



News

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Laura and John Arnold Foundation to continue data-driven criminal justice effort launched under the Obama Administration

WASHINGTON, D.C.—The Laura and John Arnold Foundation (LJAF) announced today that it is dramatically expanding its efforts to use data and analytics in order to address challenges in the criminal justice system. Former White House advisors Lynn Overmann and Kelly Jin have joined the Foundation to continue the work they began under the Obama Administration’s Data-Driven Justice initiative.

Ms. Overmann, LJAF’s new vice president of data-driven justice, has a distinguished career in the federal government and most recently served as the senior advisor to the U.S. chief technology officer in the White House Office of Science and Technology Policy (OSTP). Ms. Jin, LJAF’s new director of data-driven justice, was an advisor to the U.S. chief technology officer and chief data scientist in the OSTP.

Ms. Overmann and Ms. Jin helped launch the White House Data-Driven Justice initiative focused on using data to identify individuals with mental illness, substance use disorders, and chronic health problems who are frequently involved with local criminal justice and health care systems. In order to better serve this population and save tax dollars, the initiative is collaborating with Amazon Web Services and other technology companies to build a secure, cloud-based platform designed to make it easier for jurisdictions to combine, anonymize, and share data. The technology provides insights into risk factors and helps to pinpoint opportunities to deliver proactive, preventive services aimed at reducing costly jail stays and hospital visits, while providing stability and opportunities for people to improve their lives.

The initiative, started in June 2016, has developed a growing bipartisan coalition of 140 city, county, and state governments. These jurisdictions cover a population of more than 94 million Americans and range from rural counties such as Potter County, Pennsylvania, to some of the largest metro areas in the country such as Los Angeles County, California.

As members of the LJAF team, Ms. Overmann and Ms. Jin will continue to help communities link their privacy-protected criminal justice and health care datasets, allowing them to look across records like 911 calls, arrests, jail bookings, hospital emergency room admissions, and behavioral health service files to find more effective, less costly interventions.

The initial results are positive: communities participating in the initiative report better outcomes for their residents and cost savings.

LJAF supported the Data-Driven Justice initiative and funded Ms. Overmann's White House fellowship as part of the Foundation's strategy to leverage data and technology that can drive innovation in the criminal justice system and accelerate the adoption of proven reforms.

"There has been tremendous bipartisan momentum to reform the criminal justice system, and we are pleased to continue backing state and local leaders who are pursuing data-driven approaches to improve their systems," LJAF Executive Vice President and Chief Strategy Officer Kelli Rhee explained. "Lynn and Kelly will work closely with our Vice President of Criminal Justice Matt Alsdorf and other members of the team to build on our support for communities that are making their systems more effective, cost efficient, and fair."

Across the nation, more than 11 million people are incarcerated in local jails each year, many on low-level, nonviolent misdemeanor offenses. The annual cost to local governments is at least \$22 billion for incarceration alone. Statistics show that 64 percent of people in jail suffer from mental illness, 68 percent have a substance use disorder, and 44 percent have chronic health conditions.

"Kelly and I have spent our careers trying to find ways to better serve vulnerable populations in the criminal justice system," Ms. Overmann said. "Thanks to strong bipartisan support, data-driven strategies promise to have a huge impact on communities across the nation— strengthening health care, improving individual lives, and saving taxpayers millions of dollars in the process. We are thrilled to have the opportunity to continue this important work at the Laura and John Arnold Foundation."

"People with untreated, serious mental illness can be quite vulnerable, especially when they are homeless," said Knoxville Police Chief David Rausch. "We saw people being victimized when they were on the streets and knew jail wasn't the solution. By partnering with mental health and housing service providers, arrests have dropped and my officers know they have a place to take people where they will get the help they need. We are excited to be a part of the Data-Driven Justice initiative and to know that this critical work will continue."

"People look at what it costs for us to run our jail—\$30 million in our county for about 1,000 inmates," said Leon County Commissioner Bryan Desloge, a Republican from Florida and the president of the National Association of Counties. "We all need to be working toward lowering the number of people in our jails and looking at our laws to identify options other than jail for low-level offenders. It's a huge, huge crisis for our country today."

Jurisdictions that are interested in learning more about LJAF's data-driven justice efforts can contact the Foundation at info@arnoldfoundation.org.

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