

# Missoula County Media Release

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Commissioner

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## **Missoula County Commissioner Rowley Named to National Justice, Public Safety Committee**

The National Association of Counties has named Missoula County Commissioner Nicole “Cola” Rowley to its Justice and Public Safety Policy Steering Committee.

As a committee member, Rowley will join county representatives from across the country to help inform NACo policy and advocacy on topics related to law enforcement, courts, corrections, homeland security, community crime prevention, juvenile justice and delinquency prevention, emergency management, fire prevention and control, and civil disturbances. She’ll also attend committee meetings in Washington, D.C., during NACo’s Legislative Conference in March and in Las Vegas at the Annual Conference in July.

Rowley has been engaged in criminal justice analysis and improvement since she took office in 2015, collaborating with county departments, partner jurisdictions, nonprofits and other agencies to address inequalities in local systems. Her efforts include:

- Partnering with Sheriff T.J. McDermott to apply for and receive a grant from the Policy Innovation Lab at the Sorensen Impact Center to study the feasibility of implementing a Pay for Success financing model to address overcrowding at the Missoula County Detention Facility.
- Engaging Missoula County in the Stepping Up Initiative, a national movement to reduce incarceration of mentally ill individuals. This included successfully applying to bring a team, which included staff from the Sheriff’s Office, County Attorney’s Office and the Western Montana Mental Health Center, to Washington, D.C., for planning and technical assistance to address the issue. Rowley was later invited to speak at the 2016 National Stepping Up Summit.
- Coordinating implementation of many recommendations in the city-county Jail Diversion Master Plan, adopted in 2016. Jail diversion efforts helped the county land two MacArthur Foundation grants in recent years: \$50,000 in 2017 for the Native Outreach Project to address over-incarceration of Native Americans, and \$700,000 in 2018 for the Safety and Justice Challenge, an over-arching, data-driven justice improvement effort.
- Facilitating formation of the Criminal Justice Coordinating Council, a collaborative, cross-jurisdictional governance structure that oversees more than two dozen justice system projects, services and initiatives in Missoula.
- Helping launch the Kindness, Elegance and Love Project (KELP), a novel collaborative effort at Partnership Health Center that aims to more effectively funnel parents involved in dependent-neglect cases to appropriate services and support. The project was one of four in the country

selected for NACo's Cross-Systems Partnerships Leadership Lab, which helps counties improve the social, health and economic outcomes of populations involved in the justice system.

"Missoula County has been a leader in the state when it comes to criminal justice reform, and it's rewarding to know the hard work of so many people will now spur discussion and strategy at a higher level," Rowley said. "I'm excited for this opportunity to continue to expand my knowledge on innovative, evidence-based best practices and be involved in justice systems policy nationally."

For more information, call Rowley at 406-258-4877 or email [nrowley@missoulacounty.us](mailto:nrowley@missoulacounty.us).

More details on the Justice and Public Safety Steering Committee are online at <https://www.naco.org/advocacy/policies-and-committees/justice-public-safety-steering-committee>.

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