WE HELP YOU FIND FIX CLEAN CODE SHARE UNDERSTAND DATA FOR CHANGE
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We envision a world in which the criminal justice system is fully transparent, accessible, and accountable.

To get there, we develop tools and services that help communities reshape the criminal justice system.
When we started this work back in 2011, our rallying cry was simple: no data, no change.

At the time, there wasn’t much talk about the value of criminal justice data for pushing change. The system chugged along without much oversight or intervention. The result was a kind of inertia that preserved the status quo.

Enter Measures for Justice. We worked tirelessly to demonstrate how critical criminal justice data is for exposing patterns of injustice, inequity, and inefficiency. And we spent our early years proving the data was out there and could be used as a means for change.

As a result, we built the country’s first National Data Portal with more than 20 states’ worth of comparative information on how the nation’s courts were performing. For the first time, people could see what was happening in their counties. Who was going to jail? For what crimes? For how long? Transparency was opening eyes—literally.

We helped change the conversation and climate. Today, data is widely acknowledged as critical to making smart choices for a system that prioritizes equity, fairness, and safety. Data is an essential means to change direction and policy.

The challenge is data is still hard to get and use if you don’t know what you’re doing. There are multiple steps associated with finding/preparing/sharing/using data that need to happen.

The good news is: We take these steps every day so communities don’t have to.

RIGHT: Amy Bach, CEO (center), and Precious Freeman (right of center), VP of National Engagement, celebrating the premiere of our docuseries, Let’s Be Clear, on the red carpet at Sidewalk Film Festival.
How complicated is the process? Here are a few of the challenges:

- There are more than 3,000 counties in the US. That's **3,000 different systems**.
- There is **no national standard** for how to record data or even what data to record.
- Many counties do not have computerized systems and continue to keep data in **paper files** or record data on steno pads.
- Existing Case Management Systems weren’t built for data collection, which makes data **entry and extraction very difficult**.
- **Human error** happens in data entry (so many stories here).
- Members of the public are often **not experienced with how to use data** as a basis for tough conversations and explorations that lead to policy change.
- Public servants often don’t realize how deficient their data is.

So there are a lot of hurdles to making data available and actionable for change makers. Hurdles we know well. **We have spent the last decade developing tools and services for them.**

This is why today we go deeper than “no data, no change,” focusing on the value of every step it takes to use data as the change agent everyone knows it to be.

**Find data** for change.
**Fix data** for change.
**Clean data** for change.
**Code data** for change.
**Understand data** for change.
**Share data** for change.
**Use data to talk, explore, investigate, and make change.**
Our expertise in this area is singular. But our suite of tools and services has something for everyone. No matter where communities are on their path to change—whether they’re just beginning to assess their data for quality or learning how to use the data for policy change, we can help.

Why do this difficult work? Because, the impact is worth it. Data that people can understand and use can do so much to help communities and change lives.

When public servants make decisions based on fact, in concert with the people they serve, lives change for the better. It is that simple. Data gets mobilized as a neutral change agent; and things happen. We now have a proven, systematic approach that gets us closer to widespread impact every day.

In these pages, we’ll tell you more about our approach and how we know it works. And give you a sense of who we are and what we’re about.

If you think that facts power change—that facts matter and that a criminal justice system that relies on facts to make good decisions is the way to a better future, read on.

BELOW: Dr. Gipsy Escobar (VP of Product & Design), Amy Bach (CEO), Katricia Cleveland (Sr. Engagement Manager) sharing MFJ’s expertise at conferences and events across the country in Florida (left), California (center), and Georgia (right).
**Founding**: Measures for Justice (MFJ) 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 performance and comparing county level data.

**Wisconsin Pilot**: MFJ demonstrates that 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**: Launches first-of-its-kind public-facing, free data platform of comparative 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.

**National Data Portal**
hits milestone of twenty states’ worth of data (that’s 1200+ counties!).
Commons: Launches the first local, public facing data platform for a prosecutor’s office that is co-created with community leaders. Commons features policy goals that are created by prosecutors and the people they serve, and that can be tracked on the platform.

Groundwork: Develops new tools to help prosecutor offices, police departments, courts gauge the quality of their data and make the necessary changes to improve their data.

Police Measures: In partnership with community leaders and police departments, MFJ begins to develop a national set of police measures for use on Commons.

Commons Expansion: Transparency and accountability come to East Baton Rouge Parish, LA, and Monroe County, NY, via Commons platforms.

Groundwork: MFJ provides data quality assessments and improvement tools to multiple prosecutor offices nationwide to help put them on the path to data transparency and accountability.

Engagement: MFJ builds out engagement services to help communities understand and use data to drive the change they want to see.
Central to our work is a premise that says: If it goes in bad, it comes out bad. Put shoddy, incomplete data into a system, and no amount of organizing is going to pop out data anyone should trust. This is why you can’t just go to a prosecutor’s office, a court, or a police department and say: give us your data and we’ll put it on a dashboard and make it pretty and useful. No, the first step in any effort to get data ready is to assess the quality and comprehensiveness of that data. **What’s missing? What’s inconsistent?** We once worked with an office that did not collect any misdemeanor data. Misdemeanors account for 80 percent* of all criminal cases that come into the system. So you can imagine just how much was missing from the big picture without this data. **Who is getting arrested?** We don’t know. **For what crimes?** We don’t know. **What’s happening to those cases?** No idea. And so on. In other words: without good data to power changes in the community, no changes were happening.

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*Alexandra Natapoff, *Punishment Without Crime*, 2018
We started by creating a suite of stand-alone tools that begins with the laborious, unglamorous but vital work of assessing the quality of data. We call this first set of tools Groundwork.

And we do Groundwork with any agency, court, office that wants it. We help them get a better grip on what’s problematic about how they record and store data, and what they can do to fix it.

Groundwork doesn’t always turn into a perfectly polished public-facing dashboard right away. Instead, it’s a first, and necessary, step down the path towards transparency. Public or not, better, more accessible data, even internally, means better decisions can be made right now. The opposite holds true as well: when agencies make public poor or incomplete data, bad decisions and diminished trust ensue.

Groundwork is a vital first step on the road to a more transparent and accountable criminal justice system.

*Check out more about the groundwork we did this year on pages 14-16.*
Commons

For prosecutor offices, police, and courts that do want to make their data public on our platforms, we have a second tool in the Suite.

Commons is a full-service, community-driven tool that engages both the public and their public servants in the process of achieving data transparency and developing policy goals for accountability.

**COMMONS FEATURES:**
- A policy goal tracker
- Monthly, quarterly, and yearly data trends
- Contextual information
- Filters for comparing data by demographics
- Easy ways to share data with policymakers, media, and others
- Community Advisory Boards (CABs) working with agencies to set policy goals

*Check out where we launched Commons this year on pages 17-24.*

BELOW: Katricia Cleveland, Sr. Engagement Manager, spreads awareness of our Commons offering at the Association of Prosecuting Attorneys conference in Miami, FL.
Engagement

Commons is a data platform, but it is also a mindset. So the last in our suite of tools truly encompasses the movement we are leading: Engagement. It’s equal parts community outreach, bridge building, and data literacy efforts. The theory behind this work is steeped in our years of experience. We’ve seen it time and time again: Once you have good data, you still need a mechanism for transforming that data into change. The community—both the public and their public servants—needs to understand what the data means, how to talk to each other about it, and how to parlay learning into policy change. The stepping stone between data and change is community involvement.

Some communities already have data but don’t know how to use it. Other communities need better skills for using data as a basis for change. Some agencies need help interfacing with the public. Often the public needs help organizing around data. Our Engagement offerings are the bridge between data and change.

This Engagement piece is already at play in our Commons communities, but now we’re poised to deploy it in communities across the country.

Check out where our Engagement team did most of their work this year on pages 25-27.

BELOW: Rosaland Harrison, Director of Community Engagement, welcomes community members to the launch celebration of Commons in East Baton Rouge Parish, LA.
Meeting communities where they are.

2023 Impact At a Glance

For over a decade, Measures for Justice has been developing data tools and services that help communities reshape the criminal justice system. This year was all about meeting communities wherever they are on the path to data transparency, accessibility, and accountability.

GROUNDWORK
9 prosecutor offices from across the country committed to improving their data infrastructure.

COMMONS LAUNCHES
District Attorney’s Office: East Baton Rouge Parish, Louisiana

- 69,035 cases
- 23 months of data
- 443,158 residents

District Attorney’s Office: Monroe County, NY

- 60,892 cases
- 54 months of data
- 743,084 residents
POLICE WORK
Developing the country’s first national set of police measures available on Commons.

2 groundbreaking pilot sites in Rochester, NY and West Sacramento, CA
8 data sets in processing
100+ measures in testing phase

ENGAGEMENT
Facilitating impact across the country.

16 new partners in transparency
55 days on-the-ground in community
15 new Commons CAB members onboarded
27,079 miles traveled

STORYTELLING
Launching campaigns to communicate the power of data: Let’s Be Clear.

12 life-changing stories
2 national film festival premieres
30,000+ story views
Groundwork

*Getting your data in shape.*

Everything great needs a solid foundation. You wouldn’t build a skyscraper on toothpicks. You wouldn’t build an investment company on counterfeit money (well, you might, but see how well that works out). And you certainly wouldn’t base life-changing decisions on poor data. The good news is: you don’t have to.

We know local criminal justice data. Prosecutor, courts, police—we’ve worked with it all. We also know best practices. We know what information various agencies need to be collecting, how, and why. We know how all this data should be recorded. And we are uniquely qualified to look at an agency’s data and find the gaps and the areas for improvement.

We’re taking the guesswork out of this process for agencies that frankly just do not have the time or the resources to deal with it. Record keeping is often an afterthought until people realize how vital those records are for making good decisions. For keeping tabs on what they’ve been doing. And for providing everyone with a set of facts to guide conversations.

**Groundwork is the first step to getting ready not just for data transparency but for internal efficiency and improved decision-making.**

We offer Groundwork support to any agency that’s interested. This year, we worked with nine prosecutor offices, seven of which were in partnership with the Association of Prosecuting Attorneys.

**This is just the beginning.**

“*We see that criminal prosecution is behind other industries in learning to use our data to improve our work and our work products. And we are right next to Silicon Valley! We are learning to use data to manage our internal decisions, shape our decisions, and interface with others about our decisions.*”

Simon O’Connell, Chief Assistant District Attorney Contra Costa, CA, District Attorney’s Office
Groundwork consists of tools and services that help offices assess the current state of their data and provide recommendations for making improvements. Often we’ve found that agencies are startled—sometimes shocked—to find out just how impoverished their data really is.

This is why we’re scaling Groundwork to reach as many offices as possible.

**KEY BENEFITS**

- Evaluation of existing data culture
- Assessment of protocols, including documentation
- Training and data quality control
- Appraisal of CMS used including how key data elements are recorded
- Final report identifying the agency’s data infrastructure strengths and challenges
- Recommendations to address the challenges and leverage the strengths identified
- Work with offices to prioritize recommendations by impact and feasibility

**GROUNDWORK LOCATIONS**

- Dallas County TX
- Miami-Dade County FL
- Davidson County TN
- Norfolk County VA
- Fairfax County VA
- Ramsey County MN
- Contra Costa County CA
- Napa County CA
- Thurston County WA
CHATTING GROUNDWORK WITH DR. JAIME MICHEL
Data Director for Fairfax County Virginia Commonwealth’s Attorney Office, a Groundwork Partner

Q A year ago your biggest challenges to better data were twofold: the staff didn’t have enough technical know-how or enough of a grasp on what good data really meant. Is all of that still true today?

A We have made incredible strides over the last year. We’ve developed a standard operating procedure for all staff to follow when it comes to what data to collect and how to record it. We have a lot of trainings in place and quality assurance. 2023 really feels like the first year we can be confident that our data is reliable and ready for the public.

Q Can you talk a bit about how MFJ has helped the office get to this point?

A We’ve been doing this work to build our data capacity for some time. Measures for Justice was so important for helping us know we’re on the right track. They helped us continue to develop our roadmap for improving data quality and guided us along the way. They were our touchstone.

Q Why does good data matter so much to your office?

A Steve Descano is a reformer, and so as the Commonwealth’s Attorney, he needs data to know how things are going. The office wants to be able to rely on data to see if policies are being implemented and what their impact is. How are all the attorneys doing? Do they need more training here or there? Assuming transparency and accountability are important—and they are—the obvious first step is to ensure the data is reliable. Otherwise we’re just operating blind.

“We did not understand what a mess our data was in. We had no standards for data entry, we could not pull out the data, we could not see what we were dealing with.”

Dr. Jaime Michel, Data Director Fairfax County Commonwealth’s Attorney Office
“I did not realize the importance of having a third party involved in evaluating our processes and identifying the data holes. Nobody in our 40 staff/40 attorney office has been operating on the same page since 2016.”

Chris Beason, Director of Information Technology, Norfolk, VA, Commonwealth’s Attorney Office

BELOW LEFT: Dr. Gipsy Escobar, VP of Product & Design, presenting on the power of Commons and the importance of data transparency at the Association of Prosecuting Attorney’s conference in Miami, FL.

BELOW RIGHT: Rosaland Harrison, Director of Community Engagement, talking with attendees and spreading awareness of Commons at the National League of Cities City Summit in Atlanta, GA.
Commons

A community-driven data tool that helps shape criminal justice policy.

COMMONS PROSECUTOR:
EAST BATON ROUGE PARISH, LOUISIANA

“Public access to data, the trust and transparency that ensues, are critical components to ensure a criminal justice system that prioritizes safety and equity. We welcome Commons as an essential feature of this work.”

Hillard C. Moore III, East Baton Rouge Parish District Attorney

East Baton Rouge Parish (EBR) is the largest parish in the state by population. Northwest of New Orleans, EBR has its share of issues to resolve, from reducing its jail population to minimizing racial and ethnic disparities.

Since joining MacArthur’s Safety and Justice Challenge, EBR has made reform a top priority. A key component of that agenda is data.

Into this mix: Commons, welcomed both by community leaders and the District Attorney’s office as a means to help build trust, transparency, and accountability in the community.

Commons brings community leaders together with their public servants around data. Often these groups are aligned only on the need to improve the justice system. The conversations can be challenging. But data, as common ground, serves as a critical starting point for what’s working well and what isn’t.

Developing a Commons begins with convening a group of community leaders to think through what data matters to them and what policy goals they are interested in pursuing. In EBR, the Community Advisory Board (CAB) comprised multiple voices from the community selected by the D.A.’s Office from organizations committed to improving the criminal justice system.
Alongside the CAB, we work with D.A. offices to ensure their data are complete and ready for processing. In partnership with the Association of Prosecuting Attorneys, we were able to work closely with EBR D.A. Hillar Moore and Assistant D.A. Jermaine Guillory to improve the quality of the office’s data, meet with the CAB regularly, and release a Commons that makes EBR Parish the most transparent in the state.

When looking at areas for improvement that could have the most positive impact on their community, the CAB and the D.A.’s office collaborated to set a policy goal focused around diversions. Over the next year, members of the community will be able to monitor the office’s progress towards this goal in the Commons platform.

“To shape effective criminal justice policies, we must participate in a system that values transparency, accountability, and accessibility to the communities it serves. I urge Louisiana district attorneys to join District Attorney Moore in his commitment to transparency and to recognize that a government that operates in the light builds trust and credibility.

Scott Peyton, Right on Crime, State Director Louisiana and Mississippi, East Baton Rouge CAB Member
COMMONS PROSECUTOR: MONROE COUNTY, NEW YORK

“Data transparency is an excellent way to promote trust within the community. Public-facing data dashboards are the way of the future and I am pleased that we can now provide a comprehensive overview of criminal cases and dispositions within the Monroe County District Attorney’s Office. I am proud to have our data publicly available on Commons for the entire community.”

Sandra Doorley, Monroe County District Attorney.

Rochester is the biggest city in Monroe County and where the county’s District Attorney office is headquartered. Historically, Rochester has been a difficult place to live for people of color. The city has endured a good deal of racial strife and race riots and has witnessed no shortage of tragedies. Relations between the public and the District Attorney’s Office have been strained and characterized by mistrust and, often, hostility. In other words, Rochester, and Monroe County by extension, is the perfect place to host a Commons data platform.

Our thinking was: What if the D.A. worked with the community to co-create what justice looks like in Rochester? What if antagonists collaborated on an effort to bring unprecedented transparency to the work of the D.A.’s office? What if radical transparency, validated by a neutral third party, could facilitate the conditions for trust and accountability that are requisite for lasting, durable change—the kind that resists failure because it’s co-owned?

When we started this work, there was not a whole lot of trust between the D.A. or community leaders. But trust in data was high. Both the D.A.’s office and community leaders recognized the unprecedented opportunity associated with having irrefutable data to underscore policy decisions.

Step by step, we worked with the CAB and the D.A.’s office to make progress, find common ground, and settle on an initial policy goal of increasing diversions for non-violent crimes to 10% by 2024. This means that 10% of cases—of defendants with charges of non-violent, low-level crimes—will be given an opportunity to complete programming that avoids traditional prosecution and a criminal record.
MEET DR. RASHID MUHAMMAD

Director of Community Partnerships at JustCause, Member of Monroe County District Attorney’s Community Advisory Board

The way he sees it: Twenty, thirty years ago, there’s no Dr. Rashid Muhammad sitting in a contentious meeting between community members and the Monroe County, New York, District Attorney to talk about using data to hold the D.A. accountable. But this is exactly what’s happened. It’s a moment for Dr. Muhammad that signals something new in Monroe. A tangible sign of positive change, trust, and progress to achieving a shared goal: a safe and vibrant community.

Dr. Muhammad is now the Director of Community Partnerships at JustCause, which connects volunteer attorneys with low-income community members who need civil legal services. He was also a member of the Monroe County District Attorney’s Commons Community Advisory Board (CAB).

Dr. Muhammad grew up in Rochester, NY. His parents moved to the city on the night of the ’64 riots, which set the stage for the work they pursued for the rest of their lives, his father as a defense lawyer, then city court judge; his mother as a political organizer.

Dr. Muhammad's first love was jazz, which sent him to the Berklee College of Music. There he found himself surrounded by virtuosos and superstars—“I'm good, but I'm not that good”—so he switched gears and joined the United States Air Force. He stayed for 22 years, during which time he earned his Associates, Bachelor of Arts, Masters, and Doctorate degrees and was commissioned as an officer. He traveled the world. Got married. And then decided to come back home to Rochester and give back to the community.

For Dr. Muhammad, “Seeing the district attorney and other community members—people who have been very bifurcated based on a long history of great inequities and deep animosity here in Rochester—seeing them come together and not only have civil conversations, but realize this data-driven approach can actually be the foundation of a fruitful partnership that makes good change—that is just so important.”

Dr. Muhammad is passionate about the importance of data transparency in his hometown. His goal? “Sustainable and impactful social justice change.”
COMMONS POLICING
A national set of standard police measures to assess performance.

We have been working with policing experts, researchers, community leaders, and police departments to develop a national set of police measures to track performance in key areas including:

• Crime Reduction and Calls for Service
• Use of Force
• Least Harm Practices and Alternatives to Arrest
• Officer Safety and Wellness
• Recruitment, Training, and Education

Public calls for police reform may have shifted over the last couple years, but the need for data transparency for police departments persists—both as a means to public accountability and so departments can keep better track of their decision-making and contribution to systems of justice.

As of this year, we have developed over a hundred measures and zeroed in on some of the key metrics we are pursuing with available data from our pilot sites in Rochester, NY and West Sacramento, CA. These metrics were honed based on input from these sites as well as from community members to ensure our final list of measures captures what’s important to police and the public for getting to a more transparent, accessible, and accountable system.

BELOW: The West Sacramento Police Department, one of two policing pilot sites, hosting a Community Advisory Board meeting.
A WORD ON POLICING WITH SEMA TAHERI
Ph.D. Director of Research and Strategic Initiatives
Measures for Justice

Q Why do you think the work to develop a standardized set of police measures matters now that the public outcry for police reform has quieted down somewhat?

A Because the police are still out there every day and their work continues to impact communities in significant ways. Policing is also a key entry point to the system. So if you want to measure the whole criminal justice system, policing is a critical piece.

Q What do you think has been the hardest part of getting this work done? What has been most challenging?

A One challenge has been finding the data to answer the questions people have about police departments. For instance, say people really want to know how often the police tell someone to sit on a curb (because how individuals are treated when stopped by the police is important). The problem is: no one documents that information. We can ask if there’s a policy. We can ask if there’s information about the stops that are made. Somewhere in an officer’s notes, there’s probably something about sitting on the curb, but the aggregate data isn’t there. That’s just one example, but there are many.
Second, there’s challenges around decisions we make about how to calculate results on some of these measures. For instance: how many incidents include use of force? To get a percentage, we need to know what an “incident” means. Is it when someone calls for service? Is it when a crime is reported? Maybe use of force happened on a wellness check. So we are faced with tough decisions. But as expert criminologists who’ve spent years developing data standards and a methodology that has itself become a standard, we know data and are well positioned to make those choices. And as experts who’ve been working with police departments and communities for years, we know how to ask for feedback and clarification when needed.

Q  What is your best-case scenario for the end of this work? What do you think the impact can be?

A  I’d like to see police departments launch data platforms with as many measures as they have data for and to set internal goals to collect new data for measures that are important to communities. I’d like to see police departments respond to these needs and allocate resources for more and better data collection.

As for the impact of this work, it’s the same impact for all we do. We’re helping give people accurate and reliable numbers to start having conversations. Without these numbers, we either think it’s way worse than it is or that everything’s fine. Data is a starting point to ask questions and have productive conversations. And we’re already seeing changes to data practices in our pilot sites. We’re grateful to have the opportunity and space to explore how to bring Commons to Policing.
Engagement

Building a movement to ensure communities can drive local change in criminal justice.

We’ve said throughout that just having good data isn’t enough to stimulate change. You need an engaged and educated constituency that includes both the public and their public servants. Engaged and educated are big words that mean different things to different people. There is no one size fits all here when working with communities and their various needs. But there are some basic principles we embrace, for instance:

1. Communities want to make their own choices about what policies will suit them best. So we never advocate for the change we want to see but rather for communities to have the tools they need to advocate for themselves.

2. Data literacy is not a privilege; it’s a right. So we are committed to making data a common and easily-understood language for all.

3. Having a common language is a great starting point for community conversations, but it’s not always enough. Often communities need to know how to use data to cross the finish line to policy change. In this case, using data often means knowing how to sit down together, look at a screen, and make sense of it together in the context of policy and practice.

BELOW: Katricia Cleveland, Sr. Engagement Manager, discussing MFJ and Commons at the Baton Rouge Criminal Justice Coordinating Council Engage meeting.
AN ENGAGING CHAT WITH PRECIOUS FREEMAN
Vice President of National Engagement, Measures for Justice

Q  Can you define engagement in the context of the work we do?
A  Community engagement, for me, means “with, for, and together.” It’s what happens when leaders, or those in power, humble themselves enough to work with the public, making space for the people they represent and lead.

Meaningful community engagement is when that space is so safe that those voices can be brave enough to speak up and empowered enough to work together with their leaders.

That last part is where we come in. We partner with communities to cultivate that safe space, a common ground where they can work together towards the changes they wish to see.

Q  What makes engagement in this context different?
A  When we bring people to the table around data, I think we have a responsibility to make sure that they are informed enough to really participate in a way that’s meaningful. And so that’s why the data literacy work that we’re starting to roll out is super important, because we’ve seen people who really want to hold their agency leaders accountable, but who find it difficult just to sit through the conversations about the data elements and how those data elements contribute to possible policy areas.

You shouldn’t have to be an expert to use data as a basis for accountability.

If we were bringing folks together as focus groups just to hear their opinions, or to give us feedback, we could high-five ourselves a lot quicker. Like you get the people there and you let them speak their truth to those who are in power—you walk away feeling like you’ve done something. It’s a lot different when you’re bringing people together and they have to understand what they’re seeing so that they can contribute in a meaningful way. So there’s a bigger burden to what we’re doing, I think.
Q What else makes this work hard?

A For starters, the data don’t always support a person’s lived experience. So if you have a Community Advisory Board (CAB) of 15 people, that’s a pretty big CAB but it’s still a very small segment of the population. And so even if those 15 people have experienced the same thing, the data may not support what’s happening more broadly in their community, generally. It’s the same for the agencies. They know what they’ve seen. They may not feel that they treat one group of people differently from another group of people. And then they see these disparities in their data, and they have to reckon with that, to sit in that. I’ve seen them go: How is this possible because we’re really and truly not trying to do this? Everyone looks at the data and is surprised by what they see. So that’s the difficult part. I don’t want anybody to leave their lived experiences at the door and come to the table as if nothing has ever happened. Because that’s not real. But I do want people making space just to sit with the data and wrap their mind around it, process it, and then figure out where to go from there.

Q What is your best-case scenario for the end of this work? What do you think the impact can be?

A If we’ve done things right, people understand not only how to look at the data and understand the data but how to communicate with the data, as well. If we’ve done things right, data transparency is just the start for communities; they keep going after our work is done, using data to have tough conversations, to demand accountability or, for agencies, to hold themselves accountable.
Behind every data point is a life.

We have been thinking about ways to help make the case for the power of criminal justice data for years. For many people, data is abstract. It’s charts and graphs and numbers. But the fact is, data also represents people. And every data point represents a life.

So this year we decided to share stories about those lives. Stories that would shake people. Upset, surprise, and move them.

The result was Let’s Be Clear: a story-telling series featuring 12 people who have experienced the criminal justice system in multiple ways. Cynthia, who was assaulted behind bars. Sheriff Leonard, who’s fighting the opioid epidemic. Linnel, who lost everything waiting for due process.

Let’s Be Clear gets the red carpet treatment at the national premiere at Sidewalk Film Festival in Birmingham, AL.
We interviewed over a hundred people. And while every story we heard was amazing in its own way, we still never planned for the feeling we got hearing the stories we selected for this series.

We were not alone feeling this way. The series premiered at the Sidewalk Film Festival in Birmingham, Alabama, to widespread acclaim. Since then, it’s been shown at the New York Human Rights Festival, United Way of Rochester, and as part of several community outreach initiatives in counties interested in making better use of criminal justice data.

These stories inspire tough conversations and demand for better, more widely available data.
CRIMINAL JUSTICE DATA HAS A STORY TO TELL.

52% of minors in Luzerne County waived their right to counsel compared to a state average of 5.6%.

“The gavel came down and the bailiff handcuffed me and she said, ‘Look what you did to your mother.’ You’re not allowed to say goodbye to your family. The last time I heard my mom, she was screaming.”

Hillary Transue, Educator & Advocate
Luzerne County, PA

From 2020-2022, diversions for all cases involving Black defendants in Yolo, CA, rose from 8.9% to 17.9%.

“Today I have a four-year-old daughter and a wife of eight years. I work for Amazon and in my free time, I referee basketball games. And I get to do all this because I don’t have a felony on my record.”

Tyrone Richard Millard II, Referee
Yolo County, CA

No data. No change.

“My vision for this city in ten years is a place that is alive and thriving. It’s a learning community filled with opportunity, a restorative criminal justice system where people feel that the courts serve them.”

Vernetta Perkins, Judge
Dallas County, AL
In 2021, the per capita rate for drug possession cases in the small city of Hobbs was 110% higher than in the most populous city in the state, Albuquerque.

“We find a lot of people who are addicts being prosecuted for nothing other than their addiction. A lot of the clients that we see with these charges come back over and over and over because we never actually address the problem.”

Ibukun Adepoju, Public Defender
Lea County, NM

76.6% of prisoners are rearrested within five years of release.

“Today my organization uses data to go to conservatives and say, ‘Hey, you have to start looking at ways to improve and fix the system if you want to reduce crime.’”

Brett Tolman, Former U.S. Attorney, Executive Director of Right on Crime
Salt Lake County, UT

To feel the real impact of these stories, we invite you to visit letsbeclearstories.org and immerse yourself in the importance of data.
Expenses by Class*

We are a mission-driven organization, which is why 93% of donations that come in are used on program expenses.

TOTAL EXPENSES FOR 2023
$13,367,574

MISSION
$12,436,345

ADMINISTRATION
$210,151

FUNDRAISING
$721,078

*These are 2023 unaudited financials. For more information, please visit our website to download our 990.
Philanthropic Support

Measures for Justice is grateful for the ongoing philanthropic support from numerous individuals and organizations who make this work possible. A heartfelt thanks to the following entities who made major philanthropic contributions in 2023:

Anonymous  Sands Family Foundation
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LeChase Construction  The John D. and Catherine T. MacArthur Foundation
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Rich and Sarah Barton

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Anonymous  John D. and Catherine T. MacArthur Foundation
Bureau of Justice Assistance  Pershing Square Foundation
Chan Zuckerberg Initiative  Stand Together
Draper Richards Kaplan Foundation  The Safety and Justice Challenge Supported by the Open Society Foundations
Echoing Green  William H. Donner Foundation, Inc.
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Google

“I believe in the power of transparent, accessible data for decision making in all areas of our society, including the criminal justice system. By backing Measures for Justice, I invest in a future where data is the driver of change by communities, not unproven rhetoric across political lines.”

Mike Schumacher, annual donor
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Our Board of Directors brings an incredible amount of knowledge, expertise, and experience to stewarding the generous support that makes our work possible.

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