2021 ANNUAL REPORT
Our mission

Measures for Justice
is a nonpartisan nonprofit that makes criminal justice data available and actionable to spur reform.
How many people are in jail in your county?

Why are they in jail?

What’s the racial and economic breakdown of your county’s jail population?

How many people get charged for a crime?

What kinds of crime are people getting charged for the most?

Who gets charged most often for misdemeanors?

No data.

No change.

Dear Friends:

I started this organization because I spent years in courtrooms around the country watching citizens and people who work in criminal justice charge ahead without any sense of, or access to, the big picture—the trends and patterns into which their experiences fell. A prosecutor who had no idea he hadn’t taken on a domestic violence case in 21 years. Defendants whose outcomes were part of a bigger data story about race and class inequities. I set out to bring transparency to the system for the betterment of everyone who encounters it.

Ten years after our founding, we are well on our way. We are closing in on a staff of fifty at the helm of a national culture that not only demands criminal justice data drive the discourse but also assumes these data can be acquired, processed and displayed with ease.

That is a big assumption. The work it takes to bring full transparency to criminal justice via data is enormous. So is the urgency around getting to a more equitable, efficient and safe criminal justice system.

The cry for change is loud and persistent. We hear it and are committed to ensuring that the change we need to see stands on fact and can be judged against the facts.

This report is a chance to look back at what we’ve achieved in 2021 and to acknowledge some of the key moments in our history that helped us get to where we are today. Of course, I’d be remiss not to acknowledge that like the rest of the world, we grappled with the meaning of our work while also living through history—the global pandemic caused by Covid and a necessary reckoning with the systemic injustices against Black and brown bodies in the U.S., particularly through the criminal justice system.

Data cannot solve these problems on their own. But each data point is a point in the story of someone’s life—a life that’s connected to family, friends, employers, schools, health—impacting generations. Our job moving forward is to ensure those data points—and the stories they tell—are made available and actionable in pursuit of a better criminal justice system for all.

Thank you to everyone who has helped us make data transparency a cornerstone of how justice gets carried out, and to those who are joining us for the next great set of challenges.

Onwards,

Amy Bach, CEO, Measures for Justice
Hello, transparency. Meet: the criminal justice system.

For the past ten years, it’s been our mission to introduce transparency via data to a system that is by reputation (and sometimes by design) opaque, impenetrable and just not all that user-friendly.

Millions of Americans experience the criminal justice system every day, which is really more like 3,200 systems, since no two counties operate the same way. They certainly don’t manage data alike: different taxonomies, different recording and collecting practices, different software systems across multiple agencies that do not talk to each other.

Are you getting the picture? The country’s data infrastructure is a mess.

When most people think “infrastructure,” they think of roads and bridges, and most agree these means of getting from one place to another need repair. But when it comes to data infrastructure, people do not quite understand the magnitude of the problem. So let us break it down for you:

So let us break it down for you:

• How many people are in jail in your county?
• Why are they in jail?
• What’s the racial and economic breakdown of your county’s jail population?
• How many people get charged for a crime?
• What kinds of crime are people getting charged for the most?
• Who gets charged most often for misdemeanors?

To the above, we say: most of the time, people just don’t know. Which means that we have no way to hold our justice system accountable. In turn, the justice system—courts, prosecutors, police—have no legitimate insight into what is going wrong and where.

Encounters with law enforcement that have ended badly or tragically are an incredibly powerful motive for systems change. But to create a better, more equitable criminal justice system, these experiences need to be contextualized with data—with trends and patterns that are inarguable. And by using a platform for interacting with the data in a way that’s intuitive and provides a common language for users on all sides of the system.

This is what Measures for Justice does.

DATA CRISIS: The criminal justice system lacks the tools, technology and data to solve its problems, much less gain the trust and support of the communities it serves.

The combination of data silos, competing data practices, different taxonomies and antiquated systems has left the country without a central repository of information and often no repositories at all.

The result is a citizenship without enough power to usher in reform and decision-makers who are, as one prosecutor put it, “flying blind.”

Measures for Justice is on a mission to change all that.
Where we’re active today

Our staff

Our team of 46 includes experts in data engineering, product development and research. In 2021, we were honored to add 9 new members to the team, which surpasses our hiring trends over the last two years (7 in 2020, 7 in 2019). In 2022, our plan is to hire over 15 new staff as we strive to satisfy the growing demand in counties nationwide for data transparency.

Our board

Edwin G. Schallert
Board Chair
Debevoise & Plimpton

Amy Bach
Measures for Justice

Rosemary Barkett
Iran-United States Claims Tribunal

Ayanna Clunis
JP Morgan Chase

Justin Erlich
Tik-Tok

Jim Kohlenberger
JK Strategies

Kirsten Livingston
Wellspring Advisors

Richard J. Morello
Family Reach Foundation

CND Life Sciences

Our employees could have jobs anywhere, but they choose Measures for Justice because of the mission. We’re hiring the best of the best. For example, our Chief Product Officer, Sheila Herbert, was just named the 2021 Technology Woman of the Year by TechRochester.

More about us

Portals

- PORTAL DATA: Counties where we have collected court or prosecutor data and run them through a unique set of core measures that appear on our National Data Portal.
- COMMONS SITES: Counties where our local data platform is active or in the works. The platform is designed for communities and law enforcement to work together.
- OTHER DATA WORK: Counties where we are working to improve data infrastructure or develop public dashboards.
We envision a world where data transparency and accountability are the norm. Where communities and the prosecutors, police, and courts who serve them leverage the power of data to make change that benefits everyone, regardless of politics. **Here’s what we have done to get there.**

**Founding:** Measures for Justice comes to life to address the country's lack of publicly available criminal justice data from counties, which is where most people encounter the system. We develop a new methodology for measuring and comparing county level data.

**Wisconsin Pilot:** Measures for Justice proves the naysayers wrong: comparative data can be acquired, cleaned, coded and run through a series of performance measures to bring some long overdue transparency to the criminal justice system.

**Data Portal:** Measures for Justice launches first-of-its-kind public-facing, free data platform of performance measures that span the system from arrest to post-conviction with court data from six states. All data can be filtered by race, age, indigency and sex.

**1,200 Counties:** Measures for Justice publishes data from 20 states, becoming the largest public county-level data repository in the country. The offering makes it possible to compare how counties are performing across a series of measures.

**A Criminal Justice Revolution:** Measures for Justice helps inspire a groundbreaking new data law in Florida that mandates nearly every county agency and office needs to collect the same data, in the same way, and to report those data to the same place.

**Commons: Common Pre:** Measures for Justice develops two new tools to help prosecutors’ offices and agencies assess and ready their data for public display and/or internal use by gauging where data and data practices are problematic and why.

**Commons Expansion:** Measures for Justice begins to offer Commons in new markets, from East Baton Rouge, LA, to Monroe County, NY.

**Commons Extension:** Measures for Justice begins to offer Commons to police departments as national police measures are co-created by police departments and community leaders.
The events of 2020 changed the world for everyone. Today, conversations about criminal justice and improving the system are happening in a way that would have been impossible even a few years ago.

We were emboldened by the events of 2020 to ensure our impact was more immediate and tangible. We recommitted to uphold the same values of transparency and accountability in our organization that we seek in the criminal justice system.

2020 Highlights:

1. Soon after Covid hit, we put our data to work to determine if there was a relationship between incarceration rates and Covid. There was. We released a study that showed that incarceration rates in a community are an even stronger predictor of Covid than race, disadvantage or unemployment. This type of study only adds to the argument about criminal justice data being a gateway into community wellbeing.

2. We focused on context and recency: We relaunched our national Data Portal with more top-line findings on racial and economic disparities. And we made the strategic decision to prioritize work on Commons, our first product that brings near or real-time data to the public.

3. Finally, we added resources to our internal commitment to diversity, equity and inclusion, formalizing a staff committee and identifying immediate areas of action.
In 2020, we met our goal to collect, clean, measure and make public millions of data points from court systems across the country—from 1,200 counties across 20 states. Twenty states was a major milestone and the jumping-off point for the strides and decisions we made in 2021.

We began with the question of recency. It takes a lot of time going county to county to collect data in big chunks and standardize all that data. Though court data are public, it can take months, sometimes years, to gain access. And then, even with a fast data-processing pipeline, it can take another year to make data available. For research and long-term policy assessment, this is great. For practitioners and communities that need in-the-moment decision-making, it’s not so great.

So we’ve improved our data-processing pipeline as well as how efficiently we can collect and update data.

A second issue was ownership. Someone needs to be accountable for what the data show. We have found that the court data on our Portal are excellent for providing an overview of how cases are being processed county by county. But it’s really prosecutor and police data on local data platforms that can best pinpoint who’s responsible to create change.

So in 2021, we launched the Commons Suite of tools to help communities and law enforcement work together in pursuit of accountability, transparency and reform.

The Commons Suite: New Products in ’21

In 2021, we launched the first of three new products that compose the Commons Suite of tools.

Together, or as stand-alones, these tools make up the Commons Suite: designed to ease the way for states and counties to get to transparency.

1. **Commons**, a data engagement platform for communities and law enforcement to make real change.
2. **A data self-assessment tool** that allows county agencies to gauge their data infrastructure, practices and readiness for data transparency and standard case flow measures and data filtering.
3. **A data sample-assessment tool** that allows Measures for Justice to run a sample dataset through our pipeline to identify common quality issues allowing them to be improved before data are published in Commons.

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**2021 AT A GLANCE**

Total counties pursuing data transparency: 1,219 (~40% of all counties nationwide)

Total % of population served: 38

Total # of data products in our offering: 4
Accountability

Accountability is what happens when system leaders make their data available to everyone. Just by being transparent, these leaders become responsible for what the data say and what they are going to do about it. Similarly, average citizens, having data to inform the discourse, become responsible for acting on those data, as needed.

Community

Working with communities to co-create goals supports our commitment to accountability. The real work happens in new conversations between people who may oppose each other but who use data to stimulate new ideas and benchmark change, often for the first time, publicly.

Transparency

Transparency gets thrown around a lot when it comes to criminal justice. But it is the necessary step that has to be taken to achieve full system change.

COVID STUDY

As Covid struck the nation, the dominant narrative was that the disease predominantly struck people of color, people of little means, and people with illnesses often associated with poverty like diabetes, obesity and hypertension. We looked at Covid rates in Milwaukee, Wisconsin and compared them to incarceration rates by zip code alongside health data and demographic data and found that incarceration rates were a more reliable predictor of Covid than any one other factor. In short: the more people are arrested in a community, the more Covid you will see there. Why? The answer is complicated and has to do with concentrated disadvantage: Mass incarceration makes communities more vulnerable to public health crises, such as the Covid pandemic, by damaging social and economic networks on a large scale. The policy implications are clear: To slow the spread of Covid, increase testing in communities with high incarceration rates.

Such is the power of data to shape and inform policy.
2. Systems Change: Infrastructure & Legislation

In this country, there is no centralized repository or even a set of standards for data collection at the state and county levels. Over the past decade, strides have been made to standardize practices, centralize data warehouses, and modernize case management systems. Our focus and relentless pursuit of data transparency has been a driving force behind these changes, beginning with the groundbreaking data bill passed by the Florida Legislature in 2018. Shortly after we went live with our first six states’ worth of data, we were invited to present to the Florida Judiciary Committee of the House of Representatives a report on the state’s data—what was there, what wasn’t, and how they might improve data collection. The result was a comprehensive bill that mandated nearly all agencies across the state’s 67 counties collect the same data, in the same way, and report them to the same place. The bill was a bit of a revolution at the time and a high water mark for data transparency.

Like any new innovation in infrastructure (think building a bridge for the first time), Florida has struggled with implementation. Compliance required a significant upfront investment in new technology and, more importantly, a new roadmap for how to collect and standardize data. So we embedded “Data Fellows” into the state’s 6th Judicial Circuit to work with those county clerks. This resulted in a detailed Standard Operating Procedure for preparing data to be standardized and uploaded to a central hub. Alongside other resource guides, this is part of our project to accelerate the march toward data transparency for all agencies and counties.

NATIONWIDE DATA STANDARDS AND METRICS WORK

Measures for Justice has been leading the charge to disrupt how the country has been doing data for decades.

To that end, we have worked with the National Center for State Courts and their National Open Data Standards project (NODS) to help standardize what data elements the courts should collect. The NODS team is now implementing these standards.

Similarly, we have been working closely with the Counsel for State Governments on a Bureau of Justice Assistance Grant to carry out the function of Justice Counts: a program that has put together a coalition of leading criminal justice organizations to develop a baseline set of criminal justice metrics that can inform budget and policy decisions.

TWENTY STATE OVERVIEW

Having collected data in twenty states, we wrote a report on the country’s data infrastructure. “The Power and Problem of Criminal Justice Data: A Twenty State Review” uncovered an overwhelming lack of data transparency across the country based on nearly a decade’s worth of data from county agencies and state courts.

In some cases, the data do not exist simply because they are not being collected. In other cases, the data exist but are protected by law or administrative discretion, and across the board, records are often too incomplete or messy to translate into usable data.

Key findings from the report include:

Every state was missing significant data for key measures the report covered.

Of the twenty states, only three (Alabama, Pennsylvania, Indiana) had reliable data available on indigent defendants.

For only two states, Wisconsin and Pennsylvania, could we see details on bail, detention and release, and these were limited at best.

Our conclusion is that Congress must take action to shore up the country’s data infrastructure. As we wrote in “The Hill” with Jeremy Travis, Executive Vice President of Criminal Justice at Arnold Ventures, “In the same way that roads or education are foundational to a larger economic project, good data serve as a foundation for the larger project of public safety and racial justice. It is a project that Congress cannot ignore.”
3. Local Change: Commons

**Truth:** Not everyone believes mass incarceration exists. Not everyone thinks racial injustice is rampant. What works for one community will not necessarily work for the next.

**Truth:** We all believe the system needs to be improved. Backed by trusted data, local problems can be solved with local solutions.

Commons is a facilitator. It is a tool community and system leaders can use to improve outcomes on day one by mutually agreeing to a policy goal that will be tracked. It’s a tool communities can use to see their experiences reflected in the data and mobilized for change. And it’s a tool law enforcement can use to pinpoint what is and what isn’t working, talk to their constituents openly and publicly about them, and make change as a result. This is the future as we see it. This is the future that’s coming.

Commons: a public data platform that has local communities and law enforcement working together to make criminal justice data transparent and to set and share policy goals.

**COMMONS HISTORY**

As we pushed to get 20 states’ worth of data on our public Data Portal by 2020, we asked ourselves this: how could we best deploy our expertise based on everything we’d learned from doing those first 20 states? How could we solve the problem of ownership and recency? To get at those answers, we participated in a months-long organization-wide design initiative that resulted in a strategic plan to maximize our impact in 2021. Critical to that plan is our new Commons Suite of tools and products.

Commons is a data engagement platform that allows for near or real-time data plus goal setting and tracking by law enforcement and a community advisory board. The Commons dashboard can be used by anyone to:
- Track progress toward a shared criminal justice goal.
- Track monthly data on how cases flow through the system.
- Track trends across monthly and yearly measures.
- Break down data by demographics like race and ethnicity, sex, age, etc.
- Easily share what you find with your state legislators, local media and other stakeholders.

Commons also includes a larger suite of data-prep tools that together (or alone) can be used to ready a county agency or office for full transparency, accountability and collaboration with their communities.

We launched our first Commons in Yolo County, California, and the results exceeded expectations. The demand and interest from prosecutors, community leaders, police and city officials in the wake of that launch tell us we’re on to something good.

**Change Makers in Action**

When individual stakeholders or agencies take responsibility for what their data say, good things happen.

_read on to learn more >>>_
We’ve said throughout that data require buy-in and ownership to be effective change agents. They need users and champions and stewards.

When the District Attorney of Davis County, Utah, Troy Rawlings, used our data to show off how well his office was doing compared to the rest of the state (fewer dismissals, comparable charge reductions), he was able to get his staffing budget met.

When the former Chief Public Defender of Philadelphia, Keir Bradford-Grey, saw data on our Portal that showed higher rates of pretrial release violations in her county than the state average, she did something about it. Her social services team put together a plan, and 90% of defendants who were part of that plan did not violate the terms of their release again.

**Read more about the people and projects that are making a difference.**

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**Monroe, New York**

After a year of unrest and the controversial death of Daniel Prude at the hands of police, tensions remain high in Rochester, a city in Monroe County, New York. What’s more, the county’s District Attorney, Sandra Doorley, does not enjoy widespread support among some community activists and advocates. It’s not an easy place to facilitate conversations between law enforcement and community or to roll out Commons. And yet Commons is coming to Monroe.

Why? Because Monroe is where we work—it’s our home—and so of course we want to bring transparency to the criminal justice system here.

**More importantly, the D.A.’s office and community leaders have agreed that transparency is a positive step in the right direction. More poignantly, that the status quo cannot hold.**

Before we began our work in Monroe, the D.A.’s office did not record in its system all the data necessary to make meaningful information on misdemeanor cases public. Now, thanks to data assessments and clear interest from the community that practice has changed. In fact, the office is going back two years to backfill data fields in pursuit of maximum transparency about an issue that is often at the heart of conversations about mass incarceration. This might look like a small thing, but in a county so riven with mistrust and pain, every step towards accountability is a big thing.

So stay tuned as our work in Monroe progresses. We can’t wait to see what Commons generates for this community next.
Yolo, California

The District Attorney in Yolo, Jeff Reisig, is the new president of the California District Attorney’s Association (CDAA), which has openly been at odds with some of the state’s most progressive D.A.s. Reisig finds himself mediating between the poles and advancing an agenda everyone can agree on. The top priority is data transparency and accountability.

As he acknowledges: “We all work for the public. They have a right to know what’s going on; they have the right to see the results of our decisions.”

Two years ago, Reisig approached us to discuss the possibility of a local data platform for his office that could make his data public. This year, Commons launched in his office with the participation and support of its Multi-Cultural Community Council, which represents diverse groups in the county. The Council helped co-create what data showed up on the platform. More importantly, they participated in the process of setting a policy goal—to increase felony diversions to 10%—which can be tracked publicly. Diversion is a way for people to avoid traditional prosecution and instead take part in learning programs. Diversion helps reduce incarceration while still holding people accountable. Thanks to Commons, the community can ask: Is the D.A. meeting his goal? If not, why not?

Sixty days after Commons launched, Yolo County is a different place. For instance: today, hundreds of defendants in Yolo are now getting a second chance at life. This is what happened:

Before Commons was implemented, the rule was this: if you have a background with the criminal justice system for any offense—misdemeanor or something more serious—you are not eligible for diversion. So if you were arrested for something like jaywalking or spitting on the sidewalk and you had a criminal history or a misdemeanor offense on your record, you had no second chance opportunities available to you.

For context, we know that in this country, Black people are 5 times more likely to be stopped without cause by the police than a white person. We also know that Black people—in fact all people of color—are more likely to have a criminal history than white people.

In Yolo, this disparity was compounded by data on Commons that showed people of color were also disparately represented in cases referred to the D.A.’s office. The big problem, then, looked like this:

Black and indigenous people of color are more likely to be stopped by police and to have more criminal histories. Therefore, they were not eligible for diversions at the same rate as white people.

The D.A.’s response was swift: he announced a new policy that prevents a defendant’s criminal history from automatically disqualifying them from diversion. The change is estimated to increase diversions by 15 to 20 percent, affecting primarily people of color caught up in the system’s front end.

Putting this kind of data out there makes it clear and urgent where problems need to be solved. The data are a means of expediting change. And generating enough accountability and transparency to ensure it happens.

The Yolo D.A.’s policy change is an early, prognostic win for the power of local criminal justice data. But more importantly, it’s a win for the people of Yolo County.

“This policy change demonstrates how Commons can bring accountability to agencies, drive change in criminal justice practices, and reveal inequities to be addressed in our criminal justice system. It’s a game changer!”

—Tessa Smith, Chair Yolo D.A. Multi-Cultural Community Council, formerly a self-identified “data skeptic”
East Baton Rouge Parish, Louisiana

East Baton Rouge Parish is infamous for having “one of the deadliest jails in the country,” according to Andrea Armstrong, a law professor at Loyola University New Orleans, who’s been documenting conditions in the local prison. Tensions between community and law enforcement are as high here as anywhere.

For context, in 2015, Louisiana led the nation in imprisonment. The state’s incarceration rate was nearly double the national average.

To change these trends, the state legislature passed the Louisiana Justice Reinvestment Package to help decrease incarceration, save taxpayer money on corrections, and reinvest the money in community-based initiatives that reduce crime.

In 2019, 70% of Louisiana residents approved of the reforms and yet only 32% agree with the statement that the current criminal justice system in Louisiana is fair.

This means the time is right for Commons to broker a collaborative effort for change in East Baton Rouge.

To date, leaders from organizations on the left and right, from local chapters of the NAACP and ACLU to Right on Crime, have convened the county’s first Community Advisory Board to work with D.A. Hillar Moore on co-creating a Commons to:

- increase trust and accountability
- increase stakeholder collaboration
- ensure data are driving decisions
- make data available to everyone
- get to real solutions and a more equitable system

The process there is well underway. Let the goal-setting begin.

“Public trust in law enforcement is critical in a democracy. But at a time when that trust has been shaken nationally by highly-visible events, I applaud Measures for Justice for spearheading the creation of multi-dimensional police performance measures in a collaborative process with both law enforcement leaders and communities.”

Since our founding over 10 years ago, Measures for Justice has actively sought national funding to support our mission. To date, we’ve raised nearly $40M and continue to receive year-over-year support from individuals and national and family foundations.

Since this is our first annual report, we want to express our deep gratitude to our former and current supporters, as well as to new supporters we’re welcoming to our work.

We take pride in being good stewards of the funding we receive, and every day we work to help make communities more informed. Thank you for joining us on this journey to make criminal justice data transparency possible in every community.

Your support goes a long way. We manage our costs for administration and fundraising so that the majority of the funds raised go towards what’s normally considered “program expenses.” At this time, 92% of funds raised are for expenses in this “program” category. However, all funds raised for the organization help us move toward our ultimate vision and mission.

We are extremely grateful to our supporters, many of whom have supported us year over year. Recognizing the risk associated with being so reliant on foundations, in 2020 we committed to diversifying our revenue. We are doing this in two ways: 1) the creation of revenue-generating products and services such as Commons and other data tools; and 2) expanding our philanthropic support to include smaller family foundations and individuals. Toward that end, we welcomed our first VP of Development, Adriana Higgins, Ed.D., CFRE, in August of 2021.
2020 was a challenging year for all. Our expenses were fewer than originally anticipated because we said goodbye to in-person meetings and travel for key industry conferences for instance. That said, we are very pleased to have still met our milestones and raised the funds to support us in 2021 and beyond.

For more details on our financials, please visit our website to download our 990.

### 2020 INCOME

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### 2020 EXPENSE

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**Net Operating Income**: $3,629,185

For a complete list of our funders, please visit our supporters page.

**FOUNDING SUPPORTERS**

- Bureau of Justice Assistance
- Draper Richards Kaplan Foundation
- Echoing Green
- Ford Foundation
- John D. and Catherine T. MacArthur Foundation's Safety & Justice Challenge
- Open Society Foundations
- Pershing Square Foundation
- Sunlight Foundation
- William H. Donner Foundation, Inc.

**MILLION DOLLAR CIRCLE**

- Anonymous Donors
- Arnold Ventures
- Ballmer Group
- Chan Zuckerberg Initiative
- Google.org
- John D. and Catherine T. MacArthur Foundation's Safety & Justice Challenge
- Pershing Square Foundation

For more details on our financials, please visit our website to download our 990.