

# Criminal Justice Fast Facts

Too many adults are being arrested and branded for life for minor offenses.

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## Basic information

In 2019, Polk County arrested just over 18,000 individuals for misdemeanor crimes.

This is a higher rate than many of our neighboring counties, both by actual number and percentage of population.



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## Important Facts

1.

In 2019, only 120 adults received a pre-arrest diversion and avoided a life-long record. This program requires restitution and community service, but avoids fines and fees that come with arrests and court dates. However, there is no current process for ensuring equal access to the program.

2.

Across agencies and different crimes, there is a clear trend of over-policing Black citizens in our county, resulting in a pattern that makes arrest 2-3 times more likely if you are Black.

3.

Driving on a suspended license charges represent one out of every five arrests that happen in Polk County. This combined with other driving related offenses amounts to 8,000 people, or 37% of all misdemeanor arrests. These offenses are currently not eligible for pre-arrest diversion.

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## Our Solution

We don't want people's lives to be ruined because they were poor, had paperwork problems, or committed a minor offense. PEACE wants a screening process at the jail to track and offer non-arrest diversions to all those who are eligible. We also want all driving related offenses included. (\*see page 2)

## The Challenge

Although this program is already in place, it is not well utilized. Nearly half of all arrests were carried out by the Polk County Sheriff's Department. PEACE has sought a meeting with the Sheriff through multiple channels, but he has ignored all requests.



We don't want people's lives ruined because they are poor. We don't want them to be put in jail, lose their job, incur unnecessary debt, or be separated from family because of a first-time, non-violent, minor offense.

People in Polk County often need to drive to work, school, and church -- people can't currently depend on public transportation to get to their jobs or doctor's appointments. Offenders will still be held accountable but not branded for life.

Show up on March 29th @ 7 PM

Silvermoon Drive-In Theatre

Your presence sends a powerful message to leaders in our community that something needs to be done about the criminalization of poverty.

\*We want all driving related offenses except: DUIs, Reckless driving, Leaving the scene of an accident, and driving with a license suspended for habitual traffic offenders or DUI suspension. If they were driving while license was suspended because of unpaid fines or fees (D6 suspension), then they should be eligible for a non-arrest diversion