

Criminal Justice Research Agency State Examples

Prepared by the Council of State Governments Justice Center

House Bill 317 would create a Bureau of Racial Justice Statistics and Bureau of Racial Justice Statistics Advisory Panel to collect and analyze criminal justice data in order to identify and address racial bias in the criminal justice system.

CSG Justice Center staff have been asked by the House Judiciary Committee to provide examples of how criminal justice data research shops and agencies are structured outside of Vermont. Below are five examples of how states have structured these entities in different ways. These examples do not take into account how Vermont currently structures its criminal justice research capacity more broadly or the specific functions of the proposed Bureau of Racial Justice Statistics. CSG Justice Center staff are not aware of any other states with an analogous agency that focuses solely on race-related statistical analysis of criminal justice system data.

Connecticut

Entity: [Research Unit of the Criminal Justice Policy and Planning Division](#)

Parent agency: [Office of Policy and Management \(OPM\)](#)

Branch: Executive

Establishing language: [Public Act 05-249](#), Title 4, Chapter 50, §4-68m

Function: The mission of the Criminal Justice Policy and Planning Division is to conduct an in-depth analysis of the criminal justice system; determine the system's long-range needs and recommend policy priorities; and advise and assist the governor and the General Assembly in developing plans, policies, programs, and legislation to improve the system's effectiveness.

Oversight board: The Criminal Justice Policy and Planning Division works with the [Criminal Justice Policy Advisory Commission \(CJPAC\)](#) to develop and recommend policies for preventing prison and jail overcrowding, examine the impact of statutory provisions and current administrative policies on prison and jail overcrowding, and recommend legislation to the governor and the General Assembly.

Oversight board membership: The 20-member commission is chaired by the undersecretary of criminal justice and has representatives from the executive branch and court leadership. Other members include the chief public defender, chief states attorney, municipal police chief, and people who have justice involvement or provide victims' services.

Staffing: Five full-time staff members for the research unit: undersecretary, staff attorney, policy development coordinator, two research analysts

Year established: 2005

Iowa

Entity: [The Division of Criminal and Juvenile Justice Planning \(CJJP\)](#)

Parent agency: [Iowa Department of Human Rights](#)

Branch: Executive

Establishing language: [Iowa Code Chapter 216A, Subchapter 9](#) (begins on page 18)

Function: CJJP carries out research, policy analysis, program development, and data analysis activities to help policymakers, justice system agencies, and others identify issues of concern and improve the operation and effectiveness of Iowa's justice system. CJJP staff serve as a justice system information clearinghouse for system officials and the general public.

Oversight boards: [Justice Advisory Board](#) and the Iowa [Juvenile Justice Advisory Council](#).

The Justice Advisory Board was created by [state law](#) to coordinate the study of justice system issues, develop plans and recommendations for system improvements, and assist state and local agencies and officials. The Juvenile Justice Advisory Council is appointed by the governor pursuant to federal law to oversee Iowa's use of federal juvenile justice and delinquency prevention Formula Grant (Title II) funding and to develop plans for system improvements.

Oversight board membership: The 28-member Justice Advisory Board has bipartisan representation from all three branches of government and includes community members and content experts (full list at link above). It met quarterly in 2020.

Staffing: About 15 full-time staff, including the administrator, 5 researchers, and 3 IT specialists

Year established: 1974

Maine

Entity: [Maine Statistical Analysis Center \(SAC\)](#)

Parent entity: [University of Southern Maine Muskie School of Public Service](#)

Branch: Executive

Establishing language: [Executive Order](#) - An order establishing the Maine Criminal Justice Statistical Analysis Center

Function: SAC strives to inform the policy and practice of criminal and juvenile justice by providing research, analysis, training, and technical assistance to help governmental agencies and community-based nonprofits build capacity, use data to inform decision-making, and improve their performance.

Oversight board: SAC activities are guided by an advisory group composed of policy-level representatives of the [Maine Department of Public Safety](#), [Maine Department of Corrections](#), [Maine Administrative Office of the Courts](#), and Maine Criminal Justice Commission. SAC themes of focus change every year.

Staffing: Five full-time staff members: director, two policy associates, research analyst, project assistant

Year established: 1999

North Carolina

Entity: [Sentencing and Policy Advisory Commission](#)

Branch: Judicial

Establishing language: [House Bill 2284](#) and [history of SPAC/structured sentencing and case law](#)

Function: The Commission was created by the General Assembly in 1990 to make recommendations to the General Assembly for the modification of sentencing laws and policies and for the addition, deletion, or expansion of sentencing options as necessary to achieve policy goals. They were directed to classify criminal offenses into felony and misdemeanor categories on the basis of their severity; recommend structures for use by a sentencing court and a comprehensive community corrections strategy/organizational structure; develop a

correctional population simulation model; create studies; and make additional policy recommendations. Today, the commission releases a variety of [statistical reports and evaluations](#) about the state's corrections populations, including correctional population projections, recidivism studies, program evaluations, and analyses of sentencing patterns.

Membership: The Commission has 28 members representing all three branches of government, all areas of the criminal justice system, and the public. It generally meets quarterly.

Staffing: 10 full-time staff: 1 executive director, 2 associate directors, 6 research/policy associates, and 1 administrative secretary

Year established: 1990

Washington

Entity: [Washington State Institute for Public Policy \(WSIPP\)](#)

Parent entity: [The Evergreen State College](#)

Branch: Legislative

Establishing language: [Washington State Institute for Public Policy: Origins and Governance](#)

Function: WSIPP's mission is to carry out practical, nonpartisan research at the direction of the legislature or the Board of Directors. WSIPP works closely with legislators, legislative and state agency staff, and experts in the field to ensure that studies answer relevant policy questions.

Oversight board: A [Board of Directors](#) governs WSIPP, appoints WSIPP's director, and reviews and provides oversight for all WSIPP projects.

Oversight board membership: The WSIPP Board is made up of 16 members who represent the legislature, governor, and public universities.

Staffing: 18 full-time staff, including the director, 13 research staff, administrative assistant, software developer, and data manager. Additional fiscal and administrative support for WSIPP is provided by The Evergreen State College.

Year established: 1982