

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Hillsborough County and the City of Tampa are putting far too many people of color in jail unnecessarily, while failing to follow best practices for reducing incarceration, promoting community safety and holding police accountable.

- **The Bicycling While Black scandal, and subsequent Department of Justice investigation, highlight the urgent need for a new approach to public safety and law enforcement that focuses on building trusted relationships with residents of all races, rather than treating whole communities with suspicion, profiling and aggressive policing. The best practices section of this report highlights principles of procedural justice and effective approaches to violence prevention that other cities and counties have adopted to promote safety and justice for all of their residents.**
- **The extraordinarily high number of people being locked up for long periods of time who are then never convicted of a crime points to the urgent need for Hillsborough to change its approach to pretrial release, including following the lead of forward-looking counties in eliminating cash bail and setting fees and fines based on ability to repay. County leaders need to commit to ending the practice of putting people behind bars simply because they are poor.**
- **Mass incarceration in Hillsborough County can be reversed if the State Attorney's Office adopts policies that other counties have used to divert people in need of drug treatment and mental health services out of the court system. It is important to make sure that diversion opportunities are made available to everyone who could benefit, regardless of race.**
- **The best practices section of this report also details a range of policies that local officials can follow to promote restorative justice in schools and keep young people from being entangled in the criminal justice system, and to promote the successful re-entry of formerly incarcerated returning citizens back into the community.**

State Attorney Mark Ober, Sheriff David Gee, Police Chief Eric Ward and city and county elected officials are responsible for the safety and wellbeing of all people in the county. But they have pursued policies that effectively criminalize Black and Latino communities.

Mass incarceration may be a national issue, but solving it requires sustained action in local communities. The good news is that there are tested research-based policies that other counties across the nation have adopted that have succeeded in reducing the number of people of color in

jail and under the supervision of the criminal justice system, while making communities safer and refocusing public resources on education, training, drug treatment and violence prevention. criminal justice system, while making communities safer and refocusing public resources on, jobs and job training, education, mental health and drug treatment and violence prevention.

- **Between 1985 and 2014 the per capita jail population in Hillsborough County increased by 45 percent.**
- **Blacks are 3.8 times more likely to be in jail in Hillsborough County than Whites.**
- **The number of women in Hillsborough County jails skyrocketed 383% between 1985 and 2014.**
- **In 2014, 78% of the inmates in Hillsborough County jails had not been convicted of any crime.**
- **21.4% of people who were in jail in Hillsborough County in 2014 served more than one week and 8.7% serving more than one month before being released without charges or found innocent.**
- **Between January 1, 2014 and August 30, 2015, Tampa police stopped 9,121 people on bicycles, 73 percent of whom were Black, even though the Black population of the city is just 26 percent.**

This report is a call for leadership. Elected law enforcement officials, in Hillsborough County, and across the United States, must choose whether to provide leadership to end mass incarceration and criminalization, or step aside, and let others lead.