

## PHILADELPHIA, PENNSYLVANIA



POPULATION:  
**1,526,006<sup>1</sup>**

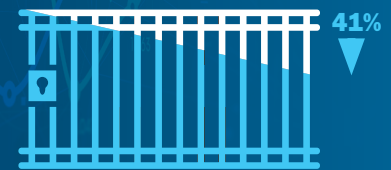
## BACKGROUND

Philadelphia formed its Criminal Justice Advisory Board (CJAB) in 2008 as a collaborative council composed of local criminal justice and social services stakeholders. By conducting periodic system assessments and developing performance indicators to determine progress in meeting collective goals, CJAB members use their program and policy expertise to take a systematic approach to addressing a broad range of criminal justice issues.

Among the CJAB's successes, recent collaborative efforts among criminal justice, health and community partners have led to better use of data and the implementation of innovative practices to reduce Philadelphia's jail population. In just a few short years, Philadelphia successfully reduced its jail population by roughly 41 percent (from 8,082 in July 2015 to approximately 4,700 as of February 2020).<sup>2)</sup>

Collaboration and coordinated efforts among CJAB members have not only helped drive down Philadelphia's jail population, but also helped shift the culture within local agencies around data collection and usage. This case study highlights some of the initiatives and practices that Philadelphia has implemented to better coordinate, evaluate and share its criminal justice data to serve vulnerable residents.

**PHILADELPHIA SUCCESSFULLY  
REDUCED ITS JAIL POPULATION  
BY ROUGHLY 41 PERCENT**  
(FROM JULY 2015 TO FEBRUARY 2020)



## DEVELOPING ROBUST DATA SYSTEMS

Through its participation in Data-Driven Justice (DDJ) and other national initiatives, Philadelphia has implemented key information-sharing projects and platforms to effectively address the needs of frequent utilizers of health, human services and justice systems and improve outcomes across agencies.<sup>3)</sup>

In 2016, the CJAB began the development of a robust information-sharing framework with the execution of a memorandum of understanding (MOU) outlining clear parameters around the exchange and external reporting of data between local agencies and an overall shift in priorities across agencies to one of analysis, collaboration and a focus on outcomes over process. The framework was an integral start to improving coordination among disparate system actors and developing tools to facilitate the sharing and integration of information and data.

In addition, Philadelphia has put significant emphasis on building and expanding data capacity through the formation of an interagency data team led by the First Judicial District. In 2018, this data team started producing monthly reports on the jail population and a public-facing dashboard with performance measures. These

tools are designed to give practitioners and policymakers a clear understanding of Philadelphia's jail population at any given time. The dashboard also provides disaggregated data that highlights critical information about racial and ethnic disparities, length of stay and serious mental illness (SMI) status.<sup>4)</sup>

**Philadelphia's jail data dashboard provides  
monthly reports with critical information on  
racial and ethnic disparities, length of stay  
and serious mental illness.**

Efforts to standardize language, improve data usability and create systems that make shared information accessible and usable to multiple audiences have allowed Philadelphia's leaders to become better-informed decision makers and helped drive a steady reduction in the jail population.

# CREATING PROCESSES TO UNDERSTAND SYSTEMS USERS

Philadelphia's Department of Behavioral Health and Intellectual disAbility Services (DBHIDS) has implemented innovative data-management strategies to address a large volume of individual-level information that exists across a wide network of partners.

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**The “golden record” provides a single reference showing a person’s touch points across behavioral health and emergency systems, making it easier to identify and serve frequent utilizers.**

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A frequent challenge with sharing data and information is having multiple records for the same person without a unique identifier. DBHIDS developed an automated process to better assess whether information from two distinct data sources references a single unique individual, allowing practitioners to automatically link the information together to create that individual's “golden record.” This record provides a clear understanding of a person's touch points across different behavioral health and emergency systems and gives experts the ability to match data from different sources to an individual when predefined criteria are met.

This approach increases the reliability of information related to transactions and provides practitioners and decision makers with datasets that can be easily integrated and synthesized. The end result is a data management system that emphasizes data reusability, not just data sharing. In practice, this system allows DBHIDS to evaluate an individuals' history of system interaction to assess patterns, identify frequent utilizers and make decisions about the most appropriate services or interventions.<sup>5</sup>

*This case study 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.*

In conjunction with these efforts, DBHIDS established an internal system to analyze and evaluate justice initiatives through a process called Forensic 360. The process gives data analysts a “360 degree” view of a person's involvement with justice and health systems, allowing for a deeper exploration of an individuals' experience with incarceration, treatment and more.

Forensic 360 provides analysts the ability to survey thousands of individual records in a repeatable and reliable manner, identify baseline data and develop comparison cohorts for better evaluation and measurement. With this process, analysts are able to more efficiently and accurately understand the impact of services and programs.

An added component of Forensic 360 is that it gives the ability to customize data for specific audiences and limit access based on the end users' specific needs. This feature to refine and limit access to available datasets helps DBHIDS and partner agencies mitigate privacy concerns. Data requests that fall outside of original scopes of work require new executive and legal approval, making Forensic 360 a powerful tool to help facilitate improved coordination and streamlining of future data-sharing agreements and ensure legal compliance.

DBHIDS plays an important role in advancing and sustaining the health and wellbeing of Philadelphia residents. The creation and use of data-integration systems provide a foundation for DBHIDS to reflect on service delivery and continuously make improvements in service quality. This sound approach to data governance, which involves decision makers, subject matter experts and IT professionals alike, is driven by a culture of collaboration and shared vision that guides organizational goals and outcomes.

<sup>1</sup> 2010 Census

<sup>2</sup> Philadelphia's Jail Population February 2020. First Judicial District of Pennsylvania, Department of Research and Development. <https://www.phila.gov/media/20200327135810/Philadelphia-jail-population-Piktochart-report-Feb-2020.pdf>.

<sup>3</sup> Philadelphia participates in other national initiatives, including Stepping Up and the MacArthur Foundation's Safety and Justice Challenge.

<sup>4</sup> Philadelphia Jail Population Snapshot. City of Philadelphia. <https://www.phila.gov/documents/philadelphia-jail-population-snapshot-reports/>.

<sup>5</sup> Data Governance Framework Strategic Plan. December 2018. City of Philadelphia, Department of Behavioral Health and Intellectual disAbility Services. <https://dbhids.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/02/DBHIDS-DG-Framework-Strategic-Plan-v2.03.pdf>.