



MEMORANDUM

TO: **ERIKA OLIPHANT**
BETH HAMLIN
Monroe County Prosecuting Attorney

FROM: **ERIC GROMMON**
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RE: Monroe County Prosecuting Attorney’s Racial Justice Project – July 2021 Status Update

DATE: 13 July 2021

This memorandum provides a status update on project activities between April 2021 to June 2021. We remain on pace to complete the project January 2022.

- We assembled a Research Advisory Committee consisting of experts who examine racial and ethnic disparities across the justice system or experts who recently engaged in research projects with Monroe County justice system partners. The Committee offers guidance on research design and data collection instruments. The Committee also delivers feedback on preliminary statistical trends as they become available. In addition to the core researchers leading this project (Eric Grommon Staci Rising, Carmen Diaz, and Evan Lowder), Committee members include:
 - Dr. Caroline Bailey, Assistant Professor, O’Neill School at IUPUI
 - Dr. Dena Carson, Associate Professor and Director of Criminal Justice and Public Safety, O’Neill School at IUPUI
 - Dr. Tri-Keah Henry, Assistant Professor, Department of Criminal Justice at Indiana University
 - Roxy Lawrence, Director of Evaluation, Center for Research on Inclusion and Social Policy at Indiana University Public Policy Institute
 - Dr. Miriam Northcutt Bohmert, Associate Professor, Department of Criminal Justice at Indiana University
 - Michelle Ying, Project Coordinator, Department of Criminal Justice at Indiana University
- We are examining new felony and misdemeanor arrests and citations referred to the Monroe County Prosecuting Attorney (MCPA) across a 20-month observation period: May 2018 to December 2019. This decision allows us to examine offenses presented to MCPA by law enforcement agencies, explore justice system patterns during Indiana University academic terms, and assess justice system patterns before COVID-19.
 - This observation period translates to:
 - 1,379 counts that were NOT charged (represents 1,241 unique individuals)
 - 7,243 cases filed (represents 5,219 unique individuals)
 - 1,861 cases dismissed (represents 1,861 unique individuals)



- We collected administrative records on all charges and cases within our observation period from Indiana Prosecutor Case Management System (INPCMS). INPCMS is Indiana’s statewide case management system for prosecutors. We exhausted all pre-existing report and export options in INPCMS. After inspection of these data, we requested and received specialized reports from INPCMS’ vendor (BC Forward) and Indiana Prosecuting Attorney’s Council (IPAC) containing additional tables and fields that WERE NOT available in pre-existing report options. These specialized reports will enable us to link no charge, filed charges, and dismissed charges together.
 - Core measures from INPCMS administrative records include: Individual (age, race/ethnicity), case (agency referral, offense type, offense level, pretrial status, attorney, court), and victim (age, race/ethnicity, relationship) characteristics
 - Core prosecutorial decision points from INPCMS administrative records include: Charging (file or no file charges), dismissal, disposition, and sentence
- We developed and are piloting case file review sampling and data collection procedures. Our INPCMS specialized reports provide the information we need to complete this project. We will supplement these data by manually reviewing a sample of approximately 350 misdemeanor case files. This decision will generate additional sources of information to understand prosecutorial discretion and decision-making, particularly choices to lower or enhance charges, recommend plea agreements, and offer diversion programs.
- We requested and received Monroe County jail, pretrial, and probation records across our observation period. We are linking these data to INPCMS records. These data will help us understand the influence of pretrial decision-making on MCPA case processing.
- We developed and are ready to administer interview and survey instruments. Interviews with MCPA staff will begin toward the end of this month. We will launch the survey for MCPA staff next month. We will begin the process of recruiting law enforcement, pretrial, court, probation, community corrections, and community members to participate in this project next month.
- We held five on-site visits. The purpose of these site visits was to gain additional information on MCPA policy, practice, data, and perceptions by speaking with attorneys and staff. These insights have been integrated into our interview and survey instruments. Another objective of these site visits is to access and pull supplemental information out of case files.
- We hosted 13 Zoom meetings. The purpose of these meetings was to finalize the research design, request data, and brief professional (IPAC) and community organizations (NAACP-Monroe County Branch, Unitarian Universalist Church) on our project and solicit feedback.
- We submitted a Letter of Interest for Arnold Ventures’ prosecution research funding. This opportunity encourages practitioner, researcher, and community organization collaborations to examine prosecutorial discretion at charging, pretrial, diversion, plea negotiation, and sentencing. The grant provides financial support for prosecutor offices and community organizations to assist the development of the research design, support data collection, and disseminate findings through public forums.



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- We requested \$415,000 for a 30-month project to expand our focus to traffic infractions, pull in at least five additional years of administrative records, and launch a public-facing dashboard
- Arnold Ventures' decision to invite full proposals will be determined toward the end of July 2021