

Issue 7: May 2023

Since the February 2023 release of the disparity analyses, the pilot District Attorneys' (DA) Offices have regrouped to discuss strategies to address racial/ethnic disparities at points of prosecutorial discretion. During this same period, the five new DA Offices that joined Phase 2 of the project have begun to review and make meaning of their data. In this newsletter, we discuss how the work continues to build. Phase 2 Offices will release their dashboards in July. Stay tuned!

The Colorado Prosecutorial Dashboards Project

The **Colorado Evaluation and Action Lab** (Colorado Lab) and the national **Prosecutorial Performance Indicators** are working with **judicial districts across Colorado** to develop data dashboards to assist DAs' Offices with tracking progress toward greater efficiency, effectiveness, and fairness.

In September 2022, the eight pilot sites developed **publicly-available data dashboards** to promote more effective, just, and transparent decision-making in prosecution. Currently, in Phase 2, we are developing the tools and infrastructure to scale use of the dashboards statewide.



Actionable Strategies to Address Racial/Ethnic Disparities

As discussed in the **previous newsletter**, in February, each pilot DA Office released an interactive **disparity report**. **Media coverage** discussed how the reports helped DA Offices better understand differences and identify strategies to ensure defendants and victims are treated fairly. A recent CPR News **article** shows how justice system actors are taking action on the results detailed in the analyses, particularly with an aim to better understand why Latinos plead guilty more often.

In late February, the pilot DA Offices convened to reflect on key results from the reports and discuss what strategies they were planning to test locally. They identified four cross-cutting strategies:

1. Hosting targeted community conversations to interpret and act on data.
2. Revisiting deferred judgment and diversion eligibility criteria to identify opportunities for program expansion.
3. Exploring opportunities for plea guidelines or prosecutorial checklists.
4. Collaborating with justice partners for systemic change.

Let us know if you or a community partner you know would like to discuss results! Contact Jo Beletic at joanna@coloradolab.org.

More information about each of these four strategies, including suggestions on how to implement each one, is synthesized in this [2-page brief](#).



“ The disparity analysis portion of the Prosecutorial Dashboards project has been a real eye opener. We have identified that cultural differences are having a significant impact on disparities between our White and Hispanic community members. To that end, we are working with the CIRCLE GROUP to obtain cultural diversity and disparity training and awareness in order to gain a greater understanding of the disparities we have identified and how they can be addressed to achieve more equitable decision-making and outcomes.

– Seth Ryan, District Attorney 7th Judicial District ”

Sharing Results with Stakeholders

On May 9th, Dr. Lauren Gase (Colorado Lab) joined Alexis King (District Attorney, Colorado First Judicial District), Angela J. Davis (Distinguished Professor of Law, American University Washington College of Law), and Joyce Akhahenda (Chief Deputy, Colorado State Public Defender) to present on *Racial Disparities in the Criminal Justice System* at the Colorado Bar Association **Criminal Law Spring Update**. The Update, which focused on race and implicit bias as it impacts the criminal justice system and our communities, was a great opportunity to connect with stakeholders.

Let us know if you are an interested stakeholder and would like to discuss results! Contact Jo Beletic at joanna@coloradolab.org.

The Five Phase 2 Offices Start Reviewing their Data

In April, the **five Phase 2 DA Offices** convened with project staff, mentors from the pilot sites, and staff from the Colorado District Attorneys' Council to dive into their draft dashboards and identify next steps for fostering a data culture.



“ Coloradans should be proud that their District Attorneys are committed to transparency and data-driven decision-making as part of this first-of-its-kind partnership with the Colorado Evaluation and Action Lab at the University of Denver. The PPI Data Dashboards will enhance the work of the prosecutor's office and will establish a model that DAs' Offices across the country will follow. I am thrilled that my office is a part of this trailblazing project, and I am looking forward to the release of our public-facing Data Dashboard in the coming weeks.

– Brian Mason, District Attorney 17th Judicial District ”

Currently, the Phase 2 Offices are focusing project efforts in the following four work areas.

Work Area	Example of Responsibilities
Area 1: Review, make meaning of, and use data internally	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Gain understanding of office priorities, practices, and culture• Identify potential facilitators and barriers to use of the dashboard within the Office• Review dashboard to make meaning of information and identify additional questions• Develop core messages and strategies to communicate work within the Office• Serve as “champions” and foster a data-driven office culture• Develop a plan to support sustainability

Area 2: Engage in two-way dialogue with the community	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop a plan to engage community members and stakeholders so that the dashboard is useful and relevant • Support dashboard rollout to the community • Review community feedback to support ongoing work
Area 3: Improve data collection and quality	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identify challenges with data availability or quality • Develop processes to improve data quality • Develop recommendations for improvements
Area 4: Maintain dashboard content	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Select what to share publicly • Write language to help the public understand how the Office is interpreting the data • Write data stories

As shared in our previous newsletter, the [Colorado Prosecutorial Dashboards Implementation Toolkit](#) is a central resource for this work and further details these work areas.

We welcome feedback and input. Our hope is that your questions and ideas will strengthen this work. Reach out any time to Jo Beletic at the Colorado Lab (joanna@coloradolab.org)

In case you missed it, our previous newsletters can be found [here](#).



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