

# Unlocking Criminal Justice:

## A new approach to an old problem.

### PROBLEM

County-level data tell us what's happening in the criminal justice system. But no one is systematically collecting these data for analysis and review.

### SOLUTION

Measures for Justice collects county-level data, cleans and codes them, and runs them through a set of performance Measures. We make the results available for free on an online Data Portal and then invite users to explore and compare counties in the same state and across states.

To date, we have measured over 370 counties—approximately 10 percent of the country—in PA, FL, WI, NC, UT, and WA. We will be updating data from current states as we head to 20 states by 2020.

**Who Creates the Measures:** The biggest names in criminal justice have developed and vetted our Measures. They hail from places like the Vera Institute of Justice, the United States Department of Justice, and leading nonprofits and universities.

**Who Cleans the Data:** Our 38 researchers and technologists have PhDs and Masters in Criminology and Computer Science from major universities across the U.S.

**What Makes the Portal Special:** Our data span arrest to post-conviction. They are granular and comparative. And they can all be broken down by race/ethnicity; sex; age; indigent status, offense severity, and attorney type.

**What Makes the Data Accurate:** We make it a priority to consult with state practitioners about their data to ensure accuracy. We also run all our data through multiple internal and external audits. And then we solicit more feedback in a loop that continues throughout our process.

### GOALS

Our Measures were designed to compare counties and address three primary objectives of criminal justice systems:

-  PUBLIC SAFETY
-  FAIR PROCESS
-  FISCAL RESPONSIBILITY

---

### EARLY FINDINGS

We have identified counties where:

- No felony cases have gone to trial in five years.
- Nonwhite defendants are sentenced to incarceration 2.5 times more often than white defendants—for the same type of drug crimes.
- People are jailed for failing to pay bail as low as \$500.
- Over 75% of misdemeanor defendants plead guilty without an attorney.
- Nonwhites are rarely diverted from traditional prosecution compared to whites.

## WHO NEEDS THIS?

- **Everyone** who wants to know how well the criminal justice system is working.
- **Prosecutors, Defense Lawyers, Judges** who want to identify areas that need attention or replicate best practices.
- **Advocates** who want analytics for reform efforts.
- **Journalists** who want to investigate problems and bright spots across the country.
- **Legislators** who want to see where taxpayer dollars are being spent wisely or excessively.

## TALES FROM THE FIELD:

- **Davis County, UT:** District Attorney, Troy Rawlings, used MFJ's data to demonstrate his office's success and to be rewarded with more resources for his office as a result.
- **Winnebago, WI:** D.A., Christian Gossett, used MFJ's data to uncover and start to remedy an indigent disparity problem in his county.
- **Philadelphia, PA:** Chief Public Defender, Keir Bradford-Grey, used the data to uncover and begin to remedy a higher rate of pretrial release violations in her county than the state average.

## BIG DATA SOLVES BIG PROBLEMS

**Our data provide a non-partisan, comparative view of what's happening in counties across America. As a result of our work:**

- Criminal justice data will improve (data breeds data);
- Legal practices at the county level will change;
- County budgets and the allocation of resources will change;
- The extent to which Americans feel informed about their criminal justice system will change;
- Data skeptics will become converts (it happens);
- Prosecutors, defense lawyers, and judges will be held accountable;
- Economic and fairness incentives will have evidence-based support.

## Partners

MFJ is supported in part by the Chan Zuckerberg Initiative, Google.org, the Ballmer Group, the Laura and John Arnold Foundation, the MacArthur Foundation's Safety and Justice Challenge, as well as the Pershing Square, Ford, Draper Richards Kaplan, and Open Society Foundations.



421 University Avenue, Rochester, NY 14607

measuresforjustice.org | mfj@measuresforjustice.org | (585) 434-5516

© Property of Measures for Justice Institute. Not for broader distribution. Confidential.

## LEADERSHIP

### Board Members

#### **Judge Rosemary Barkett**

Iran-United States Claims Tribunal

#### **Justin Erlich**

Uber

#### **Richard Morello**

Family Reach Foundation

#### **Edwin Schallert**

Debevoise & Plimpton

#### **David Shipley**

Bloomberg

### Founder and Executive Director

**Amy Bach** founded Measures for Justice in April 2011 as a follow-up to her book, *Ordinary Injustice: How America Holds Court*, which won the 2010 Robert F. Kennedy Book Award. In June 2011, Echoing Green, a premier seed investor for social entrepreneurs, selected Amy as a Fellow out of 3,000 candidates worldwide to support the launch of Measures for Justice. For her work on *Ordinary Injustice*, Amy received a Soros Media Fellowship, a special J. Anthony Lukas citation, and a Radcliffe Fellowship. Amy was a Knight Foundation Journalism Fellow at Yale Law School and is a graduate of Stanford Law School.

### Expansion

Our eventual goal is to measure every county in all fifty states.

### Terms

Measures for Justice is a registered 501(c)3 organization. Contributions can be made via our website or mailed to our address.