

Prosecutors and Responses to Crimes of Violence Notes from the Field

Within the context of a national movement toward criminal legal system reform—including the use of alternatives-to-incarceration (ATIs) for non-violent and drug cases—legal responses to crimes of violence still largely involve incarceration. Few jurisdictions apply alternatives to address violent crime, instead continuing to rely on carceral approaches, despite evidence pointing to the overall negative effects. The current study explores alternative responses to crimes of violence outside of incarceration.

Specifically, this document presents findings from five in-depth case studies. In it, we highlight some of the unique approaches to responding to violent crime implemented in each site, in hopes that they may prove instructive for other jurisdictions seeking to explore or further develop alternative approaches to crimes of violence. The featured approaches are implemented at various stages of the criminal legal system process—from after charging and the initial appearance, to pretrial and plea, to post-plea, pre-sentencing, to post-conviction and sentencing. We explore a pretrial

supervision program, restorative justice programs, pretrial diversion programs, specialty courts, and post-conviction resentencing initiatives.

Each study also includes specific recommendations made by those in the featured site and based on the information learned from the featured site. The companion piece, *A New Approach: Alternative Prosecutorial Responses to Violent Crime*, presents a comprehensive summary of study findings, along with resultant recommendations for policy and practice.

The Five Sites

To identify case study sites, we drew from our own networks,^[1] targeting jurisdictions known to be utilizing alternatives to responding to crimes of violence. We screened potential sites for eligibility through an initial remote screening interview. Selection criteria included use of an alternative-to-incarceration program in the pretrial supervision or disposition of violent felony cases, ability to support a virtual site visit, and geographical diversity. The final case study sites include Arlington County, Virginia; Denver County, Colorado; Maricopa County, Arizona; Monroe County, Indiana; and Prince George's County, Maryland.

Additional Considerations

In reviewing the practices documented in the following case study notes, we wish to make a few things clear to the reader. First, the nationwide, jurisdiction-, and office-specific context that informed many of the alternatives we studied played a role in shaping the approaches. Interviewees with whom we engaged after the summer of 2020 widely named the national landscape following the murder of George Floyd and the

trend of non-carceral approaches to lesser crimes as a factor in the decision to offer alternative-to-incarceration in cases alleging violence. Interviewees also pointed to the desire to address the underlying causes of violent crime as a motive for implementing approaches that include access to services and treatment.

Second, while some of the practices adopted by the case study sites have existed long enough to establish data collection and documentation of impacts, other approaches are newer, without such data support universally used. Those sites that have been collecting and analyzing program data used that data in a continuing effort to inform practices and policies.

Endnotes

- [1] In addition to Center for Justice Innovation staff, this included outreach through Fair and Just Prosecution and Arnold Venture's Advancing Pretrial Police and research network.

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Notes from Arlington County, VA

As part of our exploratory examination of prosecutorial responses to violent crime, the Center for Justice Innovation conducted a series of case studies across five sites. This fact sheet describes a unique practice in Arlington County, Virginia, in hopes that it may prove instructive for other jurisdictions seeking to explore or further develop alternative approaches to crimes of violence. Arlington County sought to accomplish this by using an approach based in **restorative justice practices**.

The Center for Justice Innovation conducted thirteen individual and group interviews with a range of stakeholders, including restorative justice practitioners, criminal legal system stakeholders (e.g., prosecutors, defense representative, and a judge), community members, and educators, to understand the program and create recommendations for the field.

For additional companion pieces documenting the landscape of prosecutorial responses to violence, please visit innovatingjustice.org.

Background

Arlington County is in northern Virginia and neighbors Washington, D.C. Its population is just over 230,000, and it is the nation's fifth wealthiest county. The population is majority white (74%), with the highest numbers of non-white citizens identifying as Asian (11%) or Black (10%), according to data from the 2021 U.S. census.^[1]

In January 2020, community members closely affiliated with the elected prosecutor (Parisa Dehghani-Tafti, the Commonwealth's Attorney for Arlington County and the City of Falls Church) began to explore adopting restorative justice practices for Ar-

lington's legal system, schools, and community contexts. That initial inquiry led to the creation of **Restorative Arlington**. While there are three focal points of this initiative, all are part of a whole that seeks to create alternatives to a court-based system and provide a stronger sense of safety, belonging, equity, and justice for community members. The legal component, **Heart of Safety**, draws on restorative justice conferencing^[2] as a diversion option for youth and young adults facing felony or serious misdemeanors charges. The program serves anyone who is harmed or is responsible for harm in Arlington County and the City of Falls Church, Virginia.

Alternatives for Cases of Violence

According to interviewees, local opinions about crime and racial and ethnic disparities in Arlington County vary. Community members believed that crime rates were high, which was reflected in the more punitive practices undertaken during the tenure of the previous Commonwealth's Attorney of Arlington. In contrast, interviewees reported that crime rates are not high in the county. They added that Black community members are acutely aware of the disparities in the criminal legal system, but awareness was less so among their white counterparts. Nevertheless, shifting towards a restorative approach to prosecution within the county came from a collective desire for change and required broad community buy-in.

Interviewees reported that this collective desire for change was responsible for the election of the current Commonwealth's

Attorney for Arlington and Falls Church. Dehghani-Tafti envisioned restorative approaches as a mechanism to prevent harm, reduce further harm, give voice to crime victims, and address racial and ethnic equity and trauma.

In furtherance of these goals, three working groups (i.e., legal, schools, and community) convened from April to December 2020 to develop a strategic plan for Restorative Arlington. This process involved meeting with Impact Justice^[3] and other restorative justice practitioners around the country to understand restorative justice, determine how to incorporate restorative justice principles in the daily functioning of programs (e.g., implementing restorative practices during planning meetings), build a restorative culture across all three sectors, and design their strategic plan with a focus on equity and addressing implicit bias.

This initial step was essential to creating a network across sectors and establishing broad stakeholder buy-in. The focus of this memo is on the legal component, Heart of Safety.

As the working groups progressed through the strategic planning period, Restorative Arlington received four grants in 2021 that would help support Heart of Safety.

Next, the executive director of Restorative Arlington established implementation teams who met throughout 2021 and held Community Voice Circles where community members talked about what safety and justice meant to them and concerns related to program design and implementation. Their feedback helped to inform broad programmatic goals.

The Youth and Young Adult Program implementation team included criminal justice system partners (e.g., court-based personnel, law enforcement), community members, formerly incarcerated individuals, a previously harmed individual, and youth members. The team discussed what their model would look like, which resulted in an eligibility plan which built in increased capacity over time (i.e., identifying cases that would be eligible in the short-term, interim, and long-term). The team also developed program logistics such as where to hold conferences (e.g., in the prosecutor's office or community-based partner agency) and how pretrial procedures (e.g., discovery) fit into the restorative conferencing timeline. They drafted the Heart of Safety Memorandum of Understanding in 2021 and transitioned into the Heart of Safety Advisory Team in 2022.

Restorative Arlington spent two years planning and preparing to implement the Heart of Safety Restorative Justice Conferencing Program. The Office of the Commonwealth Attorney, Juvenile and Domestic Relations Court Services Unit for Arlington County and Falls Church, and Arlington Public Schools have signed a Memorandum of Understanding with Restorative Arlington. The program launched in 2022 currently has multiple preliminary cases. In February 2023, the Office of the Commonwealth's Attorney hired a Director of Restorative Justice and Diversion services using BJA Smart Prosecution grant funds. This director, who has a social work background, serves as a liaison between Restorative Arlington and the Commonwealth's Attorney's office to identify cases for referral (in addition to referrals to other diversion services).

Program Goals & Eligibility

Heart of Safety aims to provide an option for diverting some youth and young adults away from the traditional court process.

Restorative conferencing allows both those harmed and those responsible for harm^[4] to voluntarily participate in a process that centers their needs, addresses accountability, and offers healing for the people involved and the community.

General eligibility for Heart of Safety hinges on the participants' commitment to the process, rather than to a specific criminal charge or harm caused. Most cases enter the program after the police file charges and shortly after the case is assigned to an assistant commonwealth attorney, but just before the defendant appears in court. For youth cases, Heart of Safety accepts eligible matters at the point of intake with the Juvenile & Domestic Relations Court before the case is filed as criminal petitions. If that is not possible, the Commonwealth Attorney may still take over the case and consider it for diversion.

The Director of Restorative Justice and Diversion Services is instrumental in identifying eligible cases and making referrals to the Restorative Arlington executive director to start the process of enrolling matters into Heart of Safety. The general referral and eligibility criteria are as follows:

- Cases must be felonies^[5] or serious misdemeanors (e.g., assault, burglary, robbery, arson, car theft). Intimate partner violence and sexual assault cases are eligible only if the person harmed and the person who caused harm want a restorative conference;^[6]

- Cases must have enough preliminary evidence to be viable for prosecution and the person responsible must acknowledge their responsibility for the harm;
- Participants must be 26 years old or younger at the time of the harm;
- At least one person harmed must be identified;^[7]
- Participants must not currently be on adult-supervised probation;
- Cases with co-defendants are eligible; and
- Participant(s) and person(s) harmed must agree to resolve the case with Heart of Safety.

Prosecutors may still decide that the case is not eligible, but the Restorative Arlington executive director regularly communicates with them about the program and its purpose to minimize the use of traditional prosecutorial practices.

An actively enrolled participant in Heart of Safety who picks up a new criminal case may continue the program on the original matter. A new eligible felony or serious misdemeanor case may also qualify for Heart of Safety but would be handled separately from the existing one. Prior criminal history does not automatically disqualify someone from participation in the Heart of Safety.

Enrollment & Discharge

Once referred to the Heart of Safety, the person harmed and the person responsible for harm must consent before enrolling in

Heart of Safety. This consent suspends the prosecution of the case until the completion or cessation of the restorative process. Program facilitators then have individual conversations with the parties. They discuss needs and personal histories, answer any questions or concerns about participating in Heart of Safety and decide when to meet. If all parties agree to meet, the facilitator, person(s) harmed, person(s) who caused harm, and possibly community members who were affected by the incident to have an in-person conversation about the incident at issue (e.g., what happened, why it happened, the harm, and the impact of what occurred). The process culminates in a written, mutually agreed upon restorative plan to address how to define accountability and move forward. Facilitators follow up with both parties to learn if they are satisfied with the process and whether they completed the plan.

Heart of Safety should be completed within eight to ten months of parties consenting to participate. Successful completion results in a dismissal of the original charges. Otherwise, the prosecution will resume.

Recommendations from the Site

Restorative Arlington centers its approach for restorative justice around having a big-picture goal for the community, extensive strategic planning, and piloting the idea to prepare for full-scale implementation. Interviewees made several recommendations for other jurisdictions seeking to implement a similar approach.

1. Identify Community Goals

Identifying the community's goals facilitated change within the criminal justice system and beyond. Restorative Arlington is an example of the power of having a collective goal. Heart of Safety is one product of an overall goal to bring restorative justice practices to the county's legal system, schools, and communities. This goal was developed through direct engagement with the community.

2. Collaboration Takes Time

Taking the time to engage in collaborative strategic planning can lay the foundation for success. With the support of the Arlington County Board and County Manager's Office, Restorative Arlington took two years to plan and develop Heart of Safety. The initiative brought together restorative justice practice experts, listened to the community's needs, engaged with crime victims and the formerly incarcerated, and partnered with actors within the criminal justice system to develop a program that would meet the county's goals and benefit their community.

3. Pilot Your Idea

Identifying goals and strategic planning do not guarantee perfection. Before officially launching the full-scale pretrial program, Restorative Arlington took the opportunity to test its policies and procedures through multiple preliminary cases. Taking the opportunity to see what the program might look like on the ground enabled this initiative to draw on early implementation lessons from the pilot to make the necessary

changes for success. Restorative Arlington has committed to evaluation and adjusting the program to best meet the needs of the community, and the community advisory team contributes to monthly meetings for advisory and accountability.

The opinions, findings, and recommendations expressed in this publication are those of the authors and do not necessarily represent the positions of Arnold Ventures or the participating prosecutors' offices.

Endnotes

- [1] United States Census Bureau. 2021. "Quick Facts: Arlington County, Virginia." Washington, DC: U.S. Government Printing Office.
- [2] In this context, restorative justice is an approach to understanding and responding to crime. It focuses on repairing the harm inflicted by crime on people, relationships, and communities. Restorative justice conferences include a facilitator, the person harmed, and the person who has caused harm to discuss what happened, the harm caused, and how to repair the harm.
- [3] Impact Justice provides technical assistance and training for pre-charge restorative justice diversion programs.
- [4] Rather than the language of victims and offenders, we generally speak of "those who have been harmed" and "those who have caused harm." The movement away from static labels (such as victim and offender) is tied to believing that people can change, especially when given permission and support.
- [5] Under the Code of Virginia, a felony is defined as offense that are "punishable with confinement in a state correctional facility." All other offenses are defined as misdemeanors and traffic infractions are violations of public order and not criminal in nature. There is no definition for "serious misdemeanors." For an exhaustive list of crimes and offense under the Virginia Code see "Title 18.2. Crimes and Offenses Generally." The level of the enumerated crimes and offenses are indicated within the individual chapters for the various crimes.
- [6] Restorative Arlington does have plans to make all intimate partner violence and sexual assault cases eligible when they have the capacity (e.g., more facilitators) to do so.
- [7] Despite the requirement to identify one person harmed, in limited instances, that person may select a surrogate to participate in the restorative justice conferencing process in their stead.

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Notes from City and County of Denver, CO

As part of our examination of prosecutorial responses to violent crime, the Center for Justice Innovation conducted case studies across five sites. This fact sheet describes unique practices undertaken in Denver, Colorado that may prove instructive for other jurisdictions seeking to develop decarceral approaches to crimes of violence.^[1] The City and County of Denver have explored several new approaches in response to violent crime, including **repurposing and expanding a former drug court, providing culturally responsive diversion programming, and building restorative justice services outside of the legal system.**

To learn more about the approaches Denver has taken to respond to crimes of violence and what we can learn from them, the Center for Justice Innovation conducted eighteen individual and group interviews with various Denver stakeholders, including prosecutors, defense attorneys, program service providers, and internal data and research specialists.

For additional companion pieces documenting the landscape of prosecutorial responses to violence, please visit innovatingjustice.org.

Background

The city and county of Denver is a consolidated jurisdiction and Colorado's state capital. The county is home to just over

700,000 residents of diverse racial and ethnic backgrounds.^[2] The Denver District Attorney's Office offers several alternative to incarceration (ATI) programs. The office's stated mission is to prevent and deter crimes, participate in the community, operate with transparency and accountability, support the well-being of victims, and provide diversion and alternatives to incarceration in appropriate cases.^[3] In keeping with their mission, the district attorney's office had an external research agency assess whether there was racial bias in their felony case processes, with the aims of increasing transparency and improving their practices. The study found that there were no racial disparities in plea bargaining outcomes, though there were racial disparities among cases that were dismissed or received a deferred judgement.^[4] Additionally, throughout interviews, office representatives generally presented a willingness to improve and implement new ideas within existing initiatives.

Alternatives for Cases of Violence

In the Denver District Attorney's Office, assistant district attorneys have led the development and management of several ATI initiatives over the years. Initiatives include voluntary programs for cases typically involving low levels of violence and are available at different stages of case processing. Below, we describe the eligibility criteria, intake, programming, and legal implications of successful completion for each of the four distinct ATI approaches: Restorative Justice (pre-plea), Diversion (pre-plea), DIVERT Court (post-plea), and Veterans Court (post-plea).

Like the rest of the country, Denver has more recently grappled with the COVID-19 pandemic, protests against racism and police brutality, and rising violent crime. While these events have challenged their practices in many ways, representatives from the prosecutor's office report that leaning into their commitment to develop relationships across stakeholders and within the office, creating opportunities for ATI-related education for stakeholders and the broader community, and building trust are the most sustainable investments they can make when responding to crimes of violence^[5] in the long-run.

Restorative Denver (pre-plea)

A partnership between a local restorative justice non-profit, the Conflict Center,^[6] and the Denver District Attorney's Office, Restorative Denver seeks to address crime, harm, and public safety through a community-based restorative justice program.^[7] The program was developed in 2019 as part of a collaborative, multi-stakeholder process and continues to evolve under the leadership of a deputy district attorney. A recently published report documenting the first three years of program operations showed positive initial results, including 206 successful completions^[8] and, in previous years, more than \$500 in cost savings per case.^[9] Individuals who caused harm also showed a significant increase in their understanding of how their offenses affected the victim, community, their family, and themselves.^[10]

Restorative sessions occur in the Conflict Center, which is in a stand-alone building. The decision to separate the center from

other legal system buildings was intentional to lend a sense of independence. The Conflict Center staff manages, facilitates, and monitors each case's restorative justice process and strives to disrupt inequities and racial disparities in the criminal legal system by shifting energy and resources to community-based efforts as an alternative to incarceration.

Eligibility

Assistant District Attorneys have limited discretion to refer misdemeanor cases and select felony cases, where the individual is out of custody, to Restorative Denver. Referrals must be based on the current eligibility criteria established by the DA's office policy; however, the Conflict Center is open to seeing cases of any severity.

A deputy district attorney screens all referrals to determine if a case will be an appropriate fit. Currently, the initiative mainly includes misdemeanor offenses or offenses with low levels of injury, including third-degree assault, child abuse (inappropriate discipline), theft, criminal mischief, careless driving causing injury, driving under the influence (DUI) under 21, and menacing. In cases with an apparent victim (or victims), restorative justice sessions require the victim's consent. Excluded cases include domestic violence cases and possession of large capacity ammunition magazine cases.

Conflict Center staff then complete an intake with the referred individual to confirm that the case is appropriate for restorative justice and determine whether additional referrals to community resources are appropriate. Although those accused are not required to

admit guilt on the record, they must express their responsibility for causing harm and take accountability with Conflict Center staff. There is a sliding scale fee for participation,^[11] which is determined by an individual's qualifications for a public defender or receipt of public assistance.

Programming

If the referred individual is found eligible and agrees to participate, two facilitators from the Conflict Center conduct a pre-conference with the individual to help them understand the process and identify the assets the individual brings to the space. Typically, support staff, the person who caused harm, trained community volunteers, and the person harmed (voluntary), conduct a community-group conference together. The purpose is to discuss what happened, the resulting harm, how it impacted people, and how to repair the harm. Through this process, all parties agree upon and sign a formal contract that the person who caused harm must complete. Community members will follow up with the participant throughout the process to ensure they can complete the contract. Participants can take as long as they need to complete the contract. If the contract is not completed by the individual's next court date, the court issues a continuance until the contract is completed. Prosecutors, defense attorneys, and victim advocates do not participate in the session. They are not privy to the details of the contract and are only made aware of whether the participant fulfilled the contract.

Discharge

Upon completion of the contract, program staff refer the case back to the district attorney's office to have the charges dismissed and the case sealed. As of December 2022, 206 individuals had successfully completed the program out of 273 referred. Only 6 individuals were unsuccessful. The remaining individuals are currently participating in the program.

If a participant does not complete the contract, the case will proceed through traditional case processing. Although accepting accountability is a prerequisite to participating in the Restorative Denver program, a person's participation cannot be used against them by prosecutors at trial and it is not an admission of guilt in court.

The 2nd Judicial District Adult Diversion Program (pre-plea)

The 2nd Judicial District Adult Diversion Program^[12] represents a 2018 expansion of a juvenile diversion program developed in the 1970s. The initial expansion incorporated young adults (ages 18-24); subsequent expansion led the program to include adults of all ages. While technically a part of the prosecutor's office, diversion is intentionally housed in a separate building from the prosecutor's office and diversion staff do not share the details of individuals' participation with prosecutors. The program's goal is to create behavior change through individualized case plans and to avoid the collateral consequences of a conviction. Diversion staff make program eligibility determinations and deliver holistic and culturally responsive community support to address participants' risks and needs.

Additionally, many diversion staff are from the same communities as program participants, which lends itself to a unique level of understanding, community, and trust that otherwise would be difficult to foster, especially with young people.

Eligibility

Any adult (18 years or older) charged with a first-time felony offense (including drug charges, theft, property damage, among others) that is not a Colorado Victim Rights Act (VRA) case type^[13] is automatically eligible for diversion at first appearance. After first appearance, for any cases that were not automatically flagged as eligible (including VRA cases), the assigned prosecutor can make a referral to diversion at any time; most cases are referred to diversion through this process. Examples of VRA cases referred in this manner include second and third degree assault and felony menacing.

Though the program is primarily for first-time felony offenders, prosecutors have discretion to consider individuals with a previous felony conviction based on the type of charge or previous charges that occurred several years prior. Examples of criminal history that a prosecutor may consider eligible for diversion include offenses that were previously charged as felonies but are now misdemeanors, years-old felony convictions on an offense different than the current charge, or a felony charge from more than ten years ago. Previous misdemeanor charges—including gun charges—do not necessarily render someone ineligible, unless the old charge was for the possession of a large capacity ammunition magazine. After the prosecutor assigned to the case makes a referral, the

supervising deputy district attorney makes the final eligibility decision.

Once an individual is deemed eligible, diversion staff contacts the individual at their next court date to offer diversion and conduct a screening. Eligible individuals are released on a personal recognizance bond, with a new court date in six weeks. If someone in custody is deemed diversion eligible, they must be released from custody in order for diversion staff to initiate the screening process.

Programming

Individuals who are found eligible and wish to participate in the program must make a confidential statement to diversion program staff, taking accountability for the charges against them. At a scheduled intake, diversion staff administers the Service Planning Instrument (SPIn), a risk/need assessment that maps criminogenic factors against protective factors to inform diversion programming. The potential participant then identifies three risk areas they want to address through programming.

At the next court date, based on assessment results and an individual's willingness to engage with the program, the case is accepted into diversion. The prosecutor's office then dismisses the case, the case is sealed, and participants avoid a felony conviction while completing diversion programming. The process for early dismissal is intentional, to reduce the strain of a pending criminal case while participants try to gain stability and complete diversion programming.

The program strives to provide holistic and culturally responsive resources and supports, emphasizing skill building and ac-

countability. Programming is determined by participant needs and may include drug and alcohol treatment, anger management, community service, restorative justice education, and/or financial planning support if restitution is involved.

An individual's risk and needs inform the duration of programming, which can range from a minimum of five months to a maximum of two years. An additional year is allowable for participants who owe restitution. Individual case plans specify program length and when a participant can successfully complete the program.

Discharge

As noted, participants have their cases dismissed and sealed when they enter the diversion program. As long as a participant demonstrates a willingness to try, diversion staff will work to help them successfully complete programming. Assistant district attorneys are privy to the initial referral, whether the participant was accepted, and if the individual did not complete the program. Beyond this information, the prosecutor's office is not privy to the details of participants' diversion programming.

If an individual is unsuccessful in diversion, the prosecutor's office refiles the case and moves forward with traditional prosecution.^[14]

DIVERT Court (post-plea)

DIVERT Court^[15] originated as a drug court in the Denver District Court; however, recent changes in state legislation reduced sentencing for low-level drug offenses, placing the program at risk of closing. To prevent a loss of

court resources court staff transformed it in 2020 to serve a new population by expanding the eligibility criteria to include more serious charges. With a robust infrastructure already in place, the court pivoted from a model based exclusively on court and law enforcement collaboration to one that provides an alternative to lengthy prison sentences for individuals who struggle with an underlying substance use disorder and are facing charges for serious crimes. All participants are required to be diagnosed with a severe substance use disorder. The court uses therapeutic responses and community collaboration to meet participants' needs holistically to reduce recidivism.

Eligibility

Prosecutors typically refer cases to DIVERT Court because an individual has been charged with a felony and has an underlying substance use concern. The individual must have a criminal charge with a penalty of at least four years in the Department of Corrections. After the accused individual enters a plea, they are screened, which includes a pre-sentence investigative report completed by the probation department and a clinical evaluation completed by a contracted treatment provider. Assessed individuals found to have a severe substance use diagnosis and determined to be high risk and high need by the probation pre-sentence investigative report are eligible for DIVERT Court. However, at sentencing, the ultimate decision is up to the court. Judicial discretion is a driver of admissions and meeting eligibility criteria does not guarantee that the judge will accept the case in DIVERT Court. The highest level of violence for cases accepted into the court include burglary, robbery, and assault.

Programming

Once accepted into DIVERT Court, participants undergo extensive treatment provided by community-based providers, as well as monitoring by the probation department for a minimum of two years. Often, probation officers will meet with the individual in the community to provide moral support by accompanying them through services and other daily needs. Probation officers can also provide monetary support in the form of transportation assistance and meals, as needed.

Discharge

The first cohort of participants started in 2020 and have yet to complete the program. The site is still working to determine the appropriate duration of the program based on participant needs and appropriate care. Currently, the court accepts about sixty participants a year. In the future, the program hopes to serve two to three hundred participants annually. If an individual absconds, they face discharge from the program and a possible resentencing, which could result in being sent to prison or a halfway house. The individual could be allowed to continue to participate in DIVERT Court if they show initiative and effort.

2nd Judicial District Veterans Court^[16] (post-plea)

The goal of veterans' court is to provide wrap-around supportive services and therapeutic approaches to veterans, taking into consideration their disproportionate exposure to violence and trauma through their military career or life experiences. Since

starting in 2018, the veterans court has been staffed by prosecutors with lived military experience. Drawing on their own time in service, prosecutors offer a unique perspective on the nature and potential root causes of violence among veterans. Participants are sentenced to the court with supervised probation for two years. Dedicated staff—including a judge, defender, prosecutor, probation officer, and VA liaison—work together to oversee cases often involving substance use or mental health concerns.

Eligibility

At the first court appearance, for any individual facing charges more serious than a traffic infraction, judges must inquire about the accused individual's veteran status^[17] and ensure that veterans are made aware of their rights to treatment services and access to the veterans court.^[18] Upon receiving the list of all potential participants from the courts, the dedicated veterans court prosecutor screens every case and flags referrals deemed appropriate for the program based on criminal history and case facts. Veterans court typically accepts cases based on a negotiated two-year probationary sentence that otherwise may have resulted in prison time for the individual; participation is voluntary. The most violent cases accepted include felony cases with burglary, arson, theft, or assault. At times, prosecutors can include domestic violence cases. The court strictly excludes sex offenses and homicides.

Programming

Once participants are enrolled, prosecutors and judges refer participants to individual-

ized wrap-around services and community support, as needed, provided through the Veterans Administration and Volunteers of America. Participants are subject to regular check-ins with probation officers, treatment, which may include motivational enhancement therapies, cognitive behavioral interventions, evidence-based pharmacological treatments, and relapse prevention training, and random drug testing, among other requirements. Prosecutors can also offer tailored rewards and sanctions.

Discharge

Participants complete veterans court and their sentence after two years of required programming, with the charge(s) remaining on their record. The only time a plea can be withdrawn is if the plea was a deferred judgment, meaning that at the time of their guilty plea they were not immediately sentenced. In that case, if the participant completes probation and the program, the original plea is withdrawn and dismissed.

Evaluated on a case-by-case basis, participants who do not complete veterans court can face anything from dismissal with no further penalty to implementation of the original sentencing possibilities, including jail or prison.

Recommendations from Denver

Representatives from Denver described their community as one that has generally been supportive of a more rehabilitative criminal legal response and critical of over-reliance on incarceration. However, Denver has experi-

enced a recent rise in violent crime, much like many parts of the country, and the community has since reacted with less confidence in previously celebrated alternative approaches. In response, representatives of the Denver District Attorney's Office have found that committing to relationship building, having a dedicated program champion who can serve as a liaison across stakeholder groups, and adapting existing programs to meet the needs of the current social and policy environments can create a stronger foundation for the office to respond to the community's long-term needs. Interviewees made several recommendations for other jurisdictions seeking to implement a similar approach.

1. **Invest in Relationship Building**
Bold changes can be successful if you prioritize building strong relationships across your agency and with other agencies. Prosecutors' offices across the country, like many criminal legal system agencies, are subject to changes in leadership between election cycles, potentially undermining consistency in practice. When significant changes occur—like shifts in leadership, a global pandemic, or national protests against racism and police brutality—site representatives highlight the importance of investing in relationship building within an office and other agencies before implementing any new programs in response. Interviewees saw such an approach as a crucial step to achieve stakeholder buy-in on alternative approaches in cases involving violence. One interviewee reflected that even those with the best intentions might struggle to execute them if they do not

have the mutual trust created by ongoing relationships. One way to maximize such trust is to actively collaborate with local public defenders, judges, and law enforcement throughout the program's development and implementation processes. Additionally, each program is led by an assistant district attorney, which creates stability and sustainability for the respective programs, despite any changes in district attorney leadership.

Hire program staff with similar lived experiences as those the program predominately serves. Both the adult diversion program and the veterans court have staff who share the lived experiences of program participants. Interviewees from both programs stated this connection as an essential way to build genuine relationships and trust with participants. In addition, staff with shared experiences can help colleagues better understand the barriers faced by participants and identify culturally responsive resources needed for participants to find greater success.

2. **Champion a Liaison across Stakeholder Groups to Build Trust**
A new approach to prosecution requires a collective understanding of the process and transparency in decision-making. Having a champion who can listen and respond to concerns can support program buy-in. When developing a program like Restorative Denver, having a champion who could be a neutral liaison across all departments, listen, and respond to the ongoing concerns of partners and

staff created transparency and trust for everyone involved. For Restorative Denver, that person is a deputy district attorney whose position solely focuses on program development, data tracking, and relationship management. Despite being housed in the district attorney's office, this representative is responsible for ensuring that the program works for everyone involved.

3. Build Up to Crimes of Violence Over Time

Start by accepting less severe crimes working to incorporate more severe crimes later. Interviewees recommended slowly expanding program eligibility to incorporate crimes with elements of violence, allowing programs to build capacity, and strategically supporting community and internal stakeholders to gain education and trust with the initiative. As concerns arose during this process, the program's liaison was able to respond accordingly across stakeholder groups. For example, when victim advocates raised concerns about referring cases without victim consent, the liaison actively listened and advocated for changes to the case eligibility criteria as a result. This sort of process keeps stakeholders and community engaged during the expansion of programming and creates feedback channels.

4. Evolve Programs to Reflect Changing Policy and Social Contexts

Each of the four programs was either developed within the past few years in response to changing social and policy landscapes or were older programs that demonstrated an ability to evolve.

The changing policy and social environment has included national calls for pretrial reform, racial justice, decarceration, and less punitive responses to low-level drug charges.

The programs described above adapted to this changing landscape by planning program expansions to incorporate more severe cases with elements of violence; developing programming for new, higher-risk and -need populations; and adopting culturally responsive and evidence-based programming.

The opinions, findings, and recommendations expressed in this publication are those of the authors and do not necessarily represent the positions of Arnold Ventures or the participating prosecutors' offices.

Endnotes

- [1] “Crimes of violence” is an expansive category and often includes offenses that don’t pose serious harm or threats to the community, such as menacing and theft.
- [2] United States Census Bureau. 2021. ["Quick Facts: Denver County, Colorado."](#) Washington, DC: U.S. Government Printing Office.
- [3] Denver District Attorney’s Office. 2022. ["About the District Attorney."](#) Denver, Colorado: Denver District Attorney.
- [4] Bosick, S. J. 2021. ["Racial Disparities in Prosecutorial Outcomes: An Analysis of Felony Cases Accepted for Prosecution by the Denver District Attorney’s Office in the City and County of Denver"](#) (Report No. 19-04A). Denver, CO: Colorado Evaluation and Action Lab at the University of Denver.
- [5] According to Colorado Revised Statutes, there are six classes of felonies, with Class 6 being the lowest level and Class 1 being the most serious. Title 18. Criminal Code § 18-1.3-406 defines crimes of violence by enumerating specific crimes that fit within the category, for example use, threatened use or possession of a deadly weapon, causing serious bodily injury or death, murder, first- or second-degree assault, kidnapping, some sexual offenses, and aggravated robbery. For the full list, see [Colorado Revised Statutes Title 18. Criminal Code § 18-1.3-406. Mandatory sentences for violent crimes--definitions.](#)
- [6] See information about the [Conflict Center](#).
- [7] Denver District Attorney’s Office. 2020. [Restorative Denver Year-End Report 2020](#). Denver, Colorado. Report not available publicly but may be requested.
- [8] Denver District Attorney’s Office. 2022. [Restorative Denver Third Annual Report 2022](#). Denver, Colorado.
- [9] Denver District Attorney’s Office. 2021. [Cost Comparison: RJ vs. Traditional Prosecution](#). Denver, Colorado. Denver District Attorney’s Office. 2021. [Restorative Denver Statistics 12.1.21](#). Denver, Colorado.
- [10] Denver District Attorney’s Office. *supra* note 9.
- [11] The cost is \$250, \$150 (for individuals on public assistance), or \$0 (for individuals who qualify for a public defender).
- [12] See information about the [Adult Diversion program](#).
- [13] See list of [Colorado Victim Rights Act case types](#).
- [14] The “admission” of guilt to enter into diversion can technically be used against the individual during the traditional case processing if the individual decides to go to trial with their case and the individual then says on the record that the did not commit the crime.
- [15] See information about [DIVERT Court](#).
- [16] See information about [Veterans Courts in Colorado](#).
- [17] Veterans court eligible participants include anyone who served in any military branch in any way, shape, or form, regardless of their type of discharge.
- [18] Colorado Revised Statute. [Section 167-207.5](#).

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Prosecutors and Responses to Crimes of Violence

Notes from Maricopa County, AZ

As part of our exploratory examination of prosecutorial responses to violent crime, the Center for Court Innovation conducted a series of case studies across five sites. This fact sheet describes some of the unique practices undertaken in Maricopa County, Arizona, in hope that they may prove instructive for other jurisdictions seeking to explore or further develop decarcerative approaches to crimes of violence. Maricopa County accomplished this by expanding its **felony diversion program**.

The Center for Court Innovation conducted eleven individual and group interviews with various stakeholders, to better understand the program and create recommendations for the larger field. Interviewees included deputy county attorneys (prosecutors), defense attorneys, diversion program service providers, county attorney diversion staff, including an internal data and research specialist.

For additional companion pieces documenting the landscape of prosecutorial responses to violence, please visit innovatingjustice.org.

Background

Maricopa County, Arizona is the state's most populous county and the fourth most populous county in the United States. It is home to approximately four and a half million people of diverse racial and economic backgrounds. According to agency materials, the Maricopa County Attorney's Office seeks to better identify and address underlying thinking and decision-making habits associated with criminal behavior, rather than a sole focus on the crime that caused the arrest and subsequent submission to the Maricopa County Attorney's Office.

By addressing these factors, the agency hopes to impact immediate outcomes as well as prevent future criminal legal system involvement.

To meet the goal of reducing recidivism by treating underlying thoughts, Maricopa County has several diversion programs: Animal Cruelty Diversion, Parenting Skills Diversion, Justice Court (Misdemeanor) Diversion, Check Enforcement, Domestic Violence Excessive Response Diversion, Veteran's Diversion, Developmental Disability-Felony Diversion Program and Tobacco Education.^[1] This case study will focus on their Felony Diversion and Serious Mental Illness-Felony Diversion Programs (SMI-FDP), which prosecutors offer on a discretionary basis.

Alternatives for Cases of Violence

The larger community within Maricopa County became particularly invested in how the county attorney's office handled the prosecution of certain cases after the murder of George Floyd. Per one interviewee, the overall impetus for change came from the community and the legislature. Both called for replacing imprisonment with treatment-based approaches. Maricopa County began diverting eligible drug cases away from traditional prosecution as far back as 1989. An Arizona statute allows county attorneys in the state to defer prosecution and offer alternative rehabilitative programming.^[2] Those who successfully complete the program can have the pending charges dismissed. Subsequently, the county attorney's office created a Diversion Strategies Group to manage its existing and planned programs.

Most recently, the county attorney's office initiated the Serious Mental Illness-Felony Diversion (2019) and Felony Diversion (2020) Programs. Individuals who complete either program have the charges against them dismissed, pending payment of any mandatory restitution. Both programs work with community-based service providers.

Felony Program Goals and Eligibility

The Maricopa County felony diversion programs aim to reduce individuals' contact with the criminal legal system, increase their connection to appropriate community-based systems of care, and hold them accountable for criminal conduct.^[3]

County attorneys are responsible for reviewing cases for eligibility and offering diversion. Diversion offers are typically made at the first hearing after an initial court appearance. In some instances, defense attorneys may ask a higher-level county attorney to review and reconsider a case not initially offered diversion.^[4] Not all classes of felonies are eligible for diversion.^[5] The general eligibility criteria are:^[6]

- Lower-level felonies (classes four through six) are eligible;
- Class two and three felonies are eligible with special approval from a supervisor;^[7]
- The individual cannot have disqualifying prior convictions (felony offenses, sexual offenses, sexual exploitation of children, child sex trafficking, serious offenses, dangerous offenses and dangerous offenses against children) or current open cases or holds;
- Based on the results of the Recidivism

Risk Score or Proxy Score, the individual's risk score is four or lower, out of six total;

- Total restitution owed cannot typically exceed \$2,000 (individual's offered diversion must decide if they have the ability to pay the restitution amount as a condition of successful completion, including whether they can pay above the typical \$2000, if requested by the victim);
- Any victims involved have been fully informed of the program goals and requirements; victim input is considered; and
- For the Serious Mental Illness-Felony Diversion Program specifically, individuals must be designated seriously mentally ill as defined by state statute.^[8]

Felony Program Enrollment and Discharge

Individuals deemed eligible for diversion are referred to one of the county's three service providers, where they are assessed using the Ohio Risk Assessment System (ORAS) tool. The ORAS determines an individual's overall risk to reoffend and assesses for criminogenic needs (education/employment, substance use, criminal history, criminal attitudes, family/social support, community/neighborhood instability and peer associations). Individuals enrolled in the straight felony diversion program (i.e., not SMI-FDP) are assigned to the appropriate program track.^[9] The county attorney suspends prosecution of diverted cases for two years. Fees associated with participation in the felony diversion programs can range from \$400 to thousands of dollars. Arizona's state Medicaid program may cover

some costs associated with diversion.

At program completion, the service provider sends a discharge report to the Maricopa County Attorney's Office, which files a motion to dismiss the matter. If the case requires restitution, it *must* be paid in full by the end of the diversion program to be successfully discharged. Prosecution resumes for those who do not successfully complete the diversion program.

Ongoing Program Assessment

One of the unique aspects of the Maricopa County program is the emphasis placed on research. The program employs a researcher who is knowledgeable about evidence-based approaches to reducing recidivism and who continuously monitors program data. The program tracks data on individual demographics, referral characteristics, case processing, program outcomes, and recidivism. This data enables the program to assess who the programs serve, operational needs, and any program deficits on an ongoing basis.

Recommendations from the Site

Maricopa County's approach to alternatives to incarceration involves thoughtful planning, engaging with area experts and stakeholders to create buy-in, and working with service providers whose approach aligns with that of program staff. Interviewees made recommendations for other jurisdictions seeking to implement a similar approach in three broad areas.

1. Develop the Program You Need

Identifying program goals and mechanisms for achieving those goals is an integral part of planning.

There may be misconceptions about what diversion looks like in practice and there are many different approaches to diversion. Jurisdictions should spend time during the planning period identifying what diversion means and what they seek to accomplish given the local context and players. Even with an array of diversion programs, Maricopa County understood the value of creating the systems within their office to support their diversion efforts. The recent creation of their Diversion Strategies Group is an example of the county identifying a crucial mechanism to achieving their goals of diverting programs from traditional prosecution.

2. Collaborate for Success

Felony diversion cannot happen without collaboration and stakeholder engagement. The Maricopa County Attorney's Office engages its staff, the defense bar, crime victims, and service providers to ensure programmatic success. Its felony diversion programs' success is based on the office's ability to partner with stakeholders at each step in the process.

Training and programmatic updates for prosecutors have been an important aspect of the felony diversion programs. Key program components include keeping staff updated on successful completions; ensuring that they understand the referral process and various program

tracks; and tracking data to engage in ongoing program review. Interviewees suggest beyond that, creating an office culture where prosecutors understand how poverty, mental health issues, and addiction intersect with crime through training on those topics may be helpful.

Collaboration and engagement specifically with defense attorneys may be helpful. Ensuring that defense attorneys are aware of the goals and requirements of diversion programming is essential. The Maricopa County Attorney's Office provided multiple diversion training sessions for members of the defense bar. Interviewees reported that these training sessions not only ensured that defense could understand the paths to diversion but provided an opportunity for defense attorneys to weigh in with additional factors that make individuals good candidates for diversion. Additionally, utilizing defense attorneys' experience working with community members helps identify common underlying issues to expand programming.

Work with service providers to craft the program you want while honoring their expertise. The Maricopa County Attorney's Office created its Diversion Strategies Group to help plan the felony diversion program expansion. That group engaged with the selected service provider to pick evidence-based curricula, develop program requirements for different tracks, and establish the program duration. While clinical decisions are left to the service provider,

initial collaboration and continued monthly check-ins ensure that the attorney's office and service provider remain on the same page.

3. Evolve your Program

Diversion programming doesn't have to be a "one-size-fits-all." The Maricopa County Attorney's Office has several misdemeanor and felony diversion options, but it did not start that way—these options have developed over time. Even within the felony-level programs, not all felony charges or individual profiles are appropriate for diversion. Maricopa County stakeholders selected a starting point and then adjusted the process based on data review, stakeholder engagement, and provider feedback. They remained open to evaluating their county's data and *redeveloping* their program offerings. If jurisdictions wait to identify every potential scenario or find a universally applicable approach, they may get stuck. Diversion can mean many things; define what it means in your jurisdiction, plan accordingly, and leave room and flexibility to adapt. Interviewees urge other jurisdictions to start somewhere, knowing you may go back to the drawing board a few times.

The opinions, findings, and recommendations expressed in this publication are those of the authors and do not necessarily represent the positions of Arnold Ventures or the participating prosecutors' offices.

Endnotes

- [1] Description of the Maricopa County Attorney's diversion programs.
- [2] Arizona Revised Statute §§11-361, 11-362, and 11-365.
- [3] Description of the Maricopa County Attorney's Office Serious Mental Illness-Felony Diversion Program (2019), and description of Maricopa County Attorney's Office Felony Diversion Program (2020).
- [4] In Maricopa County, defense attorneys are not typically present for the initial appearance of a criminal case, where a bond is determined, but are appointed at the next appearance after the County Attorney's Office officially files charges.
- [5] The Arizona Revised Statutes define felony as "an offense for which a sentence to a term of imprisonment in the custody of the state department of corrections is authorized by any law of this state." See Arizona Revised Statutes Section 13-105. Felony offenses are divided into six classes with Class 1 being the most serious, and Class 6 being the lowest level. Violent crime is defined as "any criminal act that results in death or physical injury or any criminal use of a deadly weapon or dangerous instrument." See Arizona Revised Statutes Section 13-901.03.
- [6] Description of the Maricopa County Attorney's Office Felony Diversion Program eligibility.
- [7] It is improbable that any class one felony, which only includes the crimes of first- and second- degree murder, would be offered diversion.
- [8] Arizona Revised Statute §36-550.
- [9] Description of the diversion tracks.

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Prosecutors and Responses to Crimes of Violence Notes from Monroe County, IN

As part of our exploratory examination of prosecutorial responses to violent crime, the Center for Justice Innovation conducted a series of case studies across five sites. This fact sheet describes some of the unique practices undertaken in Monroe County, Indiana in hopes that they may prove instructive for other jurisdictions seeking to explore or further develop alternative approaches to crimes of violence. Rather than defaulting to jails and prison, Monroe County uses its pretrial release program and problem-solving courts to provide individuals with structured supervision and access to services, including mental health supports.

To learn more about the approaches Monroe County has taken to respond to crimes of violence and what we can learn from them, a team from the Center for Justice Innovation conducted eighteen individual and group interviews with a variety of stakeholders, including deputy prosecuting attorneys, defense attorneys, probation officers, circuit court judges, and problem-solving court staff.

For additional companion pieces documenting the landscape of prosecutorial responses to violence, please visit innovatingjustice.org.

Background

Monroe County is a mid-sized suburban community of 140,000 residents located south of Indianapolis; and it is home to Indiana University and the city of Bloomington. Monroe County has a relatively high poverty rate.^[1] The county is majority white (83%); with Asian (7%) and Black (4%) individuals comprising the largest populations of non-white residents.

Monroe County’s alternatives to incarceration (ATI), specifically its Pretrial Services and Problem-Solving Court Programs, balance addressing risk factors in cases of violence with achieving justice for victims and communities. The programs seek to achieve these goals through ongoing assessment and improvement of structured supervision and treatment options. In addition, the site continually engages in new approaches based on local and national research.^[2]

Alternatives for Cases of Violence

Prosecutors in Monroe County are guided by statute on how crimes of violence^[3] are defined. Yet, building upon a strong, long-standing culture that values decarceration, transparency, and reducing the harms of the criminal legal system, prosecutors are encouraged to apply broad discretion when prosecuting cases of violence. This discretion is informed by providing line staff access to senior prosecutors—including the elected prosecuting attorney—to conference difficult cases. In addition, new staff are familiarized with the available ATIs during their initial training.

In Monroe County, using alternatives for cases involving violence is the rule and not the exception. According to interviewees, prosecutors lean heavily on the Pretrial Services Program (PSP) and Problem-Solving Court Program (PSCP) even in cases that surrounding counties are reluctant to consider (e.g., attempted murder). Together, the PSP and PSCP give stakeholders in Monroe County evidence-based options to respond to cases of violence to reduce recidivism effectively. Using program data, the office engages in

ongoing performance review and evaluation to foster a culture committed to data informed decision-making, using evidence and research to inform practice.

Pretrial Services Program

Monroe County piloted its Pretrial Services Program in 2016, following an Indiana Supreme Court ruling that all detained individuals must be released on bond or recognizance unless they present a flight risk or danger to others.^[4] Before this ruling, Indiana’s jails primarily housed pretrial individuals for whom pretrial detainment posed risks of lost social support networks, employment, and financial support.^[5] The goals of PSP are to make pretrial release available to everyone^[6] regardless of their ability to pay cash bond, to set appropriate release conditions that ensure appearance in court, and to increase the reliability of guilty pleas. Interviewees expressed that the community is largely supportive of PSP and that most released individuals remain arrest free and return to court.

Eligibility

Individuals are eligible for pretrial release if they face misdemeanor or felony charges, including violent felonies. PSP excludes individuals from pretrial release if they are facing charges of murder or treason; are already on pretrial release for a different arrest; or are on probation (including technical violations), parole, or community supervision for a different conviction.^[7]

Before the initial hearing, a pretrial officer administers the Indiana Risk Assessment

System Pretrial Assessment Tool (IRAS- PAT), which assesses for the likelihood of failing to appear in court and risk of recidivating while on release. The IRAS- PAT results in a recommendation to hold or release and designates a risk level of low, medium, or high. The pretrial officer then completes a background check and, using the IRAS-PAT, creates a pretrial supervision report with a recommendation for the judge’s consideration.

Programming

At the initial hearing, the pretrial supervision report is available to judges as they decide whether to grant release. This report also informs the monitoring conditions when release is granted. In 2021, the court’s orders corresponded with the pretrial supervision report recommendation 82% of the time. In those cases where judges deviated from the PTS recommendation, higher and lower monitoring levels were ordered at approximately the same rate (8% and 9% respectively).^[8]

Individuals released to pretrial services are assigned a pretrial officer and placed on monitoring options matched to their risk and needs. Those charged with violent offenses are eligible for monitoring levels 1 through 3 (low- to high-intensity, respectively). Level 1 monitoring requires at least one monthly in-person meeting with a pretrial officer and monthly background checks. Level 2 requires the same conditions, along with an additional contact each month, such as a phone call. Level 3 requires two monthly visits with a pretrial officer and a monthly background check.^[9] The court can order additional conditions to any supervision level (e.g., kiosk reporting, drug tests, electronic monitoring).

In addition, prosecutors can request further conditions of pretrial release depending on the charges and needs of the individual, including alcohol and drug education, substance use evaluations and treatment, and restorative justice programming. While prosecutors can suggest additional conditions, only judges can make the final determination. If a judge approves the additional conditions, the pretrial services team makes referrals to these programs or services in the community.^[10]

Discharge

Individuals remain on pretrial release until their case is disposed of or the court orders them to be discharged. One can also be terminated from the program for technical violations, committing new offenses (felony or misdemeanor), or failing to appear for a court hearing.^[11]

From 2017 through 2021, just over one-quarter (26%) of the 9,332 individuals released to PSP had a new charge during the pretrial period; 77% returned for required court appearances.^[12] In 2021, of all felonies and misdemeanor cases presented in county court, 1,554 individuals (with a total of 1,854 cases) received some type of pretrial service.^[13]

Problem-Solving Court Programs (Post-Plea)

Monroe County introduced its first problem-solving court in 1999 when it established its drug treatment court (drug court). Like other drug courts, the program in Monroe County aims to divert people who have substance use concerns away from incarceration, provide

them with treatment, connect them to educational and employment opportunities, and reduce recidivism. Since launching the drug court, Monroe County has established three other problem-solving courts within its Problem-Solving Court Program (PSCP): reentry court (established 2014), mental health court (2015), and veterans court (2016). The PSCP are low-volume courts, and as of 2021, 576 participants have graduated.

Below, we describe the eligibility criteria, intake, programming, and legal implications of successful completion for the drug court, mental health court, and veterans court. (The reentry court is described in the following section.)

Eligibility

There are no fixed rules about what charges can be considered for any of the problem-solving courts; eligibility is determined on a case-by-case basis. For example, several interviewees noted that veterans court was intentionally designed to potentially include violent crimes. Monroe County's DTC is state-funded and, unlike federally-funded DTCs, can choose to accept cases involving violence, such as burglary, robbery, battery, and assault. The eligibility requirements of all four courts are as follows:

- No past or pending convictions for either drug sales or firearms offenses;
- No outstanding warrants; and
- Must have substance use issues or serious mental illness.^[14]

A prosecutor, judge, defense attorney, or pretrial officer can refer a case to problem-

solving court. Referrals are typically based on the findings from the IRAS-PAT and the charge allegations. However, only the deputy prosecutor assigned to the PSCP can officially designate referred cases as PSCP eligible. Cases where eligibility is unclear may also be conferenced with the elected prosecuting attorney for a decision.

Once a case is deemed eligible by the deputy prosecuting attorney, a multidisciplinary problem-solving court team^[15] assesses the potential participant by reviewing relevant information. For example, determining eligibility for mental health court includes a review of clinical records by a mental health provider. When the relevant assessments are complete, the team convenes to vote on whether the candidate is a good fit for the specific problem-solving court program.

If the team decides that the candidate is a good fit, the final decision to participate still rests with the candidate. To help them in their decision-making, potential participants must observe court hearings and read the handbook, which outlines program expectations. Candidates who decide to participate must plead guilty to the lead charge to enter the program.

Programming

Once enrolled in the PSCP, participants must go through the program's five graduated phases, where successful completion of one phase is required before moving on to the next:

- Phase I: Stabilization
- Phase II: Treatment
- Phase III: Living Sober

- Phase IV: Maintenance/Relapse Prevention
- Phase V: Unsupervised/Non-reporting Phase

Throughout the phases, participants must adhere to substance use and/or mental health treatment, participate in random drug tests, and pay program fees (monthly user fee, drug test costs, treatment costs).^[16] In 2021, only 5% of the drug tests administered in the PSCP came back positive, compared to a 31% positive rate for the non-PSCP probation population in Monroe County.^[17] Additionally, participants must report to problem-solving court hearings once a week, with the frequency of these appearances decreasing to bi-weekly and monthly as the participant successfully progresses through the phases.

Participants regularly receive incentives for following program requirements—for instance, applause in court, verbal praise, a handshake from the judge, release from curfew, or increased leniency in supervision conditions. Conversely, sanctions including community service, day reporting, jail time, and even program expulsion are imposed in response to noncompliance.

Discharge

A participant is successfully discharged from a problem-solving court once they complete one year of continued sobriety and compliance with other program requirements. Participants who successfully complete the program have their case dismissed and most are immediately eligible to have their records expunged, though there are exceptions.^[18]

For participants who are unfavorably terminated, the prosecutor’s office proceeds with sentencing. Participants may be terminated from the program for repeatedly failing to submit to drug testing, non-compliance with treatment plans, and repeatedly missing court hearings, among other things.^[19]

Drug Court: In 2021, 29 participants successfully completed the program, and 33 participants were unsuccessful and were terminated from the program. Nearly 500 participants have completed the program since its inception.^[20]

An independent impact evaluation of Monroe County’s DTC in 2019 found that it effectively reduced recidivism; 18% of participants recidivated in 2019 compared to 54% in the comparison group.^[21] An earlier study conducted by NPC Research (2006) also found that the program significantly reduced recidivism and, as a result, saved taxpayers more than \$7,000 per participant when compared to the traditional court process.^[22]

Mental Health Court: In 2021, there were seven 7 successful completions and six unsuccessful terminations. A total of 20 participants have completed the program since its inception.^[23]

Veterans Court: In 2021, there were 4 successful completions and 6 unsuccessful terminations. A total of 18 participants have completed the program since its inception.^[24]

Reentry Court Program (Post- Conviction)

Reentry Court operates differently than the other problem-solving courts in Monroe

County, given its post-conviction nature. Participants of this program have already been convicted of felony offenses and have a history of substance use or mental health concerns.^[25]

Eligibility

To be eligible for reentry court, the individual must be serving an executed sentence in the Indiana Department of Correction (IDOC) with at least two years left to serve. The program considers cases involving violence (burglary, robbery, possession of a firearm), but only if there was no physical harm to a victim. In 2021, Monroe County's reentry court program had 37 active participants, six of whom were convicted of violent offenses and two more were convicted on weapons charges.^[26]

Individuals interested in participating in the reentry court program file a pro se motion to the court in which their case was disposed, requesting a modification of their sentence.^[27]

Programming

Upon release, the participant must agree to comply with many of the same requirements as participants in other problem-solving courts, such as adhering to treatment conditions, gaining employment, and attending weekly court hearings. The two-year program is broken into four stages:

- Phase I: Stabilization
- Phase II: Treatment
- Phase III: Living Sober
- Phase IV: Relapse Prevention

Discharge

If the participant completes the program, the balance of their sentence is stayed, but the conviction remains on their record. If they are terminated unsuccessfully, they typically get sentenced up to the maximum of their original sentence, which includes credit for any previous incarceration in the case.^[28]

In 2021, there were 7 successful cases completed and 23 unsuccessful cases.

Recommendations from the Site

Monroe County's alternatives to incarceration for crimes of violence rely heavily on policies and programs informed by data, a preference for treatment over incarceration, and discretion permitted to line prosecutors to apply alternatives. Site representatives offered several recommendations for other jurisdictions seeking to undertake a similar approach.

- 1. Foster a culture of collaboration both within the office and across agencies**
Leveraging relationships to build a collaborative environment breeds success. Cross-agency collaboration is a hallmark of the problem-solving court model nationally. Interviewees in Monroe County likewise highlighted the collaborative, non-adversarial approach that diverse stakeholders in that site bring to the project. Many of the team members have been with the programs since they began. Interviewees also highlighted the advantage of having a team with the capacity to provide many of the necessary program services internally.

2. Evaluate Case-by-Case

Monroe County’s prosecutors have broad discretion to evaluate cases individually and make decisions based on the details of each case. Staff across the office view this discretion as essential to their ability to refer cases of violence to alternatives to incarceration, bring about more robust solutions to recidivism, and address individuals’ needs. In addition, interviewees appreciated their ability to exercise discretion, as it meant lighter caseloads, with less pressure to prosecute every case.

3. Offer ATIs Post-Conviction

A unique aspect of Monroe County’s ATIs is that they are available for cases where a sentence is already being served (as is the case with reentry court), rather than solely as a diversion option. According to many interviewees, being released from incarceration early with structured supervision, an obligation to participate in treatment, and support for employment or educational programming better situates an individual for returning to life at home than being released without such resources. This approach is considered crucial in creating productive community members and reducing recidivism.

4. Use Data to Inform Practice

Monroe County’s Problem-Solving Court and Pretrial Services Programs keep robust data, tracking key performance indicators.^[29] Staff often consult this data to monitor their programs and identify areas for improvement. Additionally, this

data frequently proves useful in the face of criticism that the office has a lax approach to crime. In addition, the office is open to participating in external evaluations. In one example, the prosecutor’s office is working with researchers from Indiana University to identify racial disparities in how the office handles cases.^[30]

The opinions, findings, and recommendations expressed in this publication are those of the authors and do not necessarily represent the positions of Arnold Ventures or the participating prosecutors' offices.

Endnotes

- [1] Monroe County's poverty rate is 21%, compared with a national average of 12%. United States Census Bureau. 2021. "[Quick Facts: Monroe County, Indiana.](#)" Washington, DC: U.S. Government Printing Office.
- [2] Monroe County Government. 2023. [Problem Solving Court](#). Monroe County, Indiana: Monroe County Government.
- [3] According to the Indiana Code, there are six levels of felony offenses, with Level 1 being the most serious and Level 6 being the least severe. Specific offenses are designated as crimes of violence under the "Sentences" article of the [Indiana Code](#).
- [4] Monroe County Government. 2023. [Pretrial Services Program](#). Monroe County, Indiana: Monroe County Government.
- [5] Monroe Circuit Court. 2022. [2021 Annual Report – Monroe Circuit Court](#). Monroe County, Indiana: Office of Court Services. Page 94.
- [6] Not including individuals accused of murder or treason.
- [7] Monroe County Government. 2017. [Monroe County Pretrial Release Pilot Program Project](#). Monroe County, Indiana: Monroe County Government.
- [8] Monroe Circuit Court. 2022. [2021 Annual Report – Monroe Circuit Court](#). Monroe County, Indiana: Office of Court Services. Page 97.
- [9] Based on a matrix provided by the Monroe County Prosecutor's Office.
- [10] Monroe County Government *supra* note 4.
- [11] Indiana EBDM Pretrial Work Group. 2017. [Pretrial Practices](#). Monroe County, Indiana.
- [12] The site refers to the percentage of those not having a new charge during the pretrial period (74%) as the "safety rate."
- [13] Monroe County Circuit Court *supra* note 5.
- [14] Substance use and mental illness determined by preliminary assessment by probation officers and then by treatment providers in a full evaluation.
- [15] The multidisciplinary team includes a PSCP judge, deputy prosecuting attorney, deputy public defender, PSCP director, community mental health center representative, and a law enforcement representative.
- [16] Monroe County Government *supra* note 2.
- [17] Monroe County Circuit Court *supra* note 5.
- [18] Exceptions include, for example if someone comes in on a Petition to Revoke Suspended Sentence, the Petition is dismissed, but the underlying conviction is not. Also, if someone has successfully completed a PSC previously, they are typically not eligible again. However, particularly in Mental Health Court, the site has made exceptions, but determined that another dismissal was not warranted. In those cases, the individual is sentenced to probation with Mental Health Court terms as affirmative conditions.
- [19] Monroe County Government *supra* note 2.
- [20] Monroe County Circuit Court *supra* note 5.
- [21] Gallagher, John. 2019. [Program Evaluation of the Monroe County \(Indiana\) Drug Court](#), Indiana University School of Social Work. Page 2. [Online source here](#). Note: The comparison group includes all participants deemed eligible for drug court but opted out between 2014 and 2018. Given that the comparison group is not a randomized and similarly situated sample, there are limitations to these results as the comparison group may have individuals who opted out for the same reasons that contributed to their higher recidivism rates.
- [22] NPC Research. 2007. [Indiana Drug Courts: Monroe County Drug Treatment Court. Process, Outcome, and Cost Evaluation Final Report](#). Portland, Oregon: NPC Research.
- [23] Monroe County Circuit Court *supra* note 5.
- [24] *Ibid*.
- [25] Monroe Circuit Court Probation Department. 2020. [Monroe County: Reentry Court Program Participant Handbook and Program Information](#). Monroe County, Indiana.
- [26] Monroe County Circuit Court *supra* note 5.
- [27] Monroe County Circuit Court *supra* note 25.

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[28] Participants in reentry court can be terminated for the same violations as the other problem-solving courts. Credit for any previous incarceration in the case including an individual's jail term prior to modification or because of sanctions during their participation in the Re-entry Court program.

[29] Monroe County Circuit Court *supra* note 5.

[30] Burks, Ethan. 2021. "[Monroe Co. Wants To Spend \\$68K To Study Racial Disparities In The Prosecutor's Office.](#)" Monroe County, Indiana: Indiana Public Media.

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Prosecutors and Responses to Crimes of Violence

Notes from Prince George's County, MD

As part of our exploratory examination of prosecutorial responses to violent crime, the Center for Justice Innovation conducted a series of case studies across five sites. This fact sheet describes some of the particular practices undertaken in Prince George's County, Maryland, in hopes that they may prove instructive for other jurisdictions seeking to explore or further develop alternative approaches to crimes of violence. Prince George's County explored a new approach to cases involving violence when it launched its **Conviction & Sentence Integrity Unit** to support the safe and successful return to the community of individuals who have been rehabilitated after lengthy prison sentences.

To learn more about the approaches that Prince George's County has taken to respond to crimes of violence, the Center for Justice Innovation conducted ten individual and group interviews with various stakeholders, including representatives of the state's attorney's office (prosecutors and other staff), members of the defense bar,

service providers, and directly impacted community members.

For additional companion pieces documenting the landscape of prosecutorial responses to violence, please visit innovatingjustice.org.

Background

Bordering Washington, DC, Prince George's County, Maryland is the second most populous county in the state, with just under one million residents (955,306).^[1] The population is 64% Black, 20% Hispanic, 12% White, and 4% Asian.^[2]

In 2019, the elected state's attorney at the Prince George's County Office of the State's Attorney created a Conviction and Sentence Integrity Unit (hereafter, the Unit) to review the cases of individuals who may have been wrongly convicted or sentenced excessively.^[3] The Unit was the first of its kind in the state.

In 2021, Maryland became the 25th state to ban life-without-parole sentences for juveniles, dubbed "juvenile lifers," with the passage of the Juvenile Restoration Act (JRA).^[4] The JRA, which is based on emerging evidence that brain development continues well into a person's twenties, bans courts from imposing a sentence of life imprisonment without the possibility of parole for individuals under the age of 18 at the time of the commission of the crime and allows courts to sentence minors charged as adults below the mandatory minimum sentence.^[5] Notably, the JRA applies retroactively, permitting those who have served at least 20 years' incarceration for a crime committed when they were under 18 to file a motion for a sentence reduction.^[6]

Responding to Community Priorities

Interviewees shared that the Prince George's County community has concerns about crime in their neighborhoods, including

property and violent crime. They reported that the general sentiment is that people want community safety—to feel confident they can go about their daily lives without the threat of victimization.

In addition to crime, Prince George's County is also disproportionately impacted by mass incarceration. Interviewees stated that many community members want people returned to the community after facing criminal legal system consequences for their actions. Interviewees assess that the local community is looking for a measured approach, separating those who cause harm from wider society for a proportionate time and reintegrating them into the community when they can contribute to its strength.

Conviction and Sentence Integrity Unit

The Conviction and Sentence Integrity Unit is one strategy that the state's attorney uses to address the problem of violent crime.^[7] The attorneys in the Unit work to review the cases of individuals sentenced to life in prison as young people, including, but not limited to, those who are retroactively eligible for resentencing based on the JRA.

Since January 2020, approximately 300 applications have been filed for consideration by the Unit, with 24 people resentenced and reintegrated back into the community.

Eligibility

The Unit reviews the cases of individuals who are eligible for resentencing under the JRA. The Unit also reviews cases of individuals

who are JRA-ineligible yet serving life sentences, as well as select cases of individuals serving less than life sentences. The cases eligible for review by the Unit include serious violent crimes^[8] committed by individuals who were under 26 years old at the time of the offense.^[9]

The Unit created an application to screen potentially eligible cases. Prosecutors review and consider every application received. There are no specific criteria that make someone ineligible for review. Although convictions of any level of crime are accepted, applications from those serving a lengthy prison sentence, who are more likely to have violent convictions, are prioritized. So far, applicant charges have included homicides, attempted homicides, assault in the first degree, and armed robbery.

Those interested in having their sentence reviewed by the Unit must complete a sentence integrity application. This application includes the following:

- Demographic information;
- Conviction date;
- Sentence imposed (those with sentences of 30 years or more are prioritized);
- Length of sentence served (those who have served at least half of the imposed sentence are prioritized);
- Names of state's attorney, defense attorney, judge, and primary detective on the case;
- Description of sentence integrity claim (why they are applying);
- Number of infractions during previous

ten years of incarceration;

- List of any new convictions acquired while incarcerated; and
- Any health concerns prompting the application and whether they have applied for medical parole.

Applicants acknowledge that including false information will result in a denial of their claim. The application also specifies that applying for sentence integrity review does not guarantee that the case will meet the Unit's criteria and be accepted, that a person cannot appeal the Unit's decision to accept or deny their application, and that the application does not extend any post-trial petition guidelines. Additionally, the application clarifies that applying for review with the Unit does not preclude the person from filing any petitions or motions with the court.

The Unit decides eligibility on a case-by-case basis, prioritizing review of applications from those who have already served 20 years or more of their sentence and who were 26 years old or younger at the time of the commission of the crime. In addition, the Unit looks for evidence of rehabilitation and remorse, institutional history, and health of the applicant to determine which individuals to recommend for release.

Referrals via application may come directly from those in prison seeking relief or from their defense attorney. The state's attorney's office works to obtain legal counsel for those not represented at the time the Unit needs additional information or is ready to act on the application.

Resentencing Process

The state's attorney's office collaborates with the assigned defense attorney to bring approved cases back to court for a release decision. This may involve a variety of strategies, including contacting the parole commission to request release on medical grounds, filing joint motions to reopen a post-conviction case, or conceding a motion to correct a (now) illegal sentence under the JRA. The reentry court provides an additional mechanism through which the Unit may secure release. This intensive 18-month specialty court aims to gradually transition people home from prison.^[10]

Strong relationships with the judiciary are critical for returning these cases to court for resentencing. As one interviewee explained, neither prosecutors nor defense attorneys have the power—on their own or jointly—to obtain a release without a judicial order. Successful motions require understanding judicial concerns, demonstrating thoughtfulness in the cases brought to court, and developing individualized reentry plans. One interviewee described that having multiple judges who support the initiative has helped to change the culture throughout the court, improving overall receptiveness to these motions. Sometimes, the original sentencing judge will hear the new matter; other times, a different judge or the reentry court may take the case.

Prior to the appearance before a judge, the prosecutor and defense attorney work together to develop an individualized reentry plan. They work with community-based organizations to determine where the individual will live if reintegrated and what services are needed to successfully transition back

into the community—for example, therapeutic services, substance use treatment, and job placement or vocational training. The prosecutor's office also works to locate and contact the victim(s) in the applicant's case, or their next of kin, to alert them of the application, provide them with any scheduled hearing dates, and inform them of their right to be heard at the hearing.

Once the case is before a judge, the prosecutor and defense attorney argue in support of their request for a modified sentence. The judge may also hear from others in attendance to vouch for the applicant's rehabilitation, remorse, and reentry plan. In one hearing, the applicant's pastor spoke on the record about the change he observed in the applicant and his plan to hire this individual upon release. The crime victim(s) or their next of kin are invited to speak during the proceeding. They may express support or disagreement with the application for release and may speak to the impact of the crime on themselves and their family. Finally, the applicant may address the court.

During the hearing, the state's attorney's office typically requests that the court resent the individual to five years of supervised probation. In some cases, the Unit may instead support a reduction in the original sentence—for example, from 75 to 45 years—rather than an immediate release on probation. In those situations, the Unit's recommendation to the court will be for resentencing to a shorter prison term rather than to probation.

If the court grants a probation sentence, the Unit may ask that the court mandate services to promote successful community reintegration. Mandated services may range

from obtaining identification documents and learning to use modern technology to treatment services, where appropriate. For example, the court may order a person with a serious mental illness to enroll in mental health treatment for the duration of their probation sentence. The Unit has vetted community-based organizations and programs and identified several that they deem qualified to address the unique needs of individuals released after long periods of incarceration. These programs are often part of court mandates.

For many people mandated to complete programming as a condition of their release, these community-based organizations have meant the difference between success and return to prison. One resentenced interviewee emphasized the importance of having the support of compassionate and open-minded people at the program, who believed he would be successful. Another talked about how transitional housing provided him with the structure and support he did not realize he needed after spending 30 years mostly isolated from his family and the outside world. For this person, having someone support him through the anxiety of coming home and the stress of having so many people in his personal space was vital to his successful return into the community.

The amount of time the person spends in a particular program also depends on that person's unique needs. Individual needs and accomplishments—rather than universally applied time frames—determine successful program completion.

Should a resentenced individual stop attending a mandated program, the program staff would notify the court, and the court would

hold a hearing to determine the appropriate course of action. However, no such hearing has been necessary thus far; each person released under this felony resentencing initiative has continued participating in programming as mandated. Community-based organizations emphasize the importance of program compliance for the benefit of the mandated individual, the longevity of the initiative in Prince George's County, and the possibility of similar initiatives outside their jurisdiction.

In some limited cases, the Unit may decide not to recommend programming as a condition of probation. In those situations, the person typically has exceptionally strong support from family members who can provide the level of material resources and other support that others would receive through community-based organizations.

Recommendations from the Site

Interviewees made several recommendations for other jurisdictions seeking to implement a similar approach.

1. **Commit to the Initiative**

The elected prosecutor must fully commit to the resentencing initiative. Prosecutors doing this work will inevitably encounter resistance. Revisiting past sentencing decisions may reopen old wounds for victims. It may also spark opposition from community members, the media, the police, or even others in the prosecutor's office. It is important that prosecutors feel empowered to reevaluate the

fairness of these past sentences with new information that would not have been available back then, such as contemporary public safety standards, new scientific understanding about brain development, and information about individuals' efforts at rehabilitation.

The team making decisions about which applications to advance and what resentencing recommendations to make can only do so objectively and fairly if they are confident that higher-ups—including the elected prosecutor—have a strong commitment to the initiative and will back them both privately and publicly. This support should include ensuring that the unit is independent, and that the office has a transparent internal process through which that unit can take control of cases.

For example, the State's Attorney in Prince George's County has hired individuals with serious, violent criminal convictions as a part of her commitment to providing second chances to those who have successfully rehabilitated while in prison.^[11] To the extent that a prosecutor's office asks others to afford second chances to returning community members, it should demonstrate a genuine commitment to that value and lead by example where practicable.

2. Build an Experienced Team

It is essential for a prosecutor's office that is creating a felony resentencing initiative to have a strong team in place to review cases and applications for relief. The Conviction & Sentence

Integrity Unit in Prince George's County comprises two experienced prosecutors—one who is a career prosecutor and the other who has extensive experience as a post-conviction defense attorney.

Combined, these attorneys have over 30 years of criminal litigation experience. This wealth of experience allows them to evaluate the strength of prior evidence and the validity of any new legal claims more effectively, and to leverage their institutional knowledge and long-standing relationships with the courts to advance the initiative.

Additionally, having this combination of perspectives (prosecutorial and defense) within the state's attorney's office allows this Unit to examine applications in a well-rounded way—balancing accountability and rehabilitation. The felony resentencing initiative in Prince George's County is effective because the Unit is seriously considering the rehabilitative progress a person has made while in prison, rather than solely focusing on whether there is evidence of actual innocence or newly discovered evidence. The prosecutors must be confident in their ability, not easily influenced by negative criticism, and willing to listen to all sides. Attorneys reviewing these cases must be able to articulate why the person is an appropriate candidate for release and be prepared to handle disagreement with that decision.

3. Respect Victims' Voices

A unique aspect of Monroe County's ATIs is that they are available for cases where a sentence is already being served (as is the case with reentry court), rather than solely as a diversion option. According to many interviewees, being released from incarceration early with structured supervision, an obligation to participate in treatment, and support for employment or educational programming better situates an individual for returning to life at home than being released without such resources. This approach is considered crucial in creating productive community members and reducing recidivism.

4. Learn from People with Lived Experience

Involve those with lived experience of the criminal legal system as thought partners and learn from what helped them succeed. Those who have successfully rehabilitated themselves have critical insights on how others can accomplish the same thing, as well as on the barriers and challenges those reentering their communities after lengthy prison stays may face. For example, some of the people interviewed successfully reentered the community after decades in prison and used that knowledge to serve others who are trying to do the same.

One person with lived experience, who co-founded a community-based reentry organization, explained that it is critical for prosecutors doing this work to create strong partnerships with organizations that can provide services and support to those returning from prison. He explained the importance of his role not only in providing connections to social services, treatment, and basic needs like clothing and food, but also serving as a role model. His advice was, "if you are going to make rules and policies you want to work, let someone who has 'been there, done that' have a seat at the table." This individual underlined the importance of including such contributors not simply as a "token," but as an actual thought partner and leader.

The opinions, findings, and recommendations expressed in this publication are those of the authors and do not necessarily represent the positions of Arnold Ventures or the participating prosecutors' offices.

Endnotes

- [1] See information about [Maryland Counties by Population](#).
- [2] United States Census Bureau. 2021. "[QuickFacts: Prince George's County, Maryland.](#)" Washington, DC: U.S. Government Printing Office.
- [3] See information about the [Conviction and Sentencing Integrity Unit](#) of the Office of the State's Attorney for Prince George's County.
- [4] Equal Justice Initiative. 2021. "[Maryland Bans Life Without Parole for Children](#)".
- [5] See contents of [Juvenile Restoration Act](#).
- [6] Southern Maryland Chronicle News Desk. 2022. "[Juvenile Restoration Act Secures the Freedom of 23 Individuals in the First Year of its Implementation.](#)"
- [7] The jurisdiction has also developed other creative strategies, such as the [Emerging Adults Program](#) and [reentry court](#).
- [8] In Maryland, "crimes of violence" are defined within the [Maryland Code Criminal Law, General Sentencing Provisions](#). It includes crimes such as abduction, murder, rape, first degree arson, some sexual offense and assault with the intent to commit another offense.
- [9] Kaiser, E. 2012. "[6 facts about crime and the adolescent brain.](#)"
- [10] Bui, L. 2018. "[I'm back and there ain't no stopping me.' Strict court program aims to reduce repeat offenders.](#)"
- [11] Fox, S. 2022. "[Convicted murderer works at Prince George's County State's Attorney's Office.](#)"

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