Maryland Community Safety Data Dashboard

FINAL REPORT

August 2026

MARYLAND CRIME RESEARCH AND INNOVATION CENTER

About MCRIC

This document was prepared by the Maryland Crime Research and Innovation Center (MCRIC) at the University of Maryland. MCRIC engages in research to inform local, state, and national crime reduction strategy and policy through data-driven scholarship by conducting rigorous interdisciplinary basic and applied research, developing and evaluating innovative criminal justice strategies aimed at reducing crime in the state, leveraging cross-agency networks to foster data integration, and actively engaging in translational science through wide and varied dissemination of research. MCRIC leverages the broad range of expertise at the University of Maryland to engage in innovative research and interdisciplinary projects to enhance community safety and inform data-driven decision making. MCRIC works with a variety of partners including communities and community-based organizations, police and practitioners, lawmakers, academic peers, and industry, to promote data sharing, exchange knowledge and best practices, and develop new approaches.

About the Report

This report provides an overview of the development and implementation of the Maryland Community Safety Data Dashboard, created by the Maryland Crime Research & Innovation Center (MCRIC) in partnership with the Governor's Office of Crime Prevention & Policy (GOCPP). The dashboard was developed in response to House Bill 1018, which mandated the creation of a statewide data resource to track indicators related to safety, security, and overall community well-being across the State of Maryland. In addition to traditional crime measures such as reported crime and clearance rates, the dashboard incorporates a range of social and economic indicators to support a more comprehensive understanding of factors that shape community safety. The project involved collaboration with academic experts and multiple state agencies to identify, compile, and document relevant data sources and measures. This report summarizes the development of the dashboard and accompanying documentation designed to support transparency, interpretation, and future use of the data.

Research Team

Bianca Bersani, Ph.D.
Associate Professor, Department of Criminology and Criminal Justice, University of Maryland, College Park.
Director, Maryland Crime Research and Innovation Center (MCRIC).

Torri Sperry, Ph.D.
Research Director, Maryland Crime Research and Innovation Center (MCRIC).

Emily Glazener LaCroix, Ph.D.
Affiliated Researcher, Maryland Crime Research and Innovation Center (MCRIC).

Bryant Best, Ph.D.
Assistant Professor, Urban Educational Leadership & NCEED, Advanced Studies, Leadership, & Policy, Morgan State University.

Jocelyn Evens, MA
Project Manager, Maryland Crime Research and Innovation Center (MCRIC).

Grace Phelps, MA
Research Assistant, Data Visualization Analyst, and Dashboard Designer, Department of Criminology and Criminal Justice, University of Maryland, College Park.

Dixin Li, MA
Research Assistant, Department of Criminology and Criminal Justice, University of Maryland, College Park.

Pritesh Jain, MA
Data Visualization Analyst and Dashboard Designer

Jillian Rothschild, MA
Research Assistant, Department of Government and Politics, University of Maryland, College Park.

Academic Advisory Board

Rabiatu Barrie, Ph.D.
Assistant Professor, Family Science, School of Public Health, University of Maryland, College Park.

Casey Dawkins, Ph.D.
Associate Dean for Research
Professor of Urban Studies and Planning, School of Architecture, Planning, & Preservation, University of Maryland, College Park.

Heide Jackson, Ph.D.
Director, Scientific and Technical Core, Maryland Population Research Center, University of Maryland, College Park.
Associate Research Professor, University of Maryland, College Park.

Chetan Joshi, Ph.D.
Director of Counseling Center, University of Maryland, College Park.

Amy Morgan, Ph.D.
Assistant Professor, Family Science, School of Public Health, University of Maryland, College Park.

State Practitioner Advisory Group

Maryland Department of Health

Katyayani Bhide, Chief Data Officer

Susan Bradley, Data Liaison, Behavioral Health Administration.

James Yoe, Ph.D., Director of Behavioral Health Research and Innovation, Behavioral Health Administration.

Maryland Department of Human Services

Sharmin Hossain, Ph.D., MS, MPH, Chief Data Officer, Office of the Secretary

Maryland Department of Labor

Ajani Pierce, Labor Market Economist, Division of Workforce Development & Adult Learning.

Maryland Department of Planning

Alfred Sundara, AICP, Director of State Data & Analysis Center.

Maryland Department of Public Safety and Correctional Services

Angelina Guarino, Assistant Secretary of Data, Policy and Grants.

Jay Miller, Executive Director, Office of Data Development.

Maryland Department of State Police

Elena Russo, Director, Office of Media Communications.

Maryland Longitudinal Data System Center

Ross Goldstein, Executive Director.

Maryland State Commission on Criminal Sentencing Policy

Sarah Bowles, Program Analyst.

Stacy Najaka, Ph.D. Research Director.

David Soule, Ph.D. Executive Director.

Maryland State Department of Education

Molly Abend, Data Management Coordinator.

Office of the Attorney General

Tiffany Clark, Director, Legal Affairs Unit, Office of Equity, Policy and Engagement.

Christian Gant, Assistant Attorney General, Office of Equity, Policy and Engagement.

Zenita Hurley, Deputy Attorney General, Office of Equity, Policy and Engagement.

Carrie Williams, Deputy Attorney General, Office of Equity, Policy and Engagement.

Contributors

Additional contributions to this report were provided by colleagues across academic, state and practice settings. From the Criminology and Criminal Justice Department at the University of Maryland, we would like to thank Dr. Brian Johnson, Dr. Wade Jacobsen, and Dr. Min Xie for lending their expertise to the identification of sources of data, key indicators, and insights into the identification, measurement, and nature of system generated racial disparities. We would also like to thank all of our colleagues from the Governor's Office of Crime Prevention & Policy who contributed to this dashboard by sharing data and insights, connecting the research team with practitioners, and providing feedback on the design of the dashboard, including James Rhoden, Jeffrey Zuback, Briana Irwin, Tatiana Reyes, and Rachel Ames. And finally, we would like to thank Dr. Katie Leonard and Dr. Shawn Flower, whom we consulted as subject matter experts in their respective areas of expertise related to data systems and measurement.

Table of Contents

Project Scope

Legislative Background

In 2023, the Maryland General Assembly passed House Bill 1018, directing the development of a statewide Community Safety Data Dashboard to provide a comprehensive view of conditions related to safety, security, and community well-being across Maryland. The legislation recognized that traditional crime statistics alone do not fully capture the broader set of factors that influence safety within communities. As a result, the bill mandated the creation of a public-facing data resource that would integrate both public safety indicators and a range of social and economic measures that shape community conditions.

To implement this mandate, the Governor's Office of Crime Prevention & Policy (GOCPP) contracted the Maryland Crime Research & Innovation Center (MCRIC) at the University of Maryland (UMD) to lead the development of the dashboard. MCRIC was responsible for coordinating an extensive data curation and integration process that involved identifying, evaluating, acquiring, cleaning, standardizing, and documenting data from a wide range of public and administrative sources related to community safety and well-being. This process included reviewing potential indicators across multiple domains, assessing data quality and completeness, comparing overlapping sources to determine the most appropriate measures, and developing consistent approaches for organizing and presenting data collected across agencies and systems. These efforts were informed through ongoing collaboration and dialogue with subject matter experts, researchers, practitioners, and state agency partners who provided guidance on indicator selection, measurement considerations, data interpretation, and methodological challenges throughout the development process. The resulting dashboard is intended to serve as a centralized resource that supports policymakers, practitioners, researchers, and community stakeholders in understanding trends and conditions related to community safety across the state.

Defining Community Safety

The development of the Maryland Community Safety Data Dashboard was guided by a holistic framework for understanding community safety. This framework was developed and refined in collaboration with an advisory board of academics at the UMD and GOCPP, and shaped how indicators were selected, organized, and interpreted throughout the project.

Community Safety refers to the overall condition in which communities and individuals are protected from harm and supported in their well-being. It includes both **community security** – achieved through protection from crime, accidents, natural disasters, and other emergencies – and **community well-being**, which is strengthened by access to essential resources such as healthcare, education, employment, and housing. Achieving community safety requires effective emergency services, coordinated efforts among emergency responders and community organizations, and equitable systems and social supports that foster cohesion, resilience, and the capacity for communities to adapt and thrive.

This definition recognizes that safety is influenced not only by crime and justice system activity, but also by broader structural conditions that shape opportunity, stability, and health within communities.

Dashboard Purpose and Indicator Domains

Consistent with the requirements outlined in House Bill 1018 and the broader conceptual framework described above, the Community Safety Data Dashboard was designed to incorporate indicators spanning multiple domains that collectively influence safety and well-being. The legislation specifically required the inclusion of several key measures reflecting both traditional public safety conditions and broader social determinants associated with community stability. These mandated indicators included reported crime and clearance rates, as well as measures related to unemployment, school dropout rates, poverty, median household income, population density, degree of urbanization, access to behavioral health, mental health, and substance use treatment, and available surveys of public trust in policing and the criminal justice system in the state. While the legislation established these core indicators, it also allowed flexibility for the inclusion of additional measures that reflect factors related to community safety and well-being. Guided by the project's broader definition of community safety and informed by consultation with subject matter experts and agency partners, the dashboard incorporates a wider set of indicators across several domains that help contextualize safety conditions across Maryland communities.

These additional indicators include demographic characteristics such as population size, age distribution, sex, race, and ethnicity. Economic indicators were expanded to include detailed measures of poverty, unemployment, and median household income across demographic groups, housing instability indicators such as eviction filings, and counts of unsheltered individuals experiencing homelessness. Educational indicators include measures of chronic absenteeism, school suspensions and expulsions, student homelessness, students in foster care, and school safety measures such as the presence of School Resource Officers (SROs) and school shooting incidents. The dashboard also incorporates indicators related to environmental and structural conditions that influence safety and well-being. These include measures such as the Food Accessibility Index, the Social Vulnerability Index, transportation-related crash injuries and fatalities, and accidental firearm injuries and deaths. Health and behavioral indicators, including suicide rates and overdose deaths, were also included to capture additional dimensions of community well-being that intersect with public safety outcomes.

By integrating indicators from these multiple domains into a single platform, the dashboard provides a comprehensive view of the conditions that shape community safety across Maryland. Rather than focus solely on crime outcomes, the dashboard enables users to explore patterns and relationships across social, economic, environmental, health, and justice system factors that influence the stability and resilience of communities over time.

Project Partners and Development Process

Developing this dashboard involved extensive collaboration with academic experts and state agency partners. Subject matter experts representing disciplines including demography, economics, housing and urban planning, education, and behavioral health provided guidance on indicator selection, measurement considerations, and interpretation of data. In addition, several Maryland state agencies contributed data, technical expertise, and feedback throughout the development process. Key agency partners included the Maryland Department of Health, the Maryland Department of Labor, the Maryland Department of Human Services, the Maryland State Department of Education, the Maryland State Commission on Criminal Sentencing Policy (MSCCSP), the Maryland State Police, and the Department of Public Safety and Correctional Services. These partnerships were critical in identifying available administrative datasets, understanding how indicators are measured and reported, and ensuring the appropriate operationalization and measurement of the data presented within the dashboard. Because the dashboard integrates information collected across multiple agencies and systems, significant effort was dedicated to reviewing data definitions, assessing methodological considerations, and documenting any limitations associated with available data. Transparency in data sources, measurement decisions, and reporting practices was a central priority throughout the development process.

Scope of This Report

This report provides a comprehensive overview of the development of the Maryland Community Safety Data Dashboard and the supporting documentation created to facilitate its use and interpretation. To support transparency and usability, the report includes a codebook and variable reference list, detailed descriptions of data sources, and a guide outlining the rationale for key data selection and measurement decisions. In addition to describing the data sources and methodological considerations underlying the dashboard, the report includes several accompanying components that document specific aspects of the project.

Subreports summarizing findings from our exploration of public survey data on perceptions of safety among Maryland residents, availability of racial disparity data for indicators of community safety, and a discussion of best practices, methodological considerations, and limitations associated with interpreting and using the dashboard. The report also documents the development of an original behavioral health data collection instrument designed to improve the availability of relevant service access data.

Together, these materials provide a clear record of the processes used to develop the dashboard and are intended to support accurate interpretation, transparency, and future refinement of the community safety data infrastructure.

Codebook of Variables

This section provides a comprehensive list of all variables included in the dashboard, organized by domain. This codebook is intended to serve as a reference guide that defines each measure and ensures clarity and transparency in how indicators are labeled and interpreted throughout the dashboard.

Demographics

- Total population
- Sex (count and percent)
    - Males
    - Females
- Age (count and percent)
    - Under 5
    - 5 to 9
    - 10 to 14
    - 15 to 19
    - 20 to 24
    - 25 to 34
    - 35 to 64
    - 65 and above
- Race (count and percent)
    - White (alone *indicates single race)
    - Black or African American (alone)
    - American Indian or Alaska Native (alone)
    - Asian (alone)
    - Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander (alone)
    - Other (alone)
    - Mixed/multiple race
- Ethnicity
    - Hispanic or Latino (any race)
    - Not Hispanic or Latino (any race)
- Population density (number of residents per square mile)
- Urban-Rural Classification
    - Large Central Metro = counties in metropolitan areas of 1 million population or more that contain the entire population of the largest principal city of the metropolitan area, or are entirely contained in the largest principal city of the metropolitan area, or contain at least 250,000 residents of any principal city in the metropolitan area.
    - Large Fringe Metro = counties in metropolitan areas of 1 million or more population that do not qualify as large central.
    - Medium Metro = counties in metropolitan areas of 250,000 to 999,999 population.
    - Small Metro = counties in metropolitan areas of 50,000 to 249,999 population.
    - Micropolitan = counties in micropolitan statistical areas
    - Noncore = counties that did not qualify as micropolitan

Economics

- Median Household Income (In inflation-adjusted dollars)
    - All households (total)
    - White
    - Black or African American
    - American Indian or Alaska Native
    - Asian
    - Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander
    - Other race
    - Mixed/multiple race
    - Hispanic
- Percent of residents below federal poverty threshold (population for whom poverty status is determined)
    - Total
    - Age
        - Under 18
        - 18 to 64
        - 65 and over
    - Sex
        - Female
        - Male
    - Race/Ethnicity
        - White
        - Black or African American
        - American Indian or Alaska Native
        - Asian
        - Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander
        - Other Race
        - Mixed/multiple race
        - Hispanic
- Unemployment Rates
    - Total (population 16 and above)
    - Sex (population 20 to 64)
        - Female
        - Male
    - Race/Ethnicity (population 16 and above)
        - White
        - Black or African American
        - American Indian or Alaska Native
        - Asian
        - Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander
        - Other Race
        - Mixed/multiple race
        - Hispanic
    - Age (2015-2023)*
        - 16 to 19

        - 20 to 24
        - 25 to 29
        - 30 to 34
        - 35 to 44
        - 45 to 54
        - 55 to 59
        - 60 to 64
        - 65 to 74
        - 75 and over

    *In 2014, ACS only used the following age categories for calculating unemployment rates:
        - 16 to 19
        - 20 to 24
        - 25 to 44
        - 45 to 54
        - 55 to 64
        - 65 to 74
        - 75 and over

- Unsheltered persons (counts)
    - Total
    - Chronically unsheltered
    - Substance abuse
    - HIV
    - Mentally ill
    - Veterans
    - Domestic violence victims
- Housing Evictions (Counts)

Education

- School dropouts (count and rate)
- Chronic absenteeism (count and rate)
- Out-of-School Suspensions & Expulsions (count and rate)
    - Total
    - Sex
        - Male
        - Female
    - Race/Ethnicity
        - White
        - Black or African American
        - American Indian or Alaska Native
        - Asian
        - Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander
        - Mixed/multiple race
        - Hispanic
- Student homelessness (count and rate)
- Students in foster care (count and rate)

- % Of schools with full-time School Resource Office (SRO)
- Number of school shooting deaths/injuries

Environmental

- Food Accessibility Index
- Social Vulnerability Index (Relative Rank)
- Crash fatalities (count)
- Crash injuries (count)
- Number of accidental shooting deaths/injuries
- Emergency department visits related to firearms
- Suicides with a firearm

Behavioral

- Suicide rate
- Number of overdose deaths
- Primary care physician (PCP) ratio
- Mental health provider ratio
- % of Adults experiencing frequent mental distress (14 or more days per month)
- Total number of health services facilities
- % of Facilities with substance use treatment services
- % of Facilities with mental health services
- % of Facilities with a mix of substance use and mental health treatment services
- % of Facilities with neither substance use nor mental health treatment services
- % of Facilities offering detoxification services
- % of Facilities offering psychiatric emergency walk-in services
- % of Facilities offering treatment at no charge or minimal payment (PAYASST)
- Number of individuals receiving mental health services in Public Behavioral Health System (PBHS)
- Number of individuals receiving substance use disorder services (PBHS)
- % of Mental health service recipients receiving follow-up care within 7 days of ED discharge (PBHS)
- % of SUD providers actively billing for youth (ages 0-17) services (PBHS)
- Number of (unduplicated) youth receiving SUD treatment (PBHS)
- Number of unduplicated individuals served in outpatient rural settings (PBHS)
- % of Individuals receiving behavioral health services via telehealth (PBHS)
- % of Mental health service recipients with 3 or more behavioral health-related emergency department visits (PBHS)

Crime

- Crime (Department of State Police Statistics)
    - Aggravated Assault
    - Breaking & Entering
    - Larceny/Theft
    - Motor Vehicle Theft
    - Murder
    - Rape
    - Robbery
- Crime (NIBRS Offenses)
    - Crimes Against Person
        - Homicide
        - Assault
        - Sex Offenses
        - Robbery
    - Crimes Against Property
        - Burglary / Breaking and Entering
        - Larceny / Theft
        - Motor Vehicle Theft
    - Crimes Against Society
    - Total Offenses
- Firearm-Related Offenses
    - Firearm Homicides
    - Person Offenses Committed with Firearms
- Victimization
    - Violent Victimization
        - 2017-2019 (Aggregated) Rate per 1,000 persons
        - 2020-2022 (Aggregated) Rate per 1,000 persons
    - Property Victimization
        - 2017-2019 (Aggregated) Rate per 1,000 persons
        - 2020-2022 (Aggregated) Rate per 1,000 persons
    - Violent Victimization Excluding Simple Assault
        - 2017-2019 (Aggregated) Rate per 1,000 persons
        - 2020-2022 (Aggregated) Rate per 1,000 persons
    - Burglary Victimization
        - 2017-2019 (Aggregated) Rate per 1,000 persons
        - 2020-2022 (Aggregated) Rate per 1,000 persons
    - Violent Victimization Reported to the Police
        - 2017-2019 (Aggregated) Rate per 1,000 persons
        - 2020-2022 (Aggregated) Rate per 1,000 persons
    - Property Victimization Reported to the Police
        - 2017-2019 (Aggregated) Rate per 1,000 persons
        - 2020-2022 (Aggregated) Rate per 1,000 persons

Policing

- Crime Clearances
    - UCR Clearances
        - Total Offenses
        - Assault
        - Burglary
        - Larceny
        - Motor Vehicle Theft
        - Murder
        - Rape
        - Robbery
    - NIBRS Incident Clearances
        - Crimes Against Person
            - Assault
            - Homicide
            - Robbery
            - Sex Offenses
        - Crimes Against Property
            - Burglary / Breaking and Entering
            - Larceny Theft
            - Motor Vehicle Theft
        - Crimes Against Society
        - Total Incident Clearances
- Arrests
    - UCR Arrests
        - Arrest Race
            - American Indian
            - Asian
            - Black
            - White
        - Arrestee Ethnicity
            - Hispanic
            - Non-Hispanic
    - NIBRS Arrests
        - Arrestee Race
            - American Indian
            - Asian
            - Black
            - Pacific Islander
            - Unknown
            - White
        - Arrestee Ethnicity
            - Hispanic
            - Non-Hispanic
            - Unknown

- Use of Force
    - Complaints Administratively Charged
    - Complaints Not Charged
        - Complaints Unfounded
        - Complaints Exonerated
    - Complaints Pending
- Traffic Stops
    - All Stops
        - Asian
        - Black
        - Hispanic
        - Missing or Unknown Race
        - Native American
        - Other Race
        - White
    - Search Conducted
        - Asian
        - Black
        - Hispanic
        - Missing or Unknown Race
        - Native American
        - Other Race
        - White
    - Arrest Outcome
        - Asian
        - Black
        - Hispanic
        - Missing or Unknown Race
        - Native American
        - Other Race
        - White
- Officers Killed in Line of Duty
    - Total Law Enforcement Officer Deaths
        - Number of Law Enforcement Officers Killed by Homicide
        - Number of Law Enforcement Officers Killed by Accident
        - Number of Law Enforcement Officers Killed by Suicide

Courts

- Individual
    - Average Offender Score for all Sentences by Race
        - American Indian
        - Asian
        - Black
        - Other Race
        - Pacific Islander
        - Unknown Race
        - White
    - Average Offender Score for all Sentences by Ethnicity
        - Hispanic
        - Non-Hispanic
        - Unknown Ethnicity
- Incarceration Sentences
    - Incarceration Sentences by Race
        - American Indian
        - Asian
        - Black
        - Other Race
        - Pacific Islander
        - Unknown Race
        - White
    - Incarceration Sentences by Ethnicity
        - Hispanic
        - Non-Hispanic
        - Unknown Ethnicity
    - Average Incarceration Sentence Length by Race
        - American Indian
        - Asian
        - Black
        - Other Race
        - Pacific Islander
        - Unknown Race
        - White
    - Average Incarceration Sentence Length by Ethnicity
        - Hispanic
        - Non-Hispanic
        - Unknown Ethnicity

Corrections

- Recidivism
    - 1 Year Recidivism
    - 2 Year Recidivism
    - 3 Year Recidivism
    - Cumulative 3 Year Recidivism
- Supervision
    - Average Active Supervision Population-Criminal Supervision
    - Average Active Supervision Population-Drinking Driver Monitoring Program
- Correctional Violence
    - Total number of individual-on-individual homicides
        - Correctional individual-on-individual homicides
        - Detention of individual-on-individual homicides
    - Overall individual-on-individual assault rate per 100 ADP (Average Daily Population)
        - Correctional individual-on-individual assault rate per 100 ADP
        - Detention individual-on-individual assault rate per 100 ADP
    - Overall individual-on-staff assault rate per 100 ADP
        - Correctional individual-on-staff assault rate per 100 ADP
        - Detention individual-on-staff assault rate per 100 ADP

Data Decision-Making and Descriptions

The preceding section provides a comprehensive codebook of all variables included in the Maryland Community Safety Data Dashboard. While these measures represent the final set of indicators presented to viewers, they reflect only a small portion of the work undertaken during the development process. Behind this final selection was an extensive and systematic effort to identify, evaluate, and refine a much broader universe of potential indicators. This section documents that process, highlighting the scope of data considered, the criteria used to guide inclusion, and the rationale for excluding variables that were ultimately not incorporated into the dashboard.

Scope of Data Exploration

To build a dashboard that reflects the full range of factors influencing community safety, the research team conducted an extensive review of data sources across multiple domains, including public safety, health, education, housing, economic conditions, and the environment. This effort extended well beyond identifying a single measure for each concept and instead involved exploring multiple ways of measuring similar issues and comparing alternative data sources. This was done in close collaboration with academic experts and state agency partners, including subject matter experts representing multiple disciplines (e.g., criminology, criminal justice, sociology, demography, economics, housing and urban planning, education, and behavioral health) who provided ongoing guidance on indicator selection, measurement approaches, and interpretation. We also consulted with representatives from multiple Maryland state agencies, who provided data, technical expertise, and feedback throughout the development process. Key partners included the Maryland Department of Health, Department of Labor, Department of Human Services, Maryland State Department of Education, the Maryland State Commission on Criminal Sentencing Policy (MSCCSP), Maryland Department of State Police, and the Department of Public Safety and Correctional Services.

These collaborations were essential not only for identifying available data, but also for understanding how indicators are defined, collected, and reported in practice. Because the dashboard integrates information from multiple agencies and systems, substantial effort was dedicated to reviewing data definitions, reconciling differences across sources, and documenting methodological considerations and limitations. As new information was incorporated, previously considered measures were revisited and refined, making the overall process highly iterative. We examined both direct outcomes (e.g., deaths, injuries, or reported incidents) and broader measures capturing underlying risks, access to resources, or structural conditions. The resulting set of indicators reflects not simply what data were available, but a deliberate effort to identify measures that meaningfully capture different dimensions of community safety.

Criteria for Data Selection

Given the breadth of data considered, a consistent set of criteria was used to guide decisions about which indicators to include. Measures selected for the dashboard generally met several key standards:

- Clear relevance to community safety, including both direct outcomes and broader conditions affecting community well-being
- Availability at the county-level for all Maryland jurisdictions, allowing for consistent measurement and interpretation of indicators across Maryland jurisdictions (though variables that were only available at the state-level were included when appropriate)
- Sufficient coverage over time to allow insight into trends

- Use of reliable, well-documented data sources
- Clarity in how measures were defined and interpreted
- Appropriateness for public presentation, including consideration of potential misinterpretation or unintended consequences

While these standards guided our overall selection process, there were many cases in which decisions required balancing tradeoffs. For example, selecting a measure with slightly less detail in order to ensure consistent coverage across all counties and years.

Data Source Review and Indicator Decisions

With these criteria in mind, the research team conducted a detailed review of specific data sources and indicators within each domain of community safety. For each topic area, multiple potential measures were identified, assessed, and compared before final decisions were made. This section summarizes key inclusion decisions alongside examples of indicators that were considered but ultimately not incorporated, and the rationale for those decisions.

Four broader indicator factors should be noted.

- ***Time Period***. Efforts were made to collect data spanning the period between 2014 and 2024. However, due to data availability, some indicators are presented by the fiscal year rather than the calendar year. When possible, data are presented by calendar year first. When calendar year data are not available, we use fiscal year. Each indicator with data by fiscal year will be explicitly noted below and on the dashboard.
- ***Data Suppression***. Several indicators are presented by categories of race and ethnicity. However, in some jurisdictions the population identified as a particular racial category is a very low proportion of the population. Due to the concern of protecting the anonymity of individuals in areas with lower representations of racial groups and to protect the risk of making larger conclusions from small subsamples, data for specific racial categories were suppressed. Following the guidance of the U.S. Census (see here), the data were suppressed for any county and year for which there were fewer than 50 residents identified within a given racial category according to the U.S. Census demographic data.
- ***Racial and Ethnic Categories***. Due to differing race and ethnicity categories and definitions across the multiple agencies and data sources used for the dashboard, all race and ethnicity category labels displayed on the dashboard are true to the data source from which the data were gathered. Accordingly, race and ethnicity labels vary across indicators and pages of the dashboard. For example, one data source identifies “Native American” as a racial category while another identifies “American Indian.”
- ***Rates by Race***. An important element of the Legislation and dashboard is the inclusion of information that would identify potential racial disparities in indicators of community safety. Determining racial disparities is a nuanced and complicated process, due to the nature of determining the appropriate comparison group. This and associated challenges are described in more detail in the Racial Disparities in Maryland’s Criminal Justice System subreport. For the purposes of the dashboard, all criminal legal system decision points that are displayed by race and ethnicity provide information on the proportion of a given sample that identifies as a particular racial group and should not be equated as indices of racial disparities.

Demographics

Included Variables: Total population, sex, age, race, ethnicity, population density, and urban-rural designation

The dashboard presents both state- and county-level demographic data from 2014 to 2024. Population data by age, sex, race, and ethnicity were all obtained from the US Census American Community Survey (ACS) 5-year estimates. For each demographic breakdown, the dashboard includes these estimates as both total counts and as a percent of the population.

The dashboard also presents both state- and county-level data on population density from 2014 to 2024, as well as rural-urban continuum codes for each county (for 2013 and 2023). Population density was calculated using data from the US Census and rural-urban classifications were obtained from the National Center for Health Statistics (NCHS) Urban-Rural Classification Scheme for Counties.

Considered but Excluded:

- Percentage of households with no internet access (Agency of Healthcare Resources' Social Determinants of Health)
    - This variable was considered because internet access is increasingly essential for access to employment and educational opportunities. However, data were only available from 2014-2020, and other measures of employment and education were deemed more direct indicators. To conserve space and prioritize variables most relevant to understanding population context, this indicator was ultimately excluded.
- Public Transit Density (MD Open Data)
    - This variable indicates the number of metro and bus stops in each county, which could provide insight into community well-being by showing access to work and essential services. However, because substantial public transit nodes exist only in a few primarily urban counties, and there is wide variation *within* counties, the data were deemed not meaningful at the county- or state-level.

Economics and Housing

Included Variables: Median household income, percent of residents below the federal poverty threshold, unemployment rates, counts of unsheltered persons (including chronically unsheltered and subgroups such as individuals with substance abuse, HIV, mental illness, veterans, or domestic violence survivors), and housing evictions

The dashboard presents both state- and county-level economic and housing data. Median household income, poverty rates, and unemployment rates were all legislatively mandated and obtained from the US Census American Community Survey (ACS) 5-year estimates, covering 2014 to 2024. These measures provide essential context for understanding the socioeconomic environment that can influence community safety and well-being.

Data on unsheltered persons come from the United States Department of Housing and Urban Development's (HUD) Continuum of Care Homeless Assistance Program reports, which capture the number of unsheltered individuals in the state at a single point in time each year (2014-2024; excluding 2021). County-level data were not available for this variable.

Housing eviction data were collected from the Maryland District Court, which began tracking eviction cases in January 2023. The dashboard includes this information at both the state- and county-levels for 2023 and 2024. These data provide insight into housing stability, a critical component of overall community safety.

Considered but Excluded:

Several additional economic and housing indicators were reviewed but ultimately excluded in order to prioritize the most direct measures of financial stability and housing access:

- Housing-related measures (CDC Places and American Community Survey): Percentage of housing vacancies, home ownership, percentage of occupied units without fuel, units lacking complete kitchen or plumbing facilities, severe housing problems, and housing insecurity in the past 12 months
    - These variables were excluded because they either overlap with the unsheltered population or eviction measures or are not consistently available at the county-level for the full 2014-2024 period. The chosen indicators (unsheltered population counts and eviction data) were considered to more directly reflect housing instability that could impact safety and well-being.
- Income and support measures: Percent of household income required for childcare expenses, number of children eligible for free or reduced-price lunch, and receipt of food stamps (CDC Places and American Community Survey)
    - These variables were excluded because they capture indirect or partial aspects of financial strain. The legislatively mandated indicators (median household income, poverty rate, and unemployment) were considered to be a better fit for representing economic conditions in a clear and consistent way. Given space constraints and the need to provide substantial coverage of each category without overloading the dashboard, we prioritized these mandated indicators over additional, more narrowly focused measures.

Education

Included Variables: School dropout rates, chronic absenteeism, out-of-school suspensions and expulsions, percent of schools with full-time School Resource Officers (SROs), student homelessness, students in foster care, and school shooting deaths and injuries

The dashboard presents both state- and county-level education data from 2014 to 2024, where available. The legislatively mandated measure, school dropout rates, was obtained from the Maryland State Department of Education (MSDE) Annual Dropout Rate Data files. Dropout data include both counts and rates of students leaving public schools in grades 9-12, reported at the state- and county-levels.

Chronic absenteeism data (2018-2024) come from MSDE attendance files and capture students absent 10% or more of school days, reported as both counts and rates. Out-of-school suspensions and expulsions are combined into a single measure (per data availability), with counts and rates reported overall and by sex and race/ethnicity using MSDE enrollment data as denominators.

Student homelessness and students in foster care data (2018-2024) were obtained from MSDE's Students Receiving Special Services files. Counts represent the number of students experiencing homelessness or in foster care in a given school year, and rates (per 100 students) represent the percentage of students affected.

The percent of schools with full-time SROs (2020-2024) was obtained from the Maryland Center for School Safety (MCSS). This measure reflects schools that employ at least one full-time SRO, providing insight into law enforcement coverage and perceived school safety, though SROs can also contribute to the school-to-prison pipeline, particularly for students of color.

School firearm incident casualties (2014-2024) were obtained from the Gun Violence Archive (GVA) and represent the number of individuals killed or injured in firearm incidents on school grounds, including K-12 and higher education, public, and private schools.

Considered but Excluded:

Several additional education indicators were reviewed but ultimately excluded in order to focus on measures that provide the clearest insight into school safety, attendance, and student outcomes:

- Academic outcomes (County Health Rankings and Roadmap): High school graduation rates and school funding adequacy were considered but not included. While these measures are important for assessing overall educational performance, they were either redundant with the dropout data or not consistently available at the county-level for the full 2014-2024 period.
- School climate measures (Maryland School Survey): Surveys on school climate were reviewed but excluded because they were not adequately representative of all schools and lacked clear documentation on measurement and sampling strategies. Additionally, many of these survey questions were indexed to create a scale that cannot be meaningfully standardized or quantified across counties, limiting its usefulness in a dashboard context.

By prioritizing dropout rates, chronic absenteeism, suspensions/expulsions, student homelessness, students in foster care, SRO coverage, and school firearm incidents, the dashboard provides a comprehensive yet concise representation of education indicators relevant to community safety and well-being. Space limitations required drawing boundaries around which indicators could be included, and these measures were deemed most essential for representing trends across Maryland schools that have direct implications for community safety and well-being, both among youth and their communities more broadly.

Environment

Included Variables: Social Vulnerability Index, Food Environment Index, crash fatalities and injuries, accidental shooting casualties, emergency department visits related to firearms, and suicides with firearms

The dashboard presents both state- and county-level environmental data from 2014 to 2024 (where available). The Social Vulnerability Index (SVI) was obtained from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) and captures a county's social vulnerability to harm during natural or human-caused disasters. The index includes factors such as poverty, access to vehicles, and crowded housing, which can affect a community's ability to prepare for, respond to, and recover from emergencies. SVI values range from 0 to 1, with higher values indicating greater vulnerability relative to other Maryland counties. Data are available every other year from 2014 to 2022. This measure serves as a proxy for emergency preparedness, given the rarity of disasters and lack of comparable indicators.

Crash fatality and injury data were sourced from the Maryland Department of Transportation Motor Vehicle Administration and reflect the number of deaths and injuries resulting from motor vehicle crashes by county annually. Given the serious nature of these events, these measures provide insight into transportation-related public safety risks.

Accidental shooting deaths and injuries were captured from the Gun Violence Archive (GVA), a publicly available dataset that tracks firearm-related incidents. These data include both deaths and injuries resulting from accidental shootings by county and year from 2014 to 2024. Additional firearm data including emergency visits related to firearms and rates of suicide with firearms were gathered from the Maryland Department of Health's Firearm Violence Data Dashboard. Data

cover the years of 2015 through 2024 and were suppressed when counts were <10; these data are identified as missing in this dashboard.

The Food Environment Index, obtained from County Health Rankings and Roadmaps, reflects the accessibility of healthy and affordable food within counties. This index considers factors such as proximity to grocery stores, local food costs, and transportation barriers. Scores range from 0 to 10, with higher values indicating better access.

Considered but Excluded:

Several other environmental indicators were considered but ultimately not included in the dashboard because they were either infrequent, lacked sufficient county-level granularity, or did not directly capture public safety threats. These include:

- Disaster and Emergency Measures: FEMA Emergency Declarations were excluded due to the rarity of such incidents, limited county-level variation, and low utility for ongoing public safety assessment.
- Water and Air Quality (County Health Rankings and Roadmaps, Agency of Healthcare Resources' Social Determinants of Health): Drinking water violations, presence of water violations, particulate matter levels, and percentage of days with good air quality were excluded because these measures do not provide sufficient variation across the state of Maryland, were limited in time coverage, and primarily reflect environmental quality rather than immediate public safety threats.
- Other Environmental Variables (County Health Rankings and Roadmaps, OpenFEMA, MD Open Data): Emergency Management Performance Grants, power outages, and general injury death counts were excluded due to insufficient direct relevance or overlap with included variables.

The included variables were chosen to reflect meaningful and actionable environmental risks that affect community safety and well-being at the state and county levels, while conserving dashboard space.

Behavioral Health

Included Variables: Suicide rates, drug overdose deaths, primary care physician (PCP) ratio, mental health provider ratio, percentage of adults reporting 14 or more days of poor mental health per month, total number of health services facilities, percent of facilities with substance use treatment services, percent of facilities with mental health services, percent of facilities with a mix of both substance use and mental health treatment services, percent of facilities offering detoxification, percent of facilities offering psychiatric emergency walk-in services, percent of facilities offering treatment at no charge or minimal payments (PAYASST), number of individuals that received mental health services in the Public Behavioral Health System (PBHS), number of individuals that received substance use disorder (SUD) services in the PBHS, percent of PBHS mental health-related service recipients who receive follow-up care within seven days of ED discharge, percent of PBHS SUD providers actively billing for SUD treatment services rendered to youth (0-17), number of (unduplicated) youth recipients (0-17) receiving SUD treatment in PBHS, number (unduplicated) of individuals served in outpatient setting in rural areas, percent of individuals receiving behavioral health services via telehealth, and the percent of mental health service recipients with three or more behavioral health-related emergency department visits.

The dashboard presents both state- and county-level behavioral health data from 2014 to 2024 (where available). Suicide rates were obtained from County Health Rankings and Roadmaps and reflect the number of deaths by suicide relative to the population. The source was selected because it provides consistent county-level data and allows for both rate and count-based interpretation. Drug overdose death data were obtained from the Maryland Department of Health's Overdose

Dashboard and reflect the number of fatal overdoses by county. These data were selected to align with the state-reported metrics and to ensure consistency across Maryland-specific data systems.

In addition to outcome measures, the dashboard includes indicators related to behavioral health treatment access and infrastructure. These include the primary care physician (PCP) ratio (2014-2024), mental health provider ratio (2015-2024), and the percentage of adults reporting 14 or more days of poor mental health per month (2016-2024), all obtained from County Health Rankings and Roadmaps. These measures are available at both the state- and county-levels and provide insight into provider availability and the prevalence of self-reported mental health challenges. Provider ratios are expressed as the number of residents per provider, with lower ratios indicating greater access to care, and the frequent mental distress measure is age-adjusted to allow for comparisons across counties with differing population age distributions.

To capture behavioral health treatment infrastructure, several facility-based indicators were obtained from the National Substance Use and Mental Health Services Survey. These state-level measures, available from 2021 to 2024, include the total number of health service facilities, as well as the percentage of facilities offering substance use treatment services, mental health services, a combination of both, or neither. Additional indicators include the percentage of facilities offering detoxification services, psychiatric emergency walk-in services, and treatment at no charge or reduced cost (PAYASST). Together, these measures provide insight into the availability, scope, and affordability of behavioral health services across the state.

The remaining indicators were obtained from the Maryland Department of Health (MDH) and reflect utilization and service delivery within the Public Behavioral Health System (PBHS). These state-level measures, with varying availability from 2015 to 2024, include the number of individuals receiving mental health and substance use disorder (SUD) services, as well as indicators of care continuity and system engagement. These include the percentage of mental health service recipients receiving follow-up care within seven days of an emergency department discharge, the percentage of SUD providers actively billing for youth services (ages 0-17), and the number of unduplicated youth receiving SUD treatment. Additional measures capture service delivery patterns, including the number of individuals served in outpatient settings in rural areas, the percentage of individuals receiving services via telehealth, and the percentage of mental health service recipients with three or more behavioral health-related emergency department visits. These indicators provide insight into access, continuity of care, and patterns of high-need service utilization within Maryland's behavioral health system.

Considered but Excluded:

Several behavioral health indicators were considered but ultimately excluded due to concerns related to measurement limitations, data availability, geographic specificity, or conceptual fit with the goals of the dashboard. These include:

- Depression Among Adults (County Health Rankings and Roadmaps, Behavioral Risk Factor Surveillance System): Depression among adults was considered but was ultimately deemed to be incomplete or ambiguous. Depression estimates rely on diagnosed cases and therefore likely undercount true prevalence.
- Substance Use Response and Intervention Measures (Maryland Overdose Dashboard, Agency of Healthcare Resources' Social Determinants of Health): Indicators such as the number of individuals receiving naloxone and emergency department visits related to drug use were considered. While these measures provide insight into service utilization and intervention, overdose deaths were ultimately selected as a more direct and consistent indicator of community safety impact.
- Behavioral Health Access and Capacity Measures (National Survey on Drug Use and Health), County Health Rankings and Roadmaps, Agency of Healthcare Resources' Social Determinants of Health): Variables including

provider to population ratios, availability of suicide prevention services, and average distance to treatment facilities were considered. These measures were excluded due to a combination of limited time coverage, lack of county-level variation, or redundancy with facility-based indicators.

- Syringe Exchange and Harm Reduction Measures (Agency of Healthcare Resources' Social Determinants of Health): Measures related to the number of syringe exchange programs were considered as indicators of harm reduction access. However, these variables were excluded due to limited time coverage, variation in interpretation, and the determination that other included indicators better captured behavioral health system capacity and outcomes.

Given the breadth of potential indicators in this domain, decisions were guided by a need to prioritize indicators that are consistently available over time, interpretable to a general audience, and directly tied to behavioral health access, outcomes, or system capacity.

Crime

Included Variables: Crime statistics, firearm violence, and victimization

The dashboard presents both state- and county-level data on crime 2014 to 2024 (where available). Crime statistics were obtained from the Maryland Statistical Analysis Center containing data directly from the Maryland Department of State Police. These data were provided through the Maryland Uniform Crime Reporting (UCR) Program and cover 2014 through 2023. Given the phasing out of the UCR Program and introduction of the National Incident-Based Reporting System (NIBRS) beginning in 2021, NIBRS data were gathered for 2021 through 2024 through the Maryland Department of State Police's NIBRS Crime Reporting Dashboard (see here). Due to the incremental transition to NIBRS, crime statistics reporting varied widely across jurisdictions, and Maryland was not 100% NIBRS compliant until 2025. Thus, any statistics reported post-2020 should be taken with caution.

In addition to crime statistics, additional data were gathered on firearm violence in the state. NIBRS provided a raw count of crimes against persons committed with firearms but these data are only available in NIBRS-reporting jurisdictions between 2021 and 2024. Additional data on firearm-related homicides were gathered from the Maryland Department of Health's Firearm Violence Data Dashboard. These data are available between 2015 and 2024 and were suppressed when counts were <10; these data are identified as missing in this dashboard.

Victimization measures were gathered from the National Crime Victimization Survey (NCVS). This dashboard provides 3-year aggregated state-level data on victim-reported crime estimates by violent and property victimization, violent victimization that was not a simple assault, burglary victimization, violent and property victimization reported to the police. Additionally, reporting rates are included to identify the proportion of offenses that were reported to the police. These data were gathered from publicly available reports from the Bureau of Justice Statistics based on information collected with the NCVS. Although annual, county-level data were preferred in the data gathering process, given the nature of the data collection for NCVS, the 3-year aggregated state-level data were the only available data.

Considered but Excluded:

In addition to the firearm violence indicators included in the dashboard, other gun violence and firearm data were considered but ultimately excluded. These included state-level data housed by the Maryland Department of Health Firearm Violence Dashboard, such as type of firearm, circumstances of firearm-related deaths such as precipitation by another crime or drug-involved, and additional county-level demographic information regarding victims of firearm injuries. A data use agreement was attempted to obtain these data at the county-level from the Maryland Violent Death Reporting System

(MVDRS). However, delays in the agreement process prevented inclusion in the first phase of the dashboard. Additional gun- and firearm-related violence data were considered from the Gun Violence Archive which houses incident-level data gathered from law enforcement and media resources daily. However, the data from the Maryland Department of Health inform state-level decisions and were determined to be the better resource.

Policing

Included Variables: Clearance rates, arrests by race and ethnicity, use of force complaints, traffic stops by race and ethnicity, and law enforcement officers killed in the line of duty

This dashboard includes crime clearance rates, providing additional context on how many reported crimes are resolved. These data were collected from UCR Offenses Known and Clearances by Arrest data and supplemented with NIBRS data for more recent years (UCR data cover 2014 to 2022 and NIBRS covers 2021 through 2024 although limited to NIBRS-compliant jurisdictions).

The dashboard also includes measures of arrests by race and ethnicity, obtained from both UCR arrest data and the Maryland Department of State Police's NIBRS Crime Reporting Dashboard, to provide transparency into demographic patterns within enforcement activity. As with the clearance data, UCR data cover 2014-2022 and NIBRS covers 2021-2024.

Traffic stop data, including stops, searches, and arrest outcomes by race and ethnicity, obtained from the Maryland Statistical Analysis Center were included to examine potential differences in policing practices. Traffic data were available between 2015 and 2023. Due to limitations in location reporting, stops conducted by state-level agencies could not be identified as occurring in a particular county and are presented as a separate category.

Use of force complaint data were obtained from the Department of Public Safety and Correctional Services (DPSCS) Police Training and Standards Commission reports and reflect complaints filed against law enforcement agencies. These reports cover 2022 through 2024 and include data on complaints that were administratively charged, those that were not charged, and those that remained pending at the time of reporting. These data were selected as the most comprehensive and comparable statewide source, as alternative measures (such as monetary settlements or agency-specific reports) were deemed to capture only partial or non-representative subsets of incidents.

Finally, the dashboard includes state-level data on law enforcement officers killed in the line of duty, including deaths by homicide, accident, and suicide. These data provide context on risks faced by law enforcement personnel. Although this data is available at the county-level, given the small sample, this data is reported at the state-level.

Considered but Excluded:

Additional use of force data were considered for inclusion. MSAC houses detailed data on monetary rewards from use of force settlements in the state (see here). However, a very small proportion of use of force complaints result in monetary settlements, limiting the relevance of this data to use of force incidents as a whole. Additionally, the Maryland State Department of Police issues an annual report with detailed information on use of force incidents as a whole, rather than just those incidents that resulted in citizen complaints. Although these reports would be a great step forward for the state as a whole, as they currently only cover the State Police, they do not provide the necessary data for inclusion in the dashboard.

Courts

Included Variables: Incarceration sentences, average incarceration sentence lengths, and average offender scores

The dashboard presents county-level sentencing data examining incarceration sentences, average incarceration sentence lengths, and average offender scores by race and ethnicity. These data were obtained from the Maryland State Commission on Criminal Sentencing Policy's (MSCCSP) publicly available data. MSCCSP collects data on all cases falling under the state's sentencing guidelines, which apply to select circuit court cases in the state. These cases comprise the most serious misdemeanor and felony criminal charges and only contain data on convicted cases. As such, the data presented in this dashboard do not comprise all sentencing in the state of Maryland, only a subset of the most serious cases. Additionally, this data does not present adequate information on convictions in the state as it only includes cases adjudicated guilty. Thus, the data included in the dashboard identifies two sentencing decision points by race and ethnicity. The first, incarceration sentences, is defined as any sentencing event for which an offender received more than 0 months in jail or prison or was credited more than 0 months (i.e. served detention prior to conviction). The second, average incarceration length, is defined as the total number of months sentenced to jail or prison and the number of credited months for those receiving an incarceration sentence. Lastly, to provide context to these sentencing decisions, also included in the dashboard is a generated offender score. This score captures prior criminal history, prior adult parole or probation violations, and current relationship to the criminal justice system. This generated score ranges from 0 to 7 with higher average scores indicating more severe criminal history.

Considered but Excluded:

In the course of this project, we entered into a data use agreement with Maryland's Administrative Office of the Courts to obtain data on all criminal sentencing in the state. However, delays and issues with the data prevented acquisition of that data prior to the release of this dashboard. To provide data on some sentencing decisions in the state, we included publicly available data from MSCCSP in the dashboard.

Corrections

Included Variables: Correctional violence, recidivism, and supervision populations

The dashboard presents state-level data on correctional system outcomes, including assaults and homicides within correctional and detention facilities. These data were obtained from the Department of Budget and Management's Managing for Results reports and are available from fiscal year 2017 to 2023.

Also included in the dashboard are state-level data on 1-, 2-, and 3-year, and cumulative 3-year recidivism measures obtained from the DPSCS's most recent recidivism report. These data are provided for four release-cohort years, fiscal years 2016-2019. These recidivism data show rates of releases from Maryland state incarceration that are returned to state custody within a specific period of release.

Lastly, the dashboard captures the average active supervision population for both criminal supervision and the state's Drinking Driver Monitoring Program (DDMP) for fiscal years 2014 through 2023. Supervision populations are a larger share of justice-involved persons than those that are incarcerated in the state. This data demonstrates how these populations vary over time.

Considered but Excluded:

Other corrections indicators considered include additional data on recidivism and supervision populations as well as indicators capturing the pretrial phase of the criminal legal system. Other more nuanced recidivism data was considered for the dashboard, including recidivism reasons (such as for a new offense or technical violation) and by release reasons (such as by parole or expiration of sentence). However, these data were either not available over multiple years or required additional context, and single-year data would not provide a comprehensive understanding of recidivism trends in the state. Additional state-wide recidivism data is provided in the DPSCS's 2022 Recidivism Report. Additional data capturing other facets of supervision (in addition to the average supervision populations included in the dashboard) were considered, including supervision levels and case outcomes, but the limited data that is available is displayed in DPSCS's Division of Parole and Probation dashboard.

Another component of the justice system with data considered was that of pretrial services. The multiple decisions occurring between initial booking and final case resolution such as pretrial detention populations, bail setting and release decisions, and failure to appear, have wide-ranging impacts on case outcomes and community safety. However, public data on this system point is limited in availability and quality. Some of the data that is available publicly can be found at DPSCS's Division of Pretrial Detention & Services dashboard.

Juvenile Justice

Steps are being taken to include measures of youth involvement in the juvenile justice system and system outcomes in the next phase of the dashboard. Given the developing partnership between the Maryland Statistical Analysis Center (MSAC) and the Department of Juvenile Services (DJS), additional indicators will be considered. DJS houses their own data dashboard with a wide array of indicators for multiple steps of the juvenile systems and outcomes of justice-involved youth (see here).

Other Considerations

In addition to the indicators described above, a broader set of variables was reviewed during the development process. These measures were ultimately excluded because they did not align as closely with the dashboard's focus on community safety and community well-being, lacked sufficient data coverage or consistency, or were less interpretable at the state- and county-levels. These variables fall into the following categories:

- Physical Health: A wide range of physical health indicators were considered, including measures of healthcare access (e.g., primary care physician rates, number of providers, distance to care, uninsured patients), health outcomes (e.g., maternal mortality, infant mortality, low birth weight, life expectancy, preventable hospitalizations, pedestrian injuries, diabetes and HIV prevalence, and causes of death), health behaviors (e.g., routine checkups, vaccination rates), and system-level inputs (e.g., county-level health expenditures, COVID-19 cases and funding). While these indicators provide important context on population health, many were excluded due to limited time coverage, unclear or inconsistent definitions, or because they reflect broader health conditions rather than direct public safety concerns. In other cases, more specific outcomes measures (e.g., injury deaths, suicides, and overdoses) were prioritized as more direct and actionable indicators.
- Social Isolation and Connectedness: Measures such as social association rates and disconnected youth (youth not in school or employed) were considered as indicators of community connectedness and social well-being. However, these variables were excluded because they do not directly measure community safety and may be

subject to misinterpretation. In particular, some measures risked reinforcing unintended narratives about certain populations without clearly capturing safety-related outcomes.

- Criminal Justice System Structure and Investment: Indicators related to system inputs, such as county-level police expenditures, were also reviewed. While these measures provide insight into how jurisdictions allocate resources, they were excluded because spending levels alone do not directly reflect community safety conditions or outcomes. Variation in how funds are allocated and used across jurisdictions further limits the interpretability of these measures at the county and state levels.

Across these categories, exclusions reflect a consistent emphasis on prioritizing indicators that are clearly defined, consistently measured over time, comparable across counties, and directly tied to public safety outcomes. Given the breadth of available data, decisions were also shaped by the need to maintain a focused and interpretable set of measures within the constraints of the dashboard.

Behavioral Health Data Collection

Written by Torri Sperry and Grace Phelps

Background and Purpose

One of the indicators mandated under House Bill 1018 was the inclusion of measures related to "access to behavioral health, mental health, and substance use treatment." During the development of the Maryland Community Safety Dashboard, the research team conducted an extensive review of available datasets to identify indicators capable of meaningfully capturing this concept across Maryland jurisdictions. Early in this process, it became clear that both publicly available and administrative behavioral health data infrastructure presents several significant challenges for measuring service access at the county-level. Although a number of state and national datasets contain behavioral health information, coverage was often inconsistent across counties, years, or both. Many datasets only provide state-level estimates, while others contain substantial variation in reporting practices, limited historical coverage, or restricted public accessibility. In addition, "access" itself is a multidimensional concept that can be operationalized in several different ways, requiring careful consideration regarding what indicators most appropriately reflect meaningful access to care.

Conceptualizing Behavioral Health Access

To better understand how access to behavioral health services should be measured, the research team conducted a series of meetings and consultations with subject matter experts, including academic researchers specializing in behavioral health and substance use, faculty affiliated with the University of Maryland School of Public Health and University Counseling Center, and practitioners within the Maryland Department of Health (MDH). These discussions focused on both methodological considerations and practical challenges associated with behavioral health service delivery and data collection.

Through these consultations, the project adopted a broader conceptual framework recognizing that access to behavioral health care extends beyond simple provider counts or treatment utilization. Instead, meaningful access involves multiple dimensions related to service availability, affordability, acceptability, utilization, and equity. The resulting framework identified several categories of indicators that would ideally be represented within a comprehensive behavioral health access dataset:

- **Availability**: provider density, geographic distribution of services, facility availability, telehealth access, mobile crisis teams, urgent care and walk-in services, emergency department and inpatient psychiatric capacity, and crisis stabilization services
- **Affordability**: insurance coverage, out-of-pocket costs, and financial assistance programs
- **Acceptability**: patient satisfaction, cultural competency, and stigma reduction
- **Utilization**: service utilization rates, wait times, and continuity of care
- **Equity**: disparities in access and availability of targeted interventions for underserved populations

This framework guided subsequent efforts to identify available data sources and evaluate the extent to which existing datasets captured these dimensions of access.

Data Inventory and Assessment

Following the development of this framework, the research team conducted a broad inventory and assessment of available behavioral health datasets. This process involved reviewing national, state, and administrative data systems to determine what indicators were currently available, the level of geographic granularity provided, consistency across years, accessibility of the data, and overall suitability for inclusion within the dashboard. Datasets reviewed included, but were not limited to:

- National Survey on Drug Use and Health (NSDUH)
- Treatment Episode Data Set (TEDS)
- SAMHSA National Mental Health Services Survey (N-MHSS)
- SAMHSA Treatment Services Locator
- CDC Wonder
- CDC National Syndromic Surveillance Program (NSSP)
- Healthcare Cost and Utilization Project (HCUP)
- Behavioral Risk Factor Surveillance System (BRFSS)
- Youth Risk Behavior Survey (YRBS)
- HSRA Area Health Resource Files
- County Health Rankings
- Household Pulse Survey
- Maryland Overdose Dashboard
- Network of Care
- National Environmental Public Health Tracking Network

The research team also explored additional administrative and service-provider datasets recommended by behavioral health practitioners and state partners. Throughout this process, detailed documentation was maintained regarding the strengths, limitations, coverage, and utility of each source. Overall, the assessment demonstrated that while numerous datasets contain behavioral health-related information, relatively few provide consistent county-level measures capable of comparing long-term trends across Maryland jurisdictions. Most available datasets either report state-level estimates only, contain limited county coverage, or measure a narrow facet of behavioral health access. Furthermore, many datasets focus primarily on treatment outcomes or prevalence estimates rather than direct measures of service accessibility.

The project team also pursued access to administrative data through the Maryland Department of Health. Although discussions with MDH partners were productive and informative, the timeline of the dashboard ultimately did not allow sufficient time to obtain, review, and evaluate the full extent of available administrative data for inclusion in the initial development of the dashboard. Future iterations of the dashboard should continue to explore opportunities to incorporate relevant MDH data to further strengthen the scope and utility of the dashboard.

Original Supplemental Data Collection Effort

Because existing datasets did not adequately capture county-level measures of behavioral health treatment access, the research team initiated an original supplemental data collection effort in partnership with the Maryland Association of Behavioral Health Authorities (MABHA). Through coordination with MABHA leadership, the research team was invited to present the dashboard project during a monthly meeting of Local Behavioral Health Authority (LBHA) representatives.

During these discussions, the team described the goals of the dashboard and requested assistance in providing locally maintained information related to behavioral health service capacity and utilization within their jurisdictions.

The initial proposed data collection instrument was broad in scope and included dozens of variables covering multiple dimensions of behavioral health access over a ten-year historical period. However, feedback from LBHA representatives indicated that many of the requested variables were not consistently tracked or readily accessible at the local level. Participants also expressed concern that the volume of requested information would place substantial reporting burdens on already resource-constrained organizations. In response to this feedback, the research team substantially narrowed the scope of the data collection effort and prioritized a smaller set of indicators viewed as most feasible and substantively important. Jurisdictions were informed that historical data extending back ten years would be ideal where available, but that recent data for the prior one to two years would be sufficient if longer historical records were unavailable. The final supplemental data collection instrument focused on the following measures:

- Number of facilities offering mental health treatment only
- Number of facilities offering substance use treatment only
- Number of facilities offering co-occurring mental health and substance use treatment
- Number of behavioral health providers treating mental health conditions
- Number of outpatient mental health service facilities
- Average wait times for mental health treatment services
- Number of unique individuals utilizing mental health services annually
- Number of mobile crisis programs operating within the jurisdiction

Despite initial eagerness and multiple follow-up efforts, completed responses were ultimately received from only four Maryland counties. In addition to limited participation, many respondents indicated that several requested measures were not systematically tracked or were unavailable historically. In most cases, jurisdictions were only able to provide information for the most recent one to two years. Therefore, these data were not complete enough for inclusion into the dashboard as hoped. However, ongoing statewide efforts focused on behavioral health data integration and coordination may help address some of these challenges moving forward. In particular, a statewide task force focused on behavioral health data integration has become an important venue for continuing discussions related to standardization, data availability, and cross-system reporting practices in future iterations of this work.

Key Takeaways and Recommendations

The behavioral health data collection process highlighted substantial gaps in the availability, consistency, and accessibility of county-level behavioral health access data in Maryland. Although many organizations collect behavioral health-related information for administrative or operational purposes, these data are often fragmented across systems, inconsistently defined, or not structured for statewide longitudinal analysis. Several broader lessons emerged from this process:

- Existing behavioral health data systems are often designed for program administration or reporting compliance rather than statewide community-level measurement and analysis.
- County-level indicators of behavioral health access remain limited and inconsistent across jurisdictions.
- Important dimensions of access (e.g., wait times, service capacity, provider availability, continuity of care) are not systematically collected or publicly reported in many settings.
- Local providers and behavioral health authorities frequently operate under significant resource constraints that limit their ability to support large-scale retrospective data requests.

- Standardized statewide definitions and reporting practices related to behavioral health access measures remain limited. The project also identified challenges related to differences in terminology and conceptual language used across academic, medical, and administrative settings, which at times created difficulties in aligning definitions, measures, and reporting approaches across partners.

Based on these shortcomings, future efforts to strengthen Maryland's behavioral health data infrastructure may benefit from:

- **Developing standardized statewide definitions and reporting protocols for key behavioral health access indicators**. Many jurisdictions and providers currently define and track key measures differently, limiting the comparability of data across counties and over time. Standardized reporting guidance could improve consistency across local behavioral health authorities, providers, and administrative systems while reducing ambiguity in future data collection efforts.
- **Expanding county-level reporting capacity for behavioral health service access and utilization measures**. The supplemental data collection effort demonstrated that many counties may lack the staffing capacity, technical infrastructure, or centralized systems needed to efficiently compile behavioral health access data. Strengthening county-level reporting capacity may require additional state support for data management systems, dedicated reporting personnel, technical assistance, and training related to data collection and reporting practices. Building this infrastructure could improve both the quality and sustainability of future statewide behavioral health monitoring efforts.
- **Investing in centralized longitudinal administrative data systems**. A major limitation encountered throughout the project was the fragmented nature of behavioral health data systems across agencies and provider organizations. Future statewide infrastructure investments could prioritize the development of centralized administrative databases capable of tracking behavioral health service availability, utilization, and outcomes longitudinally across jurisdictions. Such systems would improve the ability to conduct trend analyses, identify emerging service gaps, and evaluate the long-term impacts of behavioral health interventions and policies.
- **Prioritizing measures that capture multiple dimensions of access**. The project highlighted that behavioral health access cannot be adequately measured through provider counts alone. Future data collection efforts should incorporate indicators that capture broader dimensions of access, including wait times, service affordability, insurance acceptance, transportation barriers, cultural and linguistic accessibility, crisis response availability, continuity of care, and patient engagement and satisfaction. Incorporating multidimensional measures would allow for a more accurate understanding of how residents experience behavioral health systems in practice.
- **Enhancing the routine collection of equity-focused behavioral health indicators**. Behavioral health access often varies substantially across demographic groups and geographic regions, yet many existing datasets lack sufficient granularity to assess disparities. Future reporting systems should prioritize the routine collection of demographic and geographic information necessary to evaluate disparities in access by race, ethnicity, age, gender, income, insurance status, disability status, and rurality.
- **Expanding access to de-identified administrative behavioral health data for research and evaluation purposes**. Discussions with the Maryland Department of Health partners suggested that potentially valuable administrative data sources exist but may not currently be structured for timely external use. Developing formalized processes for secure data sharing between state agencies, researchers, and local jurisdictions could substantially improve Maryland's capacity to evaluate behavioral health system performance and monitor changes over time.

Taken together, the findings from this process suggest that improving behavioral health measurement in Maryland will likely require not only additional data collection efforts, but also broader investments in statewide data governance, infrastructure, and cross-agency coordination. Although the Maryland Community Safety Dashboard was ultimately limited in the behavioral health indicators that could be included, the process provided valuable insight into existing data limitations and identified several opportunities for strengthening behavioral health surveillance and service-access measurement moving forward.

Perceptions of Public Trust

Written by Jillian Rothschild

Public Surveys

In addition to administrative and operational data, public surveys provide an important perspective on community safety by capturing residents' experiences, perceptions, and levels of trust in policing and the broader criminal justice system. Legislation establishing the dashboard called for the inclusion of "available surveys of public trust in policing and the criminal justice system in the State." However, the integration of such data is constrained by limitations in survey availability, consistency of survey administration, and the alignment of survey questions with legislative intent. This section documents and assesses surveys that have been administered across Maryland, with a focus on identifying measures related to crime, public safety, trust, and the justice system. By reviewing and synthesizing available public surveys, this section highlights prior efforts within the State and identifies opportunities to strengthen the use of survey data in future data collection.

Overview of Available Surveys

Publicly available surveys related to public safety, policing, and the criminal justice system in Maryland exist at both the county- and state-levels, but vary significantly in scope, representativeness, and consistency. At the county-level, surveys are available for Anne Arundel (*Anne Arundel Community College: Center for the Study of Local Issues),* Montgomery County (*National Research Center/Polco),* and Baltimore City (*Goucher College Polls).* These surveys provide limited snapshots in time, with most data collected in 2024 and some trend data available for Baltimore City (2022-2024). While there is some overlap in topics, survey questions are not standardized across jurisdictions. For instance, Anne Arundel County surveys focus on residential satisfaction and top local concerns, whereas Montgomery County surveys include more detailed assessments of government services, including policing and crime, as well as perceptions of recent changes in crime. Baltimore City surveys cover a broader range of topics, including perceptions of crime and safety, confidence in political leadership, factors contributing to crime, and support for crime prevention policies.

At the state-level, surveys of registered voters are available but are not representative of all counties and therefore cannot be incorporated into the dashboard. These surveys tend to focus on broader sentiment at the national-level (e.g., whether the country is moving in the "right" or "wrong" direction) and policy preferences (e.g., support for laws that would "better help our children under 18 who commit crimes"), rather than locally grounded perceptions of safety. Although some national surveys allow for responses from Maryland residents to be isolated, resulting samples are not representative at the state-level and are similarly unsuitable for inclusion in the dashboard.

Taken together, existing surveys are geographically limited, inconsistently administered, and available for only a small number of years. While they are not suitable for direct integration into the Maryland Community Safety Data Dashboard, they provide useful insight into the types of questions that have historically been asked and inform opportunities for improving future data collection.

Key Survey Themes Identified

To inform the development of a more consistent and statewide approach to survey data collection, common themes were identified across existing surveys that can serve as a foundation for future question design.

Perceptions of Crime & Safety. Existing surveys frequently assess how safe residents feel in different parts of their community (e.g., neighborhoods, downtown areas, commercial districts) and their perceived risk of experiencing various types of dangerous events, including property or violent crime, as well as natural disasters. Surveys also ask about perceived trends in crime and contributing factors such as substance use, immigration, systemic racism, education, and ineffective leadership. These questions provide important context, but should be adapted to reflect local conditions and priorities.

Trust in Policing and the Criminal Justice System. Measures of trust are captured in several ways, including willingness to report crime, perceptions of trust and confidence in police, and perceived effectiveness of broader criminal justice system actors such as prosecutors, judges, parole officers, and correctional staff. Some surveys also assess general attitudes toward system performance, such as whether the criminal justice system is perceived as too punitive, not punitive enough, or appropriately balanced.

Crime Control Policy. Surveys also capture public opinion on strategies to address crime, including preferences for investments in social services (e.g., mental health and substance use treatment) versus more punitive approaches such as increased enforcement or harsher sentencing. These questions help contextualize how residents believe crime should be addressed and how they believe resources should be allocated.

Recommendations for Future Survey Deployment

Given the limitations of existing data, a standardized and consistently administered statewide survey would strengthen the ability to measure perceptions of public safety and trust over time. To begin this effort, the MCRIC research team worked in collaboration with the University of Maryland, Center for Democracy and Civic Engagement (CDCE), in the Department of Government and Politics to conduct a survey to collect information on perceptions of trust in Maryland police and the criminal justice system. The survey was disseminated in Spring 2026 from April 15-26, using a probability sample of 1,001 adult U.S. citizens residing in the state of Maryland. Seventy-four percent of the respondents were contacted via text message with a request to fill out the survey online and twenty-six percent were reached by live callers on cell phones or landlines. Braun Research of Princeton, N.J. conducted the sampling, data collection, and weighting. The survey was conducted in English. The research was approved by the University of Maryland Institutional Review Board which conducts ethical review to ensure the protection of the rights and welfare of human participants (IRB 1842992-4).

The survey uses statistical weighting procedures. This accounts for deviations in the survey sample from known population characteristics, which helps correct for differential survey participation and random variation in samples. Weighting was based on the American Community Survey (ACS) 5-Year Estimates Public Use Microdata Sample 2024 using age, sex, race and ethnicity, and region to match the population of Marylanders age 18 or older.

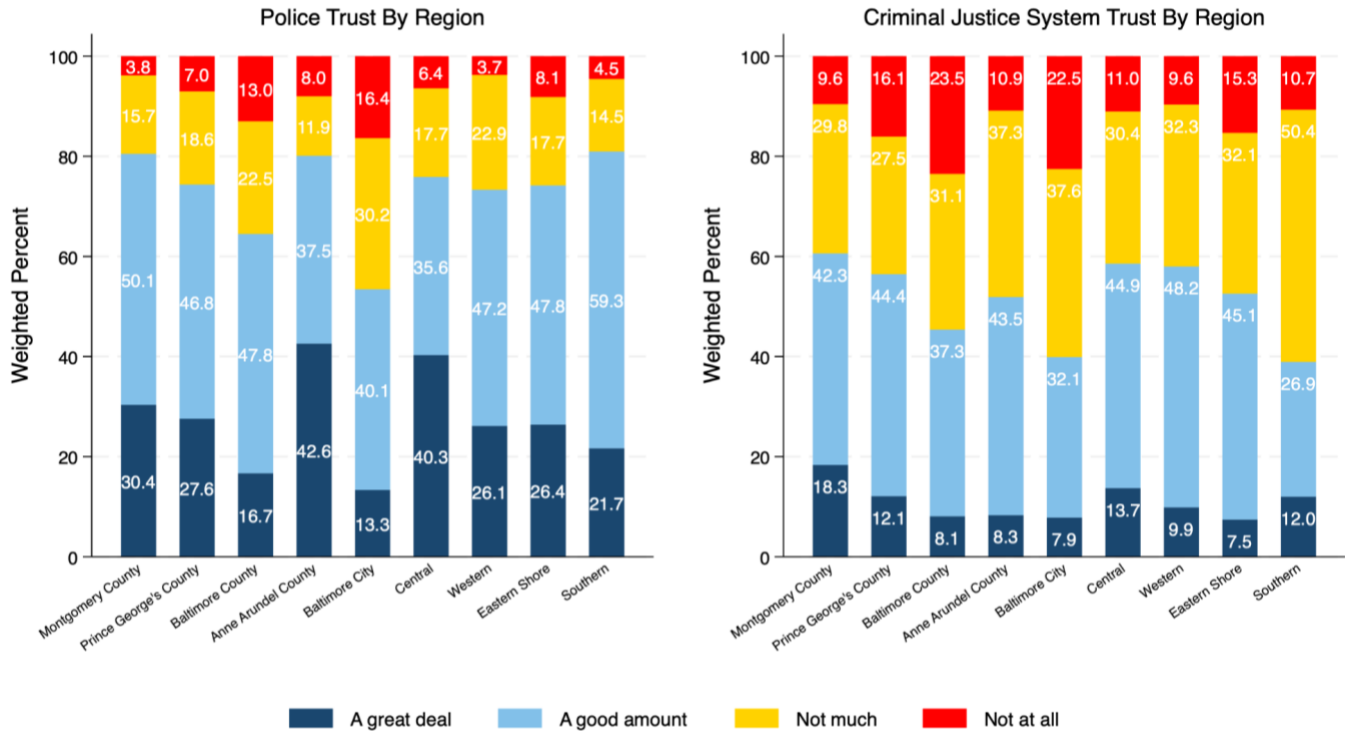
To gauge perceptions of trust in Maryland police and the criminal justice system, respondents were asked a series of questions, including:

1) How much do you currently trust the police in your community? [A great deal, A good amount, Not much, Not at all],
2) Compared to one year ago, has your level of trust for the police in your community [increased, decreased, stayed about the same]?,
3) How much do you currently trust the criminal justice system in your community? [A great deal, A good amount, Not much, Not at all], and

4) Compared to one year ago, has your level of trust for the criminal justice system [increased, decreased, stayed about the same]?

The results indicate that trust in local police is consistently higher than trust in the broader criminal justice system. This pattern is evident across regions, racial groups, age groups, and genders. Several other notable patterns emerge:

- Trust in both the police and the criminal justice system was highest among respondents in Anne Arundel County and the Central region, whereas respondents from Baltimore City and Baltimore County reported comparatively lower levels of trust in both institutions.
    - While perceptions remained relatively stable over the past year for most respondents, approximately one in five individuals in Baltimore City and Baltimore County reported a decline in trust in the police, suggesting a potential erosion of confidence in law enforcement within those jurisdictions.



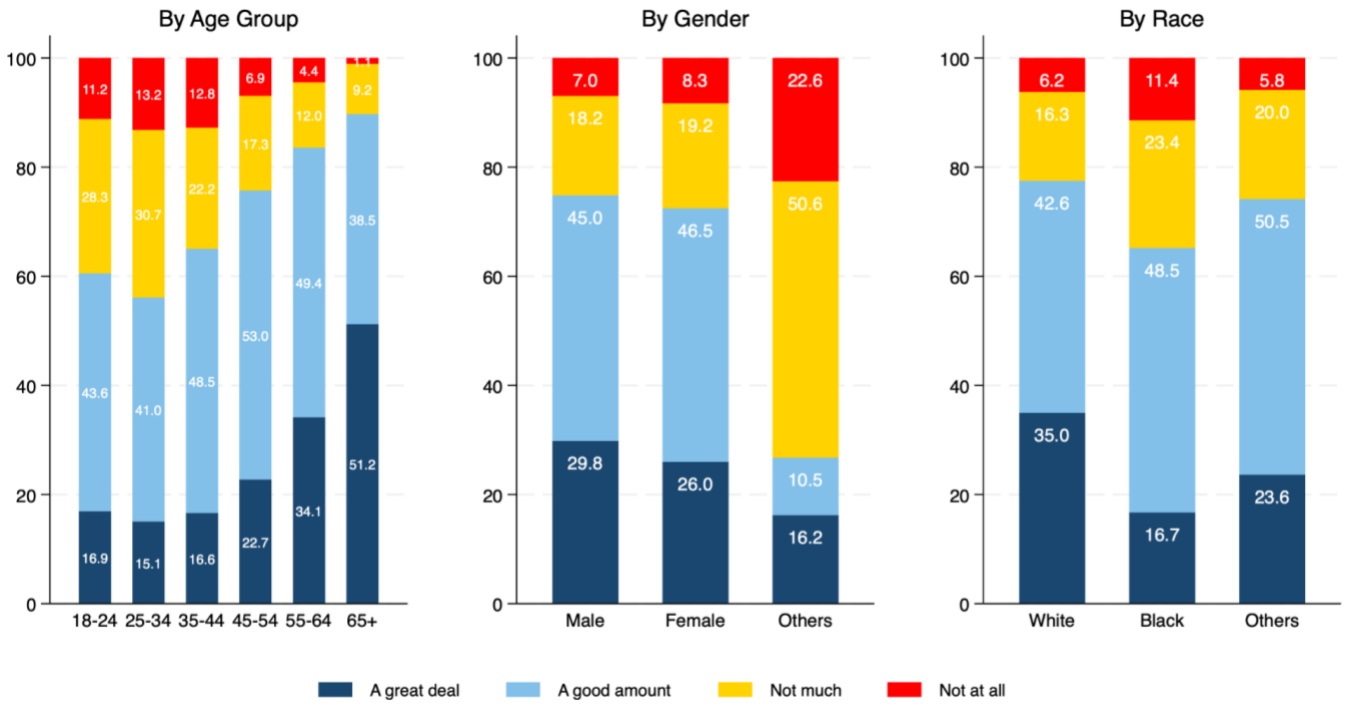
*Null answers are excluded.
Survey weights were applied to adjust for age, sex, race/ethnicity, and region so that estimates better reflect Maryland's adult population.

- Trust in the police varies substantially across age groups, with older respondents generally reporting higher levels of trust. The relationship is relatively linear, with trust increasing consistently with age. A similar pattern is less evident for trust in the criminal justice system. Although respondents age 65 and older report the highest levels of trust, there is no clear trend among younger age groups.
- Across all age groups, most respondents reported no change in their trust in either the police or the criminal justice system over the past year. However, approximately 20 percent of respondents in each age group reported decreased trust in the criminal justice system, while more than 15 percent in most age groups reported decreased trust in the police. Respondents age 65 and older were the least likely to report declining trust in either institution.
- Male respondents consistently reported higher levels of trust in both police and the criminal justice system than female respondents. Among female respondents, trust in the criminal justice system generally exceeded

trust in the police. The survey also allowed respondents to self-identify their gender in a non-binary manner; these respondents are represented in the "Other" gender category.

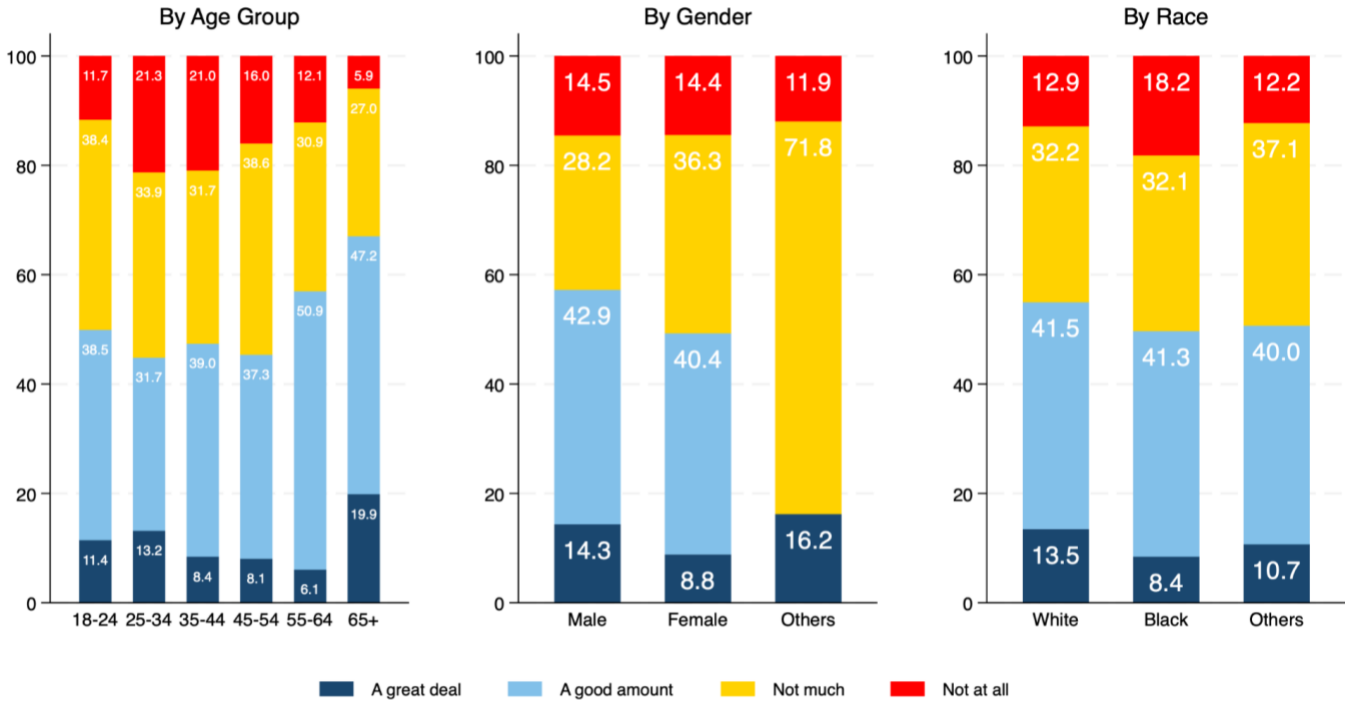
- Regardless of gender, most respondents indicated that their trust in the police and the criminal justice system had remained unchanged over the past year. However, more than 20 percent of respondents in each gender category reported decreased trust in the criminal justice system, and more than 10 percent of male and female respondents reported decreased trust in the police. Female respondents were more likely than male respondents to report declines in trust in both institutions over the previous year.
- Levels of trust differ across racial groups, with White respondents reporting the highest levels of trust in police and Black respondents reporting substantially lower levels. Racial differences were less pronounced with respect to trust in the criminal justice system.
- Trust levels generally remained stable across racial groups over the past year. One notable exception was among Black respondents, who were more likely than other groups to report declining trust in the police. Across all racial groups, relatively few respondents reported increased trust in either the police or the criminal justice system during the past year.

Police Trust by Demographic Characteristics



*Null answers are excluded.
Survey weights were applied to adjust for age, sex, race/ethnicity, and region so that estimates better reflect Maryland's adult population.

Criminal Justice System Trust by Demographic Characteristics



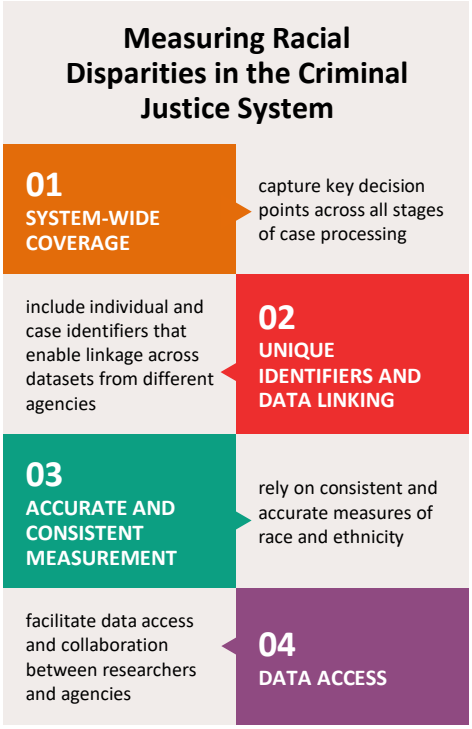
*Null answers are excluded.
Survey weights were applied to adjust for age, sex, race/ethnicity, and region so that estimates better reflect Maryland's adult population.

We recommend that Maryland maintain an investment in surveying Maryland residents annually to continue to capture the public's perceptions of trust in the police and criminal justice system. This would allow communities to track changes annually and glean insight into how perceptions may vary by gender, race, ethnicity, age, and region in Maryland.

Racial Disparities in Maryland's Criminal Justice System

Written by Dixin Li, Torri Sperry, Emily Glazener LaCroix, and Bianca Bersani

Executive Summary



The subreport on Racial Disparities in Maryland's Criminal Justice System serves as a companion piece to the Maryland Community Safety Dashboard. Legislation establishing the dashboard required the inclusion of several racial disparity measures. Incorporation of these measures was constrained by the availability and consistency of existing administrative data for measuring racial and ethnic disparities in the criminal justice system. With this sub-report, we document currently available data and its strengths and weaknesses, as well as describe opportunities for strengthening data capacity to better capture racial inequalities across the state. The broad picture suggests that current data on Maryland's criminal justice system is uneven. Some areas, like policing and sentencing, have more complete information, whereas other areas like prosecution, pretrial decisions, and parts of the correctional system, have limited or hard-to-access data. This variability impacts the ability to accurately identify if and where disparities emerge, recede, and potentially accumulate.

Key challenges include:

- **Gaps in system-wide data coverage**. In Maryland, certain key decision making points of the criminal justice system are more consistently recorded and widely reported; these touchpoints with the system represent only a small portion of a much larger process. To understand the context and presence of disparities in the system it is necessary to have complete, nuanced data for all stages, including charging decisions, plea agreements, pretrial detention, and sentencing.
- **Lack of a standard identification code system**. A standard ID system is a unique number assigned to an individual. Consistent use of a State Identification (SID) number means that every interaction an individual has with the criminal legal system – from arrest to sentencing – is connected without exposing personal identity. While tools like State Identification (SID) numbers and case numbers exist, they are not used consistently, making it difficult to track individuals across different agencies (e.g., police, courts, corrections). Because racial disparities can arise or diminish at any stage, tracking individual cases as they move through the system provides for a more accurate understanding of the nature of system-generated disparities in Maryland.
- **Inconsistent measurement of race and ethnicity across criminal legal system agencies**. Inconsistent measurement generates two main issues. First, the use of different racial and ethnic categories undermines the ability to accurately detect biases and, second, to track changes in disparities across agencies. Changing categories of race or ethnicity between agencies could result in individuals being grouped differently throughout the system. Moreover, it is often not clear who records this information in the data system and whether it is self-reported by the individual or assigned by someone else, which raises questions about the reliability of this information.
- **Limited data collaboration pathways and public data access**. When data are available, access is inconsistent and/or the processes to access data are often unclear. Data access issues leave gaps in knowledge on many

touchpoints within the Maryland criminal justice system. Publicly available annual reporting of summary data on racial disparities by each Maryland agency would provide an important starting point and baseline for describing the current state of disparities and changes over time.

These gaps point to several areas for improvement. Maryland could strengthen its system by:

- **Improving data linkage across agencies**. Adopt common person and case identifiers (e.g., SID) to track cases and individuals across different existing data sources.
- **Strengthen data quality**. Invest in staff training and routine quality assurance procedures to improve the accuracy and consistency of data entry.
- **Expand criminal justice data collection and reporting**. Establish standardized reporting requirements for prosecutorial, pretrial, and correctional outcomes, including but not limited to charging decisions, pretrial detention, bail, length of stay, probation, and parole, to support cross-jurisdictional comparisons and analyses of disparities across these key stages of the criminal justice process.
- **Increase transparency and data access**. Expand public reporting and create clear pathways for practitioners, policymakers, and researchers to access administrative data while maintaining privacy and security protections.

Together, these changes would make it possible to better understand racial disparities and support more informed policy decisions.

Introduction

The Maryland Crime Research and Innovation Center (MCRIC) at the University of Maryland developed the Maryland Community Safety Dashboard with support from the Governor's Office of Crime Prevention and Policy (GOCPP). The dashboard is designed to help the state monitor trends in community safety by bringing together key measures of community security and well-being. This report is a companion to the dashboard and focuses specifically on racial and ethnic disparities in criminal justice system data. While the legislation directing the creation of the dashboard requires the inclusion of information on racial disparities, doing so consistently is challenging given wide variation across jurisdictions in terms of data availability, data quality, and how data is collected.

To address this, the report examines existing criminal justice data resources in Maryland for understanding racial disparities. It looks at where the data is strong, where it falls short, and what those limitations mean in practice. Overall, the findings point to several opportunities for improvement such as addressing: gaps in transparency, inconsistent measurement practices, and challenges to linking data across agencies (police to courts to corrections). Together, these challenges highlight the need for more standardized, reliable, and complete data to support better-informed and more equitable policymaking.

Defining Racial Disparities in the Criminal Justice System

The term racial disparity refers to a difference in exposure, outcomes, or treatment between racial groups within a social system or process. In the criminal justice context, racial disparities can occur as differences in arrests, prosecution, incarceration, and a series of important decision-making points, which can undermine fairness and institutional legitimacy. Monitoring racial disparities helps identify the specific patterns, where they exist, and how they change over time. Importantly, racial disparities can grow or diminish as cases move through the system. Small differences in police contact, arrest, charging, detention, or sentencing can compound over time, producing large overall disparities. At the same time,

disparities may decrease at any stage if criminal justice actors offset earlier inequalities. Because of the potential for change in the presence and size of racial disparity across decision points in the criminal justice system, to get an accurate account of racial disparities in the criminal justice system, it is important to be able to track cases as they are processed through all stages of the system.

Key to generating an accurate account of racial disparities in the criminal justice system is using an appropriate comparison group as disparities can look different depending on whether comparisons are made to the general population or the specific at-risk population (i.e., the denominator decision for calculating outcomes expressed in rates). A common strategy to identify and measure the size of a racial disparity is to compare the proportion of individuals with system contact (e.g., arrested, detained, incarcerated) by racial group with the proportion of individuals in those same racial groups in the general population. Differences in these values provide some indication of if there is a disparity and if so, how large it is. Comparing outcomes to the general population is a common strategy in research and is useful for describing overall inequality. However, depending on the type of racial disparity being examined, it may not always be the most appropriate comparison. The choice of denominator can greatly affect the magnitude and even the existence of racial disparities. This denominator problem occurs for the assessment of almost all stages of the criminal justice system, and to better illustrate this problem, we present three examples here:

Traffic stops. When examining racial disparities in traffic stops, comparing stop rates by racial group to the general population is not necessarily incorrect, but a more appropriate reference group may be the population actually at risk of being stopped, that is, individuals who are licensed drivers who travel within a particular community. Using the general population as the denominator produces a measure of whether racial groups experience different overall levels of police contact. In comparison, using the licensed driver population assesses whether individuals who are *similarly at risk of being stopped* experience different treatment across racial groups.

Arrests. Comparing the arrest rates to the general population offers insights on the overall disparities in arrest exposure across racial groups. Arrest rates may also be compared among individuals who are stopped by the police, individuals involved in reported incidents, or individuals who have other forms of police contacts. Different denominators answer different questions about how and where the disparities may arise.

Incarceration. Similarly, several possible denominators can be used depending on the specific disparity one wants to measure. A commonly used denominator in research is individuals who have already reached later decision points of criminal justice case processing, such as those who are arrested, those who plead guilty, and those who are convicted. The choice of stage-specific denominator can isolate incarceration decisions themselves from all other previous decisions, rather than capturing cumulative, system-wide disparities. Depending on the specific goal of research, using these denominators might provide more precise and relevant information about the existence and even the magnitude of racial disparities.

Measuring Racial Disparities in the Criminal Justice System

To assess existing data sources in Maryland, we first identify elements of strong data systems that allow for the accurate measurement of racial disparities across the criminal justice system:

System-Wide Coverage

The criminal justice system involves many important decision-points where racial disparities might arise. Efforts should be made to build a data infrastructure that would allow for each agency to collect information for each individual that interacts with the agency. In Maryland, certain parts of the system (e.g., arrests, use of force, and incarceration) are more consistently recorded and widely reported; these touchpoints with the system represent only a small portion of a much larger process. It is necessary to have complete, nuanced data for other key stages, including charging decisions, plea agreements, pretrial detention, and sentencing. Without complete data for all decision points, it's not possible to understand the context and impact of decision-making on potential disparities at a later decision-point.

Unique Identifiers to Support Data Linkage

Disparities can arise or diminish at any decision making point in the criminal justice process. To understand which touch point may increase, decrease, or have no impact on disparities, it is important to follow individual cases through the system to understand how individuals move through the system. Therefore, data from different agencies and stages must be connected. This requires shared identifiers that make it possible to link records across datasets. Maryland has several such identifiers, including State Identification (SID) numbers, arrest tracking numbers, and case numbers. These are often included in administrative data from the Department of Public Safety and Correctional Services (DPSCS). However, they are not used consistently, and more gaps remain. For example, case numbers may be incomplete, and there is often no direct way to link arrest records to later court cases. As a result, it is difficult to construct a complete picture of an individual's path through the system.

Without this kind of linkage, each stage (policing, prosecution, pretrial, and court outcomes) must be analyzed separately. This limits the ability to identify where disparities begin or how they compound over time. Linked data would allow researchers to follow cases across stages, understand how early decisions shape later outcomes, and identify where disparities are introduced, increased, or reduced. Ideally, these identifiers would also allow connections to data outside the criminal justice system, such as health, education, and social services. This would make it possible to better understand the broader and longer-term impacts of system involvement.

Accurate and Consistent Measurement

Understanding how different racial or ethnic groups are impacted at different decision making points in the criminal legal system, it is imperative to have accurate and consistent measurement of racial and ethnic identity. In practice, however, agencies often use different categories, combine race and ethnicity in different ways, or leave this information incomplete. This makes it difficult to compare data across sources. In Maryland, racial categories are now guided by statute (MD State Government Code § 10-603 (2025)), which specifies the collection of the following categories: (i) American Indian or Alaska Native; (ii) Asian; (iii) Black or African American; (iv) Native Hawaiian or other Pacific Islander; and (v) White, along with a separate measure of Hispanic or Latino origin. However, how these standards are applied varies across agencies.

A second important issue for ensuring the accuracy of data on race and ethnic identity is the classification method. In Maryland, agencies vary in whether they include data on race and ethnicity. Among those that include this data, the person who determines what racial or ethnic category is selected in the data varies; in some cases, system-involved individuals may

self-identify, but in other contexts, race may be recorded by an officer or law enforcement official. The decision on who should document this information is not straight forward. When an individual's race or ethnicity is externally assigned, it will be influenced by perception or bias. This can lead to differences between what is recorded in the data and one's self-identified race. It is often unclear who records race and ethnicity, when it is recorded, and under what conditions. Differences in which racial and ethnic groups are classified, as well as the lack of information on who records this information weakens data quality and limits the ability to assess disparities across the system.

Data Access and Collaboration Pathways

Availability of data is important for transparency on whether and to what extent disparities are present at each decision point in the criminal justice system, as well as for enabling data analysis to understand the factors that are associated with and produce or reduce disparities. Currently, when data is available it is through annual agency summary reports or on dashboards. This limits the ease of accessibility of information and the type of analyses that can be performed. Expanding access to data can be accomplished without impacting appropriate privacy protections. In Maryland, access to detailed data varies by agency. Some have clearer and more structured processes for data access, while others have less transparent procedures or more limited capacity to share data. Formal data-sharing agreements, such as memoranda of understanding (MOUs), can also support collaboration between agencies and researchers while ensuring that legal, ethical, and privacy requirements are met.

Summary

No single data system fully meets all of these criteria. However, together they provide a useful framework for evaluating existing data. The sections that follow use this framework to assess Maryland's criminal justice data and examine how well it supports the analysis of racial disparities.

Current Data Sources in Maryland

This section reviews the availability of administrative data across Maryland's criminal justice system[1] and how it can be used to examine racial and ethnic disparities. Figure 1 provides a simplified overview of the process from arrest through to sentencing. Square boxes show stages of a case, while round boxes highlight key decision points. We start with a brief introduction of this process and what data is available, before diving into detailed assessment of each data point respectively.

Criminal Justice Process in Maryland

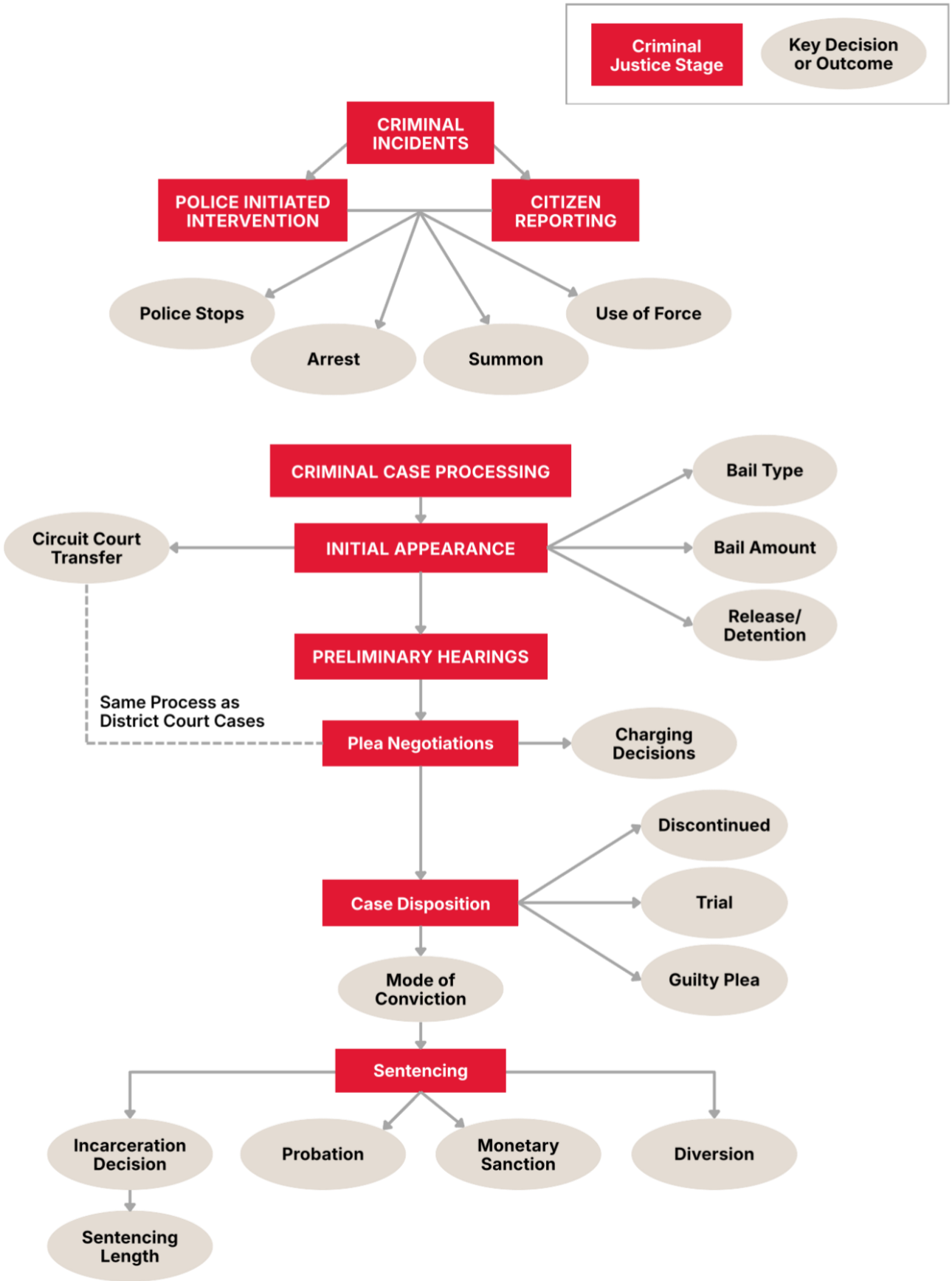
Police. The process begins with police interactions, which may be initiated by officers or by reports from the public. At this stage, officers make a series of decisions, including whether to initiate contact, investigate, issue a citation or summons, make an arrest, or use force. Data on these early stages is relatively strong and comes from several sources, including the Uniform Crime Reports (UCR), the National Incident-Based Reporting System (NIBRS), the Governor's Office of Crime Prevention and Policy (GOCPP) Race-Based Traffic Stop Data Dashboard, Maryland Department of Health (MDH) Interactive Dashboards, Use of Force Complaints reports from the Maryland Police Training and Standards Commission, and the Department of Budget and Management's *Managing for Results* Annual Performance Report.

[1] Cases involving juveniles are handled separately within the juvenile justice system. The Department of Juvenile Services (DJS) collects detailed data, but only summary information is publicly available through annual reports or public dashboard. This limits the ability to conduct case-level analysis or closely examine racial disparities using public data. The following report primarily focuses on the adult system.

Pre-Trial. For adult cases, the next step is an initial court appearance, where decisions are made about pretrial release or detention. At this stage, there is currently no publicly available dataset that allows for systematic analysis of racial disparities. While the Justice Reinvestment Oversight Board (JROB) provides a dashboard with county-level pretrial statistics, the data is aggregated and does not include race or ethnicity. The availability of these summaries suggests that more detailed data exists within agency systems. However, it is not clear how to request access to that information, and the scope and completeness of available data for analyzing racial disparities remain uncertain. Some data may be accessible through formal agreements, but the process is not transparent or consistent.

*Court***.** After the pretrial stage, cases move to either District Court or Circuit Court, depending on the severity and type of offense. Prosecutors play a central role at this point, making decisions about charges, plea agreements, and whether cases go to trial. Cases that result in conviction move on to sentencing and, in some cases, into the correctional system. Among these later stages, most accessible data focuses on sentencing in guidelines-eligible Circuit Court cases. Information on other decision points, especially prosecutorial decisions and District Court cases, is more limited, inconsistently reported, or difficult to access. The sections that follow take a closer look at these data sources and assess their strengths and limitations in more detail.

Figure 1. Simplified Criminal Justice Process in Maryland



Existing Maryland Data Sources

Crime Statistics. There are several types of data that function as indicators for crime. Calls for service (CFS) capture citizens or officer initiated requests for police response. Incidents are those events where upon police investigation it has been determined that a crime has occurred. Arrest data include incidents where an individual(s) has been taken into custody or an issuance of a citation has occurred for that event. Clearance is when a case has been resolved or closed either through an arrest or by "exceptional means" (e.g., the suspect dies, or the victim refuses to cooperate).

Maryland relies on two main national datasets to track crime: the Uniform Crime Reports (UCR) and the National Incident-Based Reporting System (NIBRS). The UCR has long provided standardized measures of reported crime across states and local jurisdictions, making it useful for tracking trends over time and making comparisons across places. In recent years, NIBRS has begun to replace the UCR, offering more detailed, incident-level data, including information about victims, offenders, and the circumstances of each event. Together, these systems allow for both long-term trend analysis and more detailed, up-to-date insights into crime.

NIBRS is now the primary source for analyzing recent patterns in crime and arrests in Maryland. However, its usefulness has been limited by uneven participation across law enforcement agencies. Because reporting is voluntary, statewide coverage was incomplete for several years, and full participation by all counties was not achieved until 2025. This makes it difficult to conduct consistent, statewide analyses over time using recent data. In addition, differences in how UCR and NIBRS collect and organize information mean the two systems are not directly comparable. Their race and ethnicity categories also differ, further complicating comparisons across time.

In addition to these general crime datasets, Maryland provides data on firearm-related outcomes through the Maryland Department of Health (MDH) Interactive Dashboard. This resource combines data from several sources, including the Maryland Vital Statistics Administration (VSA), the Office of the Chief Medical Examiner (OCME), and the CDC's National Center for Injury Prevention and Control. The dashboard includes firearm fatality data from 2015 through 2024 (with the most recent year subject to revision), including deaths from homicide and suicide, along with basic demographic information. More detailed context (e.g., firearm type and circumstances surrounding deaths) is available through the Maryland Violent Death Reporting System (MVDRS) for 2018 through 2023. Data on nonfatal firearm injuries is also available, capturing emergency department visits by county of residence from 2016 through 2024. However, publicly available data from these sources are mostly limited to state-level summaries. This limits their usefulness for analyzing racial disparities at more local levels, such as counties or communities.

Police Decision-making. Police officers make many discretionary decisions that shape public safety outcomes. However, Maryland's current data systems do not allow for a complete, county-level understanding of these decisions. Publicly available data covers only a limited set of activities (mainly traffic stops, arrests, and use of force) and often lacks the detail needed for local analysis. In some cases, additional data may exist, but the process for requesting access is unclear. Several sources provide partial insight into policing in Maryland, including arrest data from NIBRS, annual Use of Force Complaints Reports from the Maryland Police Training and Standards Commission, and statewide summaries published by the Maryland Statistical Analysis Center. While useful, these sources do not provide consistent or detailed enough information to support a full analysis of racial disparities across jurisdictions. In addition, there is no publicly available data on police encounters that do not result in a stop, citation, or arrest. Without this, it is not possible to estimate the total volume of police contact or assess disparities in everyday interactions with the public.

- *Traffic Stops.* The GOCPP Race-Based Traffic Stop Data Dashboard reports the race and ethnicity of individuals stopped by law enforcement, using categories such as White, Black, Asian, Hispanic, Other, and Unknown. This provides a useful overview of traffic stop patterns across the state, but the data has important limitations. It includes agency identifiers but does not show where stops occurred. For county police departments, stops can generally be assumed to take place within county boundaries, but a large share of stops are conducted by the Maryland Department of State Police, and for those, no location information is available. This makes it difficult to compare traffic enforcement across counties.
- *Arrests.* While arrest data is critical for understanding the crime trend, it is also an important data source that picture the patterns of police decision-making. Here, person-level data is especially important as they capture who is being arrested, how often arrests occur across demographic groups, and how the practices may vary across jurisdictions. While the primary sources are still NIBRS and UCR, the use of this data and the respective denominators is often different from the crime statistics.
- *Use of Force Data.* At the national level, the FBI maintains a Use-of-Force Data Collection, but reporting by Maryland agencies is incomplete. Only some departments participate, so the data does not provide a full or representative picture of use-of-force incidents across the state. Maryland also provides several more accessible, though still limited, data sources through GOCPP. Two dashboards are especially relevant: (1) the Use of Force Settlements dashboard, which reports on civil settlements related to use-of-force incidents and includes racial breakdowns, and (2) the Deaths in Custody and Deaths Involving Law Enforcement Officers dashboard, which tracks fatalities involving law enforcement and includes information on race, ethnicity, and cause of death.

While these dashboards offer important insights, they capture only a small portion of use-of-force activity. Most incidents, especially nonfatal or routine uses of force, are not included, even though they make up a larger share of police interactions and are critical for understanding patterns and disparities. Individual law enforcement agencies likely maintain more detailed, incident-level records, but the process for accessing this data is not clearly defined, which limits its use for broader analysis. Relatedly, the Department of Budget and Management's *Managing for Results Annual Performance Report* includes some indicators related to Maryland State Police activity, such as investigations into police-involved deaths. However, these measures are reported only as aggregate totals and are not broken down by race or ethnicity, further limiting their usefulness for analyzing disparities.

Prosecutorial Decision-making. Prosecutors have a notable influence on case outcomes through decisions on dismissals, plea bargains, and sentencing recommendations. Despite their central role, Maryland currently lacks systematic, statewide data on prosecutorial activities. Each State's Attorney's Office maintains its own records, and there is no centralized or standardized reporting system. As a result, accessing prosecutorial data is difficult and usually requires establishing direct partnerships with individual offices.

A few jurisdictions (e.g., Baltimore City, Montgomery County, and Frederick County) have developed publicly accessible dashboards. These dashboards represent an important effort to increase transparency in prosecutorial data. At present, however, their utility remains limited. Although they provide information on indictment, conviction, and disposition, the information shared covers a rather narrow set of decision points that occur during the process of prosecution and does not allow for insight into racial disparities. For example, racial breakdowns are often reported for only one or two stages of case processing, with no race or ethnicity information available for later outcomes. Nevertheless, these initial steps represent a promising direction for expanding transparency and enabling more comprehensive evaluations of prosecutorial decision-making.

Legislative efforts have tried to address these gaps. For instance, SB 763 (2022)[2] created a task force to examine prosecutorial data collection and reporting. The task force recommended standardizing a set of foundational, aggregate measures. To date, no statewide infrastructure or reporting requirements have been implemented. Without a statewide framework for collecting, standardizing, and sharing prosecutorial data, it is difficult to conduct comprehensive assessments of racial disparities across Maryland jurisdictions. Establishing such a system would be a crucial first step toward enabling more systematic, transparent, and comparable analysis across jurisdictions.

Judicial Decision-making. Data on judicial decision-making in Maryland come from different sources for Circuit and District Courts. The MSCCSP collects detailed records for felony and misdemeanor cases in Circuit Courts that fall under state sentencing guidelines, typically encompassing the most severe offenses. These records include offense details, guideline compliance, and key demographic and case-level information. This provides a strong foundation for analyzing sentencing patterns and identifying potential disparities across offenses, jurisdictions, and defendant characteristics.

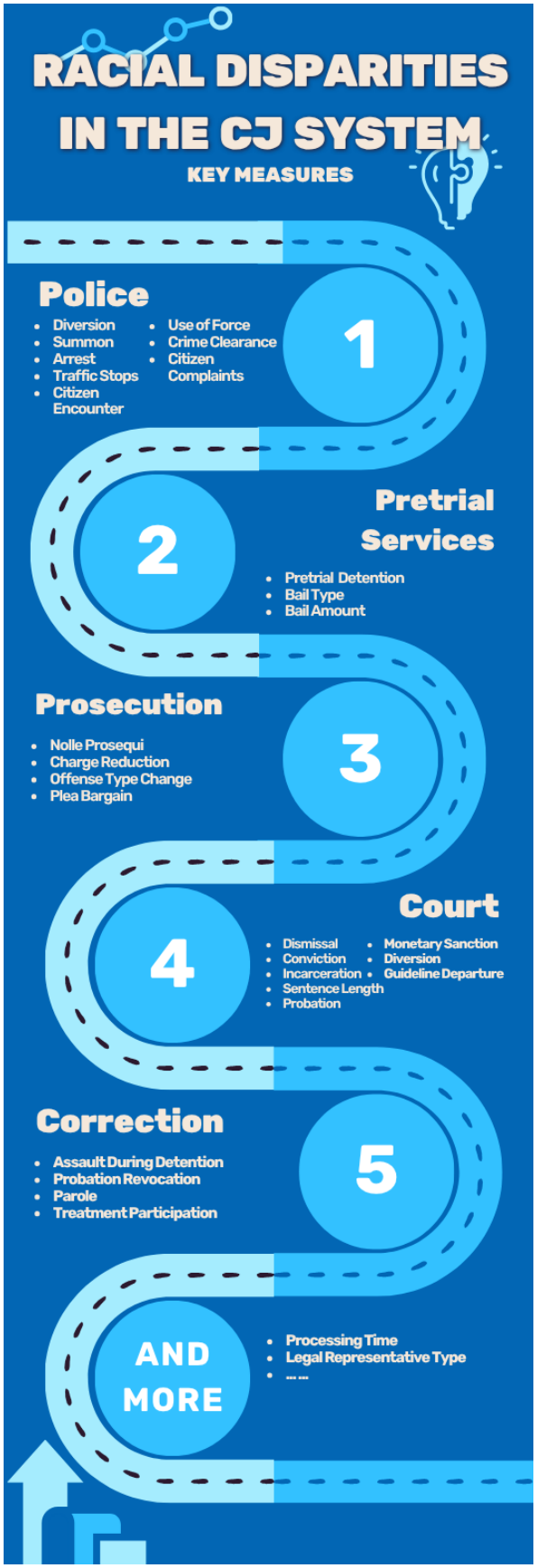
By contrast, no publicly available dataset exists for District Court decision-making, the system that settles the vast majority of criminal cases in the state. Data can be requested through the Administrative Office of the Courts (AOC), but there is no standardized process for access. MCRIC has worked with the AOC to obtain aggregated race and ethnicity information across key sentencing decision points. While initial conversations led to the expectation of data being available by February 2026, the AOC reported that they needed more time to curate the data. As a result, the scope, structure, and quality of District Court data for evaluating disparities remain unclear as of May 2026, but future iterations of the dashboard should continue to work to incorporate this information.

Correctional Outcomes. The primary source for examining racial disparities in Maryland's correctional system is the Department of Public Safety and Correctional Services (DPSCS). DPSCS maintains a Division of Correction (DOC) population dashboard, which provides aggregate racial breakdowns of the sentenced population across all DOC facilities. However, the dashboard does not allow analysis by county, offense type, sentence length, or other demographic characteristics, limiting the ability to conduct more detailed assessments of disparities within the system. GOCPP's Public Safety Dashboard also reports on selected correctional outcomes, including restrictive housing, opioid use treatment, and local detention centers, with racial and ethnic breakdowns. Recently, DPCS published a dashboard on the parole and probation population. Although the dashboard provides important information, including supervision types, supervision length, and demographic breakdowns by race and gender, the data are reported only as aggregate outcomes over a seven-year period and do not allow annual comparisons across jurisdictions or support analyses of temporal trends. Despite these efforts, data availability, linkage, and retrievability vary across systems, making it difficult to create comprehensive, individual-level datasets to study disparities across correctional stages.

[2] See https://mgaleg.maryland.gov/mgawebsite/Legislation/Details/SB0763?ys=2022RS

System-Wide Data Coverage and Gaps

To understand how Maryland's publicly available data compare with an ideal criminal justice data system, the side bar on the right summarizes key decision points across agencies. While it captures common stages in case processing, additional decisions may occur that are not formally recorded. Data availability across these stages is uneven. Some information, such as pretrial services data, exists within agency systems but is not easily accessible to researchers. Other important decision points (e.g., plea bargaining, charge modifications, and the timing of cases across stages) are either not systematically recorded or not available even upon request. These gaps make it difficult to track complete case trajectories and to fully understand where and how disparities arise across Maryland's criminal justice system.



Policy Recommendations

Our review found notable limitations in the availability, completeness, and consistency of data needed to assess racial disparities in Maryland's criminal justice system. Addressing these gaps will require improvements in data quality, consistency, transparency, and accessibility. We recommend the following actions:

- **Improving linkability of existing data sources.** Establish and incorporate common person and case identifiers across existing datasets (e.g., SID) to support data integration and allow individuals and cases to be tracked across different stages of criminal justice processing.
- **Invest in data quality at the point of entry**. Provide training for law enforcement, court personnel, and agency staff on accurate and consistent data entry. Incorporate routine data quality checks into agency oversight processes.
- **Develop a statewide system for prosecutorial data collection.** Encourage or require State's Attorney's Offices to collect and report standardized data on prosecutorial decisions, enabling analysis across jurisdictions.
- **Expand public reporting on pretrial and correctional outcomes**. Collect and release data on pretrial detention, bail amounts and types, length of stay, probation, parole, and other correctional outcomes. This will support analysis of disparities at these stages.

- **Establish a statewide criminal justice data framework**. Create a centralized structure to set standards, coordinate reporting, and support data sharing across all criminal justice agencies, including law enforcement, courts, prosecutors, pretrial services, and corrections. This framework should prioritize consistent definitions for key variables, especially race and ethnicity.
- **Improve transparency and access to administrative data**. Expand public data releases and establish clear, standardized pathways for researchers to access data. Formal data-sharing agreements can enable independent evaluation of disparities and policy impacts while maintaining privacy and security protections

Understanding Community Safety Through the Maryland Community Safety Dashboard

Written by Bryant Best

Introduction

The Maryland Community Safety Dashboard represents an important milestone in the state's efforts to understand and improve community safety. By bringing together data from education, public health, housing, behavioral health, criminal justice, and other domains, the dashboard provides Maryland residents, researchers, policymakers, practitioners, and community organizations with a central hub for examining safety trends statewide. In doing so, it offers one of the most comprehensive statewide views of community safety currently available. Like any statewide data system, however, the dashboard was designed with a specific purpose. Its strength lies in its ability to organize, standardize, and visualize information that can be measured consistently across jurisdictions. These indicators allow users to compare counties, observe important data points, and use that insight to inform decision-making using a common frame of reference. At the same time, the quantitative data that makes up the system cannot fully explain *why* said patterns exist or how they are presently being experienced. Accordingly, next steps for making the Dashboard more meaningful across the state's jurisdictions should include interpreting its data alongside community knowledge, local contexts, and complementary data sources.

Using the Dashboard to Promote Action

By making statewide data more accessible and comparable, the Maryland Community Safety Dashboard creates opportunities for diverse communities of users to identify patterns and make more data-informed decisions as it relates to community safety.

Community-based organizations may use the dashboard to strengthen grant applications, support strategic planning, and facilitate conversations with residents about local priorities. Because many organizations already possess deep knowledge of the communities they serve, dashboard findings can complement existing expertise by providing broader statewide context for issues they observe every day. For instance, Defense360, a Black-owned, self-defense organization in Baltimore, Maryland, is led by Eric Gilliam, a native Baltimorean with a unique perspective on community safety after witnessing the murder of a close family member. He started his organization to help members of his community by preparing them with knowledge, strategies, and resources to keep themselves and their loved ones safe. Defense360 illustrates how community organizations can use data resources such as the Dashboard to complement their existing knowledge of community needs, strengthen their understanding of local safety challenges, and inform programming and outreach efforts.

For practitioners, including educators, public health professionals, and community organizations, the dashboard can serve as a tool for identifying patterns that may warrant additional attention. That said, some of the data included in the Dashboard paint an important yet incomplete picture due to the ways in which statewide agencies and institutions typically collect and analyze data. For example, the Dashboard's focus on educational statistics such as chronic absenteeism, school suspensions and expulsions, and exposure to School Resource Officers (SROs) is methodologically sound as they are variables that are widely available and correlated with community safety conditions. However, variables that are less often collected, or collected inconsistently across schools and school districts, such as students' perceptions of safety, wellness,

belonging, and care on school grounds could offer a boon of additional context that may explain or amplify opportunities to address the root causes of the former statistics.

For policymakers, the dashboard offers a statewide perspective on community conditions that can inform resource allocation, strategic planning, and policy development. Comparing indicators across jurisdictions may help identify emerging disparities, highlight areas requiring additional support, and monitor changes over time.

For researchers, the dashboard creates opportunities to examine relationships among indicators, identify trends that warrant further investigation, and evaluate the effectiveness of policies and interventions over time. The Dashboard can also help identify questions that quantitative data alone cannot answer, creating opportunities for qualitative and mixed-methods research that explores how residents experience community safety in their everyday lives.

Understanding What the Dashboard Can and Cannot Tell Us

Users of the Dashboard can examine trends in crime, education, housing, health, economic opportunity, and other indicators that contribute to community safety. These measures provide a snapshot of conditions that might otherwise be difficult to observe or evaluate using other means. At the same time, Dashboard indicators should not be interpreted as absolute explanations of community safety.

For example, the Dashboard includes survey data regarding residents' trust in law enforcement. These findings are valuable because they reveal differences in perceptions across communities and demographic groups. However, they cannot explain the experiences, histories, or institutional relationships that shape those perceptions. If survey findings indicate that one community reports lower levels of institutional trust than another, the dashboard identifies an important pattern, but it does not identify the reasons underlying that pattern.

This distinction is especially important when considering issues of race, equity, and justice. Differences observed across racial or geographic groups should not be interpreted as characteristics of those communities themselves. Rather, they often reflect broader social, economic, and institutional conditions that shape people's lived experiences. The dashboard provides valuable evidence about these patterns, but responsible interpretation requires considering the historical and community contexts in which they occur.

One way that state and local governments can identify and make sense of said contexts is by partnering with communities to create community asset maps – visual representations of resources – that can or are actively in the process of addressing concerns identified through Dashboard data analysis. While the resources may include individuals, places, or affinity groups, any partnership that extends the power and utility of the Dashboard would be well worth the effort.

Similarly, the process of building a statewide dashboard necessarily involves combining data collected by multiple agencies with different missions, priorities, and methods of data collection. Education, public health, housing, behavioral health, and criminal justice agencies often collect information for different operational purposes rather than for integrated statewide analysis. Bringing these datasets together represents a significant achievement and expands opportunities for cross-sector understanding. At the same time, users should consider advocating for comprehensive data systems and interoperability across interrelated institutions such as healthcare, education, law, and politics.

What's Next: Building a More Complete Understanding of Community Safety

The Maryland Community Safety Dashboard was not designed to answer every question about community safety, nor should it be expected to do so. Instead, its greatest contribution may be its ability to identify where additional inquiry is needed and to encourage collaboration across agencies, researchers, practitioners, and communities. In many ways, the dashboard is less an endpoint than an invitation to continue building a more complete understanding of community safety across Maryland.

To that end, one opportunity involves strengthening the connections between statewide indicators and local knowledge. Community-based organizations, neighborhood associations, schools, faith communities, and residents possess insights that are often difficult to capture through standardized datasets. These organizations regularly observe how public policies are experienced in practice, how neighborhood conditions shape daily life, and how communities define safety in ways that extend beyond traditional public safety measures.

Furthermore, the dashboard highlights opportunities for qualitative and mixed-methods research. Quantitative indicators can identify where important differences exist across communities, but interviews, focus groups, community forums, participatory research, and partnerships with local organizations can help explain why those differences exist and how they are experienced by residents. Together, these approaches provide a more complete understanding of community safety than either could achieve independently.

Future iterations of the dashboard may also benefit from expanding the types of information that can be incorporated as data become more readily available. Measures related to school climate and student well-being, access to behavioral health services, environmental quality, digital access, institutional capacity, and community assets may further strengthen how Maryland conceptualizes community safety. While not every meaningful aspect of community life can or should be represented in a statewide dashboard, continued efforts to improve data interoperability, transparency, and cross-sector collaboration can expand the dashboard's usefulness over time.

Conclusion

The Maryland Community Safety Dashboard represents an important advancement in Maryland's ability to understand community safety through a coordinated, cross-sector approach. By bringing together data from multiple public systems, the dashboard provides a valuable foundation for identifying trends, monitoring disparities, and supporting evidence-informed decision making across the state.

Like any statewide data system, however, the dashboard is designed to answer some questions more effectively than others. It excels at describing patterns that can be measured consistently across jurisdictions, but those patterns acquire greater meaning when interpreted alongside community experiences, organizational expertise, and local context.

As Maryland continues to invest in data-informed approaches to community safety, it must also commit to fostering stronger partnerships among public agencies, researchers, practitioners, community organizations, and residents who each contribute a different perspective on what community safety means and how it can be strengthened.

Appendix A: Detailed Data Definitions and Measurement

DEMOGRAPHICS

This dashboard presents both state- and county-level demographic data from 2014 to 2024. Population data by age, sex, race, and ethnicity were all obtained from the US Census American Community Survey (ACS) 5-year estimates. For each demographic breakdown, the dashboard includes these estimates as both total counts and as a percent of the population.

Sex

The American Community Survey (ACS) measures two sexes: male and female. Respondents are asked to identify as either male or female based on their current sex, as defined by the Census Bureau.

Race

The American Community Survey (ACS) measures race through self-identification, in which respondents choose from a set of pre-defined racial categories. The US Census Bureau follows the Office of Management and Budget (OMB)'s standards, which currently include five categories: White, Black or African American, American Indian or Alaska Native, Asian, and Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander. There is also an option to select multiple races or 'some other race.' This dashboard follows these standards by providing population estimates based on seven racial designations: White, Black or African American, American Indian or Alaska Native, Asian, Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander, other, and mixed race. *(Note: to see more detailed estimates of race, data.census.gov provides additional subcategories for these general racial groups, as well as details on which races are included for individuals who indicated 'mixed' or 'multiple' races)*

Ethnicity

The American Community Survey (ACS) measures ethnicity through self-identification, in which respondents indicate their Hispanic or Latino origin. The ACS adheres to Office of Management and Budget (OMB) standards for ethnicity, which generally reflect social definitions rather than biological or genetic ones. This dashboard captures the number and percent of individuals that self-identified as Hispanic or Latino vs. those that did not self-identify as Hispanic or Latino. (*Note: to see more detailed estimates of ethnicity, data.census.gov provides additional data based on race combined with ethnicity, as well as ethnic origin (i.e., Mexican, Cuban, etc.*)

Age

The American Community Survey (ACS) measures a variety of age categories that have been aggregated for this dashboard based on theoretical importance for implications for public safety. For example, individuals between the ages of 0 and 14, and over the age 65 represent a "dependent population" that may necessitate additional support and services from the state. Additionally, criminal offending typically peaks between the ages of 15 to 26. This dashboard presents data on age based on the following eight categories: under 5, 5-9, 10-14, 15-19, 20-24, 25-34, 35-64, and 65 and older.

Population Density

This dashboard presents both state- and county-level data on population density from 2014 to 2023. We calculated the number of residents per square mile, based on the 2023 Census Geography file which includes data on land area.

Urban-Rural Classification

The National Center for Health Statistics (NCHS) provides a six-level urban-rural classification scheme for US counties and other jurisdictions that are the equivalent of counties in their area. NCHS has updated the scheme based on the 2023 Office of Management and Budget (OMB) delineation of metropolitan and micropolitan statistical areas.

Metropolitan:

1) Large Central Metro = counties in metropolitan areas of 1 million population or more that contain the entire population of the largest principal city of the metropolitan area, or are entirely contained in the largest principal city of the metropolitan area, or contain at least 250,000 residents of any principal city in the metropolitan area.
2) Large Fringe Metro = counties in metropolitan areas of 1 million or more population that do not qualify as large central.
3) Medium Metro = counties in metropolitan areas of 250,000 to 999,999 population.
4) Small Metro = counties in metropolitan areas of 50,000 to 249,999 population.

Non-Metropolitan:

1) Micropolitan = counties in micropolitan statistical areas
2) Noncore = counties that did not qualify as micropolitan

ECONOMICS

This dashboard presents both state- and county-level economic data from 2014 to 2024. Median household income, the percent of residents below the federal poverty threshold, and unemployment rates were all obtained from the US Census American Community Survey (ACS) 5-year estimates.

Median Household Income

The US Census Bureau defines median household income as the income level at which half of households in a specified geographic area earn more and half earn less. It is a key economic indicator, reflecting the typical income level for an area. A 'household' includes all individuals who occupy a housing unit as their usual place of residence (this can include related family members, unrelated individuals such as roommates, or a person living alone). Household income includes the pre-tax cash income of the householder and all other individuals 15 years old and older in the household, regardless of whether or not they are related to the householder. Sources of income include, but are not limited to: wages, salaries, commissions, bonuses, tips, self-employment income, interest, dividends, net rental income, royalty income, income from estates and trusts, Social Security, Supplemental Security Income (SSI), public assistance, welfare payments, retirement, survivor, or disability pensions, Veterans (VA) payments, unemployment compensation, child support, and alimony. However, it does *not* include non-cash benefits such as food stamps, health benefits, or subsidized housing. The US Census Bureau adjusts income estimates for inflation, typically using the Consumer Price Index (CPI-U).

Poverty

The US Census Bureau measures the percentage of residents below the federal poverty threshold by comparing a family's or individual's total pre-tax income with a poverty threshold that varies based on family size and composition. If a family's income falls below this threshold, everyone in that family is considered to be living in poverty. The official measure uses income thresholds that are updated annually for inflation. This dashboard presents the percentage of residents below the federal poverty threshold (based on the population for whom poverty status is determined) for the total population, and by sex, race/ethnicity, and the following age categories: under 18, 18 to 64, 65 and over.

Unemployment

The US Census Bureau defines the unemployment rate as the percentage of the civilian labor force that is unemployed. The 'civilian labor force' includes all employed and unemployed civilians aged 16 years or older, excluding those in the Armed Forces and institutionalized individuals (i.e., in prisons or mental hospitals). The unemployment rate is calculated by dividing the number of people actively seeking work but without jobs, by the total number of people in the civilian labor

force. This dashboard presents unemployment rates for the total population 16 and above, by sex (for the population age 20 to 64), race/ethnicity (for the population 16 and above), and by the following age categories: 16-19, 20-24, 25-29, 30-34, 35-44, 45-54, 55-59, 60-64, 65-74, 75 and over*

Note: In 2014, ACS only used the following age categories for calculating unemployment rates:16-19, 20-24, 25-44, 45-54, 55-64, 65-74, 75 and over.

Unsheltered Persons

The United States Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) collects state-level data regarding the number of unsheltered people each year. HUD's Continuum of Care Homeless Assistance Program collects data regarding the number of unsheltered people in the state at a single point in time in the year. The dashboard displays these counts from 2014 to 2024 (excluding 2021 - no data) for the total unsheltered population, as well as individuals who are unsheltered by the following characteristics: chronically unsheltered, substance abuse, HIV, mentally ill, veterans, and domestic violence victims.

Housing Evictions

The Maryland District Court began collecting eviction case data on January 1, 2023. The state is mandated to host a dashboard displaying each eviction case in the state of Maryland and the tenant's county of residence. The dashboard displays this data at both the county and state-level, but data are only available for 2023 and 2024.

EDUCATION

This dashboard presents both state- and county-level education data from 2014 to 2024 (where available). School dropouts, chronic absenteeism, out-of-school suspensions and expulsions, student homelessness, and students in foster care, were obtained from the Maryland State Department of Education's (MSDE) public reports. The percent of schools with full-time school resource officers (SROs) was obtained from the Maryland Center for School Safety (MCSS) and the number of school shooting incident victims was obtained from the Gun Violence Archive.

School Dropouts

These data were obtained from MSDE's *Annual Dropout Rate Data* files. This dashboard displays both school dropout counts and rates from 2014 to 2024 at both the state- and county-level. The dropout count variable represents the number of students dropping out of school in grades 9 through 12 in a single school year across Maryland public schools. The dropout rate (per 100 students) represents the percentage of students dropping out of public schools in grades 9 through 12 in a single school year. To protect student privacy, MSDE suppresses dropout data when the count of students in a given category is fewer than 10 and/or percentages less than or equal to 5 percent (or greater than/equal to 95%). Suppressed counts are indicated by an asterisk (*), and rates are displayed as <=3, which indicates that dropout rates for the given county or state-level estimate are less than or equal to 3%.

Chronic Absenteeism

These data were obtained from MSDE's *Attendance Data* excel files from 2018 (when data collection began) to 2024. This dashboard displays chronic absenteeism both in terms of a count and a rate at both the state and county-levels for Maryland public schools. The chronic absenteeism count represents the number of students who are expected to attend school but were absent 10% or more of the school days. The chronic absenteeism rate (per 100) represents the percentage of students who are expected to attend school but were absent 10% or more of the school days.

Out-of-School Suspensions & Expulsions

These data were obtained from MSDE's *Maryland Public School Suspensions by School and Major Offense Category - Out-of-School Suspensions and Expulsions* reports from 2014-2024. Out-of-school suspensions and expulsions are condensed into a single estimate, and these estimates are displayed in the dashboard both as counts and rates. The count of out-of-school suspensions and expulsions represents the total number of students who were assigned out-of-school suspension or expelled during the academic year. The rate of out-of-school suspensions and expulsions is per 100 students, representing the percentage of students who were assigned out-of-school suspension or expelled during the academic year. The dashboard displays this data by the total count and rate of suspended or expelled students, as well as by sex (male/female), and race/ethnicity, including categories for White, Black, American Indian or Alaska Native, Asian, Hawaiian or Pacific Islander, Mixed race, and Hispanic. To calculate rates for sex and race/ethnicity, we obtained the total number of students for each category from MSDE's *Maryland Public School Enrollment by Race/Ethnicity and Gender and Number of Schools* reports as the denominator when calculating the rates.

Student Homelessness

These data were obtained from MSDE's *Students Receiving Special Services Data* excel files from 2018 (when data collection began) to 2024. The dashboard displays student homelessness both as counts and rates, with counts representing the number of students who are unhoused in a given school year, and rates (per 100 students) representing the percentage of students who were unhoused in a given school year. To protect student privacy, MSDE suppresses student homelessness data when the count of students in a given category is fewer than 10 and/or percentages less than or equal to 5 percent (or greater than/equal to 95%). Suppressed counts are indicated by an asterisk (*), and rates are displayed as <=5, which indicates that students experiencing homelessness for the given county- or state-level estimate are less than or equal to 5%.

Students in Foster Care

These data were obtained from MSDE's *Students Receiving Special Services Data* excel files from 2018 (when data collection began) to 2024. The dashboard displays students in foster care both as counts and rates, with counts representing the number of students who were in foster care in a given school year, and rates (per 100 students) representing the percentage of students who were in foster care in a given school year. To protect student privacy, MSDE suppresses student foster care data when the count of students in a given category is fewer than 10 and/or percentages less than or equal to 5 percent (or greater than/equal to 95%). Suppressed counts are indicated by an asterisk (*), and rates are displayed as <=5, which indicates that students in foster care rates for the given county or state-level estimate are less than or equal to 5%.

Percent of Schools with Full-Time School Resource Officers (SROs)

The Maryland Center for School Safety (MCSS) collects annual data regarding law enforcement coverage within schools. The dashboard displays the percentage of public schools within a given county (or statewide) that employ at least one full-time SRO from 2020 (when data collection began) to 2024.

School Shooting Deaths & Injuries

These data were obtained from the Gun Violence Archive (GVA), an open source publicly available dataset that captures information related to incidents of gun violence. The database uses an open source methodology, meaning that information regarding each gun violence incident is captured through publicly available information and media coverage. Specifically, the GVA captures all gun-related incidents that took place on school grounds, including K-12 as well as colleges and universities. GVA is inclusive of both public and private schools. The dashboard displays the number of fatalities and injuries (combined) that occurred as a consequence of the gun violence incidents on school grounds within the state of Maryland from 2014 to 2024.

ENVIRONMENTAL

Food Accessibility Index

These data were obtained from County Health Rankings and Roadmaps, which collects county-level data reflecting how easy it is for people in a county to access healthy, affordable food. This index considers several factors that influence food access, including how close residents live to grocery stores or supermarkets, the cost of food in the area, and transportation options and barriers that may make it harder to purchase groceries. Index values range from 0 to 10. Higher values indicate better access to healthy food and a stronger local food environment, whereas lower values suggest that residents may face more challenges in finding or affording nutritious food. The dashboard displays this data at the state- and county-level from 2014 to 2024.

Social Vulnerability Index

These data were obtained from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention and reflect how vulnerable a county may be to harm during natural or human-caused disasters. The Social Vulnerability Index (SVI) measures social and economic conditions that can make it more difficult to prepare for, respond to, and recover from emergencies. The index considers factors such as poverty levels, access to vehicles, crowded housing, and other characteristics that may affect a community's ability to cope with disaster-related impacts. SVI values range from 0 to 1. Higher values indicate greater social vulnerability relative to other counties within Maryland, while lower values indicate less vulnerability. Because the measure is based on percentile rankings, it reflects how a county compares to others in Maryland rather than providing an absolute measure of risk. On this dashboard, the index is used to identify the top three counties each year with the highest levels of social vulnerability, highlighting communities that may need additional support in disaster preparedness and recovery efforts. These data are available every other year from 2014 to 2022 (2014, 2016, 2018, 2020, 2022).

Crash Fatalities

These data were obtained from the Maryland Department of Transportation Motor Vehicle Administration and reflect the total number of deaths as a result of a motor vehicle crash. The dashboard displays this data annually from 2014 to 2023 at both the state- and county-levels.

Crash Injuries

These data were obtained from the Maryland Department of Transportation Motor Vehicle Administration and reflect the total number of injuries as a result of a motor vehicle crash. The dashboard displays this data annually from 2014 to 2023 at both the state- and county-levels.

Accidental Shooting Deaths & Injuries

These data were obtained from the Gun Violence Archive (GVA), a publicly available database that tracks incidents of gun violence across the United States. The database uses an open-source methodology, meaning that incidents are identified and verified using publicly available information, including media reports and other public records. This measure represents the total number of people injured or killed (combined) in accidental shooting incidents within each county (and statewide) each year from 2014 to 2024. Additional firearm data including emergency visits related to firearms and rates of suicide with firearms were gathered from the Maryland Department of Health's Firearm Violence Data Dashboard. Their data were gathered from the Maryland Vital Statistics Administration (VSA), the Office of the Chief Medical Examiner (OCME), and Emergency Department (ED) Data. Data cover 2015-2024 and were suppressed when counts were <10.

BEHAVIORAL

Suicide Rate

These data were obtained from County Health Rankings and Roadmaps annual estimates of the number of suicides in each county and at the state-level from 2020 to 2024. The dashboard displays this data as the age-adjusted suicide rate per 100,000 residents.

Overdose Deaths

These data were obtained from the Maryland Department of Health, which publishes a public facing dashboard summarizing fatal overdoses across the state of Maryland. Overdose fatalities include counts of unintentional drug and alcohol-related intoxication deaths. Counts are based on confirmed fatal overdose cases and are updated as investigations are completed and records are finalized. The data reflect the total number of fatal overdoses among Maryland residents and are reported at both the state- and county-level from 2014 to 2024.

Primary Care Physician (PCP) Ratio

These data were obtained from County Health Rankings and Roadmaps and reflect the ratio of the population to primary care physicians within a given area. The measure represents the number of residents per one primary care provider, including practicing physicians specializing in general practice, family medicine, internal medicine, and pediatrics. Lower ratios indicate greater access to care. The dashboard displays this data at both the state- and county-level from 2014 to 2024.

Mental Health Provider Ratio

These data were obtained from County Health Rankings and Roadmaps and reflect the ratio of the population to mental health providers, including psychiatrists, psychologists, licensed clinical social workers, counselors, and advanced practice nurses specializing in mental health care. The measure represents the number of residents per provider, with lower ratios indicating greater access to behavioral health services. The dashboard displays this data both at the state- and county-level from 2015 to 2024.

Frequent Mental Distress

These data were obtained from County Health Rankings and Roadmaps and reflect the percentage of adults reporting 14 or more days of poor mental health per month. Poor mental health includes stress, depression, and problems with emotions. This measure is age-adjusted to allow for comparisons across populations with differing age distributions. The dashboard displays this data at both the state- and county-level from 2016 to 2024.

Behavioral Health Treatment Facilities and Services

These data were obtained from the National Survey on Drug Use and Health (NSDUH). These measures are available at the state-level from 2021 to 2024 and reflect the availability and characteristics of behavioral health treatment facilities across Maryland. Indicators include the total number of facilities, as well as the percentage of facilities offering substance use treatment services, mental health services, both substance use and mental health services, or neither. Additional measures capture the percentage of facilities offering detoxification services, psychiatric emergency walk-in services, and treatment at no charge or minimal payment (PAYASST). Together, these indicators provide insight into the capacity, scope, and affordability of behavioral health treatment infrastructure within the state.

Public Behavioral Health System (PBHS) Service Utilization

These data were obtained from the Maryland Department of Health and reflect the number of individuals receiving behavioral health services through the Public Behavioral Health System (PBHS). Measures include the number of individuals receiving mental health services (2016-2024) and the number receiving substance use disorder (SUD) services (2016-2024). These data are available at the state-level only.

PBHS Care Continuity and High-Need Utilization

These data were obtained from the Maryland Department of Health and reflect patterns of care continuity and high-need service utilization within the PBHS. Measures include the percentage of mental health service recipients receiving follow-up care within seven days of an emergency department discharge (2023-2024) and the percentage of mental health service recipients with three or more behavioral health-related emergency department visits (2020-2024). These indicators provide insight into continuity of care and repeated acute service use. Data are available at the state-level only.

PBHS Youth Substance Use Services

These data were obtained from the Maryland Department of Health and include indicators related to youth (ages 0-17) receiving substance use disorder (SUD) treatment through the PBHS. Measures include the percentage of PBHS SUD providers actively billing for youth services (2022-2024) and the number of unduplicated youth receiving SUD treatment (2022-2024). These data are available at the state-level only.

Service Delivery and Access Patterns

These data were obtained from the Maryland Department of Health and reflect how behavioral health services are delivered across the state. Measures include the number of unduplicated individuals served in outpatient settings in rural areas (2015-2024) and the percentage of individuals receiving behavioral health services via telehealth (2022-2024). These indicators provide insight into geographic access and the use of alternative service delivery methods. Data are available at the state-level only.

CRIME

Crime Statistics

The dashboard presents both state- and county-level data on crime 2014 to 2024 (where available). Crime statistics were obtained from the Maryland Statistical Analysis Center containing data directly from the Maryland Department of State Police. These data were provided through the Maryland Uniform Crime Reporting (UCR) Program and cover 2014 through 2023. Given the phasing out of the UCR Program and introduction of the National Incident-Based Reporting System (NIBRS) beginning in 2021, NIBRS data were gathered for 2021 through 2024 through the Maryland Department of State Police's NIBRS Crime Reporting Dashboard (see here). NIBRS was created to provide more detailed, incident-based information on crimes relative to the more simplistic UCR reporting. There are differences between the two reporting systems that could result in differing crime estimates, mainly the UCR's use of the hierarchy rule in which an incident with multiple offenses only had the most serious offense counted for reporting purposes. NIBRS reports both incident and offense information, in which incidents are defined as one or more offenses committed by the same offender, or group of offenders, acting in concert, at the same time and place. For ease of understanding, the dashboard displays NIBRS offense data. Due to the incremental transition to NIBRS, crime statistics reporting varied widely across jurisdictions, and Maryland was not 100% NIBRS compliant until 2025. This means that not all agencies in the state reported crime statistics to NIBRS until after the time period covered by this dashboard. Thus, any statistics reported post-2020 should be taken with caution.

There are some differences in crime categories between the UCR and NIBRS systems. First, UCR reports rape offenses separately while NIBRS groups sex offenses together. Given this change, it would be expected to have higher rates of sex offenses after the reporting change due to the inclusion of additional offenses. Additionally, the NIBRS dashboard reports all assaults while the UCR reports just aggravated assaults. This difference would also result in higher rates of assaults after the reporting change due to the inclusion of simple assault.

Firearm Violence

Data were gathered on firearm violence in the state. NIBRS provided a raw count of crimes against persons committed with firearms but these data are only available in NIBRS-reporting jurisdictions between 2021 and 2024. Additional data on firearm-related homicides were gathered from the Maryland Department of Health's Firearm Violence Data Dashboard. Their data were gathered from the Maryland Vital Statistics Administration (VSA) and the Office of the Chief Medical Examiner (OCME). These data are available between 2015 and 2024 and were suppressed when counts were <10; these data are identified as missing in this dashboard.

Victimization

Victimization measures were gathered from the National Crime Victimization Survey (NCVS). This dashboard provides 3-year aggregated state-level data on victim-reported crime estimates by violent and property victimization, violent victimization that was not a simple assault, burglary victimization, violent and property victimization reported to the police. Additionally, reporting rates are included to identify the proportion of offenses that were reported to the police. These data were gathered from publicly available reports from the Bureau of Justice Statistics based on information collected with the NCVS. The NCVS defines property victimization to include burglary, trespassing, motor vehicle theft, or other theft. Violent victimization includes rape/sexual assault, personal robbery, aggravated assault, or simple assault.

POLICING

Crime Clearances

This dashboard provides county-level crime clearance data from 2014 through 2024. A crime is "cleared" or "closed" by either arrest of the individual or individuals responsible for the crime or by exceptional means, generally meaning the individual(s) responsible have been identified but officials cannot arrest the offender due to circumstances such as death of the offender. Crime clearances were gathered from the Uniform Crime Report (UCR) Offenses Known and Clearances by Arrest data for 2014 through 2022 (obtained here). Additional crime clearance data were obtained from the Maryland National Incident-Based Reporting System (NIBRS) Dashboard (linked here) for 2021 through 2024. NIBRS clearances are based on the incident rather than the offense, if any offense within a given incident is cleared then the entire incident is identified as cleared. Given the shift in crime reporting between the UCR and NIBRS systems, data between 2021 and 2024 are not complete and should not be used to make definitive conclusions regarding police clearance rates.

Use of Force

This dashboard provides county-level data on use of force complaints from 2022 to 2024. These data were gathered from the DPSCS Police Training and Standards Commission "Use of Force Complaints Report" published annually. These data include five variables: use of force complaints administratively charged, complaints not charged, of those NOT charged complaints unfounded, of those NOT charged complaints exonerated, and complaints pending. The data were reported by law enforcement agency, which was aggregated to county-level for the dashboard.

Arrests by Race and Ethnicity

The dashboard also includes measures of arrests by race and ethnicity, obtained from both UCR Arrests by Age, Sex, and Race annual data collection and the Maryland Department of State Police's NIBRS Crime Reporting Dashboard. As with the clearance data, UCR data cover 2014-2022 and NIBRS covers 2021-2024. As the State Police's dashboard is dynamic and constantly updated with new data, the data collected for this public safety dashboard are accurate as of year-end 2025.

Traffic Stops by Race and Ethnicity

This dashboard provides county-level data on traffic stops, searches, and stops resulting in arrests from 2015 through 2023. The data were originally identified by the agency that conducted that traffic stop. Although location information was included in the data, the free-entry location variable did not provide enough data to identify the county in which each stop occurred. Due to this issue, we relied on the agency conducting the stop to assume the county where the stop occurred. For example, if a stop was conducted by Annapolis Police Department, it was assumed that stop occurred in Anne Arundel County. However, a large proportion of traffic stops in the state are conducted by the Maryland State Police. As we could not accurately identify where the stops by this agency were conducted, we included "State Agencies" as their own level of analysis. Thus, the data identify 24 jurisdictions as well as a 25th jurisdiction of "State Agencies."

Note: The racial category of "Native American" was only added to the data beginning in 2018. Additionally, in the original data, "Hispanic" was included as an additional race category rather than a separate ethnicity indicator, which limited the ability to compare these racial categories to subsequent criminal justice race and ethnicity data presented in the dashboard.

Law Enforcement Officers Killed in the Line of Duty

This dashboard provides state-level data on deaths of law enforcement by homicide, accident, and suicide. This data were provided by the Maryland Statistical Analysis Center. These data are also publicly available and are included in the Governor's Office of Crime Prevention and Policy public safety dashboards (see here).

COURTS

Incarceration Sentences

The dashboard presents county-level sentencing data examining incarceration sentences, average incarceration sentence lengths, and average offender scores by race and ethnicity. These data were obtained from the Maryland State Commission on Criminal Sentencing Policy's (MSCCSP) publicly available data. MSCCSP collects data on all cases falling under the state's sentencing guidelines, which apply to select circuit court cases in the state. These cases comprise the most serious misdemeanor and felony criminal charges and only contain data on convicted cases. As such, the data presented in this dashboard do not comprise all sentencing in the state of Maryland, only a subset of the most serious cases. Additionally, this data does not present adequate information on convictions in the state as it only includes cases adjudicated guilty. Thus, the data included in the dashboard identifies two sentencing decision points by race and ethnicity. The first, incarceration sentences, is defined as any sentencing event for which an offender received more than 0 months in jail or prison or was credited more than 0 months (i.e. served detention prior to conviction).

Average Incarceration Sentence Lengths

The second, average incarceration length, is defined as the total number of months sentenced to jail or prison and the number of credited months for those receiving an incarceration sentence. Those with higher average sentence lengths were assigned longer terms in jail or prison at the time of sentencing.

Average Offender Scores

Lastly, to provide context to these sentencing decisions, also included in the dashboard is a generated offender score. Sentencing guidelines contain a sentencing matrix using a composite score of criminal history (i.e. offender score) and a score of the seriousness of the current offense (i.e. offense score) to provide judges with a sentencing range based on the convergence of these two scores. The offender score contains points for prior criminal history, prior adult parole or probation violations, current relationship to the criminal justice system, and points for juvenile delinquency history if the offender is under 23 years of age. Due to confidentiality reasons, the delinquency score is not included in MSCCSP's publicly available data. Thus, the generated offender score included in the current dashboard is a combination of prior criminal history score (a scale of 0 to 5), prior parole/probation violations (0 to 1) and relationship to the criminal justice system (0 to 1), for a total score ranging from 0 to 7. This average score is displayed by race and ethnicity categories in the dashboard.

CORRECTIONS

Correctional Assault

This dashboard provides state-level data on homicides and assaults in correctional and detention populations from 2017-2023. These data were collected from the 2023 and 2024 Managing for Results Annual Performance Reports compiled by the Department of Budget and Management. This data is at the fiscal year so it is not directly comparable to other data in the dashboard.

Recidivism

The dashboard includes state-level data on 1-, 2-, and 3-year, and cumulative 3-year recidivism measures obtained from the DPSCS's most recent recidivism report. These data are provided for four release-cohort years, fiscal years 2016-2019. These recidivism data show rates of releases from Maryland state incarceration that are returned to state custody within a specific period of release.

Supervision Populations

The dashboard captures the average active supervision population for both criminal supervision and the state's Drinking Driver Monitoring Program (DDMP) for fiscal years 2014 through 2023. As specified by DPSCS's Division of Parole and Probation, the DDMP is an "order for probation that is placed under monitoring for a crime specified by the law with a special condition for participation in an alcohol or drug abuse education or treatment program approved by the Department of Health."

For access to the full report, please contact **MCRIC**.

MARYLAND CRIME RESEARCH AND INNOVATION CENTER

Maryland Crime Research and Innovation Center
University of Maryland
2220 Samuel J. LeFrak Hall
7251 Preinkert Drive
College Park, MD 20742

301-405-4699 | mcric@umd.edu | go.umd.edu/mcric