

Five Steps to Completing Your Juvenile Crime Analysis

STEP 1

Identify the Universe of Systems to Be Included in the Crime Analysis

The juvenile justice and delinquency prevention system is vast and the idea of collecting data from all sectors can be daunting. The purpose of completing a thorough data analysis every 3 years allows for identification of issues and concerns that may have only recently crept up in your state. As data are refreshed every 3 years, it can offer you and the State Advisory Group (SAG) the opportunity to determine what areas have improved or even worsened despite attention and focus by the SAG or others. Intervening factors such as legislation, policy, or changes in how juvenile justice is administered could have negatively or positively affected the outcomes for juveniles at risk of or involved in the juvenile justice system.

As noted in Module 2, the Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention Systems can include the following:

Delinquency Prevention (and Early Intervention) System Components	Juvenile Justice System Components
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Education• Child Abuse and Neglect/CHINS (Child Welfare System)• Mental Health/Substance Abuse or Co-Occurring Services System	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Law enforcement• Juvenile diversion• Juvenile detention• Prosecution• Juvenile court• Juvenile probation• Long-term commitment• Parole/aftercare

It is particularly important to review the Three-Year State Plan crime analysis requirements as mandated by the Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention (JJDP) Act as amended by the Juvenile Justice Reform Act (JJRA) of 2018 (SEC. 223. 34 U.S.C. 11133 (a)(1)-(32). When reviewing the requirements, consider what data will be necessary to complete a plan to address the identified concerns, issues, or population needs noted and where these data can be obtained.

Use your SAG to determine the scope of the data analysis that needs to be completed.

- Will you collect and analyze data from all possible juvenile justice and delinquency prevention systems?
- Has a pre-determination been made by your Designated State Agency (DSA) and/or SAG that narrows the focus for strategic planning purposes? Have they decided that they will just continue with the prior plan's priorities without the benefit of an updated crime analysis?
- How much of a focus will you put on delinquency prevention and early intervention data versus the deep end of the juvenile justice system?
- Are significant issues occurring within certain sectors in your state that appear to require the attention of the SAG and thus must be part of the plan?
- What data were provided to your SAG in past Three-Year State Plan process?
 - Review minutes of the last Three-Year State Plan strategic planning process (if available).
- What systems data were provided in the crime analysis section of the last Three-Year State Plan?
 - Sometimes, a more complete analysis was conducted but not fully reflected in the written and submitted Three-Year State Plan (for brevity).
 - Look for an appendix to the prior Three-Year State Plan that may hold the entirety of the data initially analyzed.
- What systems data were not included in the prior Three-Year State Plan data analysis? Should they now be included?

STEP 2

Locate Your Data Sources

- Does the prior Three-Year State Plan note what data sources were used for that data analysis and where they can be accessed (i.e., a URL)?
- For each required data element, determine who (which system) has the data and how can it be accessed.
- Is there a statewide database that houses all juvenile justice data? How can you access the data?
- If components of your juvenile justice and delinquency prevention system are operated at a local level, are data collected locally and then aggregated and available at a statewide level?
 - Who collects the data and how can you access it?
 - If not collected at a local level and aggregated, how can you access statewide data?

- Who is the contact for providing the data for the other systems? If unknown, begin by contacting the research and evaluation director/staff at each agency/system from which you need data.
- Annual reports for state and local agencies often provide detailed data regarding who was served, the services provided, and outcomes experienced by those served.
 - Many of these reports contain additional data analyses such as an examination of juveniles served by race, ethnicity, gender, outcomes, and issues of concern.

STEP 3

Select Data to Be Collected

- Start with a big picture review, such as a current “State of the State” in juvenile justice and delinquency prevention showing the trajectory of juveniles through the juvenile justice system.
- Look at the overall numbers of juvenile arrests, length of stays, and so on. Ask, “Are the numbers going up or down? Is that good or bad?”
- What do delinquency prevention indicators look like?
- Are the types or levels of cases entering the juvenile justice system (juvenile arrest and/or prosecution) changing?
- Are there differences in the numbers or rates by race, ethnicity, gender, and/or age? If so, what might explain those differences?
- Do the numbers differ across the state? Do high-density urban areas look the same as rural or frontier portions of the state? Why might there be regional differences?
- You will likely find a need for deeper analyses that should be conducted as you begin the preliminary review. Continue the data analysis until you feel confident you understand what is occurring.

STEP 4

Begin Analyzing Your Data

- Some states bring all the data to the full SAG Three-Year State Plan process. This process necessitates a multiday agenda to cover all systems and data. This process is the most thorough as it allows SAG members (and others if invited) to examine the data presented from a variety of perspectives.

- Some states do a pre-review of the data to look for issues or trends that suggest a need for focus by the SAG. This process is less thorough as it does not provide the entirety of the SAG to critically review the data to determine its highest priorities.
 - Consider conducting an internal review with DSA staff only [director, juvenile justice specialist, racial and ethnic disparities (RED) coordinator and/or compliance monitor].
 - Consider implementing a process with DSA staff and a subcommittee of the SAG, or with chairs of all the SAG subcommittees.
 - Be sure to have SAG members present when data regarding their respective systems are being discussed.
- Bring the (research or evaluation) staff who provided the data from the various systems to the discussions. They can provide context and ensure the data assumptions being made are correct.
- It is helpful to have charts, graphs, and tables when reviewing data. Use multiple formats (these can be reused later at SAG meeting) and the Three-Year State Plan.
- If necessary, develop a process for narrowing the data to that which is necessary for planning with the larger SAG.
- You will have much more data collected and analyzed that can be placed into an appendix of the Three-Year State Plan. This appendix may create, for the first time, a location where all or almost all juvenile justice and delinquency prevention data can be found. Make sure to note data sources for all data in the Three-Year State Plan and any appendices.

STEP 5

Engaging Your SAG in Strategic Planning

- Each of the prior Three-Year State Plan priorities should be presented and discussed to allow the following questions to be answered:
 - Is this issue still pertinent?
 - What data is being collected to measure success? What is the data telling you?
 - Has progress been made to address the issue? What remains to be done?
 - Will continued prioritization likely lead to substantive improvement?
 - Is Title II funding needed to support this priority?
- For the crime analysis, you might consider asking SAG members to provide the data presentation and lead the discussion for the systems they represent. This helps build buy-in by the SAG membership.

- Begin by providing a high-level view of the juvenile justice system.
- From there, break the data into sections. Start with delinquency prevention systems data, move to the “front end” of the juvenile justice system (arrest/diversion) data, and then proceed to review all other data points along the juvenile justice continuum (secure long-term commitment/parole/aftercare). Providing it in this way shows what populations are moving deeper into the juvenile justice system and might offer ideas about why and how to curb deeper level/system involvement. Make sure to describe each point using race, ethnicity, gender, and age details whenever possible. Also provide recidivism data for each level of system involvement.
- Use charts, graphs, and tables when reviewing data, and use multiple formats when possible.
- Remember to include information on potential precursors to justice system involvement (i.e., educational issues, abuse/neglect, etc.) to determine whether resources are needed to address these precursors and keep youth from ever entering the juvenile justice system.



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