

# Dane County Exec. Parisi: Furthers efforts to decrease jail population

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Communications Director: Stephanie Wilson Miller

608.267.8823 o

920.470.4618 c

Today Dane County Executive Joe Parisi announced Dane County will begin working with Madison-area Urban Ministry (MUM), Nehemiah Center for Urban Leadership Development, Anesis Center for Marriage and Family Therapy and the Jessie Crawford Recovery Center to help inmates who are transitioning into the community from the Dane County Jail.

“Our new community based jail re-entry team will be there to help people make the transition back into society at a very vulnerable time,” said Dane County Executive Joe Parisi. “We will work with them while they are in jail to assess their needs and to develop a plan for success. Once released, we will have a team in the community ready to work with and assist them in successfully reintegrating back into society.”

This program will work with inmates before they leave the jail to help prepare them for a successful transition by providing case management and peer support to eliminate intrapersonal and environmental factors that contribute to criminal activity and repeated incarceration. Individuals who are at the highest risk for returning to jail will be prioritized.

Sentenced inmates who have indications of a mental illness or substance use disorder will be prioritized for intervention, unless that individual already has support from a case manager in the community. The organizations will gather critical information and develop a re-entry plan for each individual prior to their

release to the community. MUM, Nehemiah, Anesis and Jessie Crawford Recovery Center will collaborate with other professionals and entities focused on community re-entry from the jail. The re-entry plan will address the most critical needs of the individual that are most likely to place the individual at risk of a subsequent period of incarceration.

“MUM along with our partners look forward to working with Dane County on this initiative to expand our existing reentry peer support and case management services to the entire county,” said Linda Ketcham, Executive Director of Madison-area Urban Ministry. “The County initiative will increase our capacity to offer peer support, case management, access to mental health, trauma support, employment support and housing we can offer a holistic approach to supporting for returning citizens. We recognize that these collaborations not only increase capacity but strengthen our efforts and allow us to more effectively leverage existing services.”

Participation in the program will be voluntary and in collaboration with the Dane County Sheriff's office re-entry coordinator. The partner organizations will work to help assist individuals to obtain housing, employment, counseling or medication for a mental illness or a substance use disorder, health coverage, and need-based benefits. They will meet with people in jail to start working through their plan and offer services like trauma counseling, peer support and access to other community organizations.

Dane County Executive Parisi introduced this initiative as part of his 2018 budget and efforts to divert people from the Dane County Jail and allocated \$110,000 annually toward the effort.

All the organizations are currently working in this field and are well respected community based organizations. Their combined expertise in the areas of culturally specific services, trauma informed treatment, housing, employment and training, and peer supports will provide a full continuum of services needed to assist inmates in successfully transitioning from jail to the community.

Over the coming weeks the Dane County Board is expected to approve the contract and work will be begin later this summer.