



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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**Minnesota Justice Research Center Completes Statewide
Community Conversations on Bail, Jail, & Pretrial Policy**

MINNEAPOLIS - The Minnesota Justice Research Center (MNJRC) wrapped its community conversation series last week after hearing from over 200 residents across the state to better understand the impacts of the state's pretrial practices, including the use of cash bail. In addition to hearing from individual residents, the MNJRC interviewed dozens of judges, prosecutors, defense attorneys, and sheriffs across Minnesota. The goal was to collect authentic, meaningful feedback from Minnesota communities in order to provide state policy makers with on-the-ground information about what's working and areas for improvement in Minnesota's pretrial system.

"Community engagement is fundamental to creating inclusive and just policy, especially when it comes to the criminal legal system," said **Justin Terrell, Executive Director of the Minnesota Justice Research Center**. "The people who experience the harms of Minnesota's pretrial practices are real people with real stories, they aren't just numbers or data points. We are dedicated to equipping Minnesotans with the knowledge and tools they need to navigate a complicated and often unjust system. I have endless gratitude for the MNJRC team and our partners for making these community conversations happen. We are committed to providing the Legislature with the highest-quality recommendations and conducting a fully transparent process so taxpayers know where their dollars are going."

The MNJRC team hosted 14 in-person events across six counties (Hennepin, Ramsey, Olmsted, St. Louis, Beltrami, Cass, and Stearns). MNJRC worked alongside community partners such as reentry organizations, churches, victim/survivor advocacy groups, youth-serving organizations, human rights groups, Native American legal advocacy

groups, and more to ensure conversations included multiracial, intergenerational perspectives from a variety of lived experiences.

Participants learned about current pretrial processes and shared their lived experience in the criminal legal system. As one participant noted, “Legislators need to know what it’s like. They need to hear our stories.” Read more about the importance of using people’s experiences as research data to develop recommendations in the MNJRC’s latest blog by Pretrial Bail Project Research Assistance Anna Simonton [here](#).

About 4,000 people are held pretrial in Minnesota jails on any given day. Many are in jail solely because they can’t afford bail.

This fall, MNJRC will analyze input collected from community members and synthesize it with other data in order to make policy recommendations to the state legislature in February 2025.

About the Minnesota Justice Research Center

The Minnesota Justice Research Center (MNJRC) is an independent, nonpartisan, nonprofit organization dedicated to driving meaningful change to Minnesota’s criminal legal system through rigorous and community-centered research, education, and policy development. We seek a criminal legal system that promotes public safety by being more equitable, accountable, and restorative in delivering justice. Our stakeholders include criminal legal system and corrections practitioners, law enforcement, community advocates, survivors, formerly incarcerated individuals, scholars and students. For more information, go to www.mnjrc.org.

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