued trend of lower jail population; the trend

Special thanks should also be given to all three Oklahoma County commissioners—Carrie Blumert, Kevin Calvey and Brian Maughan—for the courage to call the election and put this long-desired solution on the ballot. Finally, thanks should be given to all the citizens and county officials who have toiled many hours on task forces, study committees, etc. for recommending what the voters finally approved. To see full recommendations and new jail study slides, scan the QR code below or visit okcountycjac.com/post/recommendations-from-cjac-regarding-a-future-detention-facility.



Rendering of the OK County Jail’s proposed medium security area.

of fewer residents going to prison; MAPS 4 mental health, addiction and homelessness services coming online in the near future; and expansion of current pre-trial diversion and alternative sentencing programs. However, these preliminary indicators will only become institutionalized realities with continued collaborative hard work and effort. The Oklahoma County Criminal Justice Advisory Council and its community partners must stay the course to continue to be a conduit toward lasting change for a more fair and effective justice system in Oklahoma County.

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