**Arnold Ventures:**

**Police, Health, and Social Services to Create New Crisis Response Model to Help ‘Frequent Users’**

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* *Three pilot programs will test a new crisis response model that could help Frequent Utilizers — people who cycle repeatedly through the criminal justice, health, and social service systems — and save significant public dollars and emergency responder time*
* *Grants totaling $4.1 million will help local responders, researchers, and government associations leverage data to identify Frequent Utilizers and connect them to mental health, addiction treatment, housing and other services*

Washington, D.C. — The Laura and John Arnold Foundation (LJAF) today announced $4.1 million in funding to help local communities and researchers study new crisis response models that could better address people with mental illness and addiction who bounce between jails and hospitals. The Foundation committed $1.6 million to launch three pilot programs that will test new methods of coordination between police, hospitals, and social services; $2.1 million to fund evaluations of promising intervention programs; and $375,000 to the National Association of Counties (NACo) to organize a growing network of county leaders on the issue.

Attention to Frequent Utilizers has escalated with the release of preliminary [research](https://www.hks.harvard.edu/sites/default/files/centers/wiener/programs/pcj/files/integrated_healthcare_criminaljustice_data.pdf) that suggests the magnitude of the issue and the costs associated with it—both human and financial. The goal of LJAF’s pilot is to help emergency responders recognize Frequent Utilizers and divert them out of jail and into treatment programs that can address their root issues.

The pilot projects are scheduled to take place in three sites across the country: Middlesex County, Massachusetts, City of Long Beach, California, and Johnson County, Iowa. The programs will enable local agencies to link data through a pioneering data management system built by OpenLattice, a leader in secure data technology. With LJAF funding, the jurisdictions will hire data scientists to collect and analyze information such as 911 calls, EMS transports, emergency department visits, and shelter records, looking for patterns that can help emergency responders identify people in crisis and connect them to the help they need. This form of data sharing among health, social service, and criminal justice systems represents an innovative and unprecedented partnership that LJAF hopes will serve as a model for other jurisdictions.

In addition to building capacity for linking and analyzing data, the pilot projects will help jurisdictions develop promising interventions for Frequent Utilizers, such as training for law enforcement, Medication Assisted Treatment for people with opioid addiction and housing assistance for individuals who are chronically homeless.

“We have an incredible opportunity to help some of the most vulnerable members of our communities,” said Kelli Rhee, president of the Laura and John Arnold Foundation. “The potential is enormous. Not only can the pilot programs help connect Frequent Utilizers to the treatment they need, increasing the chance they’ll remain out of jail in the future, but the programs can save taxpayer dollars and critical emergency responder time.”

LJAF is funding three large-scale evaluations of promising interventions, which will help build the evidence base about what actually works to address Frequent Utilizers’ complex needs. LJAF has awarded a grant to the University of Rochester Medical Center to evaluate Minnesota’s replication of the successful Rochester Forensic Assertive Community Treatment (R-FACT) program. The second funding award, to the City of Long Beach, will evaluate an expanded version of Forensic Community Treatment (FACT), which aims to address mental illnesses commonly found among people in the criminal justice system. LJAF will fund research group MDRC to study the possibility of conducting a multi-location evaluation of a combined Housing First/Shared Medical Appointments program. If successful, the study could help establish the first trial in the United States of an adjusted Housing First model.

“We’re at a tipping point in our work to build a more effective crisis response network,” said Lynn Overmann, vice president of data-driven justice (DDJ) at the Laura and John Arnold Foundation. “We are excited to begin to meet the need that law enforcement, behavioral health professionals, and social service staff have voiced for years. The pilot programs and research we’re funding represent an important step forward in helping communities create better options to respond to Frequent Utilizers, improve community safety, and provide much-needed stability and health.”

The announcement of these investments represents a significant expansion of LJAF’s DDJ project, which aims to improve society’s response to people who cycle between the justice system and emergency health and social service systems.

“We are honored to be selected as a pilot site by the Laura and John Arnold Foundation,” said Middlesex Sheriff Peter J. Koutoujian. “Public safety leaders across our county recognize we cannot arrest and incarcerate our way out of mental illness and substance use disorders. We believe this designation will allow us to enhance the innovative work we’ve begun at the local and county levels to disrupt the status quo.”

The DDJ pilot programs and evaluations reflect the first national effort to reimagine emergency response models that could more appropriately respond to Frequent Utilizers’ needs, with the hope of saving resources and, most importantly, lives.

For more information about frequent utilizers and LJAF’s work to address this issue, please see “[Modern Justice: Using Data to Reinvent America’s Crisis Response Systems](http://craftmediabucket.s3.amazonaws.com/uploads/PDFs/DDJ-MODERN-JUSTICE.pdf)” or the [report summary](http://craftmediabucket.s3.amazonaws.com/uploads/PDFs/DDJ-MODERN-JUSTICE-Short.pdf).

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