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Arnold Ventures Launches Diverse Partnership to Accelerate Pretrial Justice Reform

The National Partnership for Pretrial Justice combines research, policy development, and advocacy to implement and evaluate pretrial justice reforms across the country

(Houston) - [Arnold Ventures](#) today announced the launch of its [National Partnership for Pretrial Justice](#): a collective of research, technical assistance, policy, and advocacy organizations with diverse viewpoints, united around the shared goal of improving pretrial justice across the country. The philanthropy also announced the awarding of \$39 million in new pretrial justice grants that anchor the National Partnership. Composed of more than two dozen Arnold Ventures grantees, the partnership reflects a bold new community of practice aimed at reforming America's broken and costly pretrial justice system.

"Equitable pretrial decision making is at the forefront of America's consciousness," said **Kelli Rhee, President and CEO of Arnold Ventures**. "We are pleased to be a catalytic force that ensures all people have access to their legal and human rights in our criminal justice system."

Arnold Ventures has been one of the leading investors in pretrial justice reform since 2011, alongside other pioneers in the field such as the John D. and Catherine T. MacArthur Foundation. In bringing its pretrial grantmaking under the umbrella of the National Partnership, Arnold Ventures is elevating its work in pretrial justice beyond risk assessment, making clear its commitment to supporting, collaborating with, and learning from a diverse array of organizations. Arnold Ventures' pretrial justice grantees and partners are currently working to reduce unnecessary and unjust detention across more than 35 states and 400 counties. With a total of \$48 million in funding between new and existing grants, the partnership represents one of Arnold Ventures' most significant investments in criminal justice reform to date.

"The presumption of innocence is a core American value that is too often suppressed or ignored in our pretrial justice system. Every year, far too many Americans are locked up in jails simply because they can't pay for their freedom," said **Jeremy Travis, Executive Vice President of Criminal Justice at Arnold Ventures**. "And too often, efforts to find solutions are either siloed or contentious in ways that impede reform. We want to break down the barriers that have fragmented well-meaning advocacy to build a thoughtful, research-driven community with shared goals and values."

National Partnership members represent diverse stakeholders working to reform our pretrial justice system in broad and transformative ways, including organizations working on prosecution, public defense, case processing, and rural jail reform. Among the grant-funded initiatives:

- The **Center for Effective Public Policy** will provide training and implementation assistance under Arnold Ventures' Advancing Pretrial Policy and Research project, supporting a variety of pretrial improvements and including intensive assistance in up to ten Research-Action Sites over five years;
- **RTI International** and **Stanford University** will rigorously evaluate the impact of the Public Safety Assessment (PSA) in the Research-Action Sites, as well as conduct additional research on risk assessments;
- The **Public Safety Lab at New York University** will study the impacts of bail, pretrial detention, and counsel practices on defendant-level outcomes across 1,028 diverse counties;
- The **Center for Court Innovation** is studying ways to address racial disparities in data-driven risk assessment models;
- The **Vera Institute of Justice** will create a rural jails research and policy network through two university-based hubs to better understand drivers of rural jail growth;
- The **Pretrial Justice Institute** will examine how the pretrial field's use of legal and evidence-based practices has changed in the last decade, asking questions about citations, booking release authority, the timing of the initial bail hearing and parties present, eligibility for detention, bail schedules, risk assessment, release conditions, support services, and diversion options;
- The **National Center for State Courts** is conducting research, establishing benchmarks, and providing guidance to state courts about how best to improve the efficiency of criminal case processing;
- **RAND Corporation** will conduct a randomized controlled trial in Allegheny County, Pennsylvania, on the impact of having a public defender at a criminal defendant's preliminary arraignment, with the overall goal of improving the criminal justice system; and,
- The **Urban Institute** will capture baseline data regarding prosecutorial decision-making, assess the state of prosecutorial decision-making data collection nationwide, and identify potential areas for future data collection.

As part of the launch of National Partnership, Arnold Ventures released its first [Statement of Principles on Pretrial Justice](#), a grounding document that guides its pretrial grant investments and policy objectives. To reduce unjust and unnecessary pretrial detention, Arnold Ventures believes that we must protect the presumption of innocence and only people charged with the most serious offenses should be eligible for pretrial detention; that money bail obscures legally-required risk analyses, traps people in jail, and contributes to unconscionable racial and economic disparities in our justice system; and that validated pretrial risk assessments can support more objective and consistent judicial decision making—but are only one among a variety of pretrial justice reforms jurisdictions should adopt.

“I’m delighted that Arnold Ventures continues to support experts pursuing pretrial reform across so many academic and practitioner disciplines,” said **James Cadogan, Vice President of Criminal Justice at Arnold Ventures**. “Through the National Partnership for Pretrial Justice, we will empower innovative reformers so they can capitalize on this remarkable emerging moment of consensus in the bail reform movement and lay the foundation for lasting policy change.”

There are more than two dozen members of the National Partnership. The following are remarks from five:

“We are committed to fair, just, and effective pretrial practices, every day, throughout the nation. We are inspired by Arnold Ventures' commitment to pretrial justice and excited to be a part of the National Partnership as we embark on this important work together,” said **Madeline Carter and Alison Shames, Co-Directors of the Advancing Pretrial Policy and Research project**.

“RTI is excited to be included in this important partnership and contribute research to the pretrial justice movement,” said **Matthew DeMichele, Director of the Center for Courts and Corrections Research, RTI International**.

“The ongoing detention of individuals not yet convicted of crimes merely due to their inability to pay cash bail impedes the interests of justice and imposes grave harms on defendants, their families and their communities, said **Bob Carlson, President of the American Bar Association**. “The American Bar Association is proud to partner with Arnold Ventures and the other members of the National Partnership in endeavoring to fix our broken pretrial justice system.”

“The Public Safety Lab at New York University is honored to be a founding member of the National Partnership for Pretrial Justice,” said **Anna Harvey, Professor of Politics and Director of the Public Safety Lab**. “Our Jail Data Initiative, made possible through the generous support of Arnold Ventures, is the first effort to systematically collect and analyze daily jail rosters from over 1,000 facilities across the U.S., enabling us to analyze the impacts of pretrial detention on detainee well-being on a much broader scale than previously possible. We look forward to working with the National Partnership to support practices and policies that reduce the negative impacts of pretrial detention on both detainees and their communities.”

“Vera's research has uncovered that although jail populations are on the decline in America's largest cities, growth has continued unabated in rural counties where the prevalence of jail incarceration is now the highest,” said **Chris Henrichson, research director at the Vera Institute's Center on Sentencing and Corrections**. “We are proud to partner with Arnold Ventures to launch the Rural Jails Research and Policy Network, which will spark research and inquiry in the places where reform is too often elusive.”

National Partnership for Pretrial Justice partners include: American Bar Association, The Bail Project, Center for Court Innovation, Center for Effective Public Policy, Core Correctional Solutions, Duke University, Harvard University (Access to Justice Lab), Institute for Innovation in Prosecution at John Jay College of Criminal Justice, Institute for State and Local Governance (ISLG) at City University of New York, MDRC, National Association for Public Defense, National Center for State Courts, National Juvenile Defender Center, New York Criminal Justice Agency, New York University, Pretrial Justice Institute, RTI International, RAND Corporation, Stanford University, University of California Berkeley, University of Connecticut, University of Pennsylvania, Urban Institute, and Vera Institute of Justice.

For more information on the National Partnership for Pretrial Justice, visit <http://www.pretrialpartnership.org/>.

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About Arnold Ventures

Arnold Ventures is a philanthropy dedicated to tackling some of the most pressing problems in the United States. Founded by Laura and John Arnold in 2010, Arnold Ventures' core mission is to improve lives by investing in evidence-based solutions that maximize opportunity and minimize injustice. More information about Arnold Venture's work is available at www.arnoldventures.org.