



CENTER FOR
INNOVATIVE PUBLIC POLICIES

Involvement of the Jail's Community and Stakeholders

In a 2019 survey of jail leaders - only 3% of respondents reported that the citizens whom they serve are knowledgeable about their jail; 45% reported citizens as somewhat knowledgeable; and 52% reported citizens are not at all knowledgeable. Very few jails have formal (or even informal) mechanisms to involve citizens in the jail's operation or have means to gain their support through, for example, advisory boards or councils. In this same survey, 90% of jails reported no formally established citizen advisory-only committee or group. With the public focus on accountability, transparency, trust-building and meaningful community involvement in the criminal justice system, how and why have jails been left so far behind? For more information on this survey and strategies to improve engagement of the community and stakeholders go to:

[http://www.cipp.org/uploads/3/7/5/7/37578255/consequences_of_the_invisible_jail_embracing_a_community...\[33192\].pdf](http://www.cipp.org/uploads/3/7/5/7/37578255/consequences_of_the_invisible_jail_embracing_a_community...[33192].pdf)

The absence of the public understanding of the jail's role and functions is a major impediment to achieving the jail's mission, vision and values, and an obstacle that should be addressed. The jail is part of the community, a component of the public health system and mental health services. Those in custody will return to the community. Jails operations require transparency. For more information on improving transparency of operations, to go:

[http://www.cipp.org/uploads/3/7/5/7/37578255/2021_ma_mccampbell_how_transparent_and_accountable_is_your_jail\[11135\].pdf](http://www.cipp.org/uploads/3/7/5/7/37578255/2021_ma_mccampbell_how_transparent_and_accountable_is_your_jail[11135].pdf)

Progress will be slow to address jails' needs – from staffing to inmate services -- without community involvement and support.