

Welcome back! In this newsletter we're sharing information and updates on the steps our pilot sites are taking to lay the groundwork for the development of their prosecutorial dashboards. We provide an example of the data review process and identify ideas for improving data quality. We then describe some community engagement strategies and how they add value to this work.

The Colorado Prosecutorial Dashboards Project

The **Colorado Evaluation and Action Lab** (Colorado Lab) and the national **Prosecutorial Performance Indicators** are working with **eight judicial districts in Colorado** to develop data dashboards to assist district attorneys' offices with tracking progress toward greater efficiency, effectiveness, and fairness. Following this initial phase, we will develop tools and infrastructure to scale use of the dashboards statewide.



We welcome feedback and input. Our hope is that your questions and ideas will strengthen the work of pilot sites, and that staff in jurisdictions across the state will learn along the way as the work of the pilot sites progresses. Reach out any time to Jo Beletic at the Colorado Lab (joanna@coloradolab.org)

Developing a Data Dashboard

Dashboards are designed to examine the work of the prosecutor's office as a whole. They take data from the Case Management System (in Colorado, the Action system) and display it visually so it is easier to see and understand.

Each pilot site has started visualizing their data. The dashboards are supporting sites in understanding trends in key office processes, including:

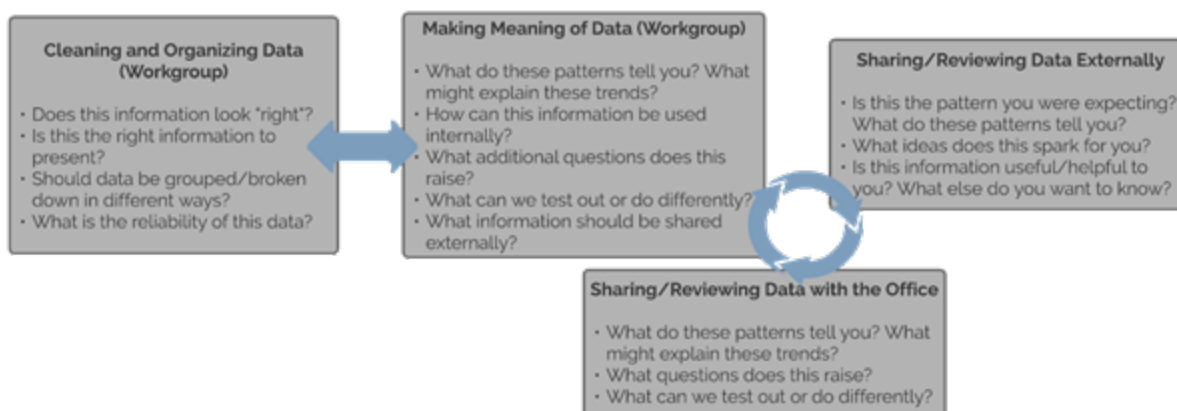
- The number and types of **cases filed**, categorized by offense type.
- The ways that **cases were resolved**, categorized as dismissed, deferred, plead guilty, acquitted, or found guilty.
- The top **sentence imposed** for guilty cases, categorized as Department of Corrections, youth corrections, Community Corrections, jail, probation with jail, probation, credit for time served, or fine/fees/community service.

The workgroups have identified ways to make this information more valuable, including adding case filters. Filters can support workgroups in "zooming in" on certain types of cases or comparing trends for different groups. Currently, case filings, resolutions, and sentences can be filtered by: (1) top charge, (2) whether it was a violent crime (see box below), (3) whether the crime is covered by the Victim Rights Act, (4) defendant characteristics, (5) and county.

The pilot sites have agreed to a cross-site definition for **Violent Crime**.
Check it out here and let us know what you think!

Additionally, each pilot site has started examining a handful of the Prosecutorial Performance Indicators, selected from the national **menu of 55 data elements**. Each dashboard will contain the indicators that the workgroup has prioritized, based on relevance (what data is useful to examine) and feasibility (what data is available and reliable). In case you missed it, check out this **tool** that offices can use to help identify high priority indicators.

The Colorado Lab is using a structured process to support offices in reviewing and making meaning of their data. This process starts by making sure that the data being displayed are accurate and reliable. Workgroups then move to making meaning of the data—considering what the patterns or trends tell them and identifying what questions the data raise. This leads to sharing and making meaning of data both internally and externally.



Improving Data Reliability

The dashboards will only be as good as their underlying data. Improving data collection efforts is essential for having information that can be trusted and useful. For this project, we have identified four primary strategies to improve data quality:

1. Develop standardized practices within and across offices to enhance data reliability and operational efficiency.
2. Develop standardized definitions/categories that can be used across offices to enhance transparency and clarity.
3. Enhance data sharing across systems (e.g., courts, law enforcement) to increase access to relevant information.
4. Augment the Action system to improve data collection and streamline workflow.

As part of the first strategy, the pilot sites have begun developing internal guidance to support more standardized data collection. We have developed draft guidance in two areas:

- **No File Guidelines** have been created to allow offices to gather a more comprehensive picture of the number and types of felonies that are referred to the office, but declined.
- **Deferred Judgment Guidelines** have been created to help offices identify how many cases are being granted deferred judgment, why deferred judgments are being offered, and whether deferred judgment conditions are met.

Review the draft guidelines and reach out to Jo (joanna@coloradolab.org) with any feedback on what it may take for your office to implement these practices.

The Colorado District Attorneys' Council is a key partner in efforts to augment Action to improve data collection and operational efficiency. The pilot sites are actively working to prioritize potential modifications that can support future iterations of the dashboards.

Effective Community Engagement Strategies

Meaningful interaction with the community is important so that prosecutors understand community concerns and priorities, the dashboards contain information that is useful and relevant to the community, and marginalized communities—who are often overlooked and/or do not have access to power—have a voice in what justice looks like.

Explore our **Community Engagement Toolkit** to learn more about the goals of community engagement and how to conduct outreach that is meaningful and sustainable.

Over the past few months, each of the pilot sites has implemented a variety of strategies to engage the community. On May 3, 2022, the 1st, 2nd, 18th, and 20th judicial districts participated in a Denver metro area community listening session to understand the public's thoughts and concerns around the role of prosecutors in Colorado. The session was moderated by Dr. Lauren Gase (Colorado Lab) and Melba Pearson, Esq. (Prosecutorial Performance Indicators). Over 50 individuals participated and provided thoughts on how the prosecutor's office can best serve the community, areas of work the community wants to know more about, and how the prosecutor's office can better engage the community in its work.

Examples of other strategies offices have used include:

- Cataloging where office staff have connections to various communities/populations to use as an entrance point for engagement and to identify which populations are not currently being reached.
- Distributing a community input survey to solicit the public's feedback on what data should be tracked and shared.
- Attending established meetings, such as formal advisory groups, town halls, and city council meetings to understand community concerns and priorities.

Each pilot site developed a **Community Engagement Action Plan** to identify and track strategies. You can review and use our **action plan tool** in your office to help guide community engagement work.



“ Everything we do is on behalf of the People of Denver. Understanding what community members want to know about our work and then tailoring our dashboard to reflect their most important issues and concerns is not only the right thing to do, it's one way we hope to earn the public's trust and support.
– Beth McCann, Denver District Attorney



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