

September 3, 2015

Mr. Mike Lawlor  
Under Secretary, Criminal Justice Policy and Planning Division  
State of Connecticut Office of Policy and Management

VIA EMAIL

Dear Mr. Lawlor,

Congratulations on reaching this point in the planning stage of the Safety and Justice Challenge! We are encouraged by the progress you have made thus far, and are eager to review the implementation plans you will produce by the end of this process. With the January 6, 2016 application deadline in sight, we wanted to provide you with additional guidance as your plans take shape.

The Safety and Justice Challenge is about reducing jail use—meaningfully and sustainably—without compromising public safety. In February 2016, as many as ten jurisdictions will be selected for a second round of funding of up to \$2 million per year to support implementation of their plans. To be selected for implementation funding, sites must present an ambitious, achievable plan to change the way jail is used and administered. Strong proposals must include a bold target for the reduction of jail use and map a clear, actionable path for achieving it.

With this in mind, we are providing guidance on what we believe is an ambitious range for the reduction of your jail population over a three-year period, based on an analysis conducted by the Safety and Justice Challenge research partner, the City University of New York Institute for State and Local Governance (ISLG). ISLG has developed a benchmark range for each of the 20 planning sites, representing a guidepost to which you may compare your expected reduction in jail population over a three-year period. The benchmark range was estimated with consideration of factors such as the magnitude of changes that have been achieved in similarly sized jurisdictions over comparable periods, and individual site incarceration rates.

**For Connecticut, ISLG has established your jail population reduction benchmark range over a three-year period to be 15–19%. This benchmark should be the *minimum* of what your reform plan aims to achieve. We challenge you to set the bar far higher.**

We understand that every jurisdiction is different and, in developing this benchmark, have tried to account for the context in which you are working. If your site concludes, however, that this benchmark is not a reasonable goal for your jurisdiction at this time, or that your implementation plan should not be evaluated against it due to particular circumstances, you will have an opportunity to explain why this is the case in your application for implementation funding.

To further support your work during the planning phase, we are pleased to introduce a new resource to all 20 planning sites: we are funding the JFA Institute to prepare a baseline projection of your site's jail population. This analysis will project what your jurisdiction's incarceration rate would be over the next three years, absent your work with the Safety and Justice Challenge. We anticipate these projections will be highly useful as your reform strategies come into focus in the coming



months, and you begin to set targets. JFA will be able to produce these projection analyses largely by using the aggregate data you have already collected and within two weeks of receiving the data; we simply request that you submit the aggregate data by September 30, 2015. Where there are gaps or questions, JFA or your site coordinator will work with you to address them.

We are excited about the work that your team is doing, and look forward to seeing how your site's reform strategy takes shape. Thank you for your continued dedication to this important work.

Sincerely,



Laurie Garduque PhD  
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