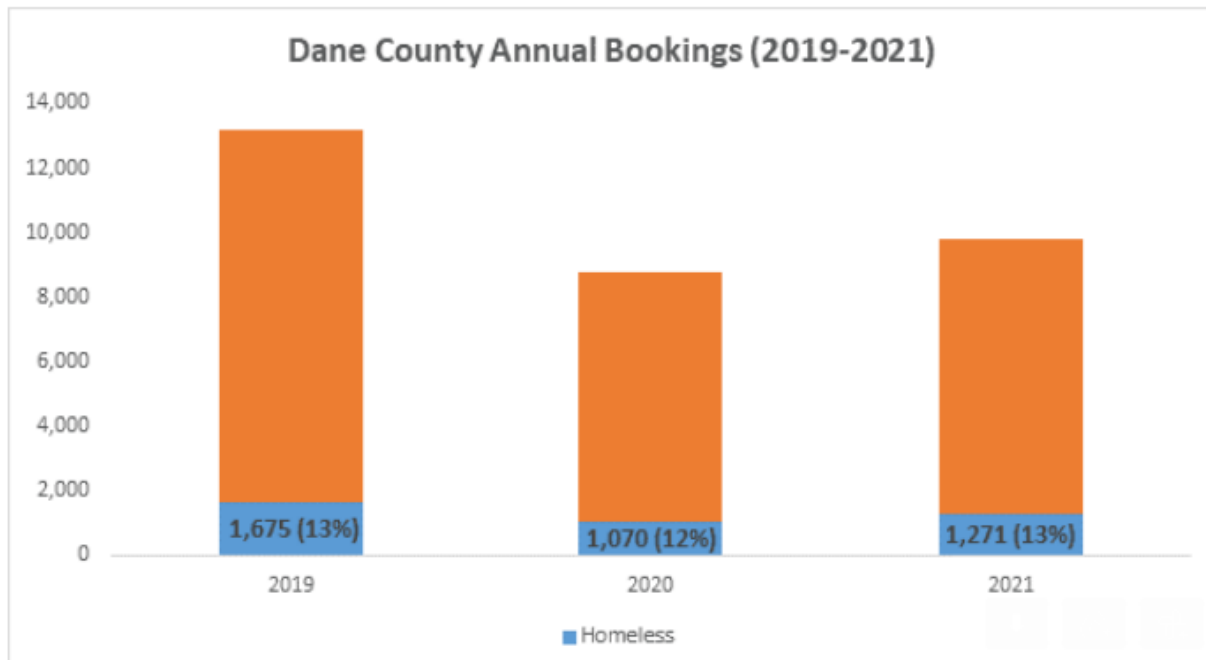


Committee Meeting 04/13/2022 11:00am-12:00pm(In attendance: Marjorie Lewis, Shannon Stevens, Jani Koester, Isaac Hoffmann, Rose Manjon, Heidi Wegleitner, Jessica Oswald, Amber Thompson, Chara Taylor, Jenna Jacobson, Matt Julian, Michelle Hemp, Tyson Vitale, Pam Anderson, Helyn Luisi-Mills, Jami Crespo, Tijana Sagorac Gruichich, Brenda Konkel, Ulysses Williams, Kora Schultz, Mya Simms, Hannah Renfro)

- I. Speaker: Heidi Wegleitner Dane County Supervisor, re. Intersection between the need for affordable housing and criminal justice reform
 - A. Long-term debate over an expensive project to rehabilitate the deteriorating Dane County Jail facilities has finally come to a close - the so-called “jail consolidation” that the County Board passed will cost a total of \$170,000,000, the largest public works project in Dane County history.
 - B. Many objected to the project because incarceration is an expensive, ineffective, and inhumane response to problems of poverty, mental illness, and substance use.
 1. Most people entering the jail are held for misdemeanors, nonviolent offenses, and probation/ parole holds
 2. People of color, people with low-income, substance use disorders and/or mental illness are disproportionately jailed
 3. 13% of Dane County inmates list an address at a shelter or homeless service agency (this is an undercount as some homeless individuals provide old addresses or the addresses of friends and family as their address when arrested)
 4. One in three Dane County inmates have diagnosed SMI (severe mental illness); also likely an undercount
 5. Dane County has a Criminal Justice Council composed of the Presiding Judge, Sheriff, District Attorney, Clerk of Courts, County Executive, and County Board Chair, as well as stakeholders from law enforcement, defense, municipal judiciary, and corrections
 - a. This body has created a data-driven “frequent utilizers report” as part of a national project that looks at jail bookings and identifies factors that lead to people to be incarcerated repeatedly - not surprisingly, experience of trauma, housing instability, mental illness and substance use disorders are highly predictive of repeat incarceration
 - b. More information about the Council’s work can be found here: Criminal Justice System Reform and Decarceration Legislative Initiatives and Reports <https://docs.google.com/document/d/1emSi-SobyN4KKt0DenUXBW0HjBEBC7XQpZC8V84IDvw/edit?usp=sharing>
 - c. The Council has a racial disparities subcommittee
 - d. Homeless services providers and treatment providers have not been well-engaged in the work of this committee - this is an area where advocates who have experience working directly with the individuals who are being repeatedly incarcerated could make a big difference
 - e. There is a proposed project to create an app that will allow the jail to identify when someone is booked is already connected with services such as homeless services, permanent supportive housing, mental health providers and/or case management, and then alert the providers that their client is in jail

13% of bookings in the last year where homeless people-Data from the jail



C. Potential Alternatives to Incarceration

1. An ongoing program is Huber work release program
2. More permanent supportive housing units
3. More accessible substance use/ mental health treatment

II. Discussion: Heidi asked committee members to share their experiences regarding clients who are booked in jail and how it affects their life stability, housing and ability to continue with their needed services and treatment

A. Chara - questions about the proposed app

1. If an app is created, what is the benefit to the people who receive services to share their information in a data collection project?
2. How will privacy be protected?
3. How will alerting providers help the people get meaningful support?
4. Heidi -These are great questions; the goal is to make sure people who “shouldn’t be in jail” are not - but providers and people with lived experience need to be included in these discussions so that these important issues can be addressed

B. Tyson - it is challenging to help homeless folks get housing when they are going in and out of jail due to mental health and substance use issues.

1. How can we have better wrap-around support and limit police interactions? What can we do to prevent the cycle where people start to make progress and then lose all the progress they made when they go to jail?
2. CARES team (a.k.a. Mental Health Ambulance - supervised by Madison Fire Department, operating 11 a.m. to 7 p.m. weekdays) -what are they doing? Could they help reduce incarceration?
 - a. Heidi-there is only one CARES team, it is not a 24-hour service and it is only in Madison, not the whole county; there is a capacity constraint

- a. Many would like to expand what we already have (CARES, community support, community treatment alternatives)
 - b. It is hoped that the new Triage and Restoration Center will help divert those with mental illness and/or substance use issues from the jail
 - c. Lived experience voices need to inform the County's policy-making, advocates need to push the county to spend more on services and less on incarceration
- C. Kora - questions about incarceration of those exhibiting mental health symptoms.
 - 1. Are people with mental illness automatically put in segregation as "mental health treatment"?
 - 2. Is there data on involuntary psychiatric holds?
 - a. Heidi - will look into this question and follow-up
- D. Shannon - question about homeless high school students
 - 1. Students with special education needs can potentially be enrolled in high school through age 21. Has data regarding incarceration among this population been studied?
 - a. Heidi - this is an important question, but not aware of data around that - will follow-up
- E. Matt - questions about appropriate case management and mental health treatment for individuals with SMI
 - 1. It's challenging for individuals whose mental health symptoms are the most severely ill to get the services they need
 - 2. CCS (Comprehensive Community Services) is a Medicaid-funded program administered by the County that offers robust wrap-around services that support individuals who have mental illness or substance use disorders or both; however, the program is voluntary, client-led and requires some level of stability (must be consistently engaging, attending appointments, meeting deadlines) - those who are the least stable are not typically successful in the program.
 - 3. CSP (Community Support Program) is another program administered by the County that provides assertive case management for individuals who have psychotic disorders
 - a. This program is very hard to get into - there are limited openings.
 - b. State statute says that if a person's last permanent residence was not in the County where they are currently located, they must return to the county where they last had a residence to get into treatment - many rural counties in Wisconsin lack homeless services and many people with psychotic disorders are transient, residency requirements create significant barriers to accessing services
 - i. Heidi - there will likely be push back for financial reasons around supporting CSP - Dane County feels disproportionately burdened by other Counties not providing services for their residents
 - ii. Heidi would like to see the County get more creative with ways to fund CSP-type services because they are not likely to cost more than the current system of jail and emergency psychiatric services
 - iii. Many of the newly-elected county board members probably know little about this topic and this is an area where the Education and Advocacy Team could effectively influence policy

- iv. Heidi is not optimistic about changing state laws that prevent CSPs from serving homeless clients whose last address was not in Dane County but optimistic about building momentum with new Board members to seek

F. Jani - Jani works with homeless children at MMSD and often sees how families are caught in a cycle of incarceration and homelessness

1. When parents with young children are arrested, it is incredibly disruptive to their children's lives and their schooling; it can trigger a loss of housing or make it more difficult for a homeless family to obtain housing
2. The jail does not communicate with the school district when a parent is arrested, and it is difficult for the parents to communicate while they are in jail - phone calls are expensive and inaccessible, police don't communicate where the children have been placed
3. There is lasting trauma and harm from the violence kids see their parents go through when their parents are arrested
 - a. Heidi - it is important for the Board and privileged folks who don't have any experience with police contact hear about these issues
 - b. It is important for the police, schools and other stakeholders to come up with a protocol of how to communicate effectively and support minor children when a parent is arrested to minimize harm to the children.
 - c. We need to highlight the importance of stopping this cycle and getting families with young children the support they need.

III. Next steps

A. Tyson - how can we effectively communicate with the County to make actual change?

1. Heidi - let your voice be heard
 - a. Contact your Dane County supervisor directly by telephone (best) or email - we have a strong opportunity with many new progressive Supervisors recently elected
 - b. Attend meetings where decisions are being made and register to speak
 - i. Health and Human Needs Committee - oversees human services funding; responsible for funding CSPs, AODA treatment, etc.
 - ii. Criminal Justice Council
 - a. Racial Disparities subcommittee
 - b. Behavioral Health subcommittee
 - c. CARES team and Triage and Restoration Center funding came from advocacy for alternatives to incarceration - we need to keep up the pressure
2. Brenda - be consistently present/piss them off and eventually they will have to make change
 - a. The County Executive has disproportionate power over how funds are allocated - the budget is created by the Executive and unelected staff behind the scenes and the County Supervisors have little voice in its creation
 - b. However, public outcry makes a difference - especially when big groups of people turn out on an issue

- c. The Board Agendas are a little hard to read, and meetings go long into the night, but it is possible to register to make a general public comment at all County Board meetings
 - d. Brenda has a blog where she posts information about upcoming meetings and some general information about issues the board is considering relevant to those we serve <https://www.forwardlookout.com/>
- B. We could connect with groups who are working on these or similar issues.
 - 1. Are there other committees or workgroups within HSC working on these issues? Where else are similar conversations happening?
 - 2. How can we connect high level data analysis with people with lived experience and those working directly with clients?
- C. Matt - The United Way has studied the cost of high utilizers in the past
 - 1. Has any research been done about the effectiveness of CSPs to reduce reincarceration or high utilization?
 - 2. The County put a lot of money into the Hotels for Housing program, and all the conversation has centered around how expensive it was - but was any research done about the cost savings in reducing emergency room visits, hospitalizations, incarceration, etc. for those in the hotels? It likely reduced costs in other areas.
 - 3. Matt will reach out to Angie at The United Way to see what information and resources she can share
- D. For discussion at the next meeting - does this group want to undertake the creation of a platform to present to the HSC to encourage more people to get involved in this advocacy work?
- E. Marjorie and Heidi will send a follow-up email containing:
 - 1. List of committees and subcommittees where advocacy could be helpful
 - 2. How to find who your County Supervisor is and how to contact them
 - 3. Follow-ups to the questions committee members had that Heidi was going to research
- F. Jani - Doubled-up Work Group is planning for homeless awareness month in November
 - 1. The Doubled-Up Work Group's goal is to help build awareness around the different ways people can experience homelessness and build compassion for those who are doubled up.
 - 2. How can the Education and Advocacy Committee support and/or are there other educational efforts we would like to provide to the community during that month?
 - 3. Doubled up planning meeting weds April 20th at 10:30am virtually - if you are interested please email Jani for an invitation jkoester@madison.k12.wi.us
- G. Ulysses - Madison Homeless Union is meeting Thursdays at 5:30 p.m. at the Downtown Central Library, 201 S. Mifflin Rm. 104