



Ramsey County Bail Reform Initiative Town Hall
February 21, 2022
4-6 PM

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Welcome





Bail Reform Working Group Introductions

Ramsey County Bail Reform Working Group is supported

by



Ramsey County
Attorney's Office,
Sheriff's Office, and
Manager



Consultant



Consultant



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The Cash Bail System

The Problem with Cash Bail

Simply put, cash bail creates a justice system where someone's liberty is often based on how much money they have.

Two people charged with the same felony and with the same record may get the same cash bail ordered. One who has access to resources can put the money down on the presumption of innocence. The other sits in jail in the false name of public safety but in reality just cannot buy their freedom.

An important tenet of our criminal justice system is the Presumption of Innocence, but our current pretrial system has come to treat many as guilty, especially those who are not able to pay for cash bail.

The cash bail system not only denies the rights of the accused based on wealth, it also imposes an unfair burden on the community by draining resources into a parasitic monetized bail/bond enterprise that exploits freedom for cash, and ultimately makes our community less safe.

Consequences

This system also contributes directly to the criminalization of poverty and people of Color, perpetuating inequities that are already disproportionately felt by communities of color and those experiencing poverty.

For those accused, release is often conditioned upon the posting of some dollar amount, a percentage of which is usually kept by a private bail-bond company even if the person attends all their court hearings. Many struggle to find whatever resources are needed to secure that right. Families forgo rent payments, childcare, groceries, and other important needs to secure the freedom of a loved one. **Meanwhile, those jailed are forced to miss work and other important commitments, which can lead to job loss or other negative outcomes.**

People detained pretrial also do not have the same ability to defend themselves, and studies have shown that pretrial detention can actually increase a person's likelihood of rearrest upon release, creating an endless cycle of arrest and incarceration and reducing public safety.

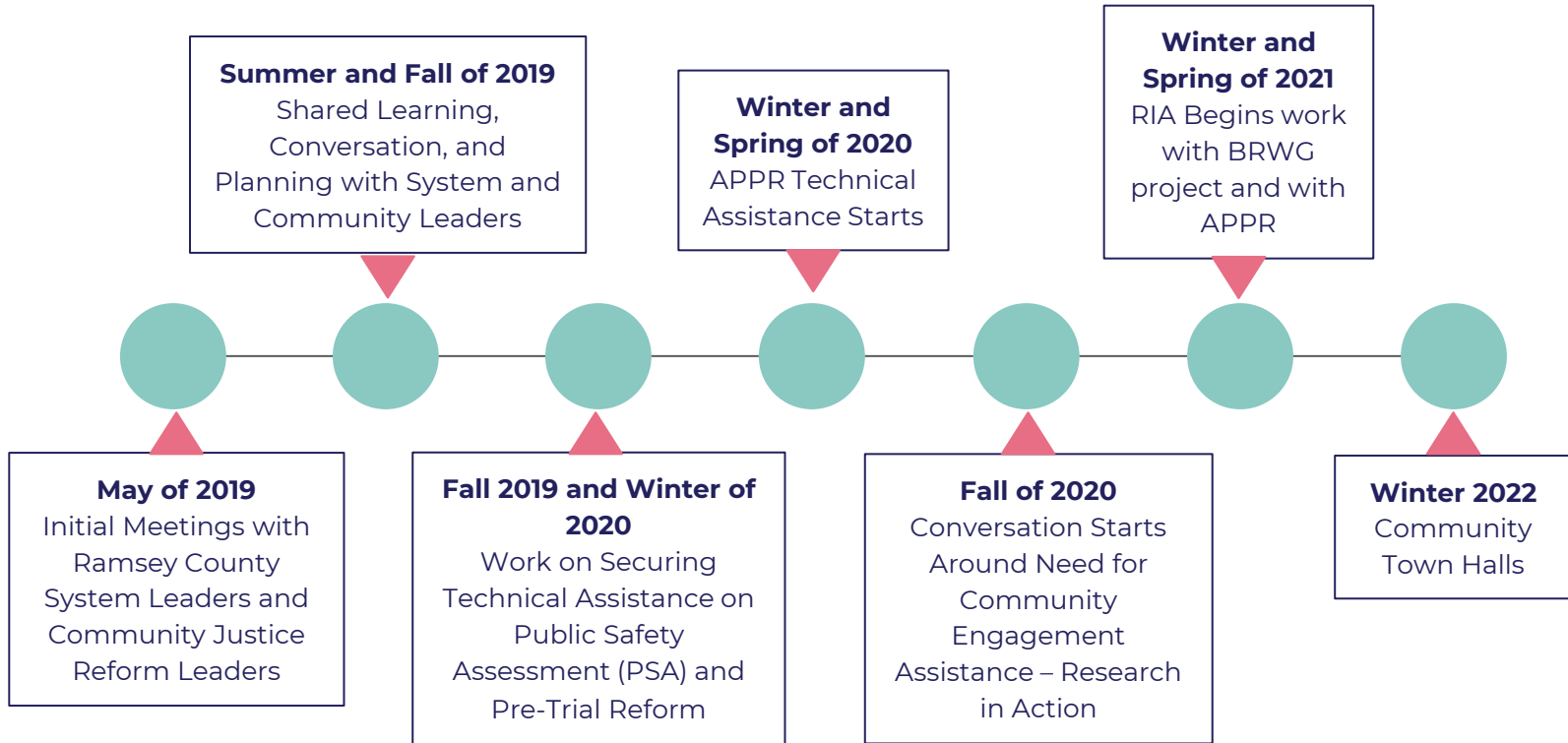


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History, Goals, and Commitments of the BRWG



History of the BRWG



Goals and Commitments of the BRWG

Goal

Eliminate the harm to communities caused by the cash bail system while improving public safety and court appearances by:

- Transitioning from a system based on wealth to a system based on risk.
- Reducing the reliance on the cash bail system
- Ensuring no one is held because of inability to pay, putting public safety first
- Reducing the jail population
- Increasing court appearance rate
- Engaging community members to develop and be part of system alternatives

Commitments

- **Racial equity** - actively working to ensure every individual who comes into contact with the justice system is treated in a fair and impartial manner.
- **Shared power through community codesign** - prioritizing community as equal partners in decision-making and including service recipients and/or representatives of marginalized communities.
- **Transparency and accountability** - ensuring the system maintains fidelity and trust to itself.
- **Public safety** - reducing crime and ensuring individuals are held accountable.
- **Health and wellbeing** - evolving beyond a practice of 'harm reduction' to a system that improves community wellbeing.



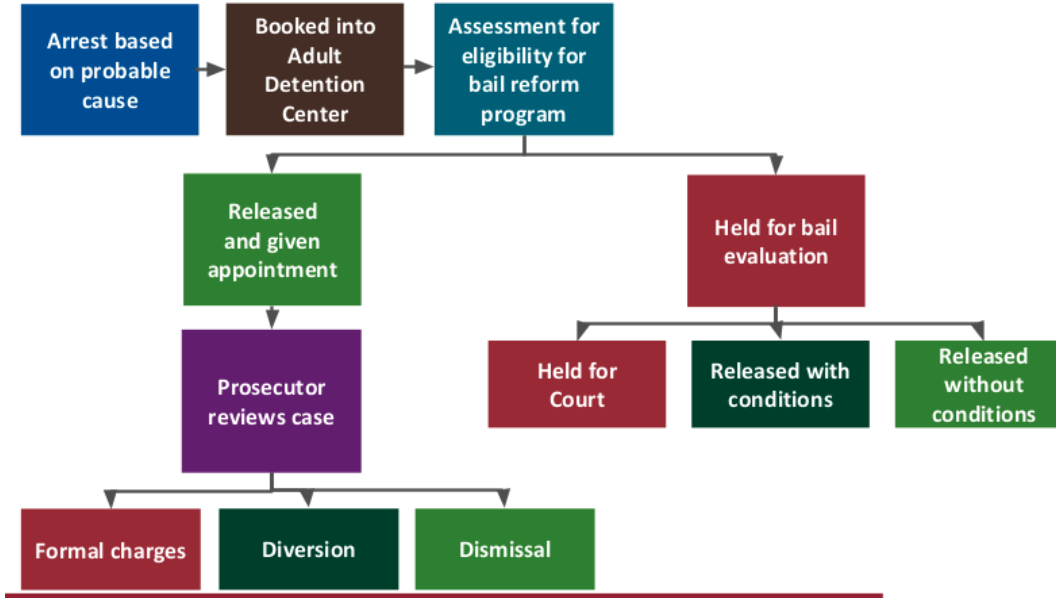
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Booking Reform

BRWG Booking Reform



New Bail Reform Process



Data on Booking Process?

Why Booking is a Meaningful Place to Start Reform

Remove pressure to take guilty plea

Poor should not equal guilty

We can gather information on this to inform future reform.

Because we have been unsuccessful in changing who gets arrested

Uniformity in multijurisdictional county

The most impactful—affects the most people

Good place to start to reinforce presumption of innocence

Naturally requires law enforcement to be part of the solution

Justice should not be for sale

Prevent protective factors i.e. jobs or housing from being taken away

Equal protections

Punishment should be after conviction

Every interaction is an opportunity to reduce harm, starting here is a good place to reduce unintended consequences

We have a responsibility to respond to the initial contact in a way that reflects social justice



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Break: Ground, Restore, Heal





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Community Feedback

Community Feedback

We want to hear from you about

- The Booking Program
 - As a place to begin reform
 - Use of an assessment tool
- Accessible language
- Other criminal justice spaces you want to see reformed
- Services in the community



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BRWG Invitation



BRWG Invitation

- **Roles & Responsibilities**
- **Membership**
- **Decision Making**



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Next Steps

Next Steps

Research in Action will follow up shortly with a survey.

- Complete the follow-up survey if interested in joining the BRWG