

Vera Institute of Justice

Criminal Justice Issues and Prisoners' Rights

<https://www.vera.org/publications/reshaping-prosecution-in-st-louis>

Policy Issue Resources

Publication

Prosecutors wield tremendous power. They decide whom to charge and with what offense whether to ask for bail, when to provide evidence to the defense, and what plea offer to make.

For decades, prosecutors have used their discretion in ways that contribute to mass incarceration and racial disparities in the criminal legal system. However, communities nationwide have recently begun to demand that their elected prosecutors adopt a new approach that reflects the communities priorities.

This report details Veras pilot partnership with Circuit Attorney (CA) Kimberly Gardner and her office in St. Louis, Missouri. CA Gardner was elected in 2017 after running on promises to reform the criminal legal system. She prioritized reducing the citys reliance on incarceration, adopting a public health approach to addressing crime, and building trust with marginalized communities. Vera assisted the Circuit Attorneys Office in adopting a data-driven approach that aligned with CA Gardners vision.

Over the span of its site engagement with Vera, CA Gardners office made significant progress in reducing its case backlog, shrinking the systems footprint, and increasing its ability to track and analyze data. With this data, the office is preparing a public-facing dashboard to share regularly updated metrics with the community.

RESOURCE SITE

ARTICLE

Transformative change, sent to your inbox.

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