

In Ohio, as across the nation, state and local elected officials, agency leaders, and other vital stakeholders are often forced to make important criminal justice policy and budget decisions without timely, accurate data. While individual agencies collect and utilize case-level data in their everyday operations, aggregate-level data that is released to, or shared with, local and state policymakers is generally siloed, stale, scattered, or buried deep in lengthy reports that hinder leaders' ability to use those data to inform their policy and budget decisions.

Justice Counts is a new national initiative that provides tools and resources to make it easier to organize and understand data and tell the story of the work behind those data. The initiative is funded and co-led by the US Department of Justice's Bureau of Justice Assistance in concert with the Council of State Governments (CSG) Justice Center. Justice Counts is backed by a coalition of 21 national partners, including associations of criminal justice stakeholders, researchers, technical assistance providers and more. This coalition represents a wide cross-section of the criminal justice system, including the National Association of Counties Research Foundation, National Association of State Budget Officers, National Sheriffs' Association, Correctional Leaders Association, International Association of Chiefs of Police and more, listed in the full [here](#).

Justice Counts provides participating states and agencies:

- A. **Consensus-driven metrics** for agencies in seven sectors of the criminal justice system: Law Enforcement, Prosecution, Defense, Courts & Pretrial Operations, Jails, Prisons, and Community Supervision. Crafted by leaders and practitioners within each sector, the metrics are designed to be both useful to policymakers and agency leaders as well as feasible for agencies—even those lacking data capacity—to complete. The metrics are also flexible, allowing participating agencies to detail how they define key terms and track relevant data, even if those definitions or methods differ from other agencies.*
- B. An **advanced digital infrastructure** that hosts the aggregate data and key contextual information about each participating state or agency. Participating agencies will enter their data/metrics into this cloud-based platform, which will then use those data/metrics to power user-friendly visualizations, allow for comparison to other agencies within each sector, and provide a high-level picture of a state's criminal justice for policymakers, agency leaders, and the public.*
- C. **Direct, hands-on assistance** from Justice Counts staff to implement this approach. Through the Founding State program, participating states and agencies will receive direct assistance from staff at the CSG Justice Center and other Justice Counts partners to plan and implement a statewide approach, leverage data already flowing from local to state agencies, and more.*

*Ohio has an opportunity to become a "**Founding State**" and receive intensive assistance to help state and local agencies adopt Justice Counts. Justice Counts is seeking to enroll 10 states before the end of 2022 so our time to act is limited. Becoming a Founding State would provide Arkansas leaders and stakeholders with: (A) early access to the digital infrastructure and the ability to provide feedback in the design process to ensure it as user-friendly as possible, meeting agency needs and enabling easy sharing of Justice Counts metrics; (B) hands-on support to convene, engage and onboard at least one agency from each of the seven Justice Counts sectors into the digital infrastructure; and (C) direct support for policymakers to*

understand and effectively use the metrics to drive policy and budget decisions. Interested participants can learn more via the website (<https://justicecounts.csgjusticecenter.org>) or by requesting a briefing or presentation through the website or by emailing justicecounts@csg.org.