

2020 HIGHLIGHTS

MAKING IMPACTFUL, SYSTEMIC CHANGE IN D.C.



DECEMBER 2020

Major Audit Sheds Light on Problems with Substance Use Disorder Services in D.C.

In August, CCE, in partnership with the D.C. Auditor, published [*Everything is Scattered: The Intersection of Substance Use Disorders and Justice-Involvement in the District*](#), an in-depth audit of substance use disorder (SUD) services provided to D.C.'s incarcerated and returning residents. After conducting over 100 interviews, extensive literature reviews, and analysis of three years of D.C. agency data, we made seven major findings on D.C.'s justice system and the delivery of SUD services.

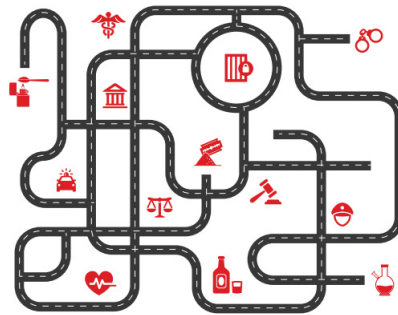
Most notably, CCE found that close to 40% of people in D.C.'s jails had evidence of a SUD. However, only 8% of those who were getting SUD care right before their incarceration were detected by the Department of Corrections as having a SUD. To better support justice-involved D.C. residents with SUDs, CCE recommends that D.C. offer pre-arrest diversion options, expand treatment access in the jail, develop intake procedures to better identify people with SUDs, improve connections to community-based treatment when leaving jail, and increase interagency data sharing, among other recommendations.

Since the report's release in August, CCE has briefed community stakeholders and educated D.C. Council members and the public on our findings and the importance of implementing the recommendations. For example, in October, CCE testified before the D.C. Council's Committee on Health on improvements that the Department of Behavioral Health could implement to save lives and decrease the revolving door to the criminal justice system.

Everything is Scattered... The Intersection of Substance Use Disorders and Incarcerations in the District

August 25, 2020

A report for ODCA from the Council for Court Excellence



Kathleen Patterson, District of Columbia Auditor
www.dcauditor.org

CCE in the News

CCE leaders and publications were cited at least **TWENTY-SIX** times by the media in 2020! Our reports and advocacy were covered in publications like *The Washington Post*, *Slate*, *The Appeal*, *DCist*, *The DC Line*, *NPR*, and more. From extensive coverage of our report on SUD services, to an op-ed by our Executive Director on the impacts of COVID-19, and coverage of our halfway house advocacy, CCE has worked hard to educate the public about justice issues that impact our community.

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PROJECT SNAPSHOT: In 2020, our Estate Administration Working Group completed 54 interviews of experts, practitioners, Superior Court personnel, and individual parties; reviewed 250 D.C. Superior Court case files; received 51 survey responses; and studied 15 other states' probate practices to better understand and decrease the barriers that unrepresented people commonly face in administering a loved one's estate in D.C.

Legislative Wins: Reducing the Incarcerated Population & Preventing the Spread of COVID-19

Recognizing that prisons and jails are particularly dangerous during a pandemic, CCE worked quickly this spring to finalize research on the importance of establishing new good time credit calculations for incarcerated people and expanding D.C.'s compassionate release law. CCE, along with lawyers at Covington & Burling, GW Law's Prisoner & Reentry Clinic, and the Public Defender Service, collaborated to publish [*Fair Practices After Sentencing: A Proposal for Reforming Good Time, Earned Time, and Compassionate Release in the District of Columbia*](#), which detailed the rationales for each policy and included sample legislative language. After sharing our research with members of the D.C. Council, both provisions were included in the District's second COVID-19 emergency response bill, which passed in April. The laws were made permanent by the D.C. Council in December. **To date, 69 individuals have received compassionate release in D.C., with more than 600 still seeking legal assistance or waiting for the court to consider their requests.**

PROJECT SNAPSHOT: With CCE's support, the [District Task Force on Jails & Justice](#) developed over 80 detailed policy proposals to improve D.C.'s criminal legal system and reimagine how and when people are incarcerated. Throughout the year, the Task Force debated some of the District's most pressing justice-related issues, analyzed novel data and survey results from the federal Bureau of Prisons, and hosted four virtual community events. The Task Force's "Phase II" report will be published in early 2021!

CCE Collaborated with the DC Reentry Action Network to Host COVID-19 Outreach Events



Throughout 2020 CCE mobilized to address D.C.'s returning citizens' disproportionate risks related to the coronavirus. This spring, CCE received reports of unsafe conditions at Hope Village, the District's now-closed halfway house for men, and a need for additional supplies at two other regional halfway houses. To respond, CCE and the DC Reentry Action Network (RAN) facilitated an emergency supply drive to deliver over 400 kits of health and hygiene supplies to D.C. halfway houses. Then, in August, CCE and RAN worked together to host outreach events that provided 1,000 coronavirus prevention kits and 500 boxes of non-perishable pantry food to D.C. residents in Wards 1, 7, and 8, which have been heavily impacted by COVID-19.

POLICY WIN: In June, D.C. Superior Court announced a change to its Jury Plan that allows returning citizens to serve as jurors just one year after completing their sentence instead of waiting ten years. CCE has been advocating for this reform since the publication of our report, [*Jury Service Revisited*](#), in 2015. This is an important step towards creating a more diverse and inclusive jury pool.

Staying Connected Despite Being Apart

Despite having to adapt to the new virtual landscape, CCE hosted a variety of engaging and successful events in 2020. For example, CCE co-hosted a series of webinars on our [*When Adults Need Help*](#) guide with the Quality Trust for Individuals with Disabilities this spring. Then, in June, we hosted the popular [*Meet the Next Chief Judge*](#) forum where the three candidates under consideration for D.C. Superior Court's new Chief Judge discussed their visions and priorities for the Court. More than 500 people registered for the live forum and hundreds more watched the recording online. Finally, in September, CCE hosted [*Shut Out or Shut Down?: Challenges in Ensuring Public Access to Courts and Government During COVID-19*](#), a Bench-Bar-Media Dialogue event where panelists discussed how courts are adjusting to virtual proceedings, the implications of the growing backlog of FOIA requests, and other challenges caused by COVID-19. We reached more than 1,000 area residents with these events!

