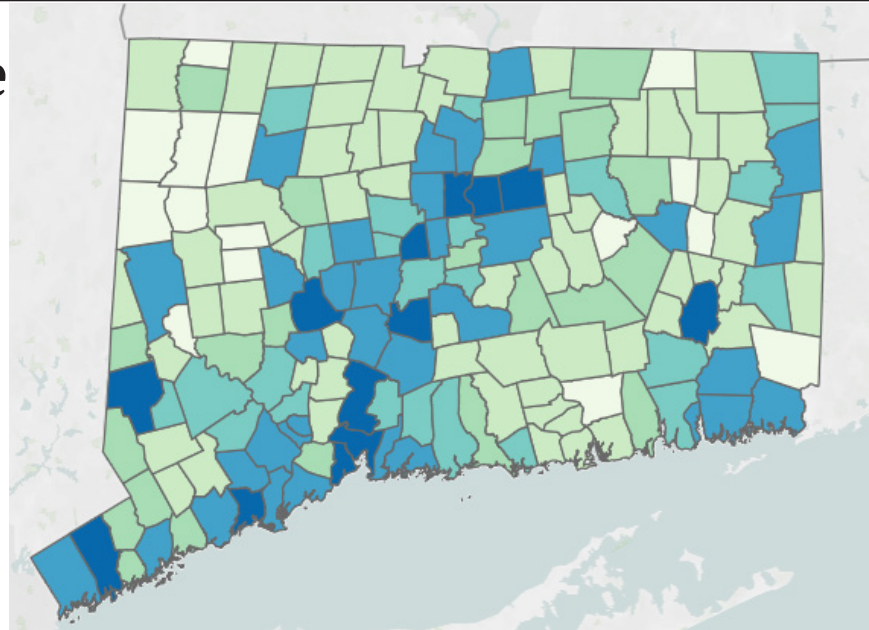


## Connecticut's Juvenile Justice System Equity Dashboard -

A tool to examine  
the juvenile justice system  
data



### Background

Connecticut's juvenile justice system has a significant impact on the lives of some of our youth. It is essential to ensure that it operates in a manner that is fair, just, and free from bias. Connecticut has taken a significant step towards achieving equity and justice by introducing the Equity Dashboard, a powerful tool designed to examine and address disparities within the juvenile justice system. This innovative initiative aims to promote transparency, data-driven decision-making, and, ultimately, a fairer future for our state's young population.

### History

The Equity Dashboard focuses on providing insight into key points within Connecticut's juvenile justice system, to observe juvenile justice involvement across the state and identify areas where racial, ethnic, or gender disparities may exist. The project began as a recommendation from Connecticut's Improving Outcome for Youth Initiative (IOYouth)

In 2019, with the goal of assessing whether recent juvenile justice system reforms had been implemented as intended and have had the expected impact, Connecticut's three branches of government launched the IOYouth Statewide Task Force. The task force's recommendations were released in July 2020, and work began in late 2020 on implementing the Equity Dashboard. In the initial phases of planning, the implementation kicked-off as a collaboration between JJPOC's Racial and Ethnic Disparities (RED) and Cross Agency Data Sharing workgroups.

Throughout 2020, a working group which included representatives from the RED workgroup, Cross Agency Data Sharing workgroup, Judicial Branch/Court Support Services Division (JBCSSD), and the Office of Policy and Management (OPM) Criminal Justice Policy & Planning Division met to refine and develop the dashboard's implementation approach. This group kicked off dashboard development by identifying potential sources of data for the IOYouth recommended measures, refining the measures to more closely

align with collected data, and prioritizing metrics with available data for initial development.

Next, the Equity Dashboard project group began focusing on implementation needs, taking three key steps to support the dashboard's initial development:

- The Judicial Branch would provide aggregate data for the prioritized measures underlying the dashboard.
- OPM would implement and host the public-facing dashboard.
- OPM's Criminal Justice Policy and Planning Division Research Unit also obtained Bureau of Justice Statistics grant funding to support cross-branch data exchange and dashboard development.

In addition, the project team formed two development groups to aid in dashboard implementation:

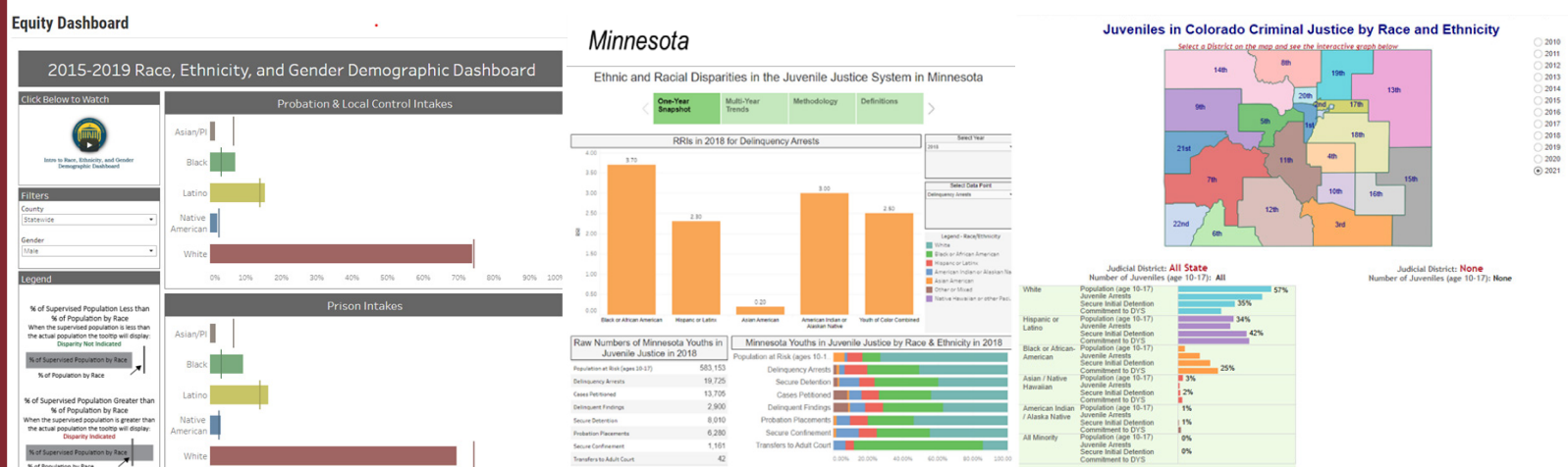
- A technical team consisting of JBCSSD, OPM CJPPD and OPM's Data Policy and Analytics Unit staff, serving to resolve any technical issues regarding the exchange of data, site construction, and hosting of the tool, and
- A Dashboard Design Group, comprised key JJPOC stakeholders and advisors as well as key members of the RED and Cross-Agency Data Sharing workgroups, who met to collaboratively iterate through potential dashboard designs.

## Dashboard Design

The Dashboard Design group identified several objectives to guide the iterative design and implementation of the Equity Dashboard:

1. Dashboard must meet RED workgroup's equity monitoring needs.
2. Each decision point/measure in the dashboard should have its own dedicated, focused page.
3. The dashboard must offer a user-friendly, accessible presentation of information to support multiple audiences.
4. The dashboard should encourage users to access additional resources to facilitate better public understanding of Connecticut's juvenile justice system.

During convenings of the Dashboard Design Group, members reviewed draft designs of Connecticut's tool as well as the design of similar tools, including those developed by other states:



## What It Offers: Four Equity Metrics

The Equity Dashboard provides crucial information regarding delinquent referrals, detention, disposition of first time felonies, and non-judicial handling in a manner that is appropriate and accessible for the general public.

## **Delinquent Referrals**

A delinquent referral happens when a juvenile summons and an arrest report are created by law enforcement after the arrest of a young person under the age of 18 years old in connection with a suspected crime. In Connecticut, this marks the starting point of a case in the juvenile justice system administered by the Judicial Branch.

The Equity Dashboard allows anyone to view the total number of delinquent referrals in Connecticut by jurisdiction, either by calendar year, a three-year time period, or a five-year time period. The demographic characteristics of the youth involved with these delinquent referrals are further analyzed by race, ethnicity, age, and gender and can be analyzed quarterly, including the given referral rate per 1,000 youth. In addition, there is also available data on the specific town that these referrals are made, as well as statewide data.

## **Detention**

Detention refers to the detainment of a youth by court order prior to their first court appearance, which occurs after a youth received a delinquent referral during a custodial arrest, when law enforcement believes that the release of the youth back to a guardian could pose a public safety risk.

The Equity Dashboard allows anyone to view the total number of detentions in Connecticut by jurisdiction, either by quarter, calendar year, a three-year time period, or a five-year time period, or statewide.

The dashboard also includes a Relative Rate Index (RRI) in terms of youth detentions. The RRI refers to a comparison of youth detentions of youth of color and white youth. For instance, a relative rate of 1.0 represents parity with white youth while the greater the difference between a group's relative rate of 1 represents the more likely ( $>1.0$ ) or less likely ( $<1.0$ ) that the youth in the given group are placed in detention compared to white youth. Simply, the RRI demonstrates whether the youth in a racial or ethnic minority are more or less likely to be placed in detention compared to white youth. This provides a unique and specific representation of the demographic disparities in the rates of youth detention in Connecticut.

## **Disposition of First-Time Felony**

A disposition of a first-time felony refers to the final outcome of a youth criminal case when the youth is referred. This indicator does not take prior criminal history into consideration and therefore focuses only on the initial felony disposition of a youth. First-time felony dispositions are available for viewing on the Equity Dashboard, providing a detailed overview of the final decisions of first-time felony referral cases by year, court district, race and ethnicity, and gender. Statewide information is available as well and the chronological information can be viewed either by calendar year, a three-year time period, or a five-year time period.

The potential dispositions of a first-time felony referral case are:

- Nolle/not prosecuted,
- supervision,
- discharge,
- dismissal,
- not accepted,
- suspended prosecution,
- probation with placement, and
- transfer.

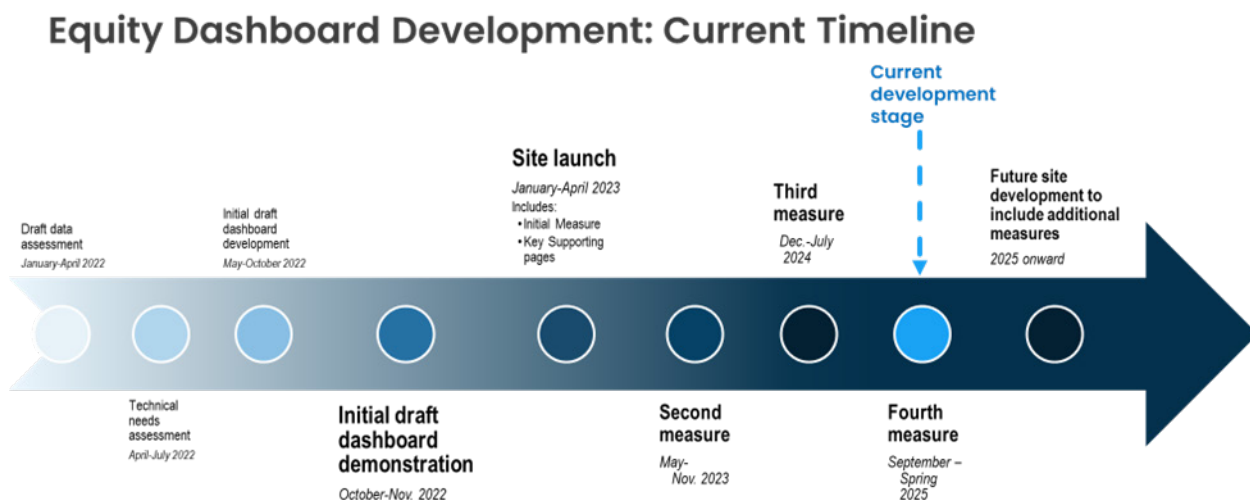
Each of these results is available for further analysis on the dashboard as well as a brief overview of what each of these dispositions consist of. This metric, then, provides a deep dive into the disparities among first-time felony referrals in Connecticut that need to be addressed in terms of race, ethnicity, and gender.

## Non-Judicial Handling

The non-judicial handling metric has not been published on the Equity Dashboard yet but will aim to analyze the handling of youth in settings and manners not in connection with the judicial system. Meaning, youth who face diversionary efforts rather than incarceration will be included in this metric's dataset which is expected to be publicly available in Spring 2025.

## Conclusion

In sum, the Equity Dashboard provides a centralized location for race, ethnicity, and gender data regarding numerous metrics in Connecticut's juvenile justice system. Additional data is being planned. The current timeline in the development is below.



It aims to address and dismantle the barriers and the disparities within this system in both a holistic and specific approach. Further, not only will stakeholders be able to use the data available, but the dashboard also allows for members of the general public to have more knowledge of these four metrics and how they influence the youth of Connecticut.

To review the Equity Dashboard, click [HERE](#).

The Tow Youth Justice Institute is a university, state and private partnership established to lead the way in juvenile justice reform through collaborative planning, training, research and advocacy.

Please visit our website at [towyouth.newhaven.edu](http://towyouth.newhaven.edu) and follow us on social media [@towyouth](https://twitter.com/towyouth) or call 203-932-7361 with questions or for more information.



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