

DEALING WITH DATA CAPACITY LIMITATIONS

Making the most of what you have

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Webinar overview

- Context: The important of local tracking and analysis
- Expectations of SJC sites
- Dealing with data capacity limitations
- SJC resources

CONTEXT

The importance of local tracking and analysis

The role of data in implementation

Critical for informing and assessing strategies

- **Informing**: Identifying jail population drivers, projecting outcomes and impacts
- **Assessing**:
 - Is the strategy working as designed?
 - How many people are being reached?
 - How do outcomes and impacts compare to targets?
 - Is there a reduction in target populations in the jail?

Data as a feedback mechanism

- Use information to adjust course as necessary:
 - Refine existing strategies
 - Identify where new strategies are needed (and what kinds of strategies)
 - Replicate or expand upon things that are working
 - Identify contextual factors that may be cancelling out progress (e.g. increase in felony arrests)

EXPECTATIONS OF SITES

What sites should be doing

- Reviewing monthly jail reports
- Tracking metrics (at least quarterly)
- Carrying out deeper analysis as feasible

Local strategy tracking: Process metrics

How is the strategy being implemented?

- Number of people served by a program
- Ineligibility reasons for people excluded
- Number of court reminders sent
- Percentage of court reminders that result in successful contacts
- Consistency between risk assessment recommendations and release decisions

Local strategy tracking: Outcome metrics

What are the immediate results of these strategies?

- Number/percentage of target population RoRed at first appearance/bond hearing
- Number/percentage of low risk defendants RoRed
- Number/percentage of supervised released participants who remain arrest-free during supervision
- Number/percentage of people with court reminder issued an FTA warrant
- Length of stay in jail among people RoRed

Deeper analysis

- To better understand metrics
- Example: Only 60% consistency between risk assessment recommendation and release decision—why isn't it higher?
 - Look at:
 - How much of inconsistency is underrides vs. overrides
 - Where is inconsistency the biggest? Specific charges, risk levels, legal and historical factors
 - Dive into qualitative data as helpful

DEALING WITH DATA CAPACITY LIMITATIONS

Data capacity limitations

- Challenges related to data:
 - Unavailability
 - Incompleteness
 - Poor quality
 - Difficult format (paper, text fields)
- Challenges related to resources:
 - Limited time, money, staff for data tracking and analysis

Dealing with data limitations

1. Identify what the issues are
2. Assess the implications for trends and measures
3. Figure out what can be done to help address them
4. Caveat appropriately

Example: Unavailability

- **Issue**: Not enough info in jail data to identify strategy target populations (e.g. low-moderate risk defendants with X charges and < 3 prior arrests)
- **Implication**: Can't assess progress on reducing their representation in the jail
- **Resolution**:
 - Measure using a proxy (e.g. low-moderate risk defendants with X charges)
 - Dive deeper in case file reviews as feasible
- **Caveat**: Not a precise measure of target population, but still much narrower than the overall pretrial population

Example: Incompleteness

- **Issue**: Race/ethnicity data is often missing
- **Implication**: Can't accurately measure disparities or outcomes for people of color
- **Resolution**: Make it a required field?
- **Caveat**: Historical data will still be spotty

Example: Poor quality/accuracy

- **Issue**: Legal status overridden in jail data
- **Implication**: Pretrial population looks smaller than it is
- **Resolution**: Regular jail snapshot pulls
- **Caveat**: If can't do at least weekly, may still be somewhat skewed

Example: Difficult format

- **Issue**: Key court data (e.g. nature of warrant issued) in text form
- **Implication**: Can't track it/know what's happening (e.g. how many FTA warrants issued for people who receive court notifications)
- **Resolution**: Explore through targeted case file review (if resources are available)
- **Caveat**: Small sample so may not be generalizable, ***BUT*** if sampling is done well can lend insight

Resource issues are harder

But figure out what's feasible

- No resources needed to review monthly reports
- Prioritize tracking of core metrics and biggest strategies
- **BUT** also consider data availability and quality—what can be done most readily as a starting point?
- Coordinate across agencies (cross-agency data subcommittee?)
- Deeper analysis can be done less often—about explaining trends, not month to month fluctuations
- Once tracking processes are set up, replication will get easier
- Use Site Coordinator and ISLG as a resources

SJC RESOURCES

ISLG resources: Data capacity assessments

- Completed during Phase I for 20 initial sites
- Assessment of data and analytical capacity at key SJC decision points
 - Summary table: Systems, data, and technology by agency
 - Overview of strengths and challenges
 - Data elements by system point
 - Recommendations for building capacity
- ***Revisit with local tracking in mind?***

ISLG resources: Assistance

- Guidance and consultation on:
 - Implementing data capacity-building recommendations
 - Problem-solving targeted issues identified by sites
 - Setting up processes for measuring, analyzing, and using data (as needed)
- Sites may request updated assessments