

Measures for Justice Launches Groundbreaking Data Portal that Brings New Transparency to Local Criminal Justice Systems in Pennsylvania

ROCHESTER, NY – May 23, 2017 – Measures for Justice (MFJ) released a Data Portal that tracks how criminal cases are being handled at the county level from arrest to post-conviction. The Data Portal includes all 67 counties in Pennsylvania.

The Data Portal increases the transparency of Pennsylvania’s local justice systems by collecting and analyzing criminal justice data and presenting them at the county level.

“For a midsize public defender organization, finding useful and reliable data is crucial to the work we do,” said Dean Beer, Chief Public Defender for Montgomery County. “These data will inform comprehensive discussions going forward about reform. This resource could not come at a better or more important time,” Beer said.

The Portal allows users to review and compare performance data within and across states, and to break them down by race/ethnicity; sex; indigent status; age; offense type; offense severity; and attorney type.

“The data are a treasure trove for communities that will now have access to reliable, informative, and comprehensive data about their criminal justice systems,” said Amy Bach, President and Executive Director, Measures for Justice. “Our Portal is intended to be a reference point for conversations about how to address the multiple issues facing the criminal justice system.”

Some findings in Pennsylvania include:

- 12% to 67% of guilty plea cases had a charge reduction, depending on the county;
- 9% to 58% of misdemeanor cases had pretrial diversion, depending on the county;
- median jail sentences for nonviolent misdemeanors ranged from 3 to 90 days across the state.

The Data Portal comprises data that has been passed through a set of performance measures developed by some of the country’s most renowned criminologists and scholars. The measures address three primary objectives of criminal justice systems: Public Safety; Fair Process; Fiscal Responsibility.

The Portal also includes data from Florida, North Carolina, Washington, Utah, and Wisconsin. Additionally, the Chan Zuckerberg Initiative is joining other funders to help support Measures for Justice’s goal of measuring 20 states by 2020.

MFJ has worked to develop the tool since its founding in 2011. The Laura and John Arnold Foundation, Google.org, Pershing Square Foundation, the MacArthur Foundation’s Safety and Justice Challenge, the Open Society Foundations, and the Draper Richards Kaplan Foundation provide funding and support, in addition to the Chan Zuckerberg Initiative.

For more information, please visit www.measuresforjustice.org.

About Measures for Justice

Measures for Justice (MFJ) is a 501(c)3 not-for-profit organization whose mission is to bring transparency to the criminal justice system from arrest to post-conviction at the county level. MFJ collects and analyzes criminal justice data from counties and displays them on a Data Portal that is free to the public.