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PRESS RELEASE

For immediate release: May 27, 2015

**CHARLESTON COUNTY WINS MACARTHUR FOUNDATION SUPPORT TO
REDUCE THE USE OF JAILS**

*Grant is part of MacArthur's \$75M Safety and Justice Challenge, which supports innovation
in local criminal justice systems*

[CHARLESTON, SC] – The John D. and Catherine T. MacArthur Foundation today announced that Charleston County is one of 20 jurisdictions selected to receive a \$150,000 grant to create a fairer, more effective local justice system. The grant is a part of the Safety and Justice Challenge, the Foundation's \$75 million initiative to reduce over-incarceration by changing the way America thinks about and uses jails. Charleston County will use the support to improve data analytics and to support collaborative evidence based solutions which seek to reduce over-incarceration.

Charleston County was chosen following a highly competitive selection process that drew applications from nearly 200 jurisdictions from 45 states. The Safety and Justice Challenge competition supports jurisdictions across the country seeking to create more just and effective local justice systems that improve public safety, save taxpayer money, and yield better outcomes. The 20 jurisdictions selected will work with expert consultants to develop a plan for local justice system improvement. In 2016, as many as 10 of these jurisdictions will receive a second round of funding – between \$500,000 to \$2 million annually – to implement their plans over two years. "Nearly 200 diverse jurisdictions responded to our challenge, reflecting nationwide interest in reducing over-incarceration," said Julia Stasch, President of the MacArthur Foundation. "Each of the sites selected has demonstrated the motivation, collaboration, and commitment needed to make real change in their local justice systems. We hope their local efforts will model effective and safe alternatives to the incarceration status quo for the rest of the country."

One of Charleston County's goals is to ensure, at the initial point of incarceration, every effort is made to properly evaluate the individual and determine what pre-trial situation best meets the core need(s) of the individual while still protecting our community.

Despite growing national attention to the large number of Americans confined in state and federal prisons, significantly less attention has been paid to local justice systems, where the criminal justice system primarily operates and where over-incarceration begins. Jail populations have more than tripled since the 1980s, as have cumulative expenditures related to building and running them. According to recent research from the Vera Institute of Justice, nearly 75 percent of the population of both sentenced offenders and pretrial detainees are in jail for nonviolent offenses such as traffic, property, drug, or public order violations. Further, low-income individuals and communities of color disproportionately experience the negative consequences of incarceration.

In Charleston County, over the past twelve months the detention center has processed approximately 27,373 admissions a majority of whose time in the 1917 bed facility is 30 days or less. The goal of Charleston County and its justice system partners is to use this data driven study to address the immediate needs that are identified. One such need may be an improved system of evaluating individuals prior to pre-trial incarceration in an effort to treat the actual cause of the individual's problem(s) and not just the symptoms. The desired impact of this effort would be to reduce recidivism by not exasperating an individual's problems with unnecessary incarceration. Charleston County is dedicated to ensuring fair and equitable treatment of all persons in their justice system while still providing for the safety its citizens.

Information about the selected jurisdictions, as well as news, research, and events related to the Safety and Justice Challenge, will be published on www.SafetyandJusticeChallenge.org.

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, make cities better places, and understand how technology affects children and society. More information about the Foundation's work, including in the justice field, is available at www.macfound.org.

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