

The Orange County Bail/Bond Justice Project is a group of faith-based communities, that believe how much money a person has shouldn't determine if they sit in jail. Bearing witness, seeking justice, and compassion for the poor are all tenets of our faith communities, and it is important to add our moral support to efforts of bail reform in Orange County.

The Bail/Bond Justice Project has two overarching goals: **Change unjust practices** in setting bail in Orange County and **Provide direct support** to those being impacted by the bail system.

## FAQs

### Why is this effort needed?

Cash bail and pre-trial detention unjustly penalizes people who are poor, and especially impacts people of color. Defendants are held in jail in pre-trial status: they have not been convicted of a crime but will not be released until they pay bail or post a bond. In 2018, approximately 1,000 people in Orange County were detained pre-trial because they could not afford to pay bail.

### Why don't you focus on changing unjust bail practices in other areas of North Carolina?

County and District Courts have substantial discretion to enact local bail reform. In fact, local bail reform is driving efforts of state-wide reform in the NC General Assembly. We've seen reform efforts in Orange County, but more progress is needed.

### Will we be letting out dangerous people?

The Orange County Bail Fund only assists defendants with a bail of \$3,000 or less, which generally covers charges involving misdemeanors and low-level felonies. Examples include open container violation, larceny, trespass, resisting arrest, drug possession or drug paraphernalia, assault, injury to real property, and breaking and entering. Domestic violence cases are treated specially on a case-by-case basis by the Court and by the Bail Fund. The Orange County Pretrial Release Services Program conducts a risk assessment of the defendants evaluating whether the individual, if released, poses (1) a danger to the community or an individual or (2) a risk of not returning to court. Based on this risk assessment, the Program makes a recommendation to release or detain the individual. We will be relying heavily on recommendations for release when available and can do our own risk assessment when not available.

### Will Bail/Bond be posted illegal/undocumented residents who are arrested and need help posting bail?

Yes. If they meet the criteria for consideration, they would be eligible.

### If people are released pre-trial without having to pay bail, will they return to court?

Several studies have shown that pre-trial release does not increase the incidence of failure to appear in court

### Who will be eligible to get assistance from the Orange County Bail Fund?

The basic requirements are: Bail of \$3,000 or less, Must live in Orange County, The person has no hold that would preclude their release, The person has no recent history of multiple failures to appear in court, and contact information where we can call or text court reminders and provide support.

**How can we help?** A few of our members have participated in court observation, project logistics, advisors and are board members of the initiative. As a community partner in the initiative, we have set a Kehillah fundraising goal of \$18,000. We have a couple anonymous donors who have pledged to donate \$50.00 on any contribution of \$25.00 or more for the first 100 donors. Donations can be made directly to the Kehillah by check or on the website.

Contact Lee Nackman [Lee@nackman.com](mailto:Lee@nackman.com) for further information. For volunteer opportunities with Orange County Bail/Bond Fund contact or Cary Keithley [cnbyrd6969@gmail.com](mailto:cnbyrd6969@gmail.com).

For more information, links to the studies mentioned and the 2019 Court Observation Report is available on the website at [www.ocbailbondjustice.org](http://www.ocbailbondjustice.org)