



NEWS RELEASE

Advancing Innovation and Transparency

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE - February 15, 2023

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NEW REPORTS, MORE DISTRICT ATTORNEYS' OFFICES GROW COLORADO'S FIRST-IN-THE-NATION EFFORT TO REDUCE RACIAL DISPARITIES IN THE CRIMINAL JUSTICE SYSTEM

Denver - A series of new reports provide Colorado District Attorneys' Offices with a more in-depth understanding of racial and ethnic differences in their prosecution processes. The reports were developed through the [Colorado Prosecutorial Dashboards project](#). It follows the pilot phase of the project in which [eight Colorado District Attorneys' Offices](#) developed publicly-available data dashboards to promote more effective, just, and transparent decision-making in prosecution.

Across the eight District Attorneys' Offices that participated in the pilot project, the new reports offer a deeper dive into key points of discretion to understand whether there are differences in outcomes across individuals of different races/ethnicities.

Overall, results show evidence of disproportionality, meaning that more Hispanic and Black individuals were arrested than expected, given the population. The reports also show some evidence of disparity at points of prosecutorial discretion throughout the criminal justice process, for example:

- A greater percentage of cases involving Black individuals were dismissed or had their charges reduced.
- A greater percentage of cases involving Hispanic individuals resulted in a guilty plea.
- In some jurisdictions, a greater percentage of cases involving Hispanic or Native American individuals were sentenced to incarceration.

Information from the new reports has been added to the dashboards of the initial eight participating Judicial Districts ([available here](#); also see below for quotes from District Attorney's about this new information).

Since the initial data dashboards launched last September, [five additional Judicial Districts have joined](#): the 3rd, 10th, 12th, 17th, and 21st. Collectively, these 13 Judicial Districts represent over half of the counties in Colorado (35) and 75% of the state's population. The remaining districts will have a continuing opportunity to create data dashboards as the project transitions to the [Colorado District Attorneys' Council](#) for ongoing management this fall.

Colorado is the first state in the country to have multiple prosecutors' offices working together to provide this type of in-depth data. This bipartisan effort helps Offices identify and prioritize actions that can be taken at points of prosecutorial discretion to make sure defendants and victims are treated fairly.

Elected DAs shared the following reflections:

**1st Judicial District
Attorney Alexis King**

“Colorado District Attorneys’ commitment to transparency and equity is demonstrated through the release of the recently completed disparities analysis, which allows us to move beyond data and into meaningful action. In the 1st Judicial District, we’re taking proactive steps to ensure our practices reflect our values by partnering with The Equity Project and Dr. Mosby-Tyler, to develop an equity lens for key decision points in case evaluation and resolution.”

**18th Judicial District
Attorney John Kellner**

“These new additions to our data dashboard project help bolster our ongoing commitment of being transparent, open, and honest with our community. We recognize the importance of monitoring disparities in the criminal justice system and increasing prosecutorial transparency and accountability. This project helps us identify potential disparities so we can take action in addressing them and ensure fair treatment for all victims and defendants.”

**8th Judicial District
Attorney Gordon McLaughlin**

“Continued analysis and action surrounding disparities in the criminal justice system is an undertaking we are committed to. We volunteered for this project because we believe in transparency and data-based decision-making. Since the dashboard release in September, we have taken significant steps to begin to address disparities in our data, including office-wide anti-racism training provided by the Boulder YWCA, educating other criminal justice stakeholders, and the further expansion of our diversionary programs.”

**21st Judicial District
Attorney Dan Rubinstein**

“Transparency is a guiding principle at the root of everything I believe a District Attorney’s Office should embody. We make important decisions every day, and need data like this to assure we avoid the possibility of unconscious bias affecting our decisions. It is my duty to make sure that, as an accountable government agency, our community has the ability to ask us tough questions to make sure we are doing the job they elected us to do with the highest ethical standards.”

**Boulder District Attorney
Michael Dougherty**

“Our office is committed to this important and transformative work. Colorado is moving to become the first state to embrace data dashboards for all the District Attorney’s Offices. Together, we are working hard to build a more transparent and equitable justice system for victims and defendants. The data continues to inform the concrete action steps already underway with the expansion of our diversion programs, screening of cases coming into the office, and our ongoing collaboration with other criminal justice partners. I am glad that Colorado is on the forefront of this critical work.”

**Denver District Attorney
Beth McCann**

“It’s wonderful that five new jurisdictions are participating in this first-of-its-kind project and providing even more data. Even with the inclusion of the additional data, the results mirror the findings from the two race and justice studies we undertook with the Colorado Evaluation and Action Lab. Although we constantly monitor our data, as a system, we can and should do better to ensure equity.”

**5th Judicial District
Attorney Heidi McCollum**

“The data dashboard and this disparity report not only provide more transparency to anyone who wants to see how certain types of crimes are being charged or resolved by my office, but it will also allow us to see how we are doing as prosecutors on behalf of our communities. With this data, we can begin to determine not only how equitable and fair the outcomes are in cases across the district, but also help identify areas of improvement that can be implemented for attorneys and staff to improve case management and thus equity and fairness in dispositions. This information allows us to appropriately respond by identifying needed training or policy updates so that we can ensure the right outcome for every case.”

The project is a collaborative effort between the [Colorado Evaluation and Action Lab](#) at the University of Denver, the [Center for Criminal Justice](#) at Loyola University Chicago, the national [Prosecutorial Performance Indicators Project](#), and the [Colorado District Attorneys’ Council](#). The project was funded with a grant from the [Microsoft Justice Reform Initiative](#).

To learn more, contact Dr. Lauren Gase at the Colorado Evaluation and Action Lab, lauren@coloradolab.org.

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Colorado Evaluation and Action Lab at the University of Denver is a statewide policy lab created in 2017 under the leadership of the Governor’s Office. It brings together data analysts and social scientists with a broad range of government and community partners to create data-informed solutions to our most pressing social problems.

Prosecutorial Performance Indicators project was launched in 2017 by researchers from Loyola University of Chicago and Florida International University with funding from the John D. and Catherine T. MacArthur Foundation’s Safety and Justice Challenge. A dashboard of 55 indicators has been created to assess prosecutorial progress on efficiency, community safety, and fairness.

Microsoft Justice Reform Initiative is applying the technology and expertise of Microsoft to accelerate the impact of justice reform organizations and nonprofits.

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