



Background: Facts About Safe Surrender

Why is Safe Surrender Important?

People with outstanding arrest warrants often live off the grid, isolated from the broader community, for fear of being caught. Eliminating the fear of getting stopped for a routine traffic violation and consequently being incarcerated for an outstanding warrant can restore people to community life and avoid a variety of stress-related health problems, including depression, anxiety and substance abuse. Social determinants of health may also improve: ability to gain legal employment, file for public assistance, and access social services.

Safe Surrender will help lower Milwaukee's shamefully high incarceration rate by resolving outstanding issues proactively. The long-term health impact of keeping people out of jail and positively engaged in the community includes higher annual and household earnings, increased emotional and behavioral health and well-being, housing stability, family unity, and social cohesion.

Who is eligible for Safe Surrender?

Beginning in summer, 2015 MICA H will convene a Steering Committee comprised of MICA H leaders and pastors, and authorities from Milwaukee's criminal justice community. This group is responsible to decide exactly what offences will be eligible for Safe Surrender and what the penalty will be. Before the Safe Surrender event, it will be clearly publicized who can surrender and what they will have to do to adjudicate their offence. It will also be clear who should not show themselves because of risk of immediate arrest and/or incarceration.

How does this build the community?

A project director and six neighborhood team organizers will staff the Safe Surrender Project. They will direct a comprehensive outreach strategy, especially in the 53206 zip code, that includes door-to-door visitation, listening sessions, neighborhood leadership training, town hall meetings and coordination with MICA H's issue Task Forces. New relationships of trust and respect will be built between the community and law enforcement officials. Additionally, the Safe Surrender event will have a component that helps to access necessary housing, health care, training and employment services.

How can I help?

Volunteer! MICA H seeks volunteers for a variety of activities including community outreach, leadership development, publicity, setting up for meetings, baking cookies for events, and more! To volunteer, contact MICA H, [414-264-0805](tel:414-264-0805).