

Data Analytics and Applied Research at the Center

The Center for Justice Innovation’s (the Center) Data Analytics and Applied Research (DAAR) department is vital to advancing the Center’s mission by harnessing the power of data to drive meaningful change in systems and communities. DAAR collaborates with internal departments and external stakeholders to develop, implement, and evaluate data-driven programs, policies, and practices that address real-world justice challenges.

Operating under the Center’s Office of National Initiatives and Research, DAAR is a dynamic and growing team of more than 30+ seasoned researchers, data analysts, and former practitioners with strong technical skills and subject matter expertise, who are deeply committed to transforming the justice system and improving the lives of the people it touches. In addition, with expertise in cutting-edge analytics and extensive experience in justice reform, DAAR translates complex data into actionable insights. By tracking data with precision, conducting rigorous research, and fostering strong partnerships, DAAR powers the Center’s efforts to drive measurable reforms that enhance community justice.

Collaboration

DAAR researchers are strong collaborators, working with staff and serving as a bridge across operational programs, technology, expert assistance, and external partners in both the community and criminal justice fields. As powerful communicators, the DAAR team is able to effectively convey complex data findings to a variety of



technical and non-technical audiences, both internally and externally. DAAR communicates these findings in a variety of ways including statistical and narrative reports, fact sheets, policy memos, infographics, data dashboards, presentations, and other publications. Working closely with program funders, Center leadership across departments, community and court partners, and on-the-ground staff, the team is uniquely positioned to foster a rich and productive exchange of information that directly informs, impacts, and reflects the Center's work. DAAR also collaborates regularly with the Center's technology department, working closely with developers and data engineers to effectively translate programmatic data and reporting needs into database solutions and automated pipelines.

Data Collection and Management

Systems development. In support of operating programs across the Center and working closely with program and technology teams, DAAR designs and develops comprehensive data tracking systems and data collection processes for effective case management, monitoring and evaluation, and funder reporting purposes. As an adjunct to these data tracking systems, DAAR also collects and analyzes feedback on the Center's projects by developing and implementing ongoing participant and stakeholder surveys.

Establishing metrics. At the outset of a new initiative, DAAR works closely with project directors, program staff, stakeholders, and funders to identify and clearly define all data metrics to be tracked in order to effectively monitor progress and evaluate outcomes.

Tracking. As programs evolve and data needs change, DAAR adjusts data protocols and procedures to align with current policy and practice as needed. Data tracking processes are operationalized through assessing need, creating logic models, auditing data, developing and refining systems and tools, and ongoing data trainings. This work requires up-to-date knowledge of dynamic program models, stakeholder expectations and contractual deliverables, current priorities, operational challenges, and technical capacity.

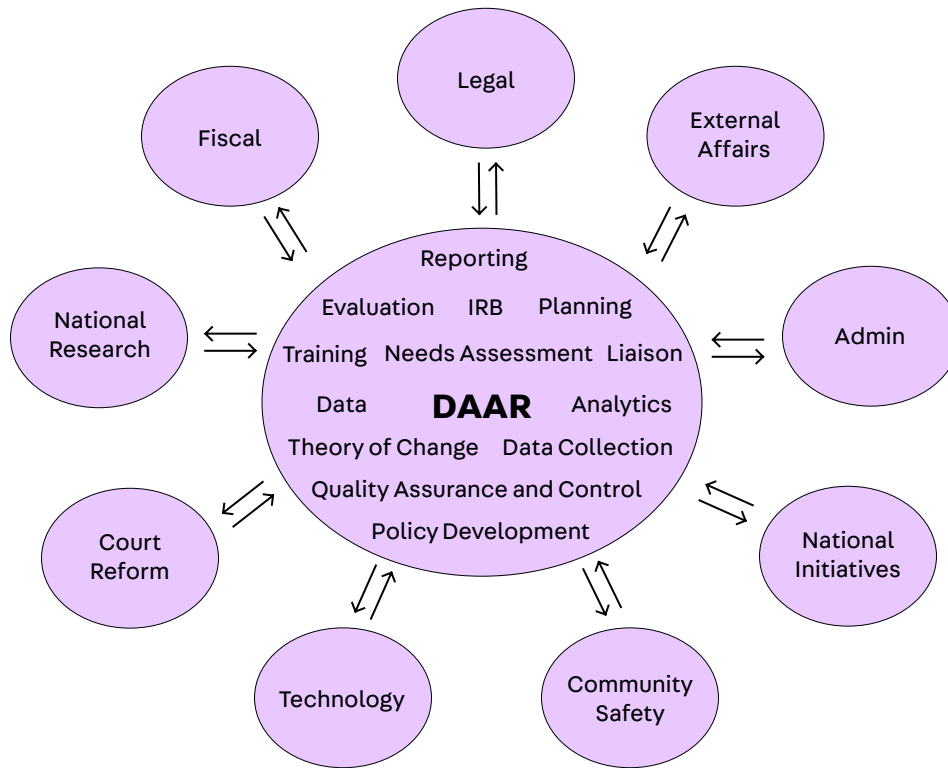
Analytics

The DAAR team consistently queries and analyzes program data to monitor progress, assess program impact, identify gaps and trends, and inform various operational decisions. These decisions involve resource allocation, program and policy development and implementation, service offerings, and goal achievement. With expertise in handling both large and small datasets, DAAR can navigate and manipulate data with the precision and speed required for timely and accurate responses to urgent data requests. Additionally, DAAR provides user-friendly reports and dashboards that involve complex data from diverse sources, ensuring programs have the information they need to succeed.

Research

In addition to continuous data tracking and programmatic data analysis, DAAR actively collaborates with sites and external stakeholders to conduct research projects designed to enhance practice both within the Center and broader community (see Figure 1). Often guided by trends DAAR recognizes and

Fig. 1.: DAAR Collaboration with Departments Across the Center for Justice Innovation and Beyond



the curiosity of program staff, DAAR employs robust research methodologies to investigate challenges and opportunities for advancement at all levels, from specific programs to the national criminal justice landscape. DAAR employs quantitative, qualitative, and mixed methods research in multiple contexts including conducting community needs assessments, rigorous program evaluations, and ongoing process evaluations. At the same time, DAAR coordinates with external researchers, assisting with studies conducted on the Center’s projects.

DAAR’s primary mission is to support all programming while ensuring accountability for driving and sustaining success in the communities the Center serves (See Fig. 1 above). However, DAAR’s impact extends

beyond the Center. It leverages insights gained from its work with Center programs to offer expert assistance to external agencies and organizations worldwide. DAAR provides guidance on identifying data metrics, collecting data effectively, and utilizing data to enhance programming. DAAR is data-driven reform, at the Center and beyond.

FOR MORE INFORMATION

To learn more or request assistance, contact the Center at info@innovatingjustice.org.