

# Chicago Community Bond Fund

**FACT SHEETS (FALL 2019):**

**1. MONEY FOR COMMUNITIES, NOT CAGES**

**2. TWO YEARS OF BOND REFORM IN COOK COUNTY**

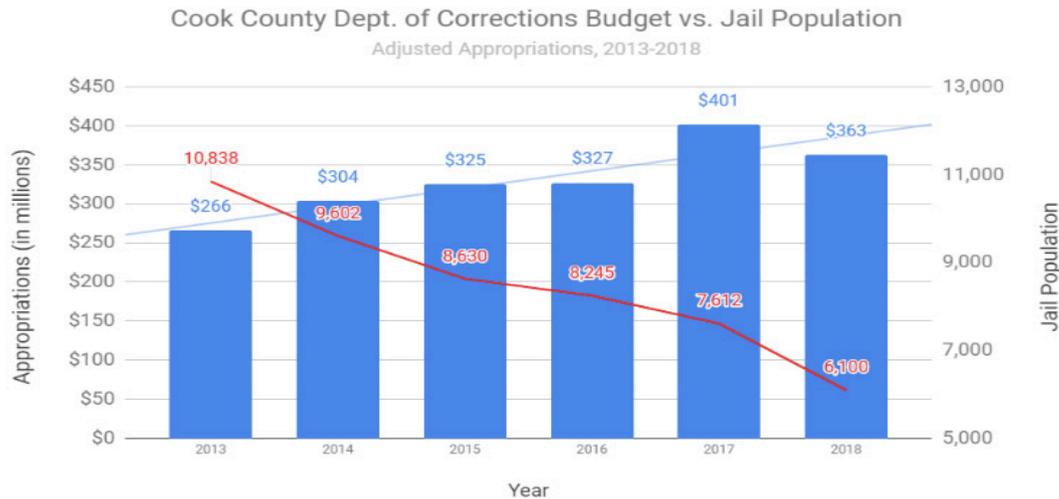


Cook County residents rally on June 17, 2019, to call for statewide bond reform outside the Thompson Center in downtown Chicago.



# MONEY FOR COMMUNITIES, NOT CAGES

Despite a massive 45% decrease in the number of people incarcerated in Cook County Jail between 2013 and 2019, the Cook County Sheriff's jail budget grew 28% between over the same time period—reaching a whopping \$588 million in 2018. The historic decline in the number of people incarcerated in Cook County Jail should coincide with a similar decrease in the Sheriff's jail budget.



As of August 2019, there are fewer than 5,900 people incarcerated in the jail, saving the county \$103 million according to Cook County Chief Judge Timothy Evans.<sup>1</sup> The declining number of people in jail provides an opportunity for Cook County to take the next step in ending mass incarceration: instead of being reallocated within the Sheriff's Office, Cook County Jail's budget can and must be intentionally shifted to prioritize spending on housing, healthcare, jobs, and economic security. This means Cook County should:

- 1. Invest in Community-Based Services, Not Jails & Criminalization:** Cook County should be funding the services that help currently underserved Black and Brown communities flourish, including accessible physical and mental healthcare, affordable housing, and community-driven economic development. By doing this, the County can take steps to ensure that more people avoid criminalization by having their needs met in the community.
- 2. End Money Bond & Reduce Pretrial Incarceration:** Money bond is racially discriminatory and increases unjust outcomes within the criminal legal system. Ending money bond is the first step towards reducing the number of people in jail and addressing racially discriminatory legacy of mass incarceration in Cook County.
- 3. Increase Support for Re-Entry & Diversion:** The Cook County Justice Advisory Council (JAC) is a promising example of how Cook County can increase investments in supporting people re-entering their communities, and Cook County should invest more in JAC initiatives than in the Department of Corrections.
- 4. Increase Access to Mental Health Care:** Low-income Black and Brown neighborhoods have seen drastic cuts to community-based mental health care services while police, jail and prisons receive more funding to respond to the same issues. Cook County must restore and increase funding to support mental health and well-being of communities before people interact with the criminal legal system.
- 5. Develop Universal Housing:** Cook County can invest in housing for communities targeted by the criminal legal system by providing additional funding to programs in re-entry housing.
- 6. Invest in Jobs & Community Economic Development Programs:** A commitment to public safety and caring for communities requires community-driven development based on the needs and priorities of the community. The County should reallocate funds from the jail to sustainable programs that empower the people who could benefit most from opportunity-creating investment.

<sup>1</sup> According to testimony provided by Chief Judge Timothy Evans at the July 17, 2019 budget hearing in front of the Cook County Board of Commissioners.

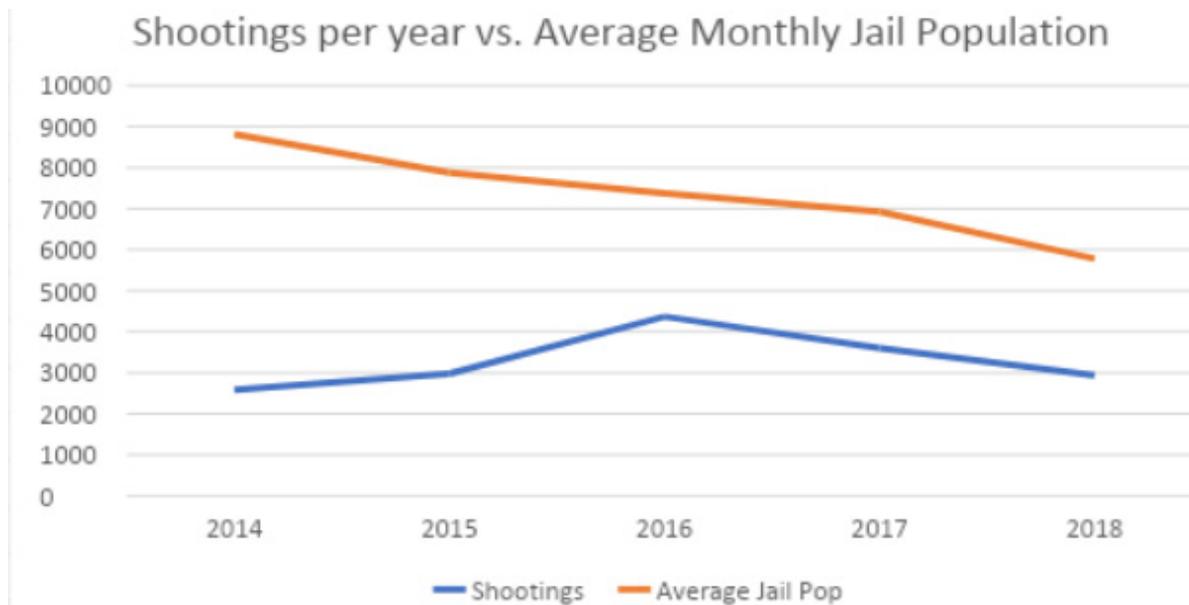
# TWO YEARS OF BOND REFORM IN COOK COUNTY

## More People Released, Lower Crime, But Still More Reductions Needed

In July 2017, Cook County Chief Judge Timothy Evans adopted General Order 18.8A, which requires judges to set money bonds only in amounts people can afford to pay. The recent report from the Office of the Chief Judge analyzing bond reform<sup>2</sup> confirmed what people on the ground are seeing: bond reform has helped thousands of people secure pretrial release without having to pay unaffordable money bonds while crime has continued to decline. Bond reform so far has resulted in successful outcomes for the courts, communities, and accused people and their loved ones.

Here are some key highlights of the data on bond reform in Cook County:

- When General Order 18.8A went into effect in September 2017, more than 8,500 people were incarcerated in Cook County Jail on any given day. Today, that number hovers between 5,500 and 5,900 people per day.
- Money bonds were used 36% less frequently, and the median money bond amount dropped significantly (from \$5,000 to \$1,000).
- Of all the people released pretrial on felony charges, less than one percent (0.6%) were re-arrested on charges considered “violent.”
- Violent crime in Chicago dropped 8% during the same time period.



Despite this promising progress, further reform is still necessary. As many as 2,000 people are still incarcerated in Cook County Jail solely due to their inability to pay a money bond. Courts have also increased the use of pretrial conditions such as electronic monitoring (EM), a form of “e-carceration” that creates jails in homes and communities, and curfews and check-in’s with pretrial service officers, which only create more hurdles for people trying to recover from the harmful impacts of pretrial incarceration.

The Chicago Community Bond Fund is pushing for the complete elimination of money bond and mandatory pretrial release for as many people as possible. We also support increasing the availability of supportive pretrial services instead of increased EM and other onerous conditions of release.

<sup>2</sup> “Bail Reform in Cook County: An Examination of General Order 18.8A and Bail in Felony Cases,” State of Illinois, Circuit Court of Cook County, Office of the Chief Judge (May 2019), available at: <http://www.cookcountycourt.org/HOME/BailReform.aspx>.



## About Chicago Community Bond Fund

Chicago Community Bond Fund (CCBF) was founded in November 2015 by a group of activists, attorneys, and community members to pay bond for people in Cook County that couldn't afford it themselves and to advocate for the end of money bond and pretrial incarceration altogether. Since then, CCBF has paid over \$1.250,000 in bond to free more than 250 people from Cook County Jail or house arrest with electronic monitoring.

[www.chicagobond.org](http://www.chicagobond.org)