



A Framework for Evidence-Based Decision Making in Local Criminal Justice Systems

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Starter Kit

3a: Developing a System Map

Appendix 1: Invitation Template

Dear Colleague,

On [Date], the [Site Name] policy team will be conducting a series of “mapping” work group sessions with decision makers and operating agency staff from across the criminal justice system to gain a greater understanding and appreciation of each of the key decision points in the jurisdiction’s criminal justice system. The final product of the mapping work groups will be a flow chart, or map, of the jurisdiction’s criminal justice system. When completed, the map will illustrate (in some detail) how defendants and offenders flow through the criminal justice system from arrest to post-release.

The Mapping Process

At each mapping work group session, participants will engage in an interactive process designed to articulate a complete “picture” of how critical decisions are made at each decision point in the system:

1. arrest
2. pretrial status
3. charging/plea
4. sentencing
5. local institutional intervention(s)/local institutional release
6. community intervention(s)
7. violation response
8. discharge from supervision

Those with knowledge and experience in day-to-day decision making have been invited to participate. Work group sessions are as follows:

[Session descriptions and times to be completed]

DATE/TIME Arrest and pretrial status

DATE/TIME Charging/pleas

DATE/TIME Sentencing

DATE/TIME Local institutional interventions/local institutional release

DATE/TIME Community interventions

DATE/TIME Violation response/discharge from supervision

All mapping work group session will be held at [location].

Preparations for Mapping Work Group Sessions

There is little preparation involved. For those who are interested, “Chapter 13: Map the System” of *Getting it Right: Collaborative Problem Solving for Criminal Justice* (McGarry & Ney, 2006) provides a more detailed overview of the mapping process and what to expect during the work group sessions.

Discussions during the mapping work group sessions will revolve around issues raised by the following kinds of questions:

1. Who is involved in decision making at this decision point?
2. What are the major decision options at this point?
3. What formal procedures or policies are followed?
4. What information is needed to make decisions?
5. What other factors are considered, including unspoken or implicit norms?
6. How long does it take to make a decision?
7. How effective is the decision making process? How do we know?
8. What are the challenges and/or barriers to effective and efficient decision making?

What to Bring to the Mapping Work Group Sessions

- Most importantly, work group participants are asked to come to the mapping work group sessions prepared to discuss how they participate in decisions that affect individuals who come in contact with the criminal justice system. In this regard, participants’ candid perspectives and insights about criminal justice processing and decision making in the jurisdiction will be invaluable to constructing the map.
- Participants may wish to bring any EASILY attainable written policies, procedures, statistical data, and the like that would better inform the discussion, but this is not essential.