
# Participatory Justice

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The ideas in this paper were shaped by discussions within the Partnership but do not necessarily represent the views of all members.

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## ABOUT THE US PARTNERSHIP ON MOBILITY FROM POVERTY

With funding from the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation, the Urban Institute is supporting the US Partnership on Mobility from Poverty. Led by chair David Ellwood and executive director Nisha Patel, the Partnership consists of 24 leading voices representing academia, practice, the faith community, philanthropy, and the private sector.

The Partnership's definition of mobility has three core principles: economic success, power and autonomy, and being valued in community. Our collective aspiration is that all people achieve a reasonable standard of living with the dignity that comes from having power over their lives and being engaged in and valued by their community.

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# Executive Summary

Everyone deserves to feel safe in their home and community. Lack of safety keeps individuals, families, and communities from thriving. Everyone also deserves a say in what safety means to them and how their government delivers it. Millions of Americans living in low-income, high-crime communities are not safe and do not believe they have the power to influence the systems meant to ensure their safety.

The crime plaguing many high-poverty neighborhoods must be addressed. However, the heavy criminal justice system presence in these neighborhoods burdens the people living there. Intensive enforcement of minor offenses creates numerous fraught encounters with the police and saddles many people with criminal records. Criminal records make it more difficult for the 70–100 million Americans who have them to get jobs.[1] Minor offenses can result in fines and fees that people with low incomes struggle to afford, and failure to pay can lead to consequences such as suspension of driver's licenses or jail incarceration. Investments in safety are disproportionately weighted toward control and punishment, as exemplified by "million dollar blocks," city blocks where $1,000,000 or more has been spent annually to incarcerate residents.[2]

The combination of lack of safety and burdensome justice system responses can fuel tension between community members and law enforcement, undermining the trust and sense of legitimacy that law enforcement requires to be effective. Research suggests that willingness to obey the law and cooperate with the police, which is indispensable in preventing and solving crimes, hinges on belief in the legitimacy of authorities.[3] When people perceive the criminal justice system as harmful, they can withdraw from civic engagement with law enforcement,[4] and the entire community suffers.

We propose a new strategy, called participatory justice, for increasing safety and encouraging civic participation in low-income communities grappling with high crime rates and criminal justice presence. Participatory justice is an innovative way for millions of community residents to empower themselves and set the direction for ensuring their safety. The proposed approach supports communities in building voice and agency regarding how they are protected from crime and victimization. Participatory justice combines existing concepts and interventions into an ambitious model that can be piloted, evaluated, and replicated. By so doing, we seek to collectively create safer communities in which the footprint of the criminal justice system is limited. Achieving this goal will help ensure that residents achieve greater voice in and autonomy from the criminal justice system, and it will reduce barriers to mobility from poverty related to crime, victimization, and criminal justice presence.

**Impact on Three Dimensions of Mobility**

The Partnership's definition of mobility has three core principles: economic success, power and autonomy, and being valued in community.

**Investment:** We propose developing and demonstrating participatory justice approaches in three to five communities over three years at a total cost of $4 to $6 million.

**Impact:**

- Economic Success: At the community level, we expect to see reduced justice involvement and victimization, leading to higher labor market participation, lower poverty rates, and increased educational attainment. Governmental-level impacts would depend on the priorities identified by implementing communities but could include annual savings of $4,000 to $20,000 for each avoided incarceration.[a]
- Power and Autonomy: Fewer individuals will be incarcerated, and the community will show higher levels of collective efficacy.
- Being Valued in Community: We expect to see increasing civic engagement and residents of affected communities reporting higher perceived standing in the community and society.

[a] Chris Mai and Ram Subramanian, *The Price of Prisons: Examining State Spending Trends, 2010-2015* (New York: Vera Institute of Justice, 2017).

# The Problem: People Most Impacted by the Justice System Are Least Able to Influence It

Major metropolitan areas across the United States are home to communities facing a devastating mix of problems: concentrated poverty; high rates of crime, violence, and victimization; and high incarceration rates with an unusually large criminal justice presence. Although each problem presents challenges, the combination of all three can make it extremely difficult for the people living in these neighborhoods to move out of poverty. Before discussing the relationship among these communities, mobility from poverty, and participatory justice, it is important to briefly discuss these phenomena. They are at the heart of the problem the participatory justice model seeks to solve: lack of power and autonomy among residents in distressed communities to influence and improve how safety is delivered to them.

- ***Concentrated poverty*** is defined as areas in which 40 percent or more of residents live below the federal poverty level. Over 10 million Americans (roughly 3.5 percent of the population) live in communities grappling with concentrated poverty.[5] Conditions in these communities are extremely difficult, and the people living in them face daily uphill battles as a direct consequence of their environment. People living in communities of concentrated poverty struggle more to get a good education, are at greater risk of engaging in crime or falling victim to violence, and have shorter life expectancies than their counterparts in more affluent neighborhoods.[6] These negative impacts are of particular concern given that neighborhood-level inequality endures over time,[7] the effects of living in high-poverty neighborhoods are felt across generations,[8] and concentrated poverty has increased in recent years.[9] Concentrated poverty also intersects with the long history of residential segregation; as a result, low-income African American and Hispanic people, for example, are much more likely to live in a neighborhood with concentrated poverty than are low-income white people.[10] Plus. poverty's effects are gendered; in 2015, women were 35 percent more likely to live in poverty than men. Poverty rates for women of color are more than double that of white women.[11]

- ***High rates of crime, violence, and victimization*** are prevalent in low-income communities.[12] Large proportions of crime are concentrated in very small geographic areas, a pattern that occurs with such consistency across time, place, and crime type that it is referred to as the "law of concentration of crime."[13] This pattern of crime concentration, which appears to hold even as crime rises or falls,[14] hampers a community's economic opportunities. Research shows that high-crime areas struggle to attract and retain businesses, limiting job opportunities for residents.[15] Similarly, victimization is

associated with higher unemployment and problems in the workplace.[16] Even for those not victimized, living in a community with high levels of crime and violence deprives people and families of a sense of safety and security and foments stress and exposure to trauma that can undermine healthy childhood development and adult decisionmaking.[17] As with concentrated poverty, concentrated crime is highly racialized, as the result of such factors as residential segregation and pervasive structural inequalities in the United States. The result is that African American people tend to reside in neighborhoods with levels of violence much higher than those experienced by other racial and ethnic groups.[18]

- Some communities have ***high rates of incarceration and an unusually large criminal justice presence***, including police presence, incarceration, community supervision, and the imposition of legal financial obligations such as fees and fines. Although justice interventions intend to increase safety and reduce victimization, overuse of the criminal justice system can saddle many people with damaging criminal records for minor offenses such as a broken taillight, produce higher levels of incarceration, and increase overall burdens on neighborhood residents. In the worst instance, justice presence can be abusive and predatory, a dynamic that triggered the recent civic unrest in Ferguson[19] and Baltimore.[20]

People living in neighborhoods simultaneously experiencing these three phenomena are likely to find themselves with limited voice and compromised autonomy, conditions that can exacerbate crime and victimization. Evidence suggests that concentrated disadvantages undermine "collective efficacy," that is, the ability of community members to collectively solve community problems. An example of collective efficacy in action is a neighborhood that convinces the local government to add a stop sign at a dangerous intersection. The community members share a similar value (wanting to keep everyone safe) and have the necessary organizational and communication skills to bring about a desired action (installation of the stop sign). Key to collective efficacy is the idea that the community members trust each other enough to effectively work together. They know that by working from shared values they can reach consensus on how to handle a problem in a way that helps the neighborhood as opposed to harming it. As a result, the community is better able to care for itself and implement the changes it most wants to see, without necessarily involving outside authorities.

In low-income communities facing high rates of crime, violence, and incarceration, collective efficacy is usually low.[21] Research tells us these phenomena break down the social networks and bonds that are necessary to build collective efficacy. We also know that crime emerges where collective efficacy is weak. Low collective efficacy means neighborhood residents are less able to articulate their priorities for public and personal safety. Residents may feel disempowered to set the agenda for how government seeks to preserve their safety and instead experience those efforts as external impositions beyond their control.

Weak collective efficacy may also impede the formation of local nonprofit organizations, which are important for many reasons but particularly in light of recent research suggesting that the presence of such organizations focused on violence reduction and community building contributed substantially to crime reduction in the United States.[22]

Additionally, the legitimacy of the law and the criminal justice system has been damaged in the communities that need their protection the most. Public belief in the legitimacy of the police and the justice system is important to securing greater compliance with the law and greater willingness to help authorities address crime and maintain order.[23] However, many residents of high-crime neighborhoods do not trust the police or believe the police share their values and priorities.[24] Such a lack of trust can impede cooperation with authorities. For example, some members of immigrant communities may be reluctant to engage with law enforcement because they fear it will increase the risk of deportation. This may result in reduced crime reporting.[25] But a reluctance to work with law enforcement, whether to report a crime or provide information to help solve it, is by no means unique to immigrants. It is not surprising, then, that a lack of legitimacy and collective efficacy leads to crime,[26] which further reduces collective efficacy, fueling a vicious cycle of concentrated poverty, high rates of crime and violence, and disenfranchisement.

Overly broad application of the state's justice apparatus in these neighborhoods has had unintended and damaging consequences that have hampered opportunities for residents to move out of poverty. The most prominent example is high rates of incarceration, which is tremendously expensive and reduces employment, wages, and income. These impacts are disproportionately borne by young black men;[27] incarceration is so extensive that it reduces the total earnings of all black men in the United States by an estimated 9 percent.[28] These impacts are also intergenerational; children of incarcerated parents are more likely to drop out of school, develop learning disabilities, have disciplinary problems in school, and suffer from health issues such as asthma, high cholesterol, and depression.[29] With an increased criminal justice presence comes an increased likelihood of picking up a criminal record for a minor infraction, such as marijuana possession, that can include large fines or, should those fines go unpaid, a suspended license. Driving with a suspended license is itself an infraction, and not driving can limit access to school, work, child care, and other critical activities. An increase in the presence of law enforcement also increases the likelihood that a traffic stop or other routine action can escalate and lead to the use of force.

Overrepresentation of people of color is pervasive across all types of justice system involvement,[30] so the barriers to mobility from justice involvement particularly affect them. Justice system presence has effects that vary by gender. Men represent the substantial majority of people involved in all points of the justice system, from arrest through incarceration. Women in communities with high levels of incarceration and criminal justice presence often become the sole custodial parent and household income earner overnight if their partner becomes incarcerated. Women may also carry the financial costs of having a

partner incarcerated, including the associated fines and fees, which can create an extra burden on an already financially precarious situation.

# The Participatory Justice Concept

The question of how to reshape the relationship between the criminal justice system and communities is at the heart of the justice reform moment under way in the United States. National efforts and campaigns such as the Safety and Justice Challenge,[31] the Juvenile Detention Alternatives Initiative,[32] and #cut50[33] are advancing a deincarceration agenda for youth and adults. The Justice Reinvestment Initiative is working nationwide to reduce justice spending and invest the savings in strategies proven more effective at reducing crime.[34] Many of the most damaging crime issues, such as gun violence, involve a relatively small number of people. The National Network for Safe Communities[35] is partnering with jurisdictions from coast to coast to replicate strategies that reduce violence and improve public safety by focusing on that small number of people most likely to be involved in violence, while minimizing arrests and incarcerations; it is also developing and testing approaches to improve relationships between law enforcement and the communities it serves through the National Initiative on Building Community Trust and Justice.[36] These are just a few examples of national, state, and local reform work, which are complemented by numerous grassroots efforts all across the country. This environment presents a tremendous opportunity for residents in the communities with the most at stake to change justice practices to reflect their needs and priorities.

Building on that momentum, we propose a new model for engaging communities in setting their own direction for ensuring safety. Specifically, we propose to conceptualize, design, and field test a formal participatory justice model in which community residents identify what they want and need from the criminal justice system in order to feel safe at home and in their neighborhoods. The model will support residents empowering themselves to address and implement those reforms with public agencies. Participatory justice combines elements of prior community-informed work into a broader, structured intervention that can be tested and replicated. A comprehensive data analysis of current public investments in delivering safety will guide the redirection of public resources to support approaches more in line with community priorities.

Participatory justice applies the concept of participatory democracy to crime and justice issues. Participatory democracy combines aspects of direct and representative democracy to achieve collective decisionmaking. Private citizens[37] select policy, and representatives react to the proposals and implement the private citizens' vision. Through a participatory democracy approach, citizens experience a higher level of agency, voice, and control over the policy process; it is especially meaningful when the participatory democracy process engages voices that are traditionally excluded in society.[38]

To understand participatory democracy in practice, consider the participatory budgeting process that the City of New York piloted in four city council districts in 2011 and had expanded to 24 districts by 2015.[39] Participatory budgeting is the most widespread application of the participatory democracy concept.

It helps city leaders reconnect (or connect) with their constituents, many of whom are often disengaged from policy decisions. The process begins with neighborhood assemblies, where city council members provide information on budget funds and residents select budget delegates and brainstorm project ideas. Delegates develop the community ideas into full project proposals that are presented to community residents. Residents then vote on what proposals to fund.

There has been no full impact evaluation of participatory budgeting in the United States to date, but studies elsewhere found impacts on public health, public spending priorities, and the number of civil society organizations.[40] Initial evaluation work on participatory budgeting in the United states has found increased community engagement among harder-to-reach populations.[41] Importantly, participation in the participatory budgeting process increased over time among populations often considered disenfranchised or marginalized, including people under the age of 18, immigrants, and people with low incomes.[42] Most people engaged in participatory budgeting had not previously collaborated in community decisionmaking, and half the voters were not members of any community or civic organizations. This voter makeup is particularly important in light of evidence that civic engagement can increase collective efficacy.[43]

In the justice space, numerous and varied interventions seek community input and guidance. Some community policing interventions, such as the Community Safety Partnership in the Watts neighborhood of Los Angeles, involve substantial community input and priority setting.[44] New York City's community engagement effort involves routine meetings with residents of public housing developments to review safety data and track results ("Neighborhood Stat"), a core element of the mayor's Action Plan for Neighborhood Safety. The most prominent effort to alter how criminal justice resources are allocated is the Justice Reinvestment Initiative, a public-private partnership between the Bureau of Justice Assistance and The Pew Charitable Trusts to fund, coordinate, and help state and local efforts to reduce justice spending and invest the savings in effective crime-reduction strategies.

Although these justice-focused participatory efforts represent important steps in the right direction, they tend to be limited in two important ways. First, the current models primarily address a single aspect of the justice system, such as policing or returning people who have been incarcerated to the community. Tackling the interrelated issues of poverty and concentrated crime by moving from overly broad applications of criminal justice attention toward more effectively targeted applications requires a comprehensive initiative. Second, these models use processes that are community informed, but not community led. The government-led nature of the Justice Reinvestment Initiative, for example, has led to criticism that it leads to reinvestment in the justice system rather than in communities.[45]

The proposed development and field testing of a participatory justice model addresses these weaknesses in prior efforts by substantially expanding the scope and ambition of previous participatory democracy efforts to envision a community-driven intervention addressing all levels and types of

governmental investments in safety and crime control. Participatory justice capitalizes on the expertise of community residents, who know what they need, and uses that local knowledge to reduce victimization and the burdens of heavy justice system presence.

Before describing the specifics of our model, it is important to note that although we have framed participatory justice as a type of participatory democracy initiative, it is also a place-based strategy. Given the place-based nature of poverty and crime, a place-based solution is worth considering. That said, many place-based strategies, including recent attempts at comprehensive community initiatives, have seen disappointing results in terms of neighborhood transformation and community leadership development.[46] We nonetheless believe in the potential of place-based work to meaningfully improve low-income, high-crime communities. We can leverage insights from past efforts to help define the characteristics of effective investments in future iterations. Such lessons include tailoring investments to local needs and priorities, respecting local leadership, strengthening local organizational capabilities, acknowledging and addressing issues of race and ethnicity, maintaining an intervention long enough to realize impact, and building knowledge within and across communities.[47]

# Participatory Justice Demonstration

The next step in addressing the intersection of safety and justice with mobility from poverty is to build on the emerging knowledge and practice of participatory democracy to create and field test a formal participatory justice model. To that end, we convened a design lab at the Urban Institute on February 15, 2017, with researchers and practitioners from community-based organizations working on justice issues and community engagement (see the acknowledgements for an attendee list). In that design lab, we identified several key components of a participatory justice model:

- A local organization can serve as a justice intermediary. The ideal justice intermediary organization will have skills and experience in local community organizing.
- The justice intermediary engages community members, including developing strategies for engaging people who can sometimes be harder to engage, such as youth or immigrant communities (particularly undocumented immigrants).
- A local research organization informs engagement through data analysis of neighborhood safety and contextual factors, including government investments in safety of all kinds.
- Community members identify shared priorities, including a focus on "quick wins" to build momentum. Priority identification will be iterative, with additional priorities identified as action proceeds on the initial priorities.
- Community residents can enroll in trainings and other mechanisms, so they gain something meaningful from participation. This investment can itself constitute a "quick win."
- Public agencies are looped in after the community has successfully identified its shared priorities.
- The community and public agencies track data jointly to ensure ongoing accountability.

A model that incorporates these insights could fundamentally transform the way that institutions, systems, and structures work to deliver safety and justice, making them accountable to community priorities and desires. The participatory justice approach would build collective efficacy and enhance trust in the justice system. Such an approach would also position residents of high-poverty communities as leaders in determining how safety is delivered to them, with an emphasis on leaders from groups that are underrepresented in decisionmaking, including people of color, women, people from immigrant communities, and people who identify as LGBTQ+. The strategies identified through the participatory justice process involve engaging and valuing all members of participating communities, in contrast to status quo interventions that tend to label, devalue, and isolate people, with incarceration serving as the starkest

example. A participatory justice process intends to foster more effective and less damaging strategies for delivering public safety and, thus, to more effectively control crime. The realization of participatory justice would reduce barriers to individual and community economic success arising from crime, victimization, and overapplication of justice interventions. Just as important, we believe participatory justice reflects a fairer and healthier relationship between the criminal justice system and communities that befits a healthy democracy.

Based on these insights, we outline a four-phase process for establishing, piloting, evaluating, and disseminating a formal participatory justice model.

## Phase One: Establish a Formal Participatory Justice Model

The proposed participatory justice work begins with forming partnerships with three to five communities (equivalent in size to a neighborhood) and a national coordinating organization. The communities would volunteer to pilot the participatory justice demonstration. This initial group would consist of neighborhoods struggling with concentrated poverty that also have substantial capacity to draw upon for their participatory justice effort, particularly

- a recent or ongoing community-driven effort that participatory justice can build on,
- access to good data on justice and community indicators,
- an appetite to try this approach, and
- community organizations able to serve as justice intermediaries.

This final factor is critical given evidence that community organizations are catalysts for transforming civic engagement into collective efficacy.[48] Pilot communities should also be regionally and demographically diverse. Although these pilot communities may not be representative of all communities that would benefit from participatory justice, if they possess the capacity described above, they offer the best chance to successfully establish proof of concept, learn from implementation, and refine the participatory justice model as needed to ensure it is as strong as possible before expanding into communities that may have fewer assets and less capacity.

Once the pilot communities are identified, the justice intermediary organizations and local research partners in each beta test site would meet with the national participatory justice coordinating entity for a "design-build" session. This session would focus on transitioning from the common participatory justice framework to implementing individual, customized plans for each of the pilot communities.

Our design lab participants were insistent that a community-driven effort such as participatory justice must be strongly grounded in common values. With that in mind, the justice intermediary and research partner organizations would also be tasked with reaching consensus on overarching values to guide the participatory justice approach. Possible values could include being

- **resident driven,** so the process is led by neighborhood residents, with other partners in supporting and facilitative roles;
- **inclusive,** by ensuring different perspectives are represented and fostering voice and autonomy for a broad group of residents;
- **open minded,** by cultivating an unbiased process that honors different community voices and is receptive to the ideas, preferences, and priorities of the diversity of community residents;
- **data informed,** so the process is grounded by solid information regarding the status quo situation in the participating community;
- **evidence infused,** so participants benefit from the considerable knowledge base regarding effective crime prevention, justice production, and victim support as they identify their priorities; and
- **outcome oriented,** by delivering on the promise of producing something that will result in change, not merely hosting a community discussion.

An important part of this pilot phase, to be coordinated by the research partners, is specifying what data should be collected regarding current crime and justice system investment in the community and how they should be communicated to communities engaged in the participatory justice process. The demonstration site research partners would develop "heat maps" that combine mapping of concentrated poverty, concentrated crime, and justice system presence. Research partners can draw on various examples of neighborhood-level data visualization, including the work of the Justice Mapping Network[49] and the National Neighborhood Indicators Partnership.[50] Providing participants with useful, digestible information, including costs of current safety and justice activities, will help ground their discussions in a solid understanding of the current situation. Community participation can be incorporated into this upfront assessment work.

The heat mapping for pilot sites could lay the groundwork for a national mapping project overseen by the national coordinating entity that would comprehensively document the overlapping concentrations of poverty, crime, and justice system presence with empirical data. The result would be an objective method of consistently identifying the universe of American communities for which the participatory justice model is appropriate. The maps could have particular value in going beyond core urban areas and identifying rural and suburban communities experiencing the three social phenomena discussed above. The results of the

national mapping project and the local data analysis for the participatory justice pilot sites could be housed on an interactive project website available to researchers and the public.

Research partners would also advise on the evidence regarding the effectiveness of options the community might consider and could help identify the most promising interventions. This effort could draw from the large amount of synthesis work by entities such as the Center for Evidence-Based Crime Policy (policing),[51] CrimeSolutions.gov (general crime reduction interventions),[52] the Blueprints for Healthy Youth Development project (youth violence and delinquency),[53] and the What Works in Reentry Clearinghouse (reentry to the community after incarceration).[54]

Design lab participants insisted strongly on the importance of narrative development, through which government actors and others in power recognize the historical and structural factors that have led to community challenges and acknowledge past (and current) harm done by government policy and the criminal justice system. In particular, participants noted the need to grapple directly with the history and reality of structural racism. The effort to develop and tailor community-specific approaches to narrative development might draw on the work of the National Initiative for Building Community Trust and Justice,[55] which is currently engaged in reconciliation work with communities and police departments in six cities across the country, efforts involving truth telling and reckoning with the historical legacy of racist policing, and current practices causing unintended harms.

## Phase Two: Pilot the Participatory Justice Demonstration

The preparation during phase one would set the stage for the full demonstration of the participatory justice model in the pilot communities, including a rigorous evaluation of both the process and its impact. Implementation would unfold over three years. The goal would be to provide proof of concept and learn how the model functions in varied local contexts. The three-year period would allow sufficient time to go from initial community priority identification to achieving changes and determine whether the model leads to greater engagement from initial community participants and the inclusion of new ones.

The justice intermediary would provide the initial staffing for the demonstration and would organize and engage local residents. Implementation funds could support expanding that staffing to include leaders who organically emerge from the community participants. The justice intermediary would conduct targeted outreach to ensure a diverse and inclusive group of community participants, among them people of color, immigrants, women, and LGBTQ+ people. These community members are not only the people traditionally underrepresented in public decisionmaking processes, but they are also those particularly affected by crime, victimization, poverty, and criminal justice presence.

The national coordinating entity and the justice intermediaries can mitigate at least some barriers to participation among community residents by compensating participants for their time, which would support deeper and more substantial engagement in the process and exploration of issues with which they may have less technical or policy expertise. Government engagement at the outset would be limited to committing to be responsive to community priorities identified through the process. This engagement would include identifying justice reform efforts that the participatory justice effort could connect with to amplify its impact on policy. However, government representatives would not join regular participatory justice conversations until later, after community priorities were established.

Priorities and recommendations for changes within the community might fall into two broad categories that can be thought of as divestment and investment. The divestment strategies would consist of justice activities the community would like to see eliminated or curtailed. They might include such recommendations as reducing "stop, question, and frisk" activities, eliminating community supervision and court fees, reducing or eliminating the use of money bond for pretrial release, and reducing the use of custody or incarceration. The investment strategies would consist of ideas community members would like to implement and could be funded, at least in part, from savings resulting from the divestments.

Elements of both types of strategy could occur at multiple levels. Some may be very close to the ground, including things such as providing more positive youth development activities or improving lighting in neighborhood areas with high rates of robbery. Others might require practice changes, such as increased use of cite and release rather than custodial arrests for low-level offenses. The most challenging changes to implement will be at the overarching policy level and related to resource reallocation, such as sentencing changes that result in less incarceration and the reallocation of the resources saved from lower incarceration rates to community-based behavioral health services.

## Phase Three: Evaluate the Model for Impact

A logic model, like the preliminary one in appendix B, would guide the evaluation of a participatory justice demonstration. The national coordinating entity would ensure that implementation and outcomes were assessed with appropriate consistency across the pilot sites. Given the innovative nature of a participatory justice demonstration, a robust process evaluation will be critical. Such an evaluation would document the process in each pilot community, focusing on how the process unfolded and was modified over time. Critical elements to understand would be which community engagement strategies were employed, how truth telling and narrative development occurred, how priorities were set, when and how government partners were engaged, and which policy changes occurred in response to the participatory justice process and why.

Participatory justice could improve mobility from poverty via three mechanisms, which the impact evaluation would need to address. First, it could increase civic engagement and collective efficacy. Such increases could have individual-level effects on participants in the process and neighborhood-level effects on crime (as greater collective efficacy supports crime control), reducing barriers to mobility through enhanced public safety. As communities see government responding to community priorities and a reduction of overly broad justice system presence, this has the potential to increase the legitimacy of the justice system and support crime control by increasing residents' willingness to report crime and cooperate with the police.

Second, participatory justice could directly increase safety and reduce justice system presence through policy, practice, and other changes resulting from government responses to the community priorities identified. Such changes would affect mobility in two ways. More focused and effective approaches to justice and victimization can improve neighborhood safety, reduce stress and harm to individuals, and improve economic prospects in the neighborhood. Mitigating justice presence can reduce barriers to mobility such as acquiring a criminal record and experiencing incarceration.

Third, if the participatory justice process brings about community reinvestment, the interventions receiving that investment (e.g., youth employment programs and increased access to behavioral health services) may have positive impacts on mobility.

A summary of measures and data sources to track the anticipated impacts of the participatory justice demonstration is included in appendix A. A robust impact evaluation would measure the impact metrics with those in matched comparison neighborhoods. These comparison neighborhoods might be named as participatory justice expansion areas once the pilot is completed to give them an incentive to participate. Although some outcomes, such as levels of civic engagement and impact on collective efficacy, could manifest during the implementation period, others, such as reduced crime rates and increased achievement in school and work, would likely accrue over a longer time horizon. The evaluation could also use the heat maps to track changes over time in the intensity of, or spatial disparity in, concentration of crime, poverty, and justice involvement.

Consistent with the participatory justice goals of empowering communities, the evaluation will use community-based participatory research (CBPR) methods as much as possible. The underlying framework of CBPR is that researchers work with the communities they study to identify issues and then influence policy with those findings, enabling the community agency in the political process. An example of CBPR is the development of *Who Pays? The True Cost of Incarceration on Families*,[56] in which the Ella Baker Center for Human Rights, Forward Together, and Research Action Design partnered with 20 community organizations to research the costs to families of incarceration across 14 states.

## Phase Four: Disseminate the Model

Assuming results of the initial field test of participatory justice are sufficiently promising, the fourth phase would create the infrastructure for replicating and disseminating the model. This phase would include creating venues to train others to implement participatory justice in their communities. A reoccurring "justice intermediary boot camp" could train community-based organizations to fill that role, paired with a participatory justice data-analysis boot camp for local research partners and those who want to work with the national heat map data. There could also be a local leadership development institute that invests in building the skills of emerging local leaders, particularly young people who participate in the participatory justice work. The early implementers from the pilot sites would trains the next cohort of participatory justice implementers. During this stage, partners would also develop written guides and online toolkits presenting the participatory justice model and examples from specific applications to reach people unable to participate in face-to-face trainings and other relevant activities.

# Moving the Idea Forward

Both philanthropy and government have critical roles to play in moving forward the development of a concrete model of participatory justice. Given the need for the process to be community driven in its earliest stages, philanthropic funders are key investors to provide resources for justice intermediaries and their research partners. Local and regional foundations in particular also can serve as the convener or co-convener of the initial participatory justice planning and design-build work and can create the ongoing infrastructure to support continued peer learning. Philanthropic support could be collaborative, with a national investor or consortium of investors seeding the demonstration, research, and technical assistance support for sites and local funders providing direct support for community-based justice intermediaries.

Participatory justice must be community-driven, but local governments can most powerfully contribute to the development of a concrete model by listening to and acting on the priorities that emerge from the process. The community's leadership role will add energy to the process and reinforce the commitment community members have made to civically engage. Conversely, failure to engage with the community and the recommendations community members create through the process could further civic disengagement and damage collective efficacy. Once the participatory justice process is under way, local government can partner with the community to jointly use data to monitor progress over the long run. State governments can contribute to the effort by providing state data for analysis, committing to re-examine state-level policies that contribute to high incarceration rates, and supporting efforts to reinvest justice cost savings in initiatives that address community priorities.

# Appendix A. Participatory Justice Investment and Impact Summary

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| **Description of the problem** | Concentrated poverty; concentrated crime, violence, and victimization; and high rates of incarceration and criminal justice presence impede mobility from poverty. |
| **Theory of change** | A participatory justice approach can increase community power and autonomy, increase collective efficacy, improve trust in government and the criminal justice system, and reduce crime and victimization. These changes hold the promise of reducing barriers related to mobility from poverty within a community. |
| **Estimated cost to implement** | **$4–6 million** for a three- to five-site, three-year demonstration |
| **Evaluation strategy** | ▪ Natural experiment/analytic technique<br>▪ Pre-post outcome tracking |
| **Data sources** | ▪ Survey<br>▪ Program or administrative data<br>▪ Direct observation |

| Mobility principle | Outcomes measured and expected benefit | Information source |
|---|---|---|
| **Economic success** | *Community level (local/neighborhood)*<br>▪ poverty rate<br>▪ % labor market participation<br>▪ high school graduation rate<br>▪ % attending or completing postsecondary education | *Community level*<br>▪ community surveys<br>▪ school district data<br>▪ American Community Survey data |
| **Power and autonomy** | *Individual/family/household level*<br>▪ average score on collective efficacy scale<br>▪ Civic Life Index[a]<br>*Community level (local/neighborhood)*<br>▪ average score on collective efficacy scale | *Individual/family/household level*<br>▪ surveys of participants in participatory justice activities<br>*Community level*<br>▪ community surveys |
| **Being valued in community** | *Individual/family/household level*<br>▪ number of participants in participatory justice process<br>o % youth<br>o % voters (last election)<br>o % noncitizens<br>*Community level (local/neighborhood)*<br>▪ % feeling their neighborhood is a valued member of the city/county/state<br>▪ % residents perceiving they have high standing in the community and society | *Individual/family/household level*<br>▪ surveys of participants in participatory justice activities<br>*Community level*<br>▪ community surveys |
| **Crime, safety, and justice system indicators** | *Community level (local/neighborhood)*<br>▪ crime rates<br>▪ resident perceptions of safety<br>▪ arrest rate (juvenile and adult)<br>▪ probationers per 100,000 residents<br>▪ sentences to incarceration per 100,000 residents | *Community level*<br>▪ police data<br>▪ community surveys<br>▪ probation data<br>▪ court data |

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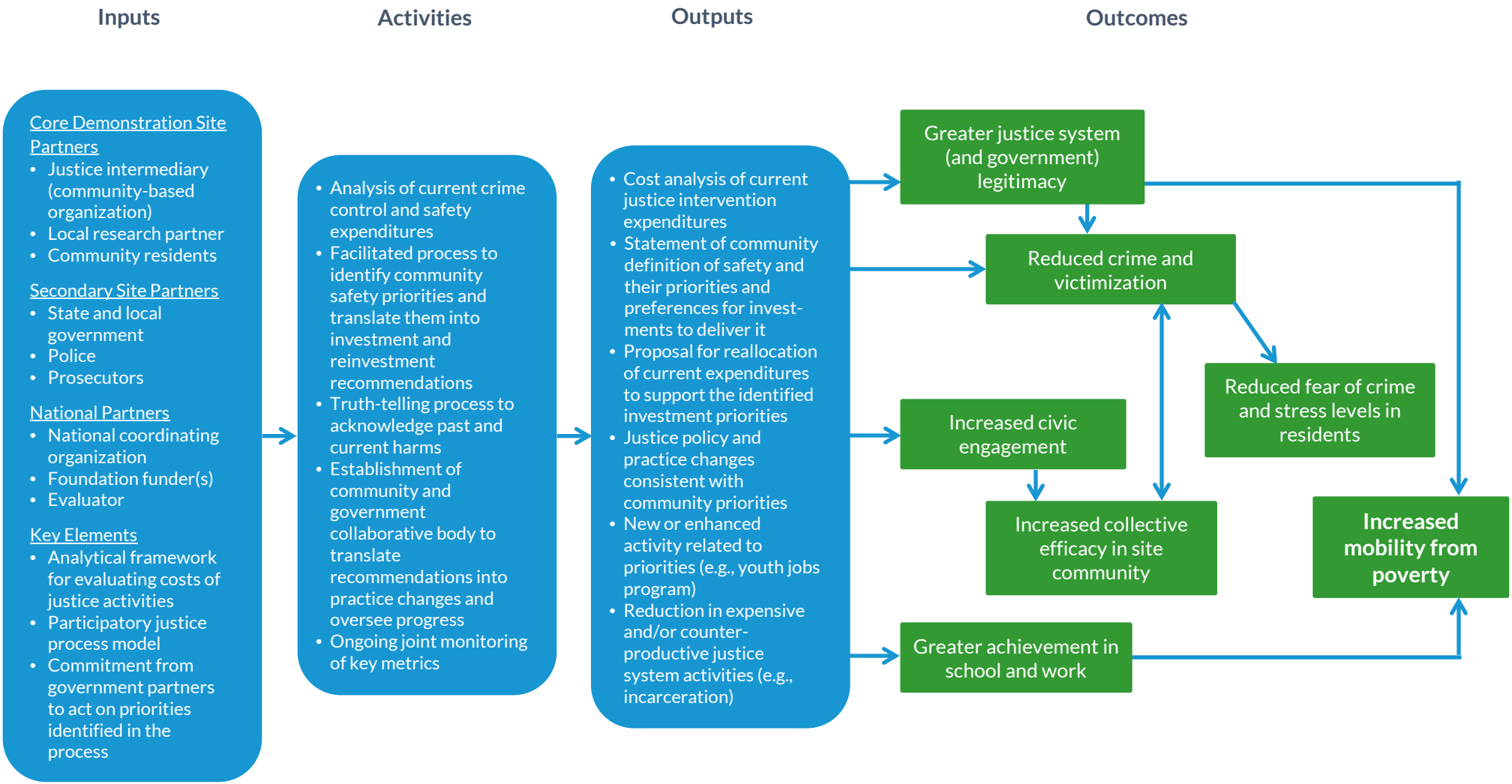
# Appendix B. Participatory Justice Demonstration Project Logic Model



# Notes

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