Erin Farley: Good Afternoon everyone. My name is Erin Farley, and I am one of JRC's research associates. For those of you less familiar with JRSA, it stands for Justice Research and Statistics Association. And we are non-profit organization dedicated to the use of research and analysis to inform criminal and juvenile justice decision making. And we are comprised of a network of researchers and practitioners. We at the court include directors, and staff from state statistical analysis centers. Before we go any further, I would like to thank our partners at the Bureau of Justice Statistics for helping make this webinar possible. And with that it’s my pleasure to welcome you to our webinar today on States Assisting Counties. Using state data in analytic capacity to support local planning. Presented by Dr. Dave Olson. Dave Olson is a professor and graduate program director in the Criminal Justice and Criminology Department. Departments, excuse me. At Loyola University in Chicago.

Erin Farley: And is also the co-director of Loyola’s Interdisciplinary Center for Criminal Justice Research Policy and Practice. For nearly 20 years Dr. Olson worked at the Illinois Criminal Justice Information Authority within the staff there. And during his 30 plus years in the field of criminal justice Dave worked with a variety of federal, state and local agencies to develop and evaluate programs and policies. Particularly in the area of community and institutional corrections. And to support objective and empirically based and data driven strategic planning efforts. We are really happy to have Dave with us today. Welcome, Dave. And I will now turn the floor and pass the magic ball over to you. Welcome.

David Olson: All right. Thank you. Hopefully everybody can hear me okay, but if you can't just type in the chat window, and we'll make sure we get any of the audio stuff corrected. Thanks for participating in this webinar everybody, and I appreciate JRSA providing me with an opportunity to share some of the work we're doing here in Illinois to advance criminal justice reform. And how we also think we're advancing the use of data analysis in a way that we think is innovative, and potentially highly impactful to support sustained, lasting, and systemic reform in the criminal justice system. I wanted to provide a little additional information about my background. Erin gave you the publicly available bio, but I wanted to give you a little bit more information about my background, so you understand how I'm approaching this.

David Olson: In terms of my career, I started out working at the Illinois Criminal Justice Information Authority as a student intern in 1988. And I became a full time member of the research staff there after graduating. And worked there full time until 1997, and then part time until 2006. For those of you who aren't familiar with the Illinois Criminal Justice Information Authority, as Erin said, it serves as the Illinois Statistical Analysis Center. But it also serves as the state administration agency. I provided some websites on the power point that'll made available in case you wanna find out more about some of the organizations that I talk about, or some of the examples I use. When I was at the Criminal Justice Authority, I worked in the Statistical Analysis Center on a variety of projects. But most of my time was spent working with a variety of state
agencies in Illinois to get and analyze data that was needed for Illinois’ block grant fund applications. At that time, primarily it was the Byrne Memorial Grant Program. Or at the time what was referred to as the Anti-Drug Abuse Act Strategy.

David Olson: One of the biggest benefits of being at the Illinois Criminal Justice Authority was the composition of its board. Which included elected and appointed officials that represented every component of the justice system. Our work was never focused on one component. And the thinking about the entire system, and it’s interconnectedness was baked into the organizational structure and the operation of the agency. One of my biggest takeaways from my time working there was that they had a lot of data. And it provided the practitioners and policymakers in a format and through a mechanism that was clear, policy relevant, and useful you could have an enormous impact. I also realized that this is an agency with a director who’s appointed by the Governor, and there can be some perceptions of politics potentially interfering with work of governmental agencies.

David Olson: While that wasn’t evident when I worked there, some of the hesitation and resistance to people of different political parties, trusting each other can be understandable to a degree in some of this work. In 1997, I had the opportunity to return back to my alma mater, Loyola as a faculty member. And with three kids under three years old, and a work schedule with the state that was, I’ll call it less than flexible, I decided to leave the Criminal Justice Authority to take a faculty position at Loyola. But my connection with the agency continued, and I remained working there part time, continuing to work on a variety of research projects that benefited both the state as well as my academic career in terms of publications and access to data. In 2006, I stopped working there part time, and shifted to a position as the department chair in the criminal justice program at Loyola. In 2015, a group of use at Loyola proposed to the university an idea that we had for an Interdisciplinary Center for Criminal Justice Research Policy and Practice. Based on our view that Illinois justice system practitioners and policymakers needed the kind of support a university based research center could provide.

David Olson: The center's unique in that it's a collaboration between the School of Law, and the College of Arts and Sciences. Bridging the gap between the legal community of which many of the elected leaders and state legislators in Illinois are members of in the social sciences. The centers charge is to promote fair, informed, effective, and ethical approaches to criminal justice policy and practice through collaborative interdisciplinary research and evaluation. The website for both Loyola's Criminal Justice Department and the center are included on the power point for your reference later. Just to bring it all full circle, recently I was honored by being appointed by the Illinois Governor and lated confirmed by the Illinois Senate to serve as an appointed member of the Illinois Criminal Justice Information Authority's board where I continue to be involved in providing guidance, insight, and assistance to the agency. To provide
some context for the project that I'm gonna describe in the webinar, I wanted to
give a brief explanation to what the impetus was for the project, and where it
fits in the larger context of criminal justice reform efforts in Illinois.

David Olson: Specifically, in January of 2015, during the current governor's first month in
office, he issued an executive order establishing the Illinois Commission on
Criminal Justice and Sentencing Reform. With a charge to develop
recommendations that would reduce Illinois' prison population by 25% by the
year 2025. The commission was comprised of 29 members appointed either by
the governor, or the leadership of both parties in the Illinois General Assembly.
The membership was broad, and I was fortunate enough to have been
appointed by the Governor to serve on this commission. In addition, the Illinois
Criminal Justice Authority's executive director was an appointed member to the
commission, and staff from the Illinois Fiscal Analysis Center provided a lot of
the research support for the commission's work. Over a two year period the
commission met, and worked, and produced a final report, after two years, that
included 26 specific recommendations on how Illinois could achieve the goal of
a reduction of the prison population by 25% by the year 2025.

David Olson: If you are interested in seeing the full report, it's available at the link provided
below. Again, to put it into some context, when the commission was formed,
Illinois' prison population was a little bit above 48,000. And a goal of 25%
reduction in the prison population would equate to a prison population of
around 36,000. Or to put it into a historical context, the goal was to reduce the
prison population by 2025 to the level that it was in 1994. Some people thought
a 25% reduction was to modest of a goal. After doing the work, many of us
realized that a 25% reduction within the context of the policymaking process
and the politics of prison reform might actually prove to be a pretty challenging
goal. The commission made a number of recommendations ranging from
changes to sentencing law, changes to earned time credits for prison inmates,
increasing training among criminal justice practitioners regarding the impact of
trauma on victims as well as cultural diversity. Also made recommendations for
improving community corrections and policy. But the one specific
recommendation that I'm gonna be talking about today was recommendation
number three, which was that the State of Illinois would provide incentives and
support for the establishment of local criminal justice coordination councils to
develop strategic plans to address crime and corrections policy.

David Olson: While some of the 27 recommendations have been implemented and passed
into law, not all have. What I'll be talking about today is the recommendation
the criminal justice coordinating councils which has been implemented. This
recommendation for the state to support criminal justice coordinating councils
is based on a number of things that the commission recognized. First, was that
any changes to state policy will ultimately impact local practice, but that local
practice will impact the eventual implementation of any policy reforms and
prison utilization. It was clearly recognized that any changes made were not
only going to impact local jurisdictions, but the degree to which they were able
to achieve or implement those reforms also had implications for the success of these efforts. The other thing that was recognized that many of you are obviously familiar with is criminal justice practices vary dramatically from county, to county, to county.

David Olson: Recognizing this, it was seen as important for the state to not only better understand these differences, but be able to understand some of the reasons for these differences that might be able to be addressed through changes to policy or resources. The other thing that was evident from the commission's work was, at the local level there's usually very little objective research and data that's shared among local practitioners and local policymakers. Not only local data that they themselves generate, but also limited research and data that was shared by state agencies that impact the operations of those local jurisdictions. The other thing that we recognized, and that was evident, and I'm gonna talk a little bit more about how to think about this, but often times when we talk about state criminal justice systems, or state policy, we don't fully recognize that within a state are a lot of different local jurisdictions, and what's going on in those local jurisdictions in terms of crime patterns, or criminal justice practices and policies, can get lost in the state level planning efforts.

David Olson: To illustrate this, I wanna kind of go through and give you a way to think about it if you haven't already kind of thought about things this way. While it's obvious to some people, often when it comes to public policymaking in the area of criminal justice, we fall under what researchers refer to is the ecological fallacy. An ecological fallacy is when we interpret statistical data, and make inferences about individuals that come from group level data. In this case, we often assume that what's going on in Illinois, or in Ohio, or in Georgia is what's going on in individual counties. The visual on the slide that I present here, this laddering down, is intended to illustrate how we really need to start thinking about criminal justice reform and how we can address issues within the criminal justice system. The criminal justice system is not homogenis, problems aren't the same across all areas of a state, and the possible solutions may not be the same either. I'll provide some examples later that illustrate this idea based on some of the work and research we've been doing in some of the counties we're working at to develop these coordinating councils.

David Olson: But a couple of examples now, I think will help illustrate this. In a state like Illinois, there's specific neighborhoods in Chicago that often times drive the narrative. And to some degree drive state level justice system indicators. The way to think about in this context with gun violence is to ask the question of, 'Whether or not we have a gun violence problem in the United States, versus a gun violence problem in Illinois. And do we really have a gun violence problem in Illinois, or do we have a gun violence problem in Chicago? Even within Chicago, is it a gun violence problem in the city as a whole? Or is the gun violence problem really limited, or focused, or concentrated in three specific neighborhoods? If we think about developing strategies and policies, we've gotta recognize that what we may understand at the state level is not
necessarily what's going on at the county level, or within cities, or even within neighborhoods. In order to come up with effective solutions, and to fully understand problems, we've really gotta zoom in and better understand what's going on locally.

David Olson: The effort to implement recommendation number three of the Governor's Commission and the state support for criminal justice coordinating councils ended up being a collaboration between the State of Illinois through the Illinois Criminal Justice Information Authority, as well as the National Criminal Justice Association, and the National Gun Owner's Association. Through their project on the National Criminal Justice Reform Project. Loyola was supported in this effort by the MacArthur Foundation, and the faculty and staff that are involved on the project on Loyola's end have a lot of experience working with state agencies in Illinois on research projects, and many of us have also served on a number of different boards and commissions. Including the State Sentencing Advisory Council, the Illinois Department of Corrections Advisory Board, the Illinois Department of Juvenile Justice Advisory Board, the Criminal Justice Authority, and the Illinois Juvenile Justice Commission. Which is a state agency in Illinois that's involved in administering all the Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention block grant funds for the state.

David Olson: The other value that we realized of having Loyola's center involved, isn't necessarily unique to Loyola, but I think it's something that we can think about in terms of the utility of getting academic partners involved more generally. It became clear through a number of the activities that we were involved in, that by having a university involved, and having the university partners involved in presenting the information, often times it was viewed by the local practitioners and policymakers as being more objective, being free from political bias, and the other obvious advantage is that depending on the types of research you may be doing, having the technical skills that you can draw on from the university can often times be an advantage. The other thing that we realized, and that we've kind of described to some people about this project, is academic partners can be stable in terms of their longevity with their institutions and their connections with their local jurisdictions and communities. It's recognized that agency directors and elected officials leave. They may leave because of different outcomes in terms of the election, or moving on to different positions. But the academics usually stay put, they usually stay within the community, and they're a longer term partner with some of the organizations.

David Olson: Jumping into the specific project that we're working on, I'm gonna talk a little bit about how we approached this effort. We're describing this as a pilot project. We're trying to test the viability and the utility of this approach to the state providing analytic support to local jurisdictions for strategic planning. Again, just like there isn't necessarily a state criminal justice system, local criminal justice system is kind of a misnomer, and we all recognize that the system is actually a complicated combination of local and state agencies that operate across different branches of government and serve specific communities with unique
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constituent demands and expectations. In other words, unlike what some
people in the public believe, there is no single elected official, or agency, or
level, or branch of government that in quotes, "Is in charge of the criminal
justice system."

David Olson: In Illinois, when we’re approaching this idea of local criminal justice coordinating
councils, we selected counties as the most obvious, or most logical level, or
organization, organizational unit, to approach in terms of this planning. In
Illinois, the state is made up of 102 individual counties. Each of these counties
has a separately elected state’s attorney. Each of the counties is part of a
specific judicial circuit. Most of the counties have their own probation
department and jail. All the counties have their own elected sheriff. And for the
most part, municipal police departments fall within the geographic boundaries
of a county. We decided that we would use counties as a level of analysis, or
level of work for these planning efforts. The way that we approached it, because
we are collaborating with the state, the State of Illinois through the Illinois
Criminal Justice Information Authority put out a request for technical assistance
to counties where counties could apply for the support that was gonna be
provided through this project. The counties didn’t have to commit to providing
resources to the project, but what they did have to provide in order to be
considered were letters of commitment by key elected officials and leadership
positions within the county to participate in the project.

David Olson: We also, because this was bundled within the recommendations about reform
and the use of incarceration within the state, we wanted to make sure that we
were only working with counties that actually used prison at a fairly high level.
We limited eligibility for the request for technical assistance to the 30 counties
in Illinois that sent the largest numbers of individuals to prison over the last
couple of years. The counties that were selected for what we’re calling the level
one part of the project, and I'll explain what level two is a little bit later, their
shown here. They’re represented by the counties that are colored in blue. As
part of the planning project, process for this project, we also did a survey of
counties in the state to try to find out if they already had criminal justice
coordinating council type partnerships going on. You see here that there were a
few counties that self reported that they had a criminal justice coordinating
council in place. And McClain was one of the unique counties that did have a
coordinating council in place, but they applied for the technical assistance,
because they wanted to take their work to the next level.

David Olson: In terms of the counties that were selected, we feel as though it's a pretty good
mix of jurisdictions for us to work with, and kind of test this pilot process out
with some different types of jurisdictions. For those of you who aren't familiar
with Illinois, along the northern tier of the state on the border with Wisconsin,
there are three counties that were selected to participate in the project.
Winnebago County is home to Rockford, which is one of the largest cities in the
state. The unique thing about Winnebago County is one single city accounts for
about 85% of the activity in that jurisdiction. It's a county that's essentially by a
lot of the work by one specific police department. McKinley County to the east of Winnebago County is an interesting county that’s a combination of suburban Chicago as well as very rural communities. Lake County, all the way to the right. It’s on the border of Lake Michigan, is an interesting jurisdiction, because it’s a suburban county of Chicago. It includes some of the most affluent communities in the country, but it also includes some of the communities at the other end of the socio-economic continuum. In Lake County there’s about 30 plus local police departments. There is not a single police department in Lake County that drives a lot of their activity.

David Olson: McClain County, like I said previously, actually has had a criminal justice coordinating council in place for now, more than 10 years. But what they were looking for was to try to take their work to the next level. Because most of that work had been focused on the jail population, and they now wanted to expand their work to looking at a broader set of activities. And then lastly is St. Clair County, which is in Southern Illinois. It's right across the river from the City of St. Louis. It's historically had one of the highest levels of violence in the State of Illinois. And it's also a mix of some urban communities and more rural jurisdictions. The project formally began in June of 2017, after we selected these five jurisdictions. The MacArthur support for this project will continue through the end of 2019.

David Olson: We're hoping to be able to get through all the phases of the project within that timeframe that I'll go through and describe in a minute. The way that the project started was in June of 2017, we had what I'm calling onsite [inaudible 00:25:14], a two day kickoff orientation conference. The way we started a project, was we had staff in each of the individual counties where the criminal justice coordinating councils convened, and then we also had a hookup with video conferencing with each of the different sites, but also with our partners from the National Criminal Justice Association, and then the National Governor's Association. During this kickoff two day orientation, we provided them with some information, NCJ walked them through the strategic planning process. We'd have some [inaudible 00:25:14] sessions where all the sites were connected via video conference for hour to hour and a half presentations. And then the groups would break off into their own jurisdiction and go through some of the exercises and planning. That's how the process to select the sites evolved. Some of these sites are also complex in terms of the degree to which they’re receiving state funding from the Illinois Criminal Justice Information Authority. Or through other criminal justice programs in the state. And I'll talk a little bit about that later. How ultimately we feel as though this process might have some utility and value for a variety of other grant management functions, or grant development functions.

David Olson: The other thing that I think makes these criminal justice coordinating councils unique is the degree to which these criminal justice coordinating councils try to include a broad representation of members and participants. This was a table that we put together as we were working on this project, and trying to figure
out what other coordinating council efforts are going on in the state. One thing
to notice is that there's a lot of coordinating bodies at the local level, or councils
in Illinois. But most of these are highly specific to particular issues such as the
Family Violence Coordinating Councils. Or they're related to specific programs.
Such as the Illinois Adult Redeploy Project. Which is a justice reinvestment
model operated out of the Illinois Criminal Justice Information Authority. Also as
stated in this table is that there are some specific constituencies or agencies
that are often not represented in these topic or program specific councils. And
I've highlighted in red some of those agencies that aren't normally part of some
of these coordinating councils. Such as the sheriff. In Illinois parole is a state
level function. Although parole agents work within local communities, they tend
to not often be involved in a lot of the coordinating councils, because they're
not really seen as a local agency, or a local partner.

David Olson: But the other thing that was evident from our work, and in looking at what else
was going on across other coordinating efforts is often times some of the most
important people in regards to resource allocation are not involved in some of
these coordinating efforts. Specifically, county level legislative groups. In Illinois
we call them county boards. County boards are the body that appropriates the
majority of the money that's relied on by county agencies that deliver criminal
justice services. Similarly, very rarely is any representation of the local city
government structure involved. A mayor, or a city manager, or city council
members. The other thing that we've really tried to emphasize with these
coordinating councils is the need to include people with lived experience in the
system. And have their voice heard. We think that having this broad
representation is unique in comparison to some of the other coordinating
efforts that have gone on. As you look at this, you can probably imagine that
some people seem to be at a lot of different meetings. If you looked at
prosecutor's, they tend to be involved in almost everything. As are often times
public defenders, or probation staff. One of the sites that we're working in, St.
Clair, which again, is adjacent to St. Louis, one of the things that they've done, is
that they have all of their coordinating council meetings on a specific morning
once a month.

David Olson: And they allow individuals to kind of come and go. Depending on which council
they need to sit on. They've really tried to make efficient use of people's times
by kind of consolidating these all on the same morning. In Winnebago County,
which I'll talk about a little bit later, because it's got some, I think unique
examples that we've learned from them, they're starting to meet quarterly now
that they've become more formalized. But they're gonna have individuals from
some of these other councils attend their quarterly meetings to insure that
there's a good flow of information, and that there's a good level of awareness
across all the different sites. I'll talk now a little bit about what the goals are of
these coordinating councils, and how we're approaching this work to try to
achieve some of the goals. The way to kind of think about it is there's five
specific coordinating councils that we're working with. All of them meet, usually
either monthly or quarterly, and at their monthly or quarterly meetings we
participate in those, we usually have a spot on the agenda, and we're usually presenting information to them. We're presenting research to them or we're following up on questions that they had from prior meetings.

David Olson: One of the primary goals of this project is to try to improve the understanding among local officials and groups about how the criminal justice system operates, and how it's interconnected. We're kind of calling this phase one. This phase was accomplished by providing some training and some presentations and ultimately reports for each of the pilot sites about how the criminal justice systems operate and function. One of the things that we realized, if you look at the arrows on the slide and some of the narrative underneath that. If you're working in a statistical analysis center, or if you're working in an agency that collects information from local units of government, you may agree with this or not. It's a pattern that I've seen in a lot of jurisdictions. But a lot of agencies report a lot of information up to the state. These results, or these outputs, or these activities usually get added up, and then they get reported to various state agencies and disseminated through various mechanisms.

David Olson: Now, as the local police departments may report uniform crime report data to the state, local probation departments may report information about their caseloads or things like that. That all gets reported up to the state, but rarely does that information get reported back to local jurisdictions in a meaningful way. And I'm really emphasizing meaningful, because compiling a lot of data from local jurisdictions, putting it in a report, and then sending them back a report with a lot of tables isn't necessarily giving them that information back in a meaningful way. A lot of jurisdictions, or a lot of states put information up on websites, and allow for interactive tools where the data can be mapped and presented, and things like that. And I'll talk a little bit about the utility of that, but also some of the challenges of that a little bit later. All right?

David Olson: The first phase was to say, "What data does the state have that could be provided back to local jurisdictions in a form, and in a way that's meaningful to them, and helpful to them to better understand their system. And again, realize that the membership of these councils is broad in it's representation. Often times a chief of police doesn't know what's going on in terms of the jail population. Or the mayor doesn't know what's going on in terms of sentences policies or sentencing practices in a jurisdiction. Providing that kind of information gave us all a good starting point. The next phase is working with these local coordinating councils to provide them with research support to examine specific things that they are interesting in. All right? One of the things I'm gonna provide in a minute that illustrates an example of the kinds of work that we've provided to them, is we gave each jurisdiction a presentation, and ultimately a report that examined the recidivism of patterns released from prison back to their community. It was well received. It was a great discussion that I'll expand on in a moment. But one of the first questions by the chief judge in one of the counties we're working in was, "Okay. That's for people coming out of prison. What about people on probation?" And then we explained that in
order to answer that kind of question we would need access to local information.

David Olson: And now they’re providing us with access to that local information to identify who the had on probation, and then we’re working with the Criminal Justice Authority to get criminal history record data to then perform analysis on their recidivism. But the goal was to provide them with answers to questions that they had. That would help them help guide their strategic planning efforts. The other goal is really to increase system wide communication and learning. And when we say system wide, we’ve got to recognize again that we’re talking about different levels of government, different branches of government, that as we all know, often times tend to work in silos and only think about their specific role or task. But really to show the inter connectiveness of the system was again, one of our primary goals. And then ultimately, what we’re hoping that this will all lead to in the next year is each of these sites will develop a local strategic plan that will facilitate with them through data analysis and assistance.

David Olson: The approach that we’re using, the way that we’re trying to get people to think about this, and understand it, is everybody that we’ve assembled in each of these counties all has a common goals. These goals are not anything that any of the partners would disagree with. All right? The other thing that we’re doing, is we’re trying to help them use research and data to guide their policies and practices. We emphasize guiding it, because we recognize that data and research is not the only thing that they have to consider. They have to consider things like the politics within their local jurisdiction, they have to consider budgets and the constrained there. But the other thing that we try to strive with these relationships is we’re trying to create a learning community among the Criminal Justice Coordinating Council members. Everybody still maintains their independence, for the most part they’re all separately elected officials. There isn’t anybody that can tell anyone in the room what they have to do, because they’re all for the most part independent. But we also recognize that everybody has something to contribute and give to the discussion and the dialogue. And everybody can learn something as well.

David Olson: We’ve had some great discussions about what does recidivism mean? What does our recidivism rate tell us? And how can we use that to better understand our system and how we communicate what the system is doing. The other thing that was important, was that we wanted to make sure everybody had access to the same information. Often times, agencies may have information that they know intimately about the dynamics of their jail population, for example, or what’s going on on probation. But that information is accessible and shared by everybody. Leaving people with some gaps in their knowledge and their understanding. And what we're seeing with this work is that it essentially started as a fairly informal kind of process, and now a number of the sites are moving to the more formal stage. Where they've established formal lists of who's a member, by-laws, those kinds of things.
David Olson: I wanna talk a little bit about kind of where the evolution of this work has come from. Without going into a to of detail about this, and for people who are participating or watching the webinar that remember in quotes, "The old days when the internet was not a thing. And when analyzing data and making presentations was more challenging." When this work started ... In the early 1990s the idea was we wanted to provide something to local policymakers to help them understand crime in the justice system and in the community that they serve. IN the early 1990s we developed memos for legislators in Illinois that were pretty much boilerplate. We had boilerplate language, we'd drop in their crime data and send them a memo. One county, Dupage County, which is a large county to the west of Chicago. They actually saw the state strategy to control drug and violent crime, and they said, "Hey, we'd like to develop a local strategy to control drug and violent crime. We worked with them to develop what we call The Criminal Justice Profile.

David Olson: Where we analyzed all the data that we had available to them and provided it to them. Once we completed that we decided ... We, 'cause I was working at the authority, Criminal Justice Authority when we did this. We decided to do it for every county in the state. And if you wanna look at those profiles, they were updated until 2004. If you go to the link on the power point here it will give you an example of what we did. It was a lot of work, it was extremely time consuming. But it was pretty much boilerplate. The text was pretty much the same, just the numbers changed. And we were able to generate a lot of them. In the 2000s, the Criminal Justice Authority moved away from these, and just started putting more data online. If you go to their web they've got a lot of data that's available in spreadsheets, increasingly they're using more dynamic kinds of web based data analysis tools. They've got a data tool that you can look at here. That you can click on a county and it will bring you up all their data and provide you with some graphs of the data.

David Olson: The challenge with all of these things, is it doesn't provide any opportunity for discussion, and it makes some assumptions about people's data literacy, and their ability to understand all of this data. Which brings us to the project that we've been working on with these five coordinating councils. There's a link in the power point to the county level trends and issues reports that we've produced now under this project. I won't got through and show you them all in the interest of time. But suffice it to say that the things that we developed in the 1990s were pretty dry, boring, and weren't necessarily that illuminating for most people. To the ones that we've done now, I would describe as much more sophisticated. I'll go through some examples of what we've been able to do in these. But the important thing about how these are being developed, is we're making presentations to these coordinating councils of the analysis. We're facilitating a discussion about the analysis, and what the data say, and what they don't say. They then ask us questions that we can respond to. We may present some data to them, and they ask, "Well, what does it look like for this particular crime?"
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David Olson: In that back and forth, in that process of presenting and facilitating, and discussion, and responding to the types of questions they ask, we've been able to create these reports that incorporate a lot of their questions and insights into the data. The other thing that's important, is through this process we've developed some really good relationships with these local criminal justice coordinating councils. Through all this dialogue and work we've developed some really strong relationships, some high levels of trust, and that has some advantages that I'll talk about towards the end in terms of how this can be used to springboard to other projects that may be helpful to the state.

David Olson: I'm gonna skip over this fairly quickly, 'cause I wanna get to a couple of the examples that I think are illustrative of some of the things that we've done. I the slide I just present some of the strengths and the weaknesses to these different approaches. The primary strength to the boilerplate memos, and the data, and websites is you can achieve economies of scale. You can generate a lot of analysis, and a lot of graphs for a lot of different jurisdictions. But it also makes some assumptions. It assumes that the people who use these sites, or who need to get access to this kind of information are data literate. Right? That they understand numbers, and that they understand data. A lot of the practitioners and policymakers don't. That's not what they got into the field for, and they don't necessarily have the ability to do the kinds of analysis of data that's necessary with a lot of these boiler plates or data that's available on websites.

David Olson: The other thing that's important, is it assumes that the people who are using it don't have anything to communicate back about what they see in the data, or questions that they have. A lot of the tools that are out there are very much one directional. A user can access websites, and look at all sorts of data, but if they have questions, or if they wanna test out theories they have no one that they can bounce those ideas off, or get answer to some of their questions. The work that we're doing now is obviously much more time consuming. It's a much longer process in terms of developing the work, and developing the relationships. It really needs somebody who's highly skilled at translating between a lot of data and quantitative information, and translating that into information that's actually useful for policymakers. But the value of it, is I think this approach is much more useful. It's much more contextualized, it gets away from that idea that what's going on in the State of Illinois as a whole is what's going on in each of these individual jurisdictions.

David Olson: Let me go through a couple examples that I think are helpful to illustrate the points that I'm trying to make, and also some of the things that we're doing. And I'm cognizant of the time, so I'll try to wrap this up in the next five to 10 minutes. One of the things that we've really recognized with this, is a lot of times we only think about the elected criminal justice practitioners as the people who need to know and benefit from this information. And through this, what we've realized is there's really an appetite and a desire for people who aren't traditionally considered as part of the criminal justice system to get access to this. We've made presentations to county boards, to city councils.
We've also presented some of the same information that we presented to the coordinating councils, to some of the local social service providers, and some of the civic and business groups. They've found it very valuable, and it's helped to dispel a lot of the myths or misperceptions that they have about this. A number of the jurisdictions also pointed to the value of having this information delivered by what they themselves described as a neutral individual.

David Olson: One of our goals with this project was to produce these analysis and these reports, and then essentially give it to these local practitioners and policymakers, and let them take it forward and educate their community. And they actually pushed back and said, "If it's given by us, people are gonna think that we've got some kind of angle, or that we're somehow benefiting from what we're telling them. We prefer it be given by someone who's more neutral. The other thing that we found, and I'm gonna show you some examples, is it kind of gets to this point that I mentioned before about the ecological fallacy. There's some assumptions about what's driven the increased use of prison. Not only nationally, but in Illinois. And as we'll see, it really varies locally. The other thing that wasn't a surprise to us, but the reaction we got to a lot of the practitioners, and policymakers, and especially some of these other groups we presented it to was there's this perception that almost all crime is violent crime, and that people who recidivate tend to commit really serious violent crimes. When we provided them with the broader picture and the context, many of them were surprised that the crimes they hear about the most in terms of the news, or on a daily basis really aren't the crimes that the system has to deal with most often.

David Olson: The other thing we realized, and we appreciate is that when we present information to these groups it really wets their appetites for more knowledge. And they ask a lot of good questions that lead us to do an additional analysis. But importantly, we gain insights into what's important to them. And I'll give you some examples of that. Let me walk through a couple things that illustrate some of these points that I've made since this is a presentation for JRS, I've gotta make sure I include some graphs and some data. Otherwise it wouldn't be a good statistical presentation. To illustrate this point we're making ... We look at what's driven or what drove the increase in Illinois prison population during the 1990s. We did a report looking at this for the state as a whole. The link to that report is on the slide. But what you can see from this, is the types of crimes driving the increase in Illinois prison population is pretty varied.

David Olson: It really does counter the perception that the majority of people in prison, and the majority of the growth in the prison population was because of drug possession. But it does illustrate a fair amount of the increase in the prison population was due to more people in prison for a non-violent crime. Right? That's what you see when you look at the state as a whole. But when you look at it by county you can see that what drove the increased use of prison varied from county to county. And I just picked three counties here to kind of give you some examples. Lake and McClain County are formerly part of the Criminal Justice Coordinating Council Project. We're doing a lot of the same kinds of
analysis for Cook County, which is Chicago. Because they're such a large jurisdiction we're doing this work and providing them with these kinds of analysis. But just to illustrate my point, if you were to look at how much of the growth in the use of prison was because of more people in prison for drug possession. Cook and Lake County look fairly similar. About 12% of the growth in their prison population, or their use of prison during that time period was the result of more people in prison for drug possession.

David Olson: In McClain County, almost non of their growth was because of more people in prison for drug possession. On the other end of the seriousness scale, 20% or 21% of the growth in the prison population from Cook County, or Chicago, was because of people in prison for murder. And in McClain County you see that very little of their growth in the prison population was because of more people in prison for murder. But a lot more was due to growth in the prison population for those convicted of other types of violent crimes. This illustrates the importance of this difference across the jurisdictions in terms of what’s going on in their system. Another example of ... And this comes from a presentation that we did in Winnebago County which is again, the City of Rockford. If you look at the solid black line, that shows you what percent of convicted felons were sentenced to prison in Illinois. And again, if you looked at that and assumed that the same pattern was going on across the state, you'd miss some of the critical differences once you disaggregate that and look at it in a more sophisticated way. What you can see here is that the prison utilization in Winnebago County is very different. And has followed a very different trend than the state as a whole, and also in Cook County in Chicago.

David Olson: One of the things we did for the project, and what we presented to the local practitioners and policymakers, was we did more sophisticated analysis. We actually looked at whether or not people convicted in Winnebago County were more or less likely to go to prison after we statistically accounted for differences in the offense and the offenders characteristics. In other words, we performed logistic [inaudible 00:51:01] to isolate whether or not you are more or less likely to go to prison in these counties. And in Winnebago County, even after we statistically control for the factors that influence sentencing their still less likely to go to prison. We're trying to better understand this pattern in Winnebago County, because clearly that has some pretty serious implications if the state wants to learn how local jurisdictions have reduced their reliance on incarceration. The last example that I'll give has to do with recidivism rates. This is some information about the recidivism rates as defined by the Illinois Department of Corrections, which is return to prison within three years. We see that in the last five to 10 years there’s been a decrease in the recidivism rate, but we aren't necessarily sure why. I suspect that the reasons why are going to be evident when we do a closer look in the specific jurisdictions and what's going on in those specific jurisdictions in terms of arrest practices and court processing.
David Olson: But one of the things we did look at as part of the project, and again, we provided to each of the five sites in the presentation and then in a report, was we looked at everybody released from prison, that returned back to their community, or their county, and we examined the recidivism patterns of the population there. I’m gonna walk through this quickly, and then get to the conclusions. This is an example of the analysis we did for St. Clair County, which again is east of St. Louis. We presented this to the coordinating council, the points that we were making with this. One, was that when people coming out of prison do get rearrested for a new crime, more often it is for a crime of non ...

Involving a crime of non-violence. Among the crimes of violence, the majority of those arrests are for domestic violence. This information alone was a surprise to those that are members of the coordinating council. Again, their assumption was that people on parole are committing much more serious crimes. And what we found was the people going back to St. Clair County actually had lower recidivism rates. In general, and specifically for crimes of violence.

David Olson: As an example of the interaction that you can get, and the back and forth that you can get from this kind of a presentation, we did this presentation, and then the elected states attorney who’s the chair of the coordinating council, he said, "Okay. That’s good. But what about firearm violence? Are most of these people who are committing these violent crimes committing crimes with a firearm?"

Because that’s what he said they’re most concerned about. We were able to go back and re-perform the analysis, and provide them with this information that very rarely when a parolee is getting arrested for a new crime doesn’t involve the use of a firearm in the commission of a crime. He then asked, "Well, what about the use of illegal possession of a firearm? Is that a large portion of the arrest?" And we provided the analysis that are in the pie on the right side. The example here, is we presented what we thought was important, but we were missing some of the things that they felt were important. The other thing that was interesting with this example was we were trying to figure out why would the recidivism rate be lower in this community?

David Olson: Again, it's got one of the highest rates of violence in the state. It's historically had a lot of problems in terms of their economy, but they're also right across the river from St. Louis. One of the theories that we had was perhaps the recidivism rate appears lower, because we’re only accessing Illinois criminal history records, and perhaps some of the parolees are getting arrested, but they’re getting arrested across the river in another state, and it's not showing up in the data. The other theory that was offered, and this time it was offered by the elected states attorney was, "Could you do these analysis, look at the recidivism rates by the city within our county that they were released to?" And when we did that, there were certain counties, or I'm sorry. Certain cities that had extremely low recidivism rates. Those are also cities that have very few police officers, and the police officers that they do have tend to work part time, and are paid an extremely low salary. Through his questions, and our look at this it kind of gave rise to a different way to interpret this. And that may be these recidivism patterns may also be a function of what's the capacity, or what are
local law enforcement agencies either doing in terms of patrol practices, or are able to do given their staff and resources.

David Olson: Let me wrap it up with just talking about a couple of the benefits that I think are helpful to think about. The information we present to the local jurisdictions has been really helpful to them to help them understand where they fit in, but more importantly they can ask why and get some answers as to why they may have the characteristics in terms of crime or justice system processing that they do. The other benefit to the local jurisdictions is we’re helping them answer questions empirically that they would never have the capacity to answer themselves given their staffing and their resources. The products that we produced for these sites, they've used it not only to educate the media, they're publicly available reports. But they've also used the research and analysis with their own planning and their own grant applications. A number of sites have gotten grants as a result of the research that we've been able to provide. The other things that's helpful, is these councils have created a formal and an informal line of communication between the local practitioners and policy makers, and state agencies. Like the Illinois Criminal Justice Authority, the Illinois Department of Corrections, one of our sites is having the chair of the parole board come to their next meeting, because they wanna better understand how parole decisions are made, and conditions of parole, and things like that.

David Olson: The advantage to the SAAs and the SACs, I wanna kind of end with this, because I think it's important. One is this process can really help you objectively understand what's going on in a local jurisdiction. Obviously, the question is, "How many jurisdictions can you do this kind of work in?" I would suggest at a minimum you should be doing it, or attempt to do something like this in the three or four largest jurisdictions in your state, since they probably derive and generate a fair amount or a fair portion of the work in the state. Or the activity in the state. The other thing that I think is important is, this really allows you to scrutinize data, and determine it's accuracy and its utility. Through this process we've identified a number of issues with reporting processes and mechanisms. Including some information that would dramatically alter our interpretation of how sentencing practices are occurring in certain jurisdictions. This could also help to develop a more robust and more sophisticated state plan. That takes into account some of this variation across local jurisdictions.

David Olson: The last point that I'll make is where this has led in terms of some other opportunities, and some other work. I think one of the things that this can potentially be very valuable for is for state administrative agencies in their grant making process, and potentially in their monitoring processes. If a jurisdiction is receiving large numbers of different grants from an SAA, going through this kind of a process in this work could really help to not only understand what's going on locally, but also could be an element to the monitoring processes that are used with some of these grants that are being given out. Ultimately this was intended to address ... The Governor’s Commission that this was born out of
was intended to impact the prison population. I want to at least end on that. What's been the impact on the prison population? I'll be the first to say that the work we're doing with the Coordinating Council's probably has nothing to do with this decrease in the prison population. But since the commission was formed, and since they began to develop and make recommendations, Illinois' prison population's down 15%. Remember the goal was a 25% reduction by 2025.

David Olson: We're about two thirds of the way there almost. In terms of achieving that roll. And we feel as though the support of these criminal justice coordinating councils will allow those local jurisdictions that tend to drive a lot of the use of prison to continue their effective reform efforts, and continue to move the state forward. I apologize for going a few minutes over the allotted time, but I'd be happy to spend some time taking questions if anybody has any.

Erin Farley: Great. Thank you so much, Dave. Yes, well if anybody has any questions please use the chat feature and while we're doing that, Jason if you want to release the poll that would be great. And then people can also take a couple minutes to answer that quick poll that we have at the end. That'll be great. Thank you.

David Olson: One other thing I'll just mention, is in the power point are again, all the links to examples that I talked about. If you're interested take a look through some of these county reports that we've developed for the project on Loyola's website. And if anybody has any specific questions, or wants to learn more about how we've done this, or questions that arise when you're looking at the material, feel free to email me. My email's on the front of the presentation.

Erin Farley: Oh, great. Thank you so much. Yeah, and I just wanna take this time to remind everybody that there is another webinar on the 28th. Keep an eye out for that, and register for it. Okay. Great. Well it doesn't look like we have any questions at this time, but like yous said, Dave, your email's on the cover. And if anybody has any questions they can reach out to you. That's wonderful. And we will have this webinar and the power point slides posted on our website probably within the next couple of days. Keep an eye out for that. Great. Well, thank you very much, Dave. Thank you for your time. And we greatly appreciate it.

David Olson: Right. Thank you everybody for participating.

Erin Farley: Great. Take care. (Silence)