

TOOLKIT 1

WELCOME TO COMMONS



Table of Contents

- 02** Who is this toolkit for
- 03** Introduction
- 06** What makes Commons so unique for driving change
- 07** How to use Commons
- 14** 3 Ways you can talk about Commons data in your meeting
- 15** Conclusion

Who is this toolkit for?

This toolkit equips you with the knowledge to navigate Commons with confidence, and understand what it provides.

The toolkit is designed for:

- **Community Members**

Learn how to access the data available in your community, leading to informed discussions and policy shaping.

- **Community Advocates**

Learn how to access data to advocate for impactful policy changes.

- **Criminal Justice Practitioners**

Learn to navigate criminal justice data for evidence-based decision-making.

- **Local Criminal Justice Agency Leaders**

Gain insights into local data for a deeper understanding of policy impacts, and aid in facilitating conversations with other members of your community.

Introduction

We're so thrilled you're eager to learn more about using **Commons, a community-driven data tool** that helps shape criminal justice policy.

The first Commons launched in Yolo County, CA in 2021, and with it came transparent and accessible data in the hands of the community for the first time. Since then, we've seen policy changes take place and heard stories of real people who have been positively impacted by those changes.

Since the Commons rollout in Yolo County, the community has continued to have conversations about change that are steeped in data. Now, let's look at an example of the kind of information and conversation that their Commons platform brought to light.

Yolo County set a goal to increase diversions... Let's see what happened when a new diversion policy was put into place.



Figure 1

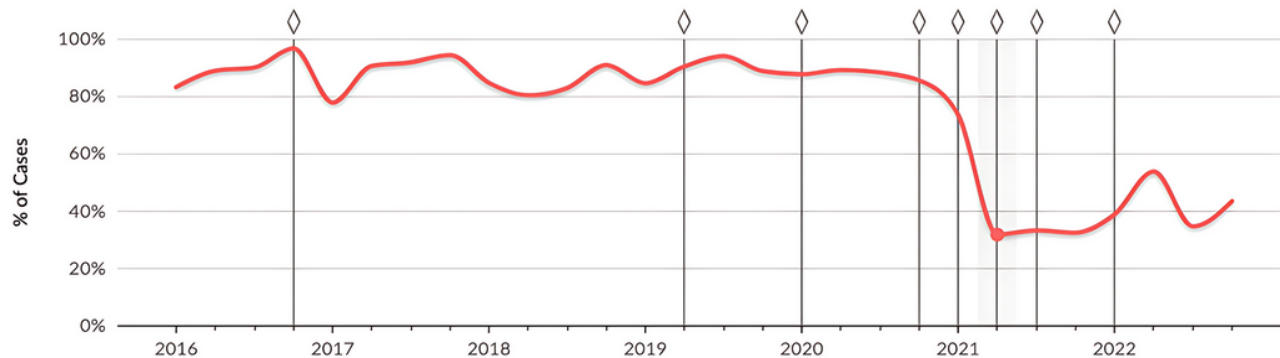
Filtered by: Sex: Male | Age: 18 to 25, 26 to 35

Offense Type (Shows cases broken down by the type of offense.) - Q2 2021

Drug Offense ●

31.9%

(22/69 cases)



What you're seeing in **Figure 1** is a trend line from the Yolo D.A's office for prosecution rates involving young male defendants with drug offenses. Do you see how that line drops pretty significantly as we get into 2021?

Figure 2

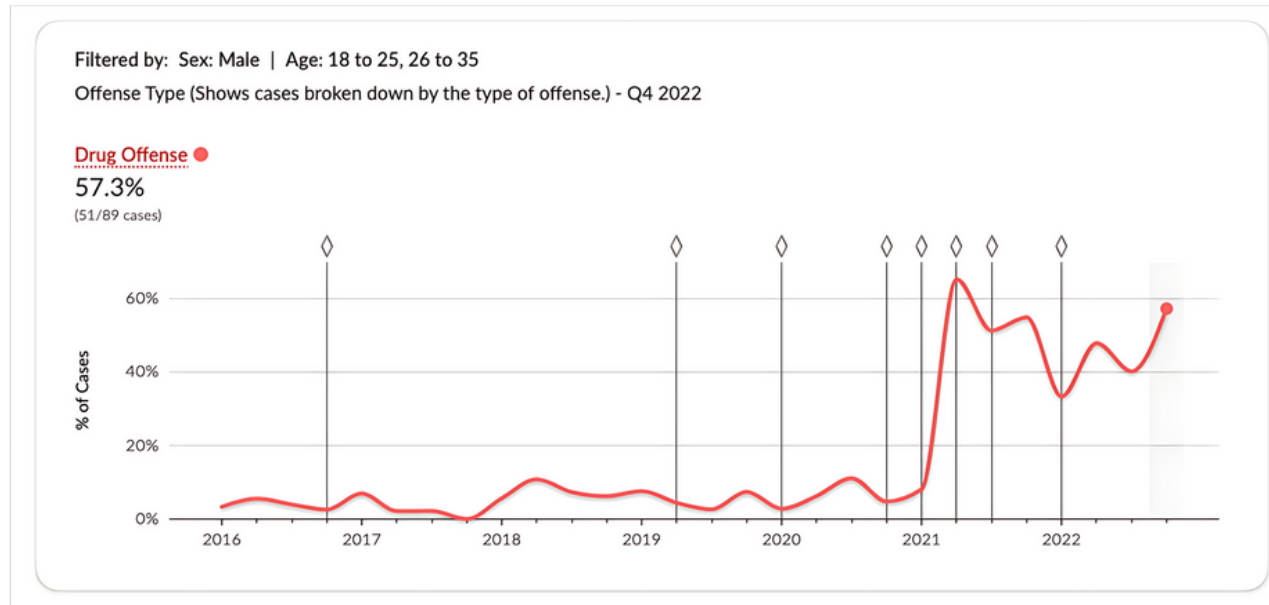


Figure 2 shows what happened during that same period of time to the same group of defendants—a steep increase in diversions, which are essentially opportunities to avoid traditional prosecution, jail time, and a record if you complete certain programs, like rehab or community service.

This is the kind of microscope Commons brings to the conversation about criminal justice. The data show, very clearly, where things are today so you can **have real conversations with the leaders in your community** about where you'd like things to be in the future.

What makes Commons so unique for driving change?

Commons is a community-driven data tool that helps shape criminal justice policy.

- **It's your platform**

Commons brings the public and their public servants together to prioritize what data should be made available.

- **It's data you can trust**

Measures for Justice is a neutral and seasoned third party that handles all of the data processing part of this work. You can be sure the data are valid, reliable, and trustworthy.

- **It's easy to use**

The platform is user-friendly, accessible, and designed to ensure the data can be understood and put to work.

- **It's policy focused**

The platform tracks a collaboratively set policy goal, evolving over time with new goals added as previous ones are achieved. It provides a real-time view of impactful changes in your community.

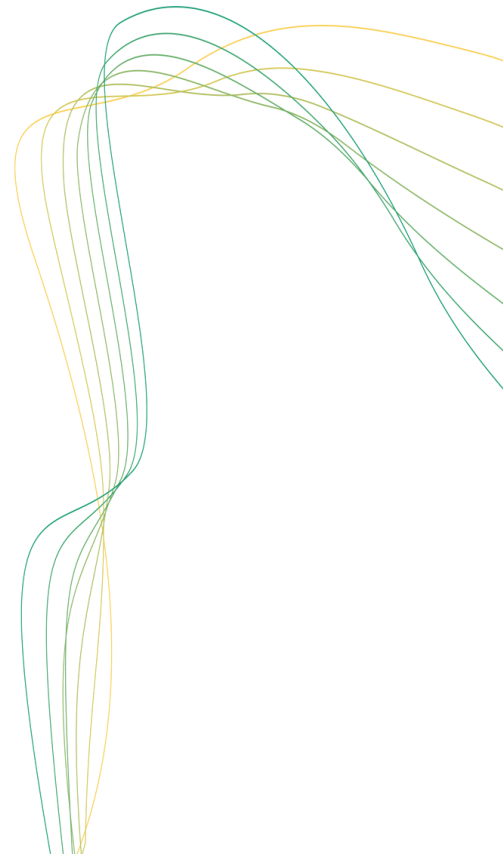
How to use Commons

Commons helps you understand how cases move through the criminal justice system in your community and the decisions the prosecutor's office makes on a monthly basis. It gives you an accurate picture of where things are today and how they've changed over time.

Track your community's policy goal or recommendation

This page allows you to track progress towards the goal that was created by your community.

- Has the prosecutor's office met the goal the community set?
- Have they fallen short? Are they on the right path?



(A) Head to the policy goal page to answer all of those questions!

commons

shared by Measures for Justice

A

MONROE COUNTY, NY

Created in partnership with the Monroe County District Attorney's Office and the Community Advisory Board

POLICY GOALCASE FLOW DATACOUNTY INFORMATION


DATA POWERED CHANGE

Ongoing access to Monroe County's criminal justice data.


Commons is a community-driven data tool that shapes criminal justice policy.



TRACK POLICY GOAL



EXPLORE DATA



SHARE FINDINGS


CO-CREATION

Working with Community Advocates and the District Attorney's Office

When the public, police, prosecutors, and courts share and trust the same data,

See trends in the system over time

This is where you get to really dive in!

Commons enables you to answer questions like:

- **(A)** How many cases is my prosecutor receiving every month?
- What percentage of cases have been prosecuted, and for what crimes?
- What percentage of cases receive a diversion (an alternative to prosecution)?
- What percentage of convicted defendants are sentenced to incarceration and for how long?

And you get to see how the answers change over time!



Cases Received by the Prosecutor

EXPLORE →

Once the police make an arrest or issue a citation on suspicion that a crime took place, the case makes its way to the prosecutor's office. This could happen before or after charges are presented in court, depending on the jurisdiction.

923

A

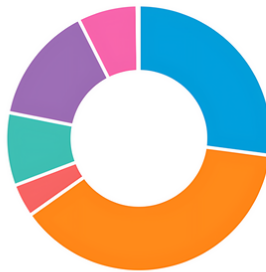
Cases Received, Mar '23



— HIDE DETAILS

By Offense Type

MARCH 2023



- Violent
- Property
- Drug
- DUI
- Public Order
- Criminal Traffic
- Other

Misdemeanors

523

Violent
91Property
225Drug
13

Felonies

297

Violent
74Property
116Drug
24

Understand your community

The platform also offers contextual information about your community, in relation to your state as a whole. It includes data on Population, Race /Ethnicity, Poverty Indicators, and information on various Criminal Justice Resources.

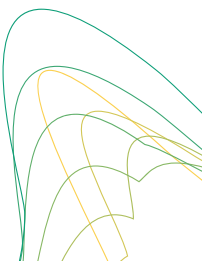
But Commons offers more than just a single view of all of these data, it also allows you to:

Filter cases in your community

(A) Filters allow you to look at the subset of cases you're most interested in.

Filters might look a little different in your community, but they can include things like:

- Defendant Race/Ethnicity
- Defendant Sex
- Defendant Age
- Offense Type (Property Crime, Violent Crime, DUI, etc.), and
- Offense Severity (Felony or Misdemeanor)

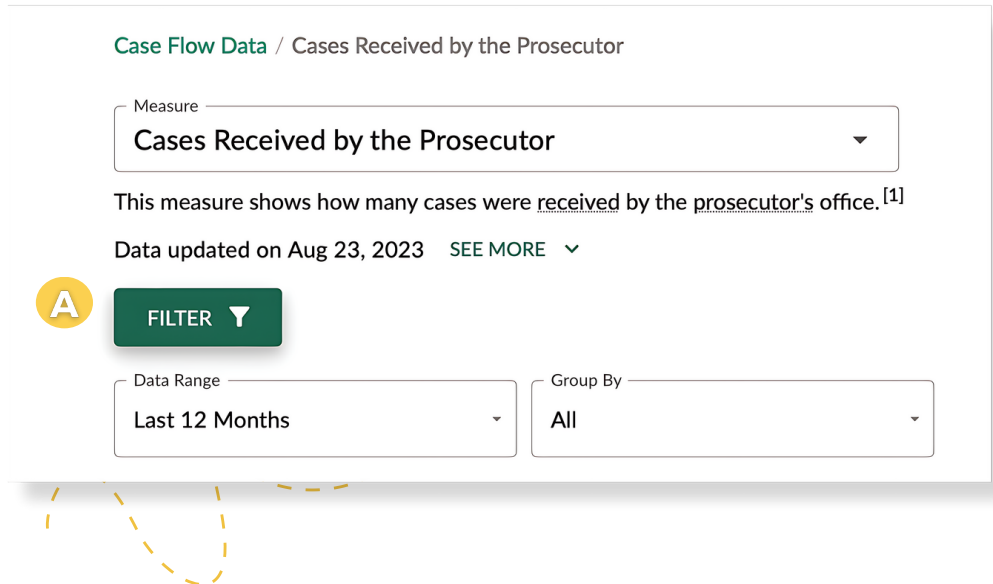


This allows you to answer even more specific questions, including:

- How many felony cases is my prosecutor receiving every month?
- What percentage of cases based on gender have received a diversion?

Even more, Commons allows you to combine filters so that you can target very specific groups, for example:

- What percentage of cases involving Latino female defendants aged 26 to 35 were sentenced to probation for larceny theft?



Case Flow Data / Cases Received by the Prosecutor

Measure
Cases Received by the Prosecutor ▼

This measure shows how many cases were received by the prosecutor's office.^[1]

Data updated on Aug 23, 2023 [SEE MORE](#) ▼

A **FILTER** ▼

Data Range
Last 12 Months ▼

Group By
All ▼

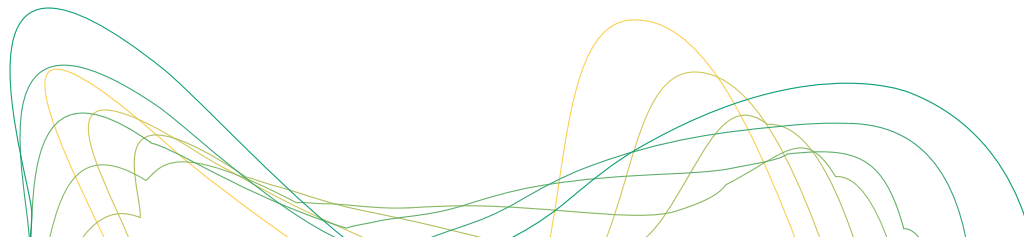
Compare Outcomes

Not only can you filter by categories, you can also compare across them!

This allows you to see differences between groups. Commons helps you to understand if defendants in one group experience a different outcome than those in another group.

This lets you answer questions like:

- What percentage of cases with a Black defendant have been prosecuted compared to cases with a White defendant, and for what crimes?
- What percentage of cases with a female defendant received a diversion (or an alternative to sentencing) compared to cases with a Male defendant?
- How long does it take for a case with a defendant aged 18-25 to move through the whole system compared to a defendant aged 46-65?



3 Ways you can discuss Commons data in your meeting

Use Commons as a tool to initiate discussions about your priorities. It helps you make the changes you'd like to see in your community.

Here's a few questions you can ask in your next meeting as a starting point for discussing the data with others:

- **Where is our community making progress?**

Consider looking at the policy goal page together. Are things on track? What other areas in the data are showing desired changes over time?

- **Where are there opportunities to make our community a better place?**

Filter data points based on your concerns. Utilize the "compare" feature to identify differences among groups. What changes would you like to see?

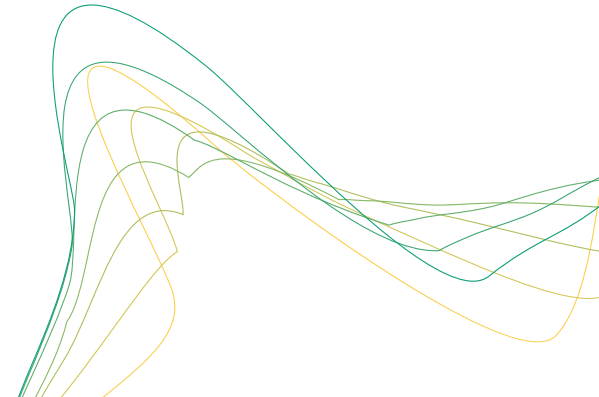
- **What can we do to inspire change?**

Generate ideas to involve your community in examining data. Utilize the Commons "discuss" feature to reach out to local representatives and media regarding the discussed data points.

Conclusion

Commons is a comprehensive data tool that provides a solution for keeping track of progress towards shared criminal justice policy goals. By tracking the flow of cases and analyzing trends on a monthly, quarterly, and yearly basis, you can gain valuable insights into the effectiveness of policies and practices within your community.

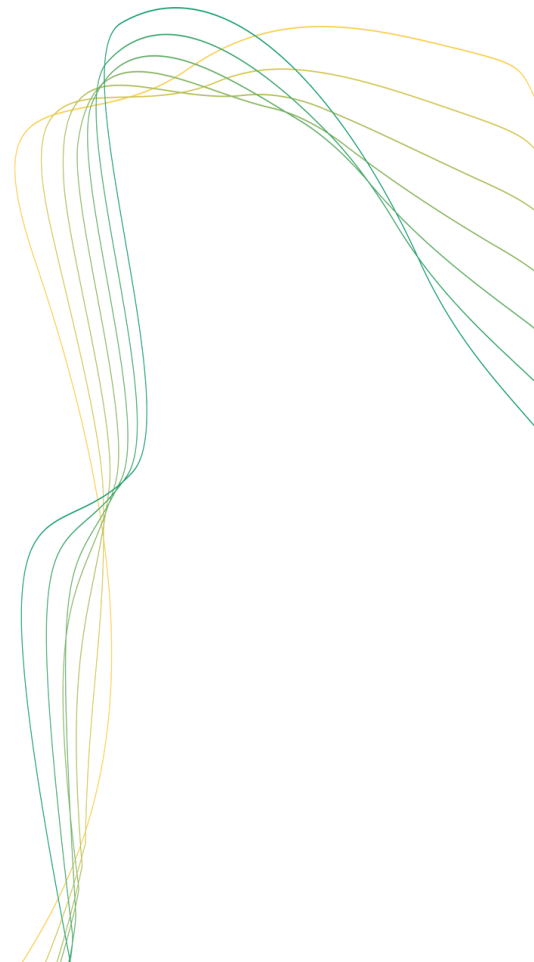
You can also share this data with state legislators, local media, and other community stakeholders, promoting greater transparency and accountability in the criminal justice system. This makes Commons a powerful tool for driving meaningful change.



Contact Us

MEASURES FOR JUSTICE

engagement@measuresforjustice.org





Provided by Measures for Justice