

# Division of Racial Justice Statistics

Presented to the House Committee on Judiciary by  
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February 6, 2025

# Summary of Main Takeaways

Data Landscape	Interpreting Data	Future Goals
The available data are inconsistent, incomplete, and scattered.	Data may be incomplete, inconsistent, or biased, complicating the possibility of drawing definitive conclusions.	Data Governance Council
Agencies lack shared understanding of what to report.	Systemic racism and bias can be harder to capture and may not show up in traditional statistics.	Dashboards
If DRJS experienced challenges, how does the public engage the data?	Statistical significance along with historical, social, and institutional contexts must be considered.	Insight Circles



# Lessons Learned

Evolving with new insights as we develop and shift to working collaboratively with other agencies and the public.

01

About the  
DRJ S

# About the DRJ S

## Mission

“to collect and analyze data relating to racial disparities with the intent to center racial equity throughout these efforts” Act 142 of 2022

## Purpose

“to create, promote, and advance a system and structure that provides access to appropriate data and information, ensuring that privacy interests are protected, and principles of transparency and accountability are clearly expressed” Act 142 of 2022

## Staffing

1 Manager, 1 Analyst, 1 Temp. Analyst, + 1 vacancy

# DRJ S Duties

**1** “work collaboratively with, and **have the assistance of, all State and local [law enforcement] agencies** for purposes of collecting all data related to systemic racial bias and disparities in the criminal and juvenile justice systems.”

**2** **collect and analyze data** related to systemic racial bias and disparities in the criminal and juvenile justice systems.

**3** “conduct justice information sharing **gap analyses.**”

## DRJS DUTIES

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“maintain an inventory of **justice technology assets** and a **data dictionary** to identify elements and structure of databases and relationships, if any, to other databases.”

5

“develop a **justice technology strategic plan**, which shall be updated annually...include identification and prioritization of data needs and requirements to fulfill new or emerging data research proposals or operational enhancements.”

6

“develop interagency **agreements and memorandums of understanding** for data sharing and publish public use files.”

## DRJS DUTIES

**7** report monthly to RJSAC and RDAP on its data, analyses and recommendations.

**8** report annually to the Legislature:

- data, analyses, and recommendations
- May include an operational assessment of DRJS structure and staffing levels and any recommendations for necessary adjustments.

**9** establish, maintain, and implement a management program for its records and information with support from VSARA and ADS.



# DRJS DUTIES

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analyze collected data to:

1. **identify the stages of the justice systems** at which racial bias and disparities are most likely to occur;
2. **organize the data** so that it can be best presented and understood; and
3. **present the data to RJSAC.**

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develop and adopt a **data governance policy** and establish:

1. **system(s) to standardize** data collection and retention; and
2. **methods to permit data sharing** and communication between State agencies, local agencies, and external researchers

12

**recommend evidence-based practices and standards** for the

collection of racial justice data to State and local agencies

## DRJS DUTIES

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develop public use data files.

14

Establish the data to be collected to carry out its duties (in consultation with RDAP & RJSAC)

15

Identify which State and local agencies and departments possess the necessary data.

02

The  
Context

## **DISPROPORTIONATE IMPACT**

Disproportionate impact occurs when certain groups are affected by a policy, practice, or system at a significantly higher rate than other groups, often in a way that is not aligned with their representation in the population. This may or may not be evident in the data, and in some cases, the data may be incomplete or unavailable to fully assess the impact.

## **The Backdrop and Reality**

Most recent state and local data continue to suggest disproportionate impacts across various metrics, particularly in criminal justice, juvenile justice and early childhood outcomes.

03

Annual  
Report

# Our Work

Toward addressing data infrastructure and transparency on key issues:

- Collaborating with agencies to strengthen data infrastructure, elevate lifecourse and data equity, and inform policy decisions.
- Ongoing development of dashboards, webinars, trainings, data and policy research reports, with a focus on data governance.
- Assessing the quality and availability of data on police interactions, sentencing, school discipline, and youth justice.

And the most important thing: ensuring data integrity, transparency, and accessibility while continuously engaging stakeholders to align efforts with addressing disproportionate impacts.

Initial assessments suggest potential disproportionate impacts.

## HOWEVER

Further analyses with more complete data are necessary, and **the DRJS report will be promptly amended**. In addition, we commit to improving the identified datasets over the next few weeks in close collaboration with relevant stakeholders for context.

Preliminary **findings are severely limited by data gaps, missing information, and reliance on de-identified datasets**, but challenges reflect **broader issues with data collection and quality**, serving as a useful starting point.

Data Sources: Vermont Criminal Justice Council (VCJC), Department of Corrections (DOC), Agency of Education (AOE), and partner agency reports.



# Limitations & Caveats

**Disparate data files & inconsistent headings**

**Missing and suppressed entries**

**Inclusion of expunged information**

**Lack of data glossaries**

**Personnel**

**Vague State Statutes**

# 04

## Recommendations & Further Inquiry

# Recommendation No. 1 (data governance protocols)

- 3 V.S.A. §5013(a)(3): “The Division shall, pursuant to section 218 of this title, establish, maintain, and implement an active and continuing management program for its records and information, including data, with support and services provided by the Vermont State Archives and Records Administration pursuant to section 117 of this title and the Agency of Digital Services pursuant to section 3301 of this title.”
- 3 V.S.A. §5013(c): “The Division shall develop and adopt a data governance policy and establish a system or systems to standardize the collection and retention of the data collected; and methods to permit sharing and communication of the data between the State agencies, local agencies, and external researchers, including the use of data sharing agreements.”
- 3 V.S.A. §5013(d): “The Division shall recommend to State and local agencies evidence-based practices and standards for the collection of racial justice data.”
- 3 V.S.A. §5012(c): “To carry out its duties under this subchapter, the Division may adopt procedural and substantive rules in accordance with the provisions of chapter 25 of this title.”

## **Enhance Data Transparency, Accessibility, and Quality**

Collaborate with agencies like DPS, DOC, and AOE to develop dashboards and improve public data sets, fostering public trust and enabling trend identification.

## **Support Data Staff Capacity Building and Collaboration Across Agencies**

Provide the Vermont Criminal Justice Council (VCJC) with dedicated support to enhance data collection and reporting.

## **Strengthen Data Governance and Integration**

Establish a Data Governance Council to oversee data completeness, accuracy, and integration. Ensure consistent data collection systems are in place across agencies, allowing for the identification of disparities and improving data-driven decision-making.

