Juvenile Justice Data Landscape

Joe Ryan, PhD  The University of Michigan Child and Adolescent Data Lab
Terri Gilbert, MSW Wayne State University Center for Behavioral Health and Justice
Overview of the Criminal Legal System in Michigan: Adults and Youth Report

Commissioned by the Public Welfare Foundation

- Provide an overview of what we know and what we don’t know about the criminal legal system
- Used data to provide a roadmap and baseline
- Youth section researched and completed using some publicly available data to fill in the many gaps
- Confirmed how much information is “missing” in both youth and adult systems
- Leads to an incomplete picture of the youth justice system
- Surfaced issues within the system and illustrated opportunities for change
What we know, and importantly, what we do not know

No aggregate data reporting on key issues such as:

How many youth were involved in the youth justice system last year?
How many youth were arrested last year?
How many youth are on probation?
How many youth are diverted from court involvement each year?
How many youth return to court for a new offense?
Which programs/interventions are achieving the desired short- and long-term outcomes?
Is the system equitable and fair, or are there disparities at key decision points?
How much do the taxpayers spend on youth justice?
Flaws in available data

Reliability and integrity depends on:
• What is in the data systems
• How the data is collected
• Whether there are standard definitions
• Whether the data are collected and reported the same way
• Whether everyone participates
Delinquency case filing trends

Data Source: State Court Administrative Office (2019)
Opportunities identified in the report:

Need for accurate, timely and informative data

Need for data transparency/data reporting to the general public/taxpayers, stakeholders, practitioners

Need to review data across allied systems

Integrated data helps us understand youth in the system better and helps us to respond more effectively

- Child welfare involvement
- Impact on educational outcomes
- Trajectory into the adult system
Why use data?

State-level

Answer basic questions about the system

• How many youth are involved in various stages of the system?
• Is the system successful?
• Is youth crime going up?
• Do most of the juveniles commit another crime?
• Are serious juvenile crimes concentrated in certain areas?
• How much do we spend?

Advocate for funding

Identify and support policy priorities
Why use data?

County-level

Answer basic questions about the youth in your county:

- Is the JJ population going up or down? Why?
- What are the key characteristics of youth who end up in the JJ system?
- How do youth move through the system?
- How many end up in the criminal justice system?
- Is the system fair?

Advocate for funding

Understand which interventions are most effective
Barriers to data integration and reporting

Four primary challenges:

1. Human capital
   - Staff
   - Technical expertise

2. Data Accessibility

3. Data Quality

4. Data Sharing

5. Incentives
Progress so far

At Present – several groups discussing data in multiple forums

2020 – Michigan Justice Fund Data Workgroup

2019 - Michigan Safety and Justice Roundtable of Justice-involved Youth Recommendations


2013 – Multi-jurisdictional Juvenile Justice Data Sharing Project

2012 - Juvenile Justice 20/20 and MDHHS Datapalooza convening and Recommendations
Potential Next Steps: Roadmap

Create Governance Structure
- Conduct environmental scan
- Develop gap analysis
- Determine information technology architecture
- Determine data requirements
- Develop data standardization
- Develop set of regular data reports

Determine data sharing parameters –
- Policies
- Access
- Liability
- Data Use Agreements
Resources

- National Center for State Courts
  - National Open Court Data Standards

- Bureau of Justice Assistance
  - Multi-jurisdictional data sharing
  - Global Reference Architecture

- National Council of Juvenile and Family Court Judges/National Center for Juvenile Justice
  - Fundamental Measures of Juvenile Justice