

DATA-DRIVEN JUSTICE

KEY STAKEHOLDERS: COURTS AND PROBATION



Data Driven Justice (DDJ) is a project of the National Association of Counties that supports local jurisdictions in using data to better align resources to respond to people in crisis, particularly those who are frequent utilizers of justice, health and human services systems. This brief is one in a series outlining different roles and duties in establishing and maintaining DDJ in communities as outlined in the [Data Driven Justice Playbook](#).

This brief is for **OFFICERS AND STAFF OF THE COURT AND PROBATION SYSTEMS** - positions such as prosecutors, public defenders, probation and pretrial officers, court administrators and judges who have first-hand knowledge of the challenges faced by people with mental illnesses and/or substance use disorders who come in contact with the criminal justice system. These stakeholders are crucial to helping ensure people are served by the appropriate systems through diversion and access to services after release from jail, promoting greater transparency and accountability throughout the judicial process and advocating for deeper systems change. Below are some ways that courts and probation leaders can support your community's Data-Driven Justice efforts.



BUILDING STAKEHOLDER CONSENSUS

- Attend and actively participate in regularly scheduled stakeholder meetings.
- Contribute to the development of a shared vision for improving outcomes for frequent utilizers.

UNDERSTAND THE PEOPLE YOU HOPE TO SERVE

- Review available court and probation data to understand which data are available for potential sharing and/or integration. These data will likely come from multiple systems.
- Identify and share the key characteristics of the frequent utilizers you have identified to develop a common definition of frequent utilizers across systems.
- Collaborate with partners to create definitions of race across systems to better track and report on racial disparities.

In Prince George's County, Md., probation and supervision agencies partnered with the Department of Mental Health and local health departments to share resources and train local probation staff on medication-assisted treatment and how to effectively document observations for appropriate treatment planning and referrals. Read Prince George's County's case study [here](#).

- Participate in cross-system trainings with other criminal justice stakeholders and local behavioral health professionals to increase awareness of the needs of people with mental illness and/or substance use disorders and educate your peers on your roles and responsibilities.
- Consider creating specialized probation and/or court caseloads or dockets in partnership with local behavioral health and social services providers to meet the treatment and services needs of frequent utilizers.

ESTABLISH A FRAMEWORK FOR DATA GOVERNANCE

- Sign agreements (e.g., MOUs) to formalize data-sharing relationships with other stakeholders.
- Work with cross-sector partners to create a standard release of information form to help with sharing individual client information.

CONDUCT A RESOURCE SCAN AND IDENTIFY GAPS IN SERVICES AND TREATMENT

- Participate in your community's systems mapping exercise (e.g., Sequential Intercept Mapping) to help identify availability and gaps in services, resources and processes.
- Offer access to your data systems to support the integration of data across multiple systems, gaining a better understanding of where service gaps and pressure points exist.

BUILD CONTINUAL DATA USE AND INFORMATION SHARING INTO CROSS-SYSTEM ORGANIZATIONAL OPERATIONS AND POLICY DISCUSSIONS

- Continually review and share data to identify and track frequent utilizers of systems.
- Engage with mayors, city councils and county commissions, as well as criminal justice and behavioral health leaders, to explore policy reform and funding for data integration and treatment and services for frequent utilizers.
- Participate in opportunities to educate the public and leaders on current court and probation opportunities to serve frequent utilizers and support effective policies and ordinances.
- Establish collaborative relationships with cross-sector working groups and engage in local criminal justice task forces and/or subcommittees focused on serving people with mental illnesses and/or substance use disorders.
- Look for opportunities, such as conferences and panel presentations, where your community's work can be featured and highlighted.

This issue brief was created with support from Arnold Ventures as part of Data-Driven Justice, a project that aims to support local jurisdictions in using data to better align resources to respond to people who are frequent utilizers of justice, health and human services systems. For additional resources on implementing Data Driven Justice (DDJ), please refer to the [Data Driven Justice Website](#).