



News from the Shelby County Mayor's Office
Mark H. Luttrell, Jr., Mayor
Suite 1100, 160 North Main, Memphis, Tennessee 38103

All news releases can be seen at www.shelbycountyttn.gov in the News Listing

Public Information Officer: Steve Shular steve.shular@shelbycountyttn.gov
Office (901) 222-2047, Cell (901) 359-5117

May 27, 2015

Shelby County Wins MacArthur Foundation Grant to Reduce Jail Incarceration

The John D. and Catherine T. MacArthur Foundation announced today in Washington, D.C., that Shelby County Government is one of only 20 communities across the nation to receive a \$150,000 six-month planning grant to examine ways to safely reduce the jail population without compromising public safety. Jail policies and practices will be examined with the help of the Vera Institute of Justice, a national research partner.

Almost 200 communities in 45 states competed for the grant. **“This grant demonstrates Shelby County’s commitment to find more appropriate ways to treat non-violent offenders and use taxpayer dollars more effectively,”** said Shelby County Mayor Mark H. Luttrell, Jr.

The Shelby County Sheriff’s Office operates the men’s jail at 201 Poplar Avenue and Jail East for women at 6201 Haley Road in east Memphis. **“We want to ensure our jails are only being used to house those who pose a risk to the community. Jail is often a gateway to deeper and more lasting involvement in our criminal justice system,”** said Shelby County Sheriff Bill Oldham.

Overall, Shelby County wants to utilize the MacArthur Foundation grant to identify problems in the Criminal Justice system and solutions to them. Some of the issues Shelby County wants to address are:

1. Increase access to mental health services upon release from jail for those with mental illness
2. Reduce the Disproportionate Minority Contact rate – Shelby County is 53% Black, but 87% of the males and 74% of females admitted to the Shelby County Jail in 2014 were Black
3. Reduce jail operational costs – 53% of the Sheriff’s Office budget is for staffing and operating the jail
4. Reduce the re-arrest rate of offenders

“There’s a nationwide interest in reducing over-incarceration,” said Julia Stasch, President of the MacArthur Foundation. **We hope local efforts will model effective and safe alternatives to incarceration to the rest of the country.”** Once a multi-agency work team completes the planning grant, the resulting implementation plan will be submitted for a second grant. If awarded, Shelby County could receive up to \$2M in MacArthur Foundation funds over the next two years to execute the implementation plan.

About the MacArthur Foundation

The MacArthur Foundation supports creative people and effective institutions committed to building a more just, verdant and peaceful world. In addition to selecting the MacArthur Fellows, the Foundation works to defend human rights, advance global conservation and security, makes cities better places, and understands how technology affects children and society. More information about the Foundations work, include the justice field, is available at www.macfound.org

(End of Release)