



The Citation Project A Collaborative Project to Inform Policing Policy

Executed by the UNC School of Government's [Criminal Justice Innovation Lab](#) (CJIL) and the [North Carolina Association of Chiefs of Police](#) (NCACP) the Citation Project seeks to improve policing practices through implementation and rigorous evaluation of a model citation in lieu of arrest policy. The project has three components: (1) developing a model citation in lieu of arrest policy; (2) selecting North Carolina police departments to serve as pilot sites and supporting their implementation of the model policy; and (3) conducting an empirical evaluation to assess impact on core criminal justice metrics.

Citation in Lieu of Arrest Promises Benefits to Law Enforcement & Communities

Charged with identifying best practices and offering recommendations on how policing practices can promote effective crime reduction while building public trust, the Task Force on 21st Century Policing recommended that law enforcement agencies develop and adopt policies and strategies that reinforce the importance of community engagement in managing public safety. These include "least harm" resolutions such as use of citation in lieu of arrest. Increased use of citations offers other potential benefits, including increased law enforcement efficiency. Additionally, increased use of citations may help reduce unnecessary pretrial detentions of low-risk defendants and associated costs, unfairness, and negative public safety outcomes. An arrest triggers an initial appearance and imposition of conditions of pretrial release. Because secured bonds are the most common condition imposed in North Carolina, the decision to make an arrest versus issue a citation often results in imposition of a secured bond and associated wealth-based detentions.

A Collaborative Project Elevating Law Enforcement Priorities

A seven-member team is executing the project. Police chiefs hold five seats, ensuring a law enforcement informed effort. Law enforcement team members include: Chief Dan House, NC State University Police Department and Immediate Past President of the NCACP; Chief Blair Myhand, Clayton Police Department; Chief Paul Burdette, Beaufort Police Department; Chief Damon Williams, NC Central University Police Department; and Chief Eddie Buffaloe, Elizabeth City Police Department. Also on the team is CJIL Director Professor Jessica Smith, a leading expert on North Carolina criminal law who brings decades of experience working with judicial system and law enforcement leaders. The team's seventh member is Sarah Desmarais, Professor in the Applied Social and Community Psychology Program and Director of the Center for Family and Community Engagement at North Carolina State University. Desmarais brings expertise in empirical evaluation and implementation of evidence-based criminal justice practices.

Project Support & Timeline

Supported by a grant from the Charles Koch Foundation, the project team had its kick-off meeting in early 2020. The team developed a model citation policy, implementation plans for pilot departments, a pilot project training manual and research protocol. Pilot sites include the following police departments: Winston-Salem, Wilmington, Apex, and Elizabeth City. Pilot sites were chosen based on factors such as commitment to implementation, adequacy of local resources, community demographics and caseloads. Pilot sites will begin implementing the model policy on December 1, 2020. A rigorous empirical evaluation will continue into early 2023, examining, among other things, change in use of citations; impact on failure to appear and new arrests rates; change in jail admissions; and officer time savings.

For more information, contact

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