The National Association of Counties (NACo) Smart Justice Initiative is a key component of NACo president, Commissioner Chris Rodgers’s, Douglas County, NE; presidential initiative. During his tenure, President Rodgers will aim to utilize the hallmarks of evidence-based/data-driven policies, the efficient and effective use of resources, and maintaining public safety and accountability to profile smart county justice policies and practices. As an essential stakeholder, county governments are often the entity providing, both directly and indirectly, services to enhance individuals’ lives and are responsible for maintaining public safety and the efficient use of local dollars. This initiative will help provide counties with the tools and information needed to further build knowledge and capacity for success.

Currently over 13 million individuals are booked into county jails each year and over 700,000 individuals into state and federal prisons. Regardless of the time served or the institution in which an individual was remanded, most offenders will one day return to their communities. According to the most recent Census of Governments, counties spend approximately $70 billion on direct justice expenditures and $50 billion on health services. Counties are in a distinctive position to not only have continued community corrections interaction, but also provide other health and human services for the individual and in many cases his/her families.

NACo has demonstrated its commitment to addressing local justice policies and programs. Specifically, NACo is working with counties to implement supportive housing, health, and pretrial policies and practices; and will be engaging in efforts to assist counties in assessing their reentry efforts and initiatives. NACo’s Smart Justice Initiative provides a catalyst to expand knowledge and resources for counties on a wide array of local justice issues.

**Goals of the Initiative**

NACo’s Smart Justice Initiative will engage counties across the country in an effort to:

- Build capacity for evidence-based, data-driven local justice policies and practices throughout the nation’s counties.
- Provide a closer examination of the need for intergovernmental collaboration and public private partnerships in an effort to enhance safer communities and utilize taxpayer money more effectively and efficiently.

**Current and Planned Activities**

Under the Smart Justice Initiative, NACo’s current and planned activities include:

- **Case Study Tour** – NACo will tour counties across the country to highlight various local justice system issues, initiatives, policies, and practices that have shown success and/or promise in addressing the needs of a returning individual.
- **Smart Justice Symposium** – NACo will conduct an educational symposium which will feature workshops and presentations on topics of importance to counties when implementing and enhancing smart justice policies and practices.
- **Webinar Series** – Smart Justice webinars will be conducted highlighting local initiatives and the role of the elected official in implementing such policies.
- **Webpage** – An online directory of local justice programs has been developed which includes a database of innovative local justice efforts at the county level.

For more information about NACo’s Smart Justice Initiative, please contact Maeghan Gilmore.