



WASHINGTON STATE STATISTICAL ANALYSIS CENTER

Criminal Justice Research & Statistics Center

Informing a data-driven justice system

The Criminal Justice Data Book (CJDB): Database Architecture

Washington State Statistical Analysis Center



About the CJRSC – the Washington SAC

Statistical Analysis Centers (SAC) are found across the nation in 51 states and territories. As the Washington SAC, the Criminal Justice Research & Statistics Center (CJRSC) is responsible for collecting, analyzing, and reporting public safety and criminal justice related statistics to federal, state, and local levels of government. We also facilitate the sharing of state-level information nationally. The information produced by SACs and their involvement in criminal justice projects is critical to local, state, and federal criminal justice agencies and community organizations as they develop programs and policies related to crime, illegal drugs, victim services, and the administration of justice.

SACs play a vital role in developing criminal and juvenile justice policy at the state and local levels. Their research provides evidence that policymakers use to guide their decision-making. By furthering the use of evidence-based practices in their states, SACs promote the effective and efficient administration of criminal and juvenile justice.

Contact Us

Phone	Fax	Address	Website
360-902-0599	360-586-1988	P.O. Box 43113 Olympia, WA 98504-3113	sac.ofm.wa.gov

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Version History

Date	Version	Author(s)	Revision Note
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Abstract

The Washington State Criminal Justice Data Book (CJDB) provides a comprehensive and integrated view of Washington's criminal justice system by combining data from multiple state agency sources into a centralized resource available through CrimeStats Online. As a product of the Criminal Justice Research and Statistics Center (CJRSC) – the Washington State Statistical Analysis Center (SAC), housed within the Office of Financial Management (OFM)'s Public Safety Policy and Research Center (PSPRC), the CJDB serves as an essential resource for understanding trends, patterns, and outcomes across the criminal justice system.

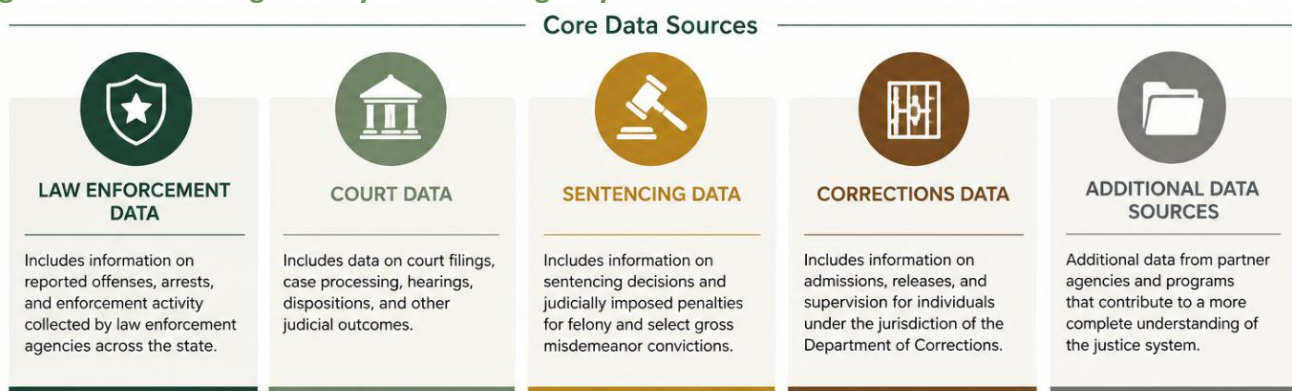
The purpose of this report is to provide a comprehensive overview of the CJDB system's architecture, including the integration of data from multiple criminal justice agencies, the relationship between the CJDB and the Justice Data Warehouse (JDW), and the governance and quality assurance practices that ensure the accuracy, consistency, and reliability of statewide criminal justice reporting.

Contributing Data Systems and Agency Partners

The CJDB reflects collaboration among multiple state agencies responsible for collecting and maintaining criminal justice information. Each agency contributes a unique perspective on the justice system, creating a more complete understanding when examined together (see Figure 1).

Law enforcement data provide information about reported criminal activity and system responses, including arrests and enforcement actions. Court data provide insight into case processing, dispositions, sentencing decisions, and judicial outcomes. Corrections data provide information regarding incarceration, admissions, releases, community supervision, and correctional populations. Together, these sources allow users to examine the movement of cases and individuals through multiple stages of Washington's criminal justice system.

Figure 1. Contributing Data Systems and Agency Partners



The integration of these sources allows researchers and policymakers to examine questions that cannot be answered through a single agency dataset. For example, understanding changes in sentencing patterns requires consideration of both court decisions and broader system trends, while examining corrections populations requires understanding how arrest patterns, charging decisions, and sentencing practices contribute to correctional outcomes.

System Architecture

The CJDB is built upon the integration of criminal justice information collected and maintained by multiple state agencies. Because no single agency captures the complete criminal justice process, the CJDB combines

aggregated de-identified information from across the justice system to provide a more comprehensive understanding of criminal justice activity in Washington State.

Figure 2. CJDB System Architecture



The CJDB incorporates administrative data from key justice system partners, including law enforcement agencies, courts, and correctional agencies. These sources represent different stages of justice system involvement, allowing users to examine patterns from initial contact with the justice system through case processing and correctional outcomes. By integrating these sources, the CJDB provides a statewide perspective that extends beyond individual agency responsibilities and highlights how different components of the justice system interact.

Data contributed to the CJDB include information related to reported offenses, arrests, court filings, case outcomes, sentencing decisions, and correctional populations. Each contributing data source reflects the operational responsibilities of the agency responsible for collection. As a result, the integration process requires careful attention to data definitions, coding structures, reporting practices, and quality assurance procedures to ensure that information can be meaningfully analyzed across agencies and over time.

The CJRSC-SAC applies standardized methodologies and quality review processes to support consistency and reliability across the integrated dataset. These processes include reviewing data completeness, aligning comparable measures across systems, documenting changes in reporting practices, and ensuring that users understand appropriate interpretation of criminal justice indicators. This approach allows the CJDB to provide meaningful statewide and county-level analyses while recognizing the complexity of administrative justice data.

Data Governance and Quality Assurance

Maintaining the accuracy and usefulness of statewide criminal justice data requires ongoing data governance and quality assurance processes. Because information is collected across multiple agencies with different missions, systems, and reporting requirements, careful oversight is necessary to ensure that integrated data remain reliable and interpretable.

The CJRSC-SAC plays an important role in managing these processes by documenting data sources, monitoring changes in reporting practices, maintaining consistent definitions, and supporting appropriate

interpretation of criminal justice measures. Data governance practices help ensure that users understand both the strengths and limitations of administrative justice data.

Quality assurance activities are essential for identifying potential issues such as missing information, changes in data collection procedures, variations across jurisdictions, or differences in agency reporting practices. By maintaining transparency around these considerations, the CJDB supports responsible use of justice data and promotes confidence among researchers, policymakers, and the public.

Relationship Between the Criminal Justice Data Book and the Justice Data Warehouse

The CJDB and the Justice Data Warehouse (JDW) are complementary components of Washington State's broader criminal justice data infrastructure. While both resources support the analysis of justice system information, they serve different purposes and audiences.

The CJDB is designed primarily as a public-facing analytical resource that provides accessible information about statewide criminal justice trends. Through CrimeStats Online, users can explore standardized measures, examine historical patterns, and generate reports without requiring specialized programming or access to underlying administrative datasets. The CJDB emphasizes transparency, accessibility, and broad understanding of criminal justice trends.

The JDW, in contrast, serves as a more advanced integrated data environment designed to support complex research, evaluation, and policy analysis. The JDW brings together longitudinal justice system data from multiple sources and provides researchers and authorized analysts with a more detailed analytical environment. This allows for more complex examination of system interactions, individual-level pathways through the justice system, and advanced statistical analyses.

Together, the CJDB and the JDW provide complementary capabilities. The CJDB supports public access, transparency, and broad trend analysis, while the JDW supports deeper research and evaluation efforts requiring more detailed integrated data. Both resources strengthen Washington's ability to use data to understand justice system outcomes, evaluate policy impacts, and support evidence-informed decision-making.