As we at the W. Haywood Burns Institute close out 2017, we look back with deep reflection. We so appreciate the support of our partners, families, communities, and stakeholders in our relentless pursuit of justice and fairness.

Your support has enabled us to work against the forces of mass incarceration and outdated approaches to public safety. Every day we are re-imagining the delivery of justice with well-being as the preferred approach. As we continue to strategize towards the future, we are reminded of the deep impact our work has nationwide.
Highlights of Significant Wins in 2017

California’s SB190 Passes

SB 190, a bill co-sponsored by the Burns Institute, passed in the California legislature, ending the practice of charging administrative probation fees to youth and their families.

Before SB190, administrative probation fees were a common practice for most California counties and disproportionately saddled the families of youth of color with significant financial burdens.

The Community Justice Network for Youth’s Midwest Regional Conference

Over 30 participants representing 14 different organizations from throughout the northern Midwest joined together to strategize, share skills and best practices, and reignite relationships with one another.

This gathering, the first in five years, continued to build on the momentum that has been built up for the past decade and a half. We successfully saw the coming together of members new and old, strengthening the network as we continue to move our vision and strategic plan forward.

Juvenile Detention Alternatives Initiative (JDAI) Continues to Make Progress in Tribal Communities

The Mississippi Band of Choctaw Indians (MBCI) and Pueblos of Isleta (POI) have continued to push forward around what community alternatives can look like for tribal communities. As they ignite conversations around the inclusion of tribal culture and restorative approaches in the youth justice system, their solutions influence JDAI’s broader strategic thinking and serve as a model for detention alternatives.

Santa Clara County Commits to Focus on Impact on Youth of Color

Santa Clara County changed their workgroup names to reflect a commitment to specifically and intentionally focus on the impact of justice system decision making on youth of color. The County has recently drastically increased Deferred Entry of Judgement program success rates for youth of color: 75% of Latino youth completed the program successfully in 2016, up from 56% in 2013. Black youth saw a success rate of 100% in 2016, compared to 39% in 2013.

Additionally, the Burns Institute worked with Overfelt High School to perform a school engagement diagnostic, the results of which were a set of policy recommendations which have led to a 48% decrease in out of school suspensions and a 77% decrease in in-school suspensions.

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Sharing Our Data While Expanding Our Reach

The Burns Institute Data Map Now Reflects the Latest National Data

Following up from our launch in 2013, our interactive data map is now updated to reflect the latest national youth detention data from the Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention (OJJDP).

Although youth incarceration numbers have decreased by 56 percent since its peak in 1999, this newest update shows that deep racial and ethnic disparities persist:

Black youth are five times more likely to be incarcerated than White youth, while Latino and Native American youth are two and three times more likely, respectively.

Expanding into the Adult Sector with the Safety and Justice Challenge

As a partner in the John D. and Catherine T. MacArthur Foundation’s $100 million Safety and Justice Challenge to rethink justice systems and reduce jail populations in more than 40 jurisdictions across the nation, we continue to lead the Challenge’s racial and ethnic disparities work.

This year our leadership resulted in the Challenge requiring local jurisdictions to focus more intentionally on addressing racial and ethnic disparities and providing training to other partner organizations within the Challenge to support their local work. Further, our collaboration with the Foundation has helped the Challenge include more community voices in all aspects of the work.

In 2017, the Burns Institute

Collaborated with and Trained

- 845 justice system stakeholders
- 300 community stakeholders
- 250 child welfare system advocates and
- 100 philanthropic partners throughout
- 25 states and
- 2 tribal communities

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A Glimpse of the Work Ahead

Lessons learned from over 15 years of work on racial and ethnic disparities have energized our future approach. We are moving beyond traditional approaches of justice reform by engaging local partners to better understand the impact that structural racism has on the administration of justice.

This new approach will include families, communities and the full spectrum of those that practice and experience the administration of justice. We know that cross-sectoral and inter-disciplinary approaches must be used to examine income inequality, gentrification and other practices that increase disparities. We hope to begin sharing our BI methodology, tools and techniques through various trainings and shared learning opportunities across the country, in places both familiar and unexplored, all while accelerating our own learning in the process.
As the year comes to a close, we acknowledge the harm that the children, families and community members impacted by our nation’s use of incarceration have endured. It is for you and our collective communities that we do this important work and we hold ourselves accountable to you as we continue to fight for justice and fairness.

For all of you marching in the streets, strategizing in board rooms, or advocating for your communities, now more than ever we must join together in the relentless pursuit of justice, fairness, and equity.

For those capable of supporting us, please consider a donation to help strengthen our work.