

NC Rural Jail Project

The UNC School of Government Criminal Justice Innovation Lab (the Lab) and RTI International (RTI) invite you to apply for the NC Rural Jail Project, funded by Arnold Ventures' Advancing Pretrial Policy & Research (APPR) initiative.

The Lab and RTI will work with one rural county to help local stakeholders better understand the factors that influence local pretrial practices, including incarceration, and support their efforts to develop solutions that make sense for their community. The project has three parts. First, we'll help local stakeholders better understand trends in local pretrial populations. We'll answer questions like: How many people are being booked and released? Who are they and why are they being booked? How long are they in jail pretrial? We'll present this information to stakeholders and help them identify issues and explore solutions.

Second, we'll interview system personnel and people impacted by the system to understand and share the context behind the data. We'll learn how local processes impact the pretrial population. We'll also ask about local resources available to address identified issues and local challenges (such as lack of behavioral health services or homelessness). And, importantly, we'll get stakeholder's ideas about improving the local system and their thoughts about innovations implemented elsewhere. We'll present our work to stakeholders and explore issues and potential solutions.

Finally, we'll hold focus groups with stakeholders from other counties to learn how their experiences align with those of our partner county. We will prepare a final report that will provide a roadmap for pretrial reform for our partner county and will be shared with other rural communities. Importantly, our role is to support our partner county. We will not be coming in and telling stakeholders what to do. Rather, we will support stakeholders as they seek to better understand their system, engage with their data, and develop solutions tailored to their community's needs.

Key Dates

Nov. 12, 2021: Application due

End of November: Applicants notified

December 2021: Kick off meeting with project team

Spring 2022: Interviews

Spring/Summer 2022: Two separate team meetings to present data, identify issues & discuss solutions. We will also visit the site and interview justice-impacted people.

Fall 2022: Meeting to discuss draft report

Sept. 30, 2022: Project end

What's expected from the partner county?

Project Team

To apply, counties must identify a project team including:

- Senior resident superior court judge
- Chief district court judge
- District attorney or designee
- Public defender or designee, or if none, defense representative
- Clerk of court or designee
- Sheriff or designee

Either the senior resident or chief district court judge must agree to serve as team lead. The county can have up to two additional team members, such as the Chief Magistrate, a county commissioner, or a county social services director.

Meetings

We will have a short video conference kick-off meeting at the start of the project with all team members. During the project—which will run from December 2021 to October 2022—we’ll have at least three 90-minute team meetings to present and discuss the data. Each team member will also be asked to participate in a video interview (no longer than one hour). We’ll also ask team members to help us identify and recruit people who have been through the system for interviews that will occur in-person during a site visit. During the site visit, our team will also watch the processes at the court, jail, and other agencies that play roles in the pretrial process. Finally, we will touch base with team members periodically by phone or email, to get additional information or clarification on issues we may see.

Data

Our county partner will need to supply jail booking data. We have a lot of experience with jail data, and we will work cooperatively with jail staff to help with this task.

How to apply

Rural counties eligible to apply are shown in the table below. If you’re thinking of applying, let us know by emailing Lab Project Manager Ethan Rex at rex@sog.unc.edu. Once you are ready, apply here: <https://cjl.sog.unc.edu/nc-rural-jail-project/>. As part of the application, all team members will need to submit a letter of commitment. **Applications are due no later than 5 PM on November 12, 2021.**

Eligible Counties *				
Ashe	Dare	Lenoir	Robeson	Vance
Beaufort	Duplin	Macon	Rutherford	Watauga
Bladen	Granville	McDowell	Sampson	Wilkes
Carteret	Halifax	Montgomery	Scotland	Wilson
Cherokee	Harnett	Moore	Stanly	
Cleveland	Jackson	Pasquotank	Surry	
Columbus	Lee	Richmond	Transylvania	

* Rural counties with a population over 25,000 are eligible to participate. This population limit ensures sufficient data over the study period.