

Vera Institute of Justice

Criminal Justice Issues and Prisoners' Rights

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Policy Issue Resources

Publication

Prosecuting attorneys enjoy exceptionally broad discretion in making decisions that influence criminal case outcomes. They make pivotal decisions throughout the life of a case with little public or judicial scrutiny. With support from the National Institute of Justice, the Vera Institute of Justice undertook research to better understand how prosecutors make decisions. Vera researchers combined statistical analyses with qualitative analyses, examining initial case screening and charging decisions, plea offers, sentence recommendations, and post-filing dismissals for multiple offense types in two moderately large prosecutors offices. In addition to a technical report, the study produced a summary report and four podcasts.

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