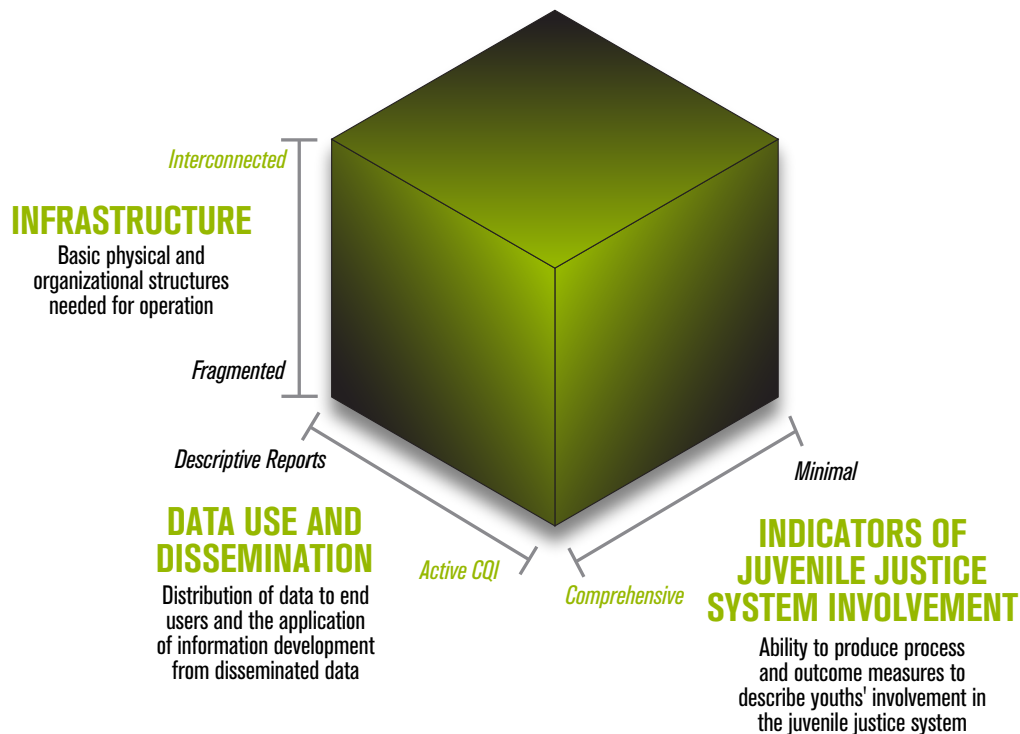


# Juvenile Justice Model Data Project

## 3D DATA CAPACITY ASSESSMENT

### 01 INFRASTRUCTURE



The Juvenile Justice Model Data Project's 3D Data Capacity Assessment is a tool for juvenile justice practitioners to strategically examine the data capacity of their juvenile justice system and reflect on their own use of data to inform decisions and drive improvements. The assessment indicates areas where systemwide, agency-level, and staff-level improvements can be made, and the responses listed inform improvement plans. The assessment has three sections: **Infrastructure**, **Data Use and Dissemination**, and **Indicators of Juvenile Justice System Involvement**.

This section, Infrastructure, is intended to help juvenile justice practitioners understand the extent to which their agency and juvenile justice system have the underlying structural components necessary to support data-informed practices.

## INFRASTRUCTURE

In the context of assessing data capacity, infrastructure does not simply mean the physical systems used to collect and report data; it also encompasses the organizational structures that allow juvenile justice system stakeholders to effectively use the data collected to inform decisions about policy and practice. Jurisdictions or agencies may have access to sophisticated data systems; however, technology alone cannot make informed decisions that lead to better practice and outcomes.

Therefore, it is important to determine both if juvenile justice-related agencies have the internal capacity to collect, analyze, and apply data to their day-to-day operations and whether they collaborate with other stakeholders to drive systemwide improvements.

Infrastructure can be viewed through four lenses:

1. **Leadership** – The collection and use of data is supported by leadership in each juvenile justice-related agency, *and* there is a shared sense of purpose to use data to improve outcomes for youth and families.
2. **Vision** – There is a locally developed strategic plan that guides practice with clearly defined goals and measurable benchmarks.
3. **Technology** – There are sufficient data collection systems that allow agencies to extract data, share information, and work together to drive improvements.
4. **Skills/Training** – All staff are trained to collect, use, and understand data, and are trained in the importance of making data-informed decisions.

The following 20 questions allow juvenile justice system practitioners to more fully understand their infrastructure along a four-point scale (No Capacity, Minimal, Moderate, and Optimal) and on three levels: System, Agency, and Person. The scale itself provides examples of recommended practice. For example, the following three instances, taken from the assessment, highlight optimal practice in each level:

- **System: Collaboration Across Agencies** – Regular, formal collaboration among all agencies is identified as central to the juvenile justice system.
- **Agency: Agency Data Sharing** – There is a shared database that allows for data sharing among agencies and/or we routinely access a data warehouse with at least one other agency.
- **Person: Use of Data** – We understand what data exist and where to find them, and we use them on a regular basis.

Optimal practice and the approaches used to get there may look different depending on a jurisdiction's structure, policies, and resources; however, the responses provided are intended to illustrate one example of how a jurisdiction can improve data capacity. In practice, this means that juvenile justice system practitioners having rated *System: How would you describe collaboration across agencies and system actors in your state's juvenile justice system?* as "No Capacity" will be able to implement optimal practice by formalizing multi-agency stakeholder groups through a memoranda of understanding and developing a shared vision and strategic plan to effectively collect, share, and use data to inform practice.

## INSTRUCTIONS

The 3D Data Capacity Assessment is most effective when a group of individuals from different juvenile justice-related agencies and different departments within each agency who have diverse perspectives and roles completes it. Juvenile justice-related agencies may vary across jurisdictions, but usually include the juvenile court; probation, detention, corrections, and parole agencies; legal representatives; law enforcement; and community service providers. We recommend convening a group to complete the assessment together or to complete the assessment individually and then meet to compare and discuss responses. Some items on the assessment may not be relevant to all juvenile justice-related agencies; however, it can still be beneficial for everyone to hear and learn from their partners.

Please carefully review each item. Respond to each item taking into account current activities and procedures of the system, agency, and practitioners.

## SYSTEM QUESTIONS

**How would you describe the attitude towards data and research across your state’s juvenile justice system?**

UNSURE	NO CAPACITY	MINIMAL	MODERATE	OPTIMAL
I do not know/ Unsure	Our juvenile justice system does not acknowledge the benefits of using data to inform decisions and practice	Our juvenile justice system acknowledges the benefits of using data to inform decisions and practice, but doesn't actively practice data-informed decision making	Some parts of our juvenile justice system actively practice data-informed decision making individually, but we do not do so as a system	Our juvenile justice system actively uses data to inform decisions about system-wide efforts

**Thinking about your state system, what is most often the impetus for change in practice?**

UNSURE	NO CAPACITY	MINIMAL	MODERATE	OPTIMAL
I do not know/ Unsure	Change in practice happens when required by the government or other regulations	Change in practice happens independently within agencies, but is not coordinated system-wide	Change in practice happens most often when we realize our practices are not aligned with the field	Change in practice happens most often when we aren't meeting our performance benchmarks

**How would you describe collaboration across agencies and system actors in your state’s juvenile justice system?**

UNSURE	NO CAPACITY	MINIMAL	MODERATE	OPTIMAL
I do not know/ Unsure	There is no collaboration between agencies	There is some informal collaboration between agencies	There is regular, formal collaboration between some agencies	Regular, formal collaboration among all agencies is identified as central to the juvenile justice system

**Does your system employ multi-stakeholder groups to drive improvements to practices? For example, a Juvenile Detention Alternative Initiative (JDAI) stakeholder group or a school-justice partnership that includes representatives from multiple agencies.**

UNSURE	NO CAPACITY	MINIMAL	MODERATE	OPTIMAL
I do not know/ Unsure	No, agencies work independently on system change	There is no formal group, but we call on partners as needed	Yes, formal multi-stakeholder groups meet on an as-needed basis	Yes, at least one multi-stakeholder group meets regularly and has clearly defined goals

<b>Is there a state or system-wide strategic plan to improve practice that is supported by the core juvenile justice stakeholders (i.e, juvenile court, juvenile probation, and juvenile corrections)?</b>				
<b>UNSURE</b>	<b>NO CAPACITY</b>	<b>MINIMAL</b>	<b>MODERATE</b>	<b>OPTIMAL</b>
I do not know/ Unsure	There is no system-wide strategic plan in place	We understand that we need a system-wide strategic plan but have not started developing one	We are currently working with other agencies to develop a system-wide strategic plan for juvenile justice practice	Yes, our system has a strategic plan with clearly defined and measureable benchmarks to guide practice in our system
<b>If you have or are working on a plan: Does the system-wide strategic plan include goals related to your ability to collect and use data to inform practices?</b>				
<b>UNSURE</b>	<b>NO CAPACITY</b>	<b>MINIMAL</b>	<b>MODERATE</b>	<b>OPTIMAL</b>
I do not know/ Unsure	There is no plan in place related to collecting and using data to inform practices	We are currently working with other agencies to develop a plan related to data collection and use	We have created a plan related to data collection and use, but it is not yet being implemented	We have created a plan related to data collection and use, and it is being implemented

<b>AGENCY QUESTIONS</b>				
<b>What is the research capacity of your agency for juvenile justice information?</b>				
<b>UNSURE</b>	<b>NO CAPACITY</b>	<b>MINIMAL</b>	<b>MODERATE</b>	<b>OPTIMAL</b>
I do not know/ Unsure	There are no staff positions who are responsible for analyzing juvenile justice data	We have staff whose responsibilities include developing data reports in addition to other non-research responsibilities	We have one or two staff whose main responsibility is analyzing juvenile justice data to answer questions about agency performance	We have a specific research department or unit dedicated to analyzing juvenile justice data to answer questions about agency performance
<b>Describe the primary data systems used by your agency.</b>				
<b>UNSURE</b>	<b>NO CAPACITY</b>	<b>MINIMAL</b>	<b>MODERATE</b>	<b>OPTIMAL</b>
I do not know/ Unsure	As an agency, we primarily use pen and paper to track data on individual youth (e.g., case files)	As an agency, we rely on many different data collection systems including spreadsheets and databases that often live on one person's computer	Throughout the agency, all staff primarily use one transactional database for entering and accessing data	As an agency, we primarily use a database that two or more agencies can access

<b>Who receives training on your data system?</b>				
<b>UNSURE</b>	<b>NO CAPACITY</b>	<b>MINIMAL</b>	<b>MODERATE</b>	<b>OPTIMAL</b>
I do not know/ Unsure	There is no formal training on our data system	Those entering data are trained on how to do their specific function	Those entering the data are trained on all aspects of the system, including how the data are used	All staff and administrators who enter or use the data are trained on all aspects of the system, including how to enter and use data
<b>How often do staff and administrators receive training on your data system?</b>				
<b>UNSURE</b>	<b>NO CAPACITY</b>	<b>MINIMAL</b>	<b>MODERATE</b>	<b>OPTIMAL</b>
I do not know/ Unsure	Staff and administrators never receive training on the data system	Staff and administrators receive training one time (e.g., during orientation)	Staff and administrators receive training when changes are made to the system	Staff and administrators receive training periodically throughout their employment
<b>What documentation exists for users of the primary database?</b>				
<b>UNSURE</b>	<b>NO CAPACITY</b>	<b>MINIMAL</b>	<b>MODERATE</b>	<b>OPTIMAL</b>
I do not know/ Unsure	There is no documentation on coding categories or definitions	There is documentation of definitions and coding categories, but it is not readily accessible by all staff	Documentation exists and is accessible by all staff, but there is no process for keeping it up-to-date	All staff have access to a guidebook and/or codebook that is updated periodically
<b>To what extent does your agency share data with other agencies?</b>				
<b>UNSURE</b>	<b>NO CAPACITY</b>	<b>MINIMAL</b>	<b>MODERATE</b>	<b>OPTIMAL</b>
I do not know/ Unsure	Data are not shared with other agencies in the juvenile justice system	Other agencies can request data from us through a formal data request	There is a formal agreement in place to regularly share data extracts with at least one other agency	There is a shared database that allows for data sharing between agencies AND/OR we routinely access a data warehouse with data from at least one other agency
<b>Thinking about the data your agency collects, aside from individual case management, how is it used?</b>				
<b>UNSURE</b>	<b>NO CAPACITY</b>	<b>MINIMAL</b>	<b>MODERATE</b>	<b>OPTIMAL</b>
I do not know/ Unsure	We collect data, but there is no established process for looking at it in the aggregate	A handful of “data people” at the agency understand and use data	Leadership and staff review reports on a quarterly or yearly basis	Data use is pervasive in our agency, making sure we are meeting goals, assigning cases appropriately, staff development, etc.

<b>How flexible is your primary data system?</b>				
<b>UNSURE</b>	<b>NO CAPACITY</b>	<b>MINIMAL</b>	<b>MODERATE</b>	<b>OPTIMAL</b>
I do not know/ Unsure	We rely on a vendor to make changes to variables and reports	Variables (e.g., race) cannot be changed, but categories for a variable (e.g., Asian, black, white, etc.) can be added or changed in-house	Variables, coding categories, and/or reports can be changed in-house, but it requires much effort	Variables, coding categories, and reports can be added easily in-house
<b>Is there an established protocol to access information from criminal (adult) court?</b>				
<b>UNSURE</b>	<b>NO CAPACITY</b>	<b>MINIMAL</b>	<b>MODERATE</b>	<b>OPTIMAL</b>
I do not know/ Unsure	No, there is not an established process	This is done on an individual basis	A request can be made to receive a batch of information for a sub-group of youth	This information is regularly matched and analyzed to inform decisionmaking
<b>Are there quality assurance procedures in place to ensure data are accurate and reliable?</b>				
<b>UNSURE</b>	<b>NO CAPACITY</b>	<b>MINIMAL</b>	<b>MODERATE</b>	<b>OPTIMAL</b>
I do not know/ Unsure	No, there are no quality assurance procedures	When we identify obvious issues, they are corrected	There are regular, manual quality assurance checks and file reviews	We have automated quality assurance checks, follow-ups with staff, and retraining when necessary
<b>Does the agency's primary data system assign a unique identifier for each youth?</b>				
<b>UNSURE</b>	<b>NO CAPACITY</b>	<b>MINIMAL</b>	<b>MODERATE</b>	<b>OPTIMAL</b>
I do not know/ Unsure	No, the system does not assign unique identifiers to each case or youth	Each case is assigned a number, and one youth can have multiple case numbers	Each youth is assigned a number that is used each time the youth returns to our agency	Each youth is assigned a number, and this number is shared with at least one other agency OR we store another agency's youth identifier in our database

## PERSON QUESTIONS

### Do you and/or your coworkers understand what data exist regarding the agency's performance and where to find it?

UNSURE	NO CAPACITY	MINIMAL	MODERATE	OPTIMAL
I do not know/ Unsure	We do not completely understand the data that are available to us or where to find it OR data are not available	We understand who can answer questions about the agency's performance	We understand where to find information about the agency's performance, but rarely access it	We understand what data exist, where to find it, and use it on a regular basis

### Does your agency's primary data system meet the needs of you and/or your coworkers?

UNSURE	NO CAPACITY	MINIMAL	MODERATE	OPTIMAL
I do not know/ Unsure	No, we rely on ad-hoc data processes to collect the information needed to inform our decisions	Minimally, the agency's primary database collects some of the information needed to inform our decisions, but there are substantial gaps in the information we currently collect	Mostly, the agency's primary database collects most of the information needed to inform our decisions; however, agency staff often need to supplement this with ad-hoc data collections	Yes, the agency's primary database collects everything we need to inform our decisions and has the framework to provide aggregate reports on multiple variables

### How familiar are you and/or your coworkers with performance measures, data analysis, and continuous quality improvement?

UNSURE	NO CAPACITY	MINIMAL	MODERATE	OPTIMAL
I do not know/ Unsure	We are not familiar with these concepts	We have an awareness of these concepts but have not been trained	We have received training on these concepts but have not begun using them in practice	We are familiar with and have been trained on these concepts and have incorporated them into our work activities



## THE JUVENILE JUSTICE MODEL DATA PROJECT

The Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention (OJJDP) invested in improving juvenile justice data and increasing its consistency across states and localities through the Juvenile Justice Model Data Project (MDP). The MDP developed model measures and analyses to monitor trends and assess the efficiency and effectiveness of juvenile justice systems and provided guidance to the field on the data elements and coding categories required to calculate the model measures. Organizations representing all sectors of juvenile justice—from law enforcement through the court process and juvenile corrections—contributed to the measures. This assessment is one of the products from the MDP. Please see <https://www.ojjdp.gov/research/juvenile-justice-model-data-project.html> for more information.

## SUGGESTED CITATION

Deal, T., Schiller, W., Taylor, M., & Boc, J. (2018). *Model Data Project 3D Data Capacity Assessment: Infrastructure*. Pittsburgh, PA: National Center for Juvenile Justice.

This project was supported by Grant No. 2015-JF-FX-K003 awarded by the Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention, Office of Justice Programs, U.S. Department of Justice. The opinions, findings, and conclusions or recommendations expressed in this publication are those of the author(s) and do not necessarily reflect those of the Department of Justice.

