



# PLANNING AN ETHICAL DATA STRATEGY FOR JUSTICE TRANSFORMATION:

Steps, Tools and Lessons from  
the Los Angeles County Division of  
Youth Diversion and Development's Start-Up Year

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## About the Authors

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## About the Los Angeles County Division of Youth Diversion and Development (YDD)

YDD is a division of the Los Angeles County Department of Health Services focused on advancing collaborative countywide youth development infrastructure and equitably reducing young people's involvement with the justice system. Its flagship program is an evidence-informed model of pre-booking youth diversion that empowers community-based organizations as the providers of individualized care coordination in lieu of arrest.

## About New America and the Public Interest Technology (PIT) Team

New America is committed to renewing American politics, prosperity, and purpose in the Digital Age. We generate big ideas, bridge the gap between technology and policy, and curate broad public conversation. We combine the best of a policy research institute, technology laboratory, public forum, media platform, and a venture capital fund for ideas. We are a distinctive community of thinkers, writers, researchers, technologists, and community activists who believe deeply in the possibility of American renewal. New America's Public Interest Technology team deploys fellows to help local governments and non-profits leverage data and technology to solve pressing problems.

## About the Partnership

New America's Public Interest Technology team partnered with LA County's Division of Youth Diversion and Development (YDD) to help develop YDD's data strategy. PIT and YDD worked together to determine how to leverage data to improve YDD's pre-booking diversion program and how to reduce the potential risks data may pose to participating youth. This report distills lessons learned during their partnership. The partnership and this report were made possible thanks to generous support from Reissa Foundation and Liberty Hill Foundation.

## About this Toolkit

Increasingly, jurisdictions across the United States are moving towards the reform or transformation of criminal and juvenile justice systems.<sup>1</sup> Built upon decades of strong community advocacy, jurisdictions are changing policy or funding alternatives to the criminal and juvenile justice systems at three main stages: prevention, diversion, and reentry.<sup>2</sup>

Such efforts have generally shown promise reducing justice system involvement and improving public safety.<sup>3</sup> However, research on the impact of specific intervention models is limited. Because in many ways it is the least well-defined of these categories, the field of “diversion” is particularly in need of more robust assessment and better considerations for the ethical creation and use of data. Existing literature consistently calls for improvements to data infrastructure and strategy to support comprehensive evaluation.<sup>4,5</sup>

On one hand, data presents an enormous opportunity to justice transformation efforts in general, and to diversion efforts in particular. Carefully planned data collection and analysis can help initiatives monitor priorities and work with their partners to improve the program for participants. Data can also add to the evidence base for justice transformation and deepen the field’s understanding of the benefits and risks of various models. At the same time, the data collected during these initiatives can pose tremendous risks to participants. If not properly protected, data can be used against the people an initiative aims to help. And, poorly crafted data practices may lead initiatives to focus on what can be measured, rather than on what really matters. Justice transformation initiatives need comprehensive data strategy to realize the opportunities of data while minimizing its risks.

This toolkit aims to help other initiatives develop a data strategy to support justice transformation efforts by drawing on lessons learned during the start-up year of Los Angeles County’s Youth Diversion and Development Initiative [YDD].

YDD was created in 2017 to coordinate a pre-booking youth diversion model for Los Angeles County, home to the largest juvenile justice system in the nation. From its conception, YDD realized the need to carefully plan its data practices. Therefore, one of its first steps was establishing a partnership with the New America Public Interest Technology [PIT] team to bring on a year-long, full-time, on-site data strategy and ethics manager. In addition to providing research, recommendations, and technical assistance, the manager worked closely with YDD’s senior research and policy manager to build a responsible data strategy from the ground up. This toolkit distills lessons learned from this partnership in hopes of helping other justice transformation initiatives develop a useful, ethical data strategy.

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1 Models for Change Juvenile Diversion Workgroup, *Juvenile Diversion Guidebook Models for Change* [Chicago, IL: Models for Change, 2011]; Nicole Porter, *Top Trends in State Criminal Justice Reform*, 2018, [Washington, DC: The Sentencing Project, 2019].

2 Diane Myers and Anne Farrell, “Reclaiming Lost Opportunities: Applying Public Health Models in Juvenile Justice,” *Children and Youth Services Review* 30 [October 2008]: 1159-1177.

3 Michael Rempel et al, *Multisite Evaluation of Prosecutor-Led Diversion Programs: Strategies, Impacts, and Cost-Effectiveness* [New York, NY: Center for Court Innovation, April 2018]; Holly A. Wilson and Robert D. Hoge, “The Effect of Youth Diversion Programs on Recidivism: A Meta-Analytic Review,” *Criminal Justice and Behavior* [October 2012].

4 Daniel Mears et al. “Juvenile Court and Contemporary Diversion: Helpful, Harmful, or Both?” *Criminology & Public Policy* 15, [June 2016]:953-981; Jeffrey Butts, “Critical Diversion” *Criminology & Public Policy* 15, [June 2016]:1-7.

5 Models for Change Juvenile Diversion Workgroup, *Juvenile Diversion Guidebook Models for Change* [Chicago, IL: Models for Change, 2011]; Nicole Porter, *Top Trends in State Criminal Justice Reform*, 2018, [Washington, DC: The Sentencing Project, 2019].

## How to Use This Toolkit

This toolkit presents three inter-connected phases that will help your initiative create a data strategy that supports, and aligns with, your overarching mission and goals. Phase I will help your initiative draft data principles to guide your work, Phase II will help you identify ways to use data to monitor and improve your initiative, and Phase III will help you reduce the risks of data. Each corresponding chapter outlines key steps in that phase, describes what those steps look like in practice, and concludes with an editable tool we've created to help your initiative complete the phase.

Throughout, we'll highlight the importance of deep community engagement and shared decision-making with those most impacted by your effort. In the appendix, you'll find a Planning Your Engagement tool to help you strategize how to meaningfully gather a collaborative around issues related to data.

This toolkit is simply a starting point for your work to build a data strategy for your initiative. As such, whenever possible, we've listed and linked additional readings and tools that may enhance your understanding and help your initiative build a smart and ethical data strategy.

## YDD's Model

This toolkit is designed to be accessible and useful to a wide range of justice transformation initiatives. However, since we draw directly from our experience building a data strategy for the Los Angeles County Division of Youth Diversion and Development (YDD), we've summarized YDD's pre-booking diversion model.

Established in 2017, YDD was built by a cross-sector collaborative, including youth leaders and community advocates, diversion providers, law enforcement, researchers, and youth-serving county agencies to advance a public health model of early-intercept, community-based youth diversion.

YDD's flagship program is its pre-booking diversion program that enables local law enforcement agencies to divert youth to YDD-funded community-based services. This historic initiative aims to dramatically reduce youth involvement in the justice system by advancing a countywide network of community-based alternatives to arrest or citation. YDD works with law enforcement agencies and community-based organizations across Los Angeles County to connect youth to individualized, strengths-based activities and services that support youth development. Youth who are successfully diverted through YDD's community-based providers avoid a permanent arrest or criminal record.

YDD provides coordination, training, program management, and evaluation support to this growing network of community-based youth diversion providers. To bring additional capacity to this work, YDD has pursued focused partnerships to support high-priority research and recommendations, such as the partnership with New America Public Interest Technology Team to bring on a data ethics and strategy manager.

In all of YDD's work, the initiative prioritizes the type of community engagement and collaborative planning that made the Youth Diversion and Development initiative possible in the first place. Many portions of this toolkit will note the need for your initiative to similarly engage stakeholders. We've distilled key lessons on engagement in the appendix.

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# PHASE I: CREATING DATA PRINCIPLES TO GUIDE FUTURE WORK

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Data poses both risks and opportunities from the moment it is captured. Data can be tremendously valuable to justice transformation efforts; it can help bolster support for reform and can help initiatives improve their policies and practices to better meet their goals.<sup>6</sup> But, data can also yield harm as evidenced by the way juvenile and adult arrest records create lifelong barriers to education and employment.<sup>7</sup> As the ability to store and process data increases, new uses—and thus new risks and opportunities—will arise. People who designed administrative data collection systems years ago may have never imagined the ways in which that data would be used today—such as to determine benefit eligibility or predict cases of fraud.<sup>8</sup>

Data principles distill your philosophy about data so that you can respond to data opportunities and risks in a consistent manner. These principles can serve as a framework for answering data questions you know your initiative will face, and can be a guiding light when questions arise that you don't yet anticipate. To create your own principles at the start of your youth justice transformation initiative, follow the key steps below, review the Division of Youth Diversion of Development's principles, and work through the "Brainstorming Principles" tool.

## Key Steps

- **Identify key stakeholders to engage about data.**  
To ensure that your principles are responsive to your community's priorities and concerns, you should create a list of key stakeholders to consult about data. At a minimum, this list should include program decision-makers, program participants, community advocates, justice and data experts, and implementation partners, such as referring agencies and service providers.
- **Gather stakeholders' initial perspectives on data opportunities and risks.**  
Once you've identified key stakeholders, provide numerous opportunities for these stakeholders and the community-at-large to share their perspective on data needs and risks. For more guidance on how to substantively and equitably engage stakeholders, see the engagement tool in the appendix.
- **Conduct further research to better understand data risks and opportunities.**  
Looking at other data-driven policy efforts and ethical data-focused initiatives can help you better understand the issues raised by your stakeholders.
- **Draft your data principles.**  
Your data principles should outline practices or commitments that will help you realize the opportunities and minimize the risks that you and your stakeholders identified. Great data principles help draw connections between data collection, sharing, and analysis and your initiative's larger goals.
- **Share your draft principles with your stakeholders and refine based on feedback.**  
Once you've drafted your principles, share them with your stakeholders and adjust based on their feedback so that your principles better address your community's priorities and concerns.

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<sup>6</sup> See Gainesville, Florida example on Page 4 of *Alternatives to Arrest for Young People*, [Washington, DC: National League of Cities]

<sup>7</sup> Riya Saha Shah and Jean Strout, *Future Interrupted: The Collateral Damage Caused by Proliferation of Juvenile Records*, [Philadelphia, PA: Juvenile Law Center, 2016]

<sup>8</sup> Jen Fifield, "What Happens When States Go Hunting for Welfare Fraud," Pew Stateline, May 24, 2017,

<https://www.pewtrusts.org/en/research-and-analysis/blogs/stateline/2017/05/24/what-happens-when-states-go-hunting-for-welfare-fraud>

## **Steps in Practice: Los Angeles County Youth Diversion and Development Initiative**

### **Identify key stakeholders to engage about data**

To ensure that your principles are responsive to your community's priorities and concerns, you should draft a list of key local stakeholders to consult about data and incorporate feedback about who else should be at the table from these stakeholders.

YDD was created by a collaborative, diverse group of stakeholders including leaders from local health, social services, and justice systems; law enforcement representatives; community advocate and experts on youth justice transformation; and youth impacted by the justice system. Many of these stakeholders regularly attend YDD's public steering committee collaborative oversight meetings and subscribe to YDD's mailing list. YDD invited all those attending steering committee meetings and on the mailing list to opportunities to engage with YDD around data issues. Additionally, YDD identified particular individuals to engage through targeted interviews.

Your list, at a minimum, should include program decision-makers, the people your transformation effort aims to serve, community advocates, and implementation partners, such as referring agencies and service providers. The Planning Your Engagement tool, located in the appendix, will help you brainstorm partners to engage.

### **Gather stakeholders' initial perspectives on data opportunities and risks**

Your initiative should provide numerous opportunities for key stakeholders and other interested parties to provide their perspective on data

YDD and PIT gathered stakeholders' perspectives through a number of means. In the spring of 2018, PIT hosted an open session at YDD's annual conference to learn about the community's priorities and concerns for a YDD data system. PIT conducted supplemental, one-on-one interviews with County leadership, potential law enforcement partners, community-based providers, and youth justice transformation advocates and experts. Simultaneously, YDD and UCLA School of Law's Criminal Justice Program held data workgroups on particularly complicated topics, such as sharing data between community-based providers and law enforcement agencies. YDD and PIT shared high-level findings from these conversations with YDD's steering committee for further discussion. These engagements generated a rich picture of how stakeholders viewed the potential and perils of data, which directly informed YDD's data principles

For ideas on how to equitably and effectively engage stakeholders about data see the Engagement Tool in the appendix. The Brainstorming Data Principles Tool at the end of this chapter will help you synthesize the priorities and concerns you hear during these engagements so that you can create principles that are responsive to your community's needs.

### **Conduct further research to better understand data risks and opportunities.**

Looking at other data-driven policy efforts and ethical data-focused initiatives can help you better understand the issues raised by your stakeholders.

PIT conducted a field scan and literature review on the risks and opportunities of data collection, sharing, and analysis. PIT also interviewed data ethics and cybersecurity experts at New America and beyond. This research provided more context about the risks and opportunities identified by stakeholders and helped YDD and PIT educate stakeholders on the range of risks or opportunities.

Your initiative may wish to partner with an outside organization—such as an advocacy group or local university—to conduct research, or you may wish to pursue this research on your own. To get you started we’ve listed a few of our favorite resources below:

- The canonical “[Governing by the Numbers: The Promise of Data-Driven Policymaking in the Information Age](#)” outlines how data can be used to improve policy
- Models for Change’s [Information Sharing Tool-Kit](#) provides an overview for how data can be used to improve individual case planning, to inform program development and to evaluate the success of a programs in the juvenile justice space.
- Virginia Eubanks’s [Automating Inequality](#) is a must read for anyone aiming to use data or tech for good. It highlights how data and technology have been used to surveil and punish the poor.
- Youth Justice Coalition’s [explanation of its RealSearch program](#) is an important resource on the pitfalls and danger of many types of research—including data analysis.
- Upturn’s [Data Ethics](#) report highlights key issues related to data ethics and potential risk mitigation strategies. While the report is targeted towards philanthropists, it’s also instructive for government leaders.

The Brainstorming Data Principles Tool at the end of this chapter provides a space for you to record some of the information you learn during this research.

### **Draft your data principles**

Once you’ve gathered and analyzed stakeholder and best-practice research, it’s time to write a draft of your principles.

After synthesizing stakeholder research and other resources, PIT drafted YDD’s data principles, titled “Commitments for the Ethical Use of Data.” The document contains four broad principles: protect against the risks and harms of data, use data to drive meaningful change for youth, respect youth’s ownership of data, and hold data decisions accountable to community leadership. Each broad commitment is followed by specific, more actionable sub-commitments.

Your commitments should similarly outline practices or commitments that will help you realize the opportunities and minimize the risks that you and your stakeholders identified. The Brainstorming Data Principles Tool will help you generate these principles by connecting the dots between stakeholder feedback, outside research and your initiative’s goals. For examples of principles, see YDD’s Commitments for the Ethical Use of Data on the next page and review the below examples:

- Virginia Eubanks’s [Digital Oath of No Harm](#) is a Hippocratic Oath for those working with data
- New Zealand’s Privacy Commissioner and Chief Data Steward jointly developed their [Principles for the safe and effective use of data and analytics](#)
- Responsible Data, a world-wide collaborative focused on minimizing the harm of data, particularly in the humanitarian-aid space released these [Key Elements of Responsible data](#)

**Share your draft principles with your stakeholders and refine based on feedback**

Once you've drafted your principles, share them with your stakeholders and adjust based on their feedback so that your principles better address your community's priorities and concerns.

To solicit feedback, YDD shared their draft data principles with YDD's mailing list and with YDD-contracted providers during a standing feedback. YDD incorporated feedback into the principles before posting to their public website.

Once you've finalized your principles, share your final version in a public space so that your stakeholders can help hold your data work accountable to your values.

Los Angeles Division of Youth Diversion and Development  
**COMMITMENTS FOR THE ETHICAL USE OF DATA**

YDD recognizes both the potential benefits and the potential harms of data. We believe that to best reach our goals, we must ensure our practices align with our core values and mission. Since YDD cannot predict every potential future use of data, we've outlined considerations and fundamental commitments to inform all future data collection, sharing and analysis practices.

### 1. Protect Against Risks and Harms of Data

Participants in YDD's diversion program will avoid the collateral consequences of an arrest record. However, storing information on a youth's diversion experience is not without risks. Governments and their contractors have used administrative records to increase surveillance and restrict access to goods and services; hacks and unintentional leaks have exposed personal information stored in government databases; staff have misused or improperly shared sensitive data; and, private individuals and institutions have discriminated against others based on government records.

#### TO PROTECT YOUTH, WE WILL:

Comply with local, state and federal data privacy regulations and pursue additional ways to prevent unauthorized access and use.

Evaluate the potential risks of all future proposed data practices and work to mitigate these risks.

Prevent government employees and agencies from using diversion records to reduce opportunities for youth.

Hold our contractors accountable to similarly protecting diversion data and encourage other partners to adopt similar practices.

### 2. Use Data to Drive Meaningful Change for Youth

Thoughtful data collection and analysis can help YDD monitor fidelity to its model, highlight areas where partners need additional support and identify where policy and implementation may need to change to improve outcomes. This can inform discussions and decisions that improve diversion for partners and for participating youth. Data analysis can also improve juvenile justice reform efforts in LA and beyond by highlighting effective and equitable alternatives to arrest.

Still, data analysis is not infallible. Flawed or biased analysis can lead to harmful policy decisions, a singular focus on data can devalue people's knowledge and lived experiences, and poorly crafted data-review can shift the focus to what can be measured- rather than what matters most.

#### TO USE DATA TO DRIVE CHANGE, WE WILL:

Collect and analyze data to measure progress towards our goals and inform program and policy changes.

Recognize the limits of quantitative data and supplement with qualitative information.

Engage program partners and participants in analyzing, interpreting and making decisions based on data.

Share partner and community-vetted analysis with others to promote diversion across LA County and beyond.

Review our research agenda with partners and participants to inform future evaluation work.

### 3. Respect Youth's Ownership of Data

In the spirit of youth development and empowerment, we recognize young people as the ultimate owners of their data who must consent to data uses. In order to truly consent, youth must understand the potential uses of their data and the potential risk of such practices. As data owners, youth are entitled to analysis based on their data.

#### TO RESPECT YOUTH'S OWNERSHIP, WE WILL:

Clearly communicate to participating youth the potential uses and risks associated with their data.

Protect against uses and harms not communicated to youth.

Make data analysis accessible to young people and their communities.

### 4. Hold Data Decisions Accountable to Community Leadership

We believe these commitments will improve diversion and protect youth from potential harm. But publishing these commitments alone will not ensure that data practices match our values and mission.

#### TO BE ACCOUNTABLE, WE WILL:

Consider these commitments in all data decisions and enshrine particular commitments into policy.

Document how data is collected, analyzed and shared in order to increase transparency.

Invite youth, their families and the community to share how we can better live up to our data commitments.

# Brainstorming Tool: Developing Your Data Principles, Part I

The following two charts will help you synthesize your stakeholder engagement and outside research in order to brainstorm your data principles. On this page, list common data opportunities shared by your stakeholders in the left-most column. In the second column, write down any examples you find in your research on how other jurisdictions have realized this opportunity. In the third column, reflect on how realizing this opportunity may advance your initiative's overall goals. And, in the fourth column, note what your initiative would need to do to realize the opportunity. Text from the fourth column can be directly incorporated into your initiative's data principles.

## Data opportunities identified by stakeholders

**EXAMPLE:** Data can help program partners have a shared understanding of successes and challenges

## What has this looked like in other initiatives?

**EXAMPLE:** MAP, in NYC, shares data at every community meeting to help guide discussions

## How could this opportunity advance our initiative's goals?

**EXAMPLE:** Sharing data at community meetings could help all partners work together to figure out how to improve our program

## What would it take to realize this opportunity?

**EXAMPLE:** We need to collect data people care about, we need a plan to share it at our meetings.

# Brainstorming Tool: Developing Your Data Principles, Part II

In the left most column, list common data concerns or feared outcomes shared by your stakeholders. In the second column, note examples of this negative outcome in other initiatives. In the third column, reflect on how this negative outcome may endanger your initiative goals. And, in the fourth column, note what your initiative needs to do to reduce the risk of this outcome occurring. As with the first page, content from the fourth column can be directly incorporated in your initiatives data principles.

## Stakeholders' concerns or feared outcomes

**EXAMPLE:** Data analysis may lead us to focus on what can be measured, instead of on what matters

## What has this looked like in other initiatives?

**EXAMPLE:** "Tyranny of Metrics" has hurt other programs

## How could this feared outcome endanger our initiative's goals?

**EXAMPLE:** It would shift our focus from helping youth and it could harm our relationship with our partners and the community

## What would it take to prevent this feared outcome or alleviate this concern?

**EXAMPLE:** Balancing quantitative data with qualitative information, analyzing data with our partners so that we make sure it says what we think it does

# PHASE II: USING DATA TO MONITOR AND IMPROVE YOUR INITIATIVE

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When properly used, data can help your initiative measure and share the success of your program to help bolster support for justice transformation. Data can also track potential problems and inform decisions about how to improve. This monitoring is especially important in diversion programs where strategies have unintentionally increased racial/ethnic disparities and expanded, rather than reduced, contact with law enforcement.

The key steps outlined below are designed to help organize your approach to using data to monitor and improve your initiative. Paired with the Data Needs Template and examples from YDD, these steps can strengthen your ability to thoughtfully and effectively drive decisions using the right kinds of data.

As with all data work, your work to use data to monitor and improve your initiative should be shaped by stakeholder engagement, align with your data principles, and incorporate data risk-mitigation best practices.

## Key Steps

- **Determine the data you need to measure to track the success of your program**  
To use data to monitor and improve your initiative, you'll need the right data. At the start of your efforts, you should outline your initiative's over-arching goals and identify what data you'll need to measure progress toward these goals. The Identifying Data Needs Template will help you map out the potential indicators, data sources, and specific data points you'll need for your analysis.
- **Identify strategies to collect data from implementation partners and other sources**  
Once you have identified your data wish list, start planning how to secure the required data and adjust your plans based on stakeholder feedback. You will need to work closely with your implementation partners to create new data collection processes that help you get the data you need without disrupting operations or causing undue burden. You may also need to identify additional sources of data, such as surveys or interviews with participants and partners and administrative records.
- **Plan analyses you'll conduct on an ongoing basis**  
Once you have a clear plan for measurement and data collection, map out the different types of assessments that will best support your ability to be data driven and determine who will conduct these analyses. Some process and short-term outcome measures may be best analyzed regularly by an internal assessment team. More complex or long-term measures of outcome or impact might be better analyzed by external evaluators that have resources needed for robust evaluation.
- **Engage program partners, participants and the community in making decisions based on your data**  
Collecting the perfect type and amount of data won't serve your initiative unless you're using that data to guide decisions. Reviewing data with partners, participants and the public will add nuance to your analysis and help all parties get on the same page about how to improve the program.

## Steps in Practice

### **Determine the data you need to measure to track the success of your program**

To use data to monitor and improve your initiative, you'll need the right data. At the start of your efforts, you should outline your initiative's over-arching goals and identify what data you'll need to measure progress toward these goals.

During the collaborative planning process that created YDD, stakeholders identified key goals for the pre-booking diversion program as well as key concerns about the model. In data-related meetings, stakeholders shared the ways in which data could track progress towards these goals or highlight potentially concerning trends. YDD and PIT used this material to outline the data needed to measure success of the program. PIT and YDD outlined program goals and listed questions we'd need to answer to know if we were meeting those goals. Then, we brainstormed indicators, data sources and specific data points (such as new questions for forms or fields from existing data) that would help us answer these questions. This work informed our data collection forms and requirements.

Your initiative can use the "Identifying Data Needs Template", located at the end of this chapter, to determine the data you will need to measure success of your program.

### **Identify strategies to collect data from implementation partners and other sources**

Once you have identified your data wish list, start planning how to secure the required data and adjust your plans based on stakeholder feedback.

Based on the work describe in the last step, YDD and PIT created a list of data elements we hoped all community-based providers and law enforcement agencies could collect. We met individually with community-based providers and referring law enforcement agencies to review our list and discuss their current data collection processes. Based on this, we adjusted our list of data elements and created individual plans for how providers could capture the required data and securely share the required data.

YDD is currently pursuing a data management system that will simplify internal program data collection and sharing from law enforcement, community-based providers and, potentially, outside sources of data. YDD identified an initial set of priority external data sources—including youth arrest data from participating law enforcement agencies and the California Department of Justice to ensure the office can track any potential net-widening. YDD is in the process of bringing on an external evaluator to identify additional data needed to measure long-term outcomes. We envision that YDD and our evaluator will craft data-sharing agreements to secure such data.

Your initiative should also work closely with implementation partners to create new data collection processes that help you get the data you need without unduly burdening partners or disrupting operations. You may also need to identify additional sources of data, such as surveys or interviews with participants and partners and administrative records. The following additional resources may help you in this step:

- The [U.S. Department of Health and Human Service's Guide to Data-Driven Decision Making](#) has an excellent section on collecting and analyzing data. While the report is focused on data in Child Welfare initiatives, the content should be helpful for justice transformation efforts with a variety of resources.
- The [Data Collection and Sharing for Program Evaluation and Performance Measurement](#) section in Models for Change's Information-Sharing Toolkit provides guidance on how to secure data, particularly outside data, that may be needed for program evaluation and performance measurement.

- Living Cities' [Data Inventory tool](#) can help you track challenges with the data and help you plan when you'll collect various data points.

### **Plan Analyses You'll Conduct on an Ongoing Basis**

Once you have a clear plan for measurement and data collection, map out the different types of assessments that will best support your ability to be data driven and who will conduct these analyses.

YDD has the internal capacity for ongoing data analysis and a budget for an external evaluator. Using the data needs template as our guide, PIT and YDD outlined how these various partners can work together to contribute to measuring success and monitoring pitfalls of our pre-booking diversion program. YDD will conduct ongoing assessments on high-priority, easily quantifiable data. For example, we'll run monthly analysis to ensure that providers are getting referrals that are appropriate for diversion, to measure racial/ethnic equity in participation and to track common reasons why youth are leaving the program. Our contracted evaluators will validate this work, enrich data analysis with qualitative research and aid in long-term outcome measurements. If other research needs arise, we'll find additional research partners to take on specialized or ad-hoc projects.

Your initiative should likewise outline who will conduct what analysis, and when. Some process and short-term outcome measures may be analyzed regularly by an internal assessment team while external evaluators may be better positioned to analyze more complex or long-term measures of outcome or impact. For more guidance, page 26 of the [U.S. Department of Health and Human Service's Guide to Data-Driven Decision Making](#) provides an overview of the type of analyses that can help programs who aim to use data to improve their efforts. [Living Cities' Data-Driven Feedback Loop Examples](#) outlines how particular initiatives have planned data analysis to measure progress towards their goals.

### **Engage Program Partners, Participants and the Community in Making Decisions Based on Data**

Collecting the perfect type and amount of data won't serve your initiative unless you're using that data to guide decisions. Reviewing data with partners, participants, and the community will add nuance to your analysis and help all parties get on the same page about how to improve the program.

YDD plans to bring data analysis to designated meetings—such as monthly check-ins with community-based providers, quarterly meetings with law enforcement and community-based partnerships, and public steering committee meetings—in order to review, and make decisions based on, data.

Make sure to create a plan for engaging your partners, participants and the community in using data to drive change. Below are a few resources to get you started:

- The Urban Institute's guide on [Data Walks](#) provides one example of how to engage a wide variety of stakeholders around data
- David Brooks's [op-ed on collective impact](#) explains how these cross-sector, collaborative initiatives use data to understand and solve problems
- Living Cities blog series on [Using Data for Collective Impact](#) provides helpful guidance for how to facilitate discussions around data

## Highlight in Practice: Using Data to Monitor Net-Widening and Racial Inequities in Youth Diversion

New diversion programs often yield two unintended consequences than undermine their mission- net-widening and increasing racial inequities. When launching a new diversion program, you can monitor these issues with careful data collection and analysis.

**Net-widening** occurs when youth who wouldn't have otherwise been arrested are referred to a program. Such referrals are not true diversions since they don't reduce the number of youth who are processed through the juvenile justice system. Net-widening undermines the goals of youth justice transformation initiatives and can lead to worse outcomes for participants.<sup>9</sup> Data analysis can help illuminate net-widening so that you can address it with your partners. We suggest that you use data to:

- *Compare types of cases processed in the juvenile justice system before the launch of a diversion program to types of cases referred to diversion program:* Understanding past juvenile arrests, booking and processing trends can help you identify potential net-widening. A high number of referrals for offenses that were not typically processed through the justice system in the past is one red-flag of net-widening.
- *Keep an eye on over-all juvenile justice involvement rates:* If overall booking rates, detention rates and referrals to probation fail to decline after the introduction of a diversion program, the program is likely net-widening.
- *Mind alleged offense date vs. referral dates:* Cases that are referred to a program many months after an alleged incident may be the result of net-widening. You should work with your implementation partners to flag these cases and confirm with the referring police agencies that youth would be otherwise be processed through the juvenile justice system.

Additionally, some diversion efforts have **increased racial disparities** in youth's contact with law enforcement. Nationwide, youth incarceration fell by 54% between 2001 and 2015. However, over this same period of time, racial and ethnic disparities increased by about 22%. Black youth are now five times more likely to be detained or committed than white youth, compared to four times more likely in 2001.<sup>10</sup>

Data collection and analysis can help you monitor any disparities so that you can introduce policies and procedures to improve equity. Human Impact Partner's **Advancing Racial Equity in Youth Diversion Evaluation Framework** outlines key data that should be collected and analyzed across the lifecycle of a diversion case to measure equity and suggests promising practices for reducing disparities.

<sup>9</sup> *Widening the Net in Juvenile Justice and the Dangers of Prevention and Early Intervention*, [San Francisco, CA: Center on Juvenile and Criminal Justice, 2004].

<sup>10</sup> *Black Disparities in Youth Incarceration*, [Washington, DC: The Sentencing Project, 2017].

# Identifying Data Needs Template

This template will help you plan how you can use data to measure success of your initiative and highlight areas where you may need to change policy or programming to better reach your goals. Write one of your initiative’s goals above each table. Then, fill out the cells. Starting from the left, list guiding questions, brainstorm potential indicators that will help you answer the question, and note where you’ll get the required data. Finally, list the specific data points—such as questions on forms and fields from external data sources that you will need to construct your indicators. Feel free to note when you’ll work with others to finalize any portion of the chart. An example from the YDD project precedes three blank templates— create more as you see fit!

**EXAMPLE GOAL:** *Reduce the overall number of youth arrests, referrals to probation and petitions filed*

GUIDING QUESTION	POTENTIAL INDICATORS	DATA SOURCE(S)	SPECIFIC DATA POINTS NEEDED
<b>Are referrals replacing arrests or is diversion “widening the net”?</b>	Number and types of offenses diverted in a given year compared to number and types of offenses arrested	YDD referral records, current arrest data	Alleged offense (for referral and arrest data)
	Types of cases arrested pre-YDD vs. types of cases diverted in YDD	YDD referral records, previous years’ arrest data	Alleged offense (for referral and arrest data)
	Extended length of time between alleged offense and diversion referral	YDD referral records	Incident date, referral date
<b>What percent of diversions are successfully completed?</b>	Number of youth participating in, refusing, or completing program requirements	Number of youth participating in, refusing, or completing program requirements	Enrollment status + enrollment date, completion status + completion date
<b>What percent of referrals to diversion end in arrest, referral to probation, or filed petitions?</b>	Percent of referrals to diversion ending in arrest, referral to probation, or filed petitions	YDD records + law enforcement and probation records	YDD youth + LE disposition codes, probation disposition codes
<b>What barriers do youth face in completing diversion?</b>	Number and reason codes for non-enrollment and non-completion	YDD referral, enrollment, and completion updates records	Non-enrollment and non-completion codes (e.g. guardian declined, provider unable to make contact, etc.)
	Participant and family feedback on barriers to youth enrollment, participation, and success	Surveys or interviews with youth and families	To be determined by evaluators
	Community based provider feedback on barriers to youth enrollment, participation and success	Surveys or interviews with community based providers	To be determined by evaluators

INITIATIVE GOAL:

GUIDING QUESTION	POTENTIAL INDICATORS	DATA SOURCE(S)	SPECIFIC DATA POINTS NEEDED

INITIATIVE GOAL:

GUIDING QUESTION	POTENTIAL INDICATORS	DATA SOURCE(S)	SPECIFIC DATA POINTS NEEDED

INITIATIVE GOAL:

GUIDING QUESTION	POTENTIAL INDICATORS	DATA SOURCE(S)	SPECIFIC DATA POINTS NEEDED

# PHASE III: PROTECTING AGAINST POTENTIAL DATA RISKS AND HARMS

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Risk exists the moment data is captured. Any data is vulnerable to potential unauthorized access, abuse and misuse. Likewise, any poorly designed data analysis can devalue lived experience and expertise and lead an initiative to focus on what can be measured, rather than on what matters. These risks multiply each time data is shared or used for a new purpose and can create real harm for the people about whom data is collected or shared.

The risks of data are particularly pronounced in justice transformation and diversion efforts. To facilitate and evaluate your program, you may need to collect sensitive data such as information on the incident that led to referral to a program, demographic information, or health, education, and social needs of a participant. Given the relative newness of these initiatives, some of this data exists in a gray space not fully regulated by existing laws.

To ensure your initiative doesn't hurt the people it intends to serve, you need to mitigate the risks data may pose. The steps below will outline some of the work necessary to mitigate risks and the tool at the end of this section will help your initiative plan how to adopt data risk mitigation best practices. As explained in the first step, it's critical to have legal and tech partners to help you during this phase of your work.

## Key Steps

- **Gather legal and technical partners that can help you understand and mitigate risks**

Your core program staff and stakeholders may be able to handle some risks or potential harms that data may cause; the Best Practice Inventory at the end of this chapter will help you plan how to adopt promising practices to reduce the risk of data. However, you'll need to pull in legal and tech partners to clearly identify the full range of risks and safest strategies for managing those risks. Lawyers can help you understand legal protections required for various data and can help you use tools like consent forms and contracts to protect your data. Tech partners can help you understand potential security vulnerabilities and point you to technical solutions to keep your data safe.
- **Map potential pathways to the risks identified by stakeholders**

Your stakeholders, your staff, and your legal tech partners will likely identify a wide range of harms that could come from improper use of your data. Visually mapping potential pathways to data harms can help your team and partners identify where you need additional policies and practices to reduce risk.
- **Respond with transparency to known risks**

Once you've identified pressing risks and threats, share the steps you'll take to address them with your stakeholders. That way, you'll hold yourself accountable to addressing these threats and get feedback on how you might better reduce risks.
- **Build policies and practices to evaluate and mitigate future risks**

Risks are not static. New threats may arise given the political landscape around your initiative and new risks present themselves in each future data use. Your initiative should build practices and polices to continue to evaluate and mitigate risks and to ensure your data practices continue to align with your principles and standard best practices.

## Steps in Practice

### Gather legal and tech partners to help you identify and mitigate risks

Your core program staff and stakeholders will be able to identify some risks or potential harms that data may cause. However, you'll need to pull in legal and tech partners to identify additional risks and potential ways to manage those risks.

PIT identified common risks and threats of data and synthesized potential legal and technical solutions, but we ultimately realized we needed additional support to fully explore and mitigate risks. PIT consulted with security experts and PIT/YDD are working with IT to ensure that our data system fully protects youth data. Additionally, we've consulted with the County's counsel and justice transformation-focused lawyers on risks and potential protections for data.

Your initiative should likewise seek to familiarize yourself with risks and risk mitigation—including legal and technical considerations—but should engage legal and technical professionals in developing a full picture of risk and a risk mitigation strategy. Make sure to share and discuss your data principles with your legal and technical partners so they can help you fulfill your vision.

The following documents will help you develop a foundational understanding of some of the technical and legal considerations:

- The Engine's Room [Organisational Security for Civil Society](#) discusses nonprofit cybersecurity but holds lessons for all efforts looking to minimize data risk; likewise [Ford Foundation's Data Security & Grantcraft Guide](#) provides a succinct overview of security threats and risk mitigation opportunities for all efforts, not just grant-making
- The federal government's [HIPAA](#) website provides excellent, plain language overviews of HIPAA component and requirements
- Models For Change's [Information Sharing Tool Kit](#) provides an overview of federal law on sharing information at the intersection of youth justice, health, and social services. The tool kit includes resources, such as templates consent form and contracts—to help you understand these laws in practice.

### Map potential pathways to data harms

Your stakeholders, your staff, and your legal tech partners will likely identify a wide range of harms that could come from improper use of your data. Visually mapping potential pathways to data harms can help your team and partners identify where you need additional policies and practices to reduce risk.

YDD and PIT started this process with sticky notes. On one color of sticky notes, we wrote out all the fears stakeholder had shared with us and additional risks or threats we found through our research. We then used another sticky notes to map out pathways could lead to those harms. Finally, we used a different color of sticky notes to highlight “road-blocks” to those pathways; we flagged policies, legal agreements, and technical functions that could prevent that harm from coming to fruition. We moved this model to an online sticky note website and are collaborating with our technical and legal partners to identify additional pathways to harms and tools to reduce risk.

Your initiative can undertake a similar process. In partnership with your legal and technical partners, visually represent the potential negative outcomes and harms of data, including the common fears listed in your “Drafting Data Principles Tool” on page 11. Then, map out pathways to those harms and ways to disrupt those pathways. Make sure to think about a full range of tools including policies, the best practices listed at the end of this chapter, legal tools, and technical fixes. To create a digital version of a sticky note map see [ideaflip](#).

### **Respond with transparency to known risks**

Once you’ve identified pressing risks and threats, share the steps you’ll take to address them with your stakeholders. That way, you’ll hold yourself accountable to addressing these threats and get feedback on how you might better reduce risks.

YDD’s stakeholders identified pressing risks and concerns with YDD data before and during the initiatives founding period. Many stakeholders noted the potential danger of allowing law enforcement and prosecutors access to information captured during the course of a youth’s diversion. In response, YDD, with support from UCLA Criminal Law, developed a policy that aims to generate buy-in from law enforcement while protecting youth’s legal rights and affording additional protections that align with YDD’s values. More about this policy is on the following page. We also are pursuing a long-term data management system that has certain technical features—like audit reports—that will help monitor how law enforcement’s access to limited status fields are shaping referrals. YDD stakeholders also shared concerns that diversion records could be misused by government agencies and employees across all levels of government. In response, we excluded certain data elements from our reporting requirements—such as immigration status—that may have helpful evaluation purposes but could be used against youth. We’re also updating our consent form to strictly limit how the data YDD collects will be used in the future.

Your initiative should also work to quickly find solutions to known risks and to share how you’ll mitigate these risks with your stakeholders. As in all steps in this phase, include your technical and legal partners so that they can help you identify a full range of tools to reduce risks.

### **Build policies and practices to evaluate and mitigate future risks**

Risks are not static. New threats may arise given the political landscape around our initiative and new risks present themselves in each future data use. Your initiative should build practices and policies to continue to evaluate and mitigate risks and to ensure your data practices continue to align with your principles and standard best practices.

YDD and PIT have been building a number of practices to continually evaluate and mitigate risks. First, we’re planning to do an annual check-in about our own data principles, our “Commitments for the Ethical Use of Data.” We’ll ask our stakeholders and diversion partners if we’re living up to these commitments and generate ideas of what to add to our commitments to better protect our values. Second, we’re developing a procedure to review every future data request or proposed data use. This will help us make sure that future data uses align with our consent forms, legal requirements, our commitments, and our data protection best practices. Since we believe transparency powers accountability, we’re also drafting a transparency policy that outlines how we’ll share information about our data practices on our website and with our partners.

Your initiative should likewise build practices and procedures to review the risk of every future data use and determine how to counter that risk so that your data practices align with your values.

## Highlight in Practice: Setting a Policy for Data-Sharing with Law Enforcement in Pre-Booking Diversion

Effective youth pre-booking diversion relies on law enforcement's ability to refer, providers' capacity to engage youth and families, and a young person's trust that participation in programming will improve their wellbeing. Youth diversion data must therefore only be collected, communicated, and assessed such that it supports program effectiveness without compromising confidentiality or trust. Although there is growing evidence that shows the lasting negative impacts of arrest records on a young person's wellbeing, little research has been done to establish the risks incurred by records generated by diversion programs on a young person's future opportunities for health and success. Without intentional work in this area, it may continue to remain unclear exactly how these increasingly popular programs are putting young people at further risk. Initiatives across the nation therefore have an important role in contributing to shared knowledge about their data-related risks and any effective strategies to protect against harms involved in youth diversion.

In 2018 and early 2019, PIT and YDD conducted stakeholder research focused on identifying priorities for our emerging data strategy. Youth and community advocates expressed strong concerns that any diversion data shared with justice system agencies would place youth at risk while law enforcement agencies expressed unwillingness to refer youth they considered to pose higher risks to public safety to community-based alternatives without some limited information about a young person's diversion history. YDD then convened a collaborative data workgroup where specific policy questions could be discussed and negotiated in more detail and consensus could be built around key questions.

Finally, YDD and PIT worked with University of California, Los Angeles School of Law's Criminal Justice Program to produce a memo on confidentiality protections for youth diversion data. Titled "Legal and Programmatic Boundaries to Sharing Youth Diversion and Development

Data," this memo outlines supporting research and the following recommendations regarding data sharing with justice system agencies during early implementation: contracted providers and partnering law enforcement agencies submitting youth diversion referrals will share limited data related to a young person's diversion referral status, enrollment status, and completion status, but YDD will not share individualized care plan information, including but not limited to health, academic, and service data with any law enforcement or justice system agencies.

As we continue to work towards a transformation of our shared conception of public safety from one that prioritizes punishment, detention, and isolation to one that prioritizes wellbeing, positive development, and restorative justice, YDD plans to revisit the question of how much information needs to be shared with law enforcement partners in order to ensure all youth have the opportunity to be connected to community-based alternatives to arrest.

One important first step for your initiative is to build a strong relationship of trust and open dialogue with key partners who you'll rely on in order to achieve your goals—from law enforcement agencies to youth and community based providers. Be intentional about creating spaces where these partners feel as safe and encouraged as possible to disagree and work together to identify the best possible solutions. Once you start to identify areas of consensus, create draft policies strategically that show partners they've been heard without compromising your ultimate goals.

# Tool: Best Practice Inventory

This worksheet will help your initiative determine how to adopt best practices for reducing the risk of data collection, sharing, and analysis. The first column describes recognized best practices for minimizing data risks. The next three columns ask you to describe how you'll align your initiative's data practices these principles. First, you'll note the ways in which your own practices align with this best practice. Then, you'll identify additional ways to align this practice. Finally, you'll write down next steps—including stakeholders to consult—to ensure that you create such practices. The first row is completed as an example. Feel free to add some of your initiative's data principles as additional rows.

BEST PRACTICE	CURRENT ALIGNED PRACTICES	ADDITIONAL WAYS TO ALIGN WITH THIS PRACTICE	NEXT STEPS AND STAKEHOLDERS TO CONSULT
<p><b>EXAMPLE:</b> —Be transparent about data practices</p>	<p><b>EXAMPLE:</b> —We've reformatted our consent form to make it more clear how data will be used —We've shared our data principles on our website</p>	<p><b>EXAMPLE:</b> —On our website, we could publish a list of all data elements collected and a summary of a) who we share data with and b) the type of data analysis we're conducting</p>	<p><b>EXAMPLE:</b> —Create a website page for data practices —Talk to our stakeholders about other information we should share on our website</p>
<p><b>Be transparent about data practices</b> <i>Transparency powers accountability. When you share information about your data practices, the community can help identify when you've strayed from your principles or are taking actions that could expose your data to risk.</i></p>			
<p><b>Minimize data collection and retention</b> <i>The more data you have, and the longer you keep it, the higher the risk that the data will be breached. Minimizing the data you collect and deleting data at designated intervals will reduce the risk of a data breach or leak.</i></p>			
<p><b>Limit data sharing</b> <i>Each time data is shared, new vulnerabilities arise. To reduce risks, limit data sharing to only mission-critical needs and ensure that the group you share data with also enacts these best practices.</i></p>			

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**BEST PRACTICE****CURRENT ALIGNED PRACTICES****ADDITIONAL WAYS TO ALIGN WITH THIS PRACTICE****NEXT STEPS AND STAKEHOLDERS TO CONSULT**

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**Enumerate data uses in your consent form**

*Government data is increasingly used in applications beyond their original purposes, which can increase the risk that the application will harm the data subject. You can prevent this mission-drift of data by listing out the uses of data in your participant consent form and precluding all uses not listed in the form.*

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**Comply with all relevant data privacy law and regulations**

*Data privacy law and regulations provide a baseline of practices that reduce data risks. HIPAA, for example, mandates certain technical and operational safeguards. Discussing relevant regulations with your legal and technical teams will ensure that you're in compliance and help you reduce the risk of data.*

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**Ensure security of data systems**

*Nearly half of local government face daily cybersecurity threats. There are a number of technical solutions—such as encryption, two-step verification, system auditing, and central role management—that can help prevent or minimizing the impact of a breach. Consult with your IT or technical teams to ensure that your system is as secure as possible.*

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BEST PRACTICE	CURRENT ALIGNED PRACTICES	ADDITIONAL WAYS TO ALIGN WITH THIS PRACTICE	NEXT STEPS AND STAKEHOLDERS TO CONSULT
<p><b>Ensure data quality</b>  <i>Data analysis based on flawed data can skew understanding and lead to harmful outcomes. Creating practices to confirm data quality will help reduce the risk of flawed data analysis.</i></p>			
<p><b>Substantively engage participants and implementation partners in data analysis</b>  <i>Poorly designed data analysis can devalue participants and implementation partners' lived expertise and lead your initiative to draw incorrect conclusions from data. By engaging participants and implementation partners in data analysis, you'll ensure their expertise is reflected in the data and in decisions based on data analysis.</i></p>			
<p><b>Regularly review data practices to ensure that they still align with goals, principles, and best practices</b>  <i>Reducing risks and living up to data principles is an ongoing process. Building in times to review your practices within your initiative and with your stakeholders can help ensure your initiative continues to live up to its data principles and goals.</i></p>			

# CONCLUSION

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In this toolkit we outlined three interconnected phases to building a responsible data strategy: a) creating data principles, b) using data to monitor and improve your initiative, and c) protecting against potential data risks. For each phase, we listed key steps and described these steps in practice, using examples from our partnership creating a data strategy for Los Angeles County Youth Diversion and Development initiatives. We included additional tools and resources throughout to support any initiative's efforts to build an effective and ethical data strategy capable of supporting their goals.

While YDD and PIT learned a great deal while jointly crafting a data strategy, we've highlighted a number of opportunities for future work:

- 1 Identifying concrete ways to uphold data commitments when bringing on external evaluators or other research partners
- 2 Incorporating data ethics into partnership agreements to help hold all implementation and systems partners accountable to data needs and protections
- 3 Establishing sustainable processes by which initiative data can be democratized (i.e., regular data capacity-building for youth and community members, ongoing opportunities for youth and community members to lead participatory research projects)
- 4 Continuing to build internal capacity for data assessment and research (e.g., hiring additional research and policy staff who participate in capacity-building opportunities, formalizing long-term partnerships)
- 5 Conducting robust evaluation on the risks of different types of data collection systems and data sharing policies to identify promising strategies to mitigate risk

Although the majority of the examples presented in this toolkit are focused on developing an ethical data strategy for a youth diversion or other justice transformation initiative, we believe the steps, priorities, and general concepts outlined here would be valuable assets to any complex policy initiative. Programs and policies focused on education, fair housing, transportation, or environmental justice—any initiative that requires multi-modal solutions and impacts a wide range of individuals—all have a responsibility to maximize the value and reduce the harms of data in all aspects of their work.

The steps presented here are intended only to serve as a starting point for any initiative seeking to build their capacity to be data-driven and data-informed. It is through working collaboratively with your community of stakeholders to make these steps your own that your initiative can develop an ethical data strategy that reflects your values and helps you meet your goals.

# APPENDIX- COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT RESOURCES

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## The Case for Engagement

In order to develop a truly effective and ethical data strategy, any public initiative must meaningfully engage its stakeholders in planning, decision making, and ongoing oversight. This kind of engagement should always include representatives of those most impacted by the initiative (e.g., youth, diversion providers, and law enforcement officers in our youth diversion initiative example).

Engaging a diverse group of stakeholders requires careful consideration of power dynamics and thoughtful work to ensure all voices are equitably heard and able to contribute to important decisions. When planning an engagement, your initiative should take several steps including identifying an appropriate facilitator or group of facilitators, determining the structure of meetings and meeting activities over time, carefully considering the physical location and set-up of the meeting room, and outlining process of presenting recommendations and synthesizing feedback for final program or policy decisions.

## Facilitation Tools and Activities

- **Sticky note brainstorming and clustering:** Using this kind of visual facilitation tool helps people generate ideas in a new way, allows group to identify common themes, and helps mitigate power imbalances, as sticky notes are anonymous and can help engage folks who are less comfortable speaking up in a room. Sticky notes can also help those who are visual learners. See description of this tactic [here](#).
- **Sticky dot voting:** Similar to using sticky note brainstorming, you can use this kind of [visual voting process](#) used to identify priorities or gather feedback.
- **Consensus decision making processes:** For big decisions, it is important to identify which kind of decision making process works for your stakeholder group. Although voting can be efficient, it can also sometimes lead to the exclusion of important voices or opinions (e.g. those of individuals who your initiative is seeking to serve). A description of other consensus processes can be found [here](#).
- **Bringing on the right facilitator(s):** The person or persons facilitating can make or break a group meeting. Depending on the goals of your group or particular meeting, you might want to bring on a facilitator or facilitators with different strengths or existing relationships with members of your group. In some cases, it may be useful to have a facilitator generally perceived as neutral who can hold space for others to facilitate certain parts of the meeting or group process. For example, YDD has worked with its network of youth leaders to co-design meeting agendas for youth-led steering committee meetings focused on the perspectives and ideas of youth who have been impacted by the justice system.

- Creating discussion prompts: It can also be helpful to create thoughtful prompts to spur discussion that you can have on hand for ice breakers, foundation-setting, or for specific parts of your agenda in case folks are hesitant to speak up or you need to re-center the conversation. Below are some examples from our work collecting perspectives on data for our youth diversion initiative:

–I’m afraid that data will: \_\_\_\_\_

–I hope that data will: \_\_\_\_\_

–Data can help this initiative by: \_\_\_\_\_

–Data can help my goals by: \_\_\_\_\_

–Data collection, sharing and analysis could hurt: \_\_\_\_\_  
(LIST GROUP AND CIRCUMSTANCE THAT WOULD CAUSE HARM)

## Additional Resources

- Seeds for Change has a strong collection of resources for strengthening cooperation, including tools for consensus decision-making, meeting facilitation, and other skills for working in groups. Here are some of our favorites:
  - This video on [Processes for Consensus Decision-Making](#)
  - This video on [Making Consensus Decisions Genuinely Democratic](#)
  - This guide to [Organizing Successful Meetings](#)
  - This guide to [Facilitating Meetings](#)
  - This short guide to [Group Agreements for Meetings](#)
  - This [Checklist](#) for Encouraging People to Be (and Stay) Involved in Your Group
- New York City’s Civic Service Design Tools and Tactics has this helpful [collection](#) of tools and tactics for conducting interviews and focus groups and engaging those most impacted by a policy throughout the policy design process
- This Open Policy Making [toolkit](#) from the United Kingdom also presents some useful tools and techniques policymakers can use to create more open and user-led policy

# Tool: Planning your Initiative's Engagement

## Create a list of key stakeholders

Your data vision should be informed by the stakeholders of your initiative, including decision makers, participants, implementation partners, experts, and advocates. Use this tool to list the groups or individuals you wish to engage about their perspective on data and determine how best to reach out to them.

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INITIATIVE DECISION MAKERS

PROGRAM PARTICIPANTS

IMPLEMENTATION PARTNERS

EXPERTS AND ADVOCATES IN THE FIELD

LEGAL AND TECH PARTNERS

OTHER

## **Design engagement strategies specific to each phase**

### **PHASE I: DRAFTING DATA PRINCIPLES**

WHAT DO WE WANT TO LEARN? WHAT QUESTIONS DO WE NEED ANSWERED?

WHAT ARE THE POWER DYNAMICS OR OTHER INTERPERSONAL DYNAMICS AT PLAY THAT MIGHT MAKE AMPLIFY SOME VOICES AT THE EXCLUSION OF OTHERS? HOW CAN THESE DYNAMICS BE BALANCED?

WHEN AND HOW WILL WE ENGAGE FOLKS (E.G., ONE-ON-ONE, IN SMALL GROUPS, AS A FULL COLLABORATIVE) TO ANSWER EACH QUESTION?

WHO IS BEST SUITED TO FACILITATE EACH PART OF OUR ENGAGEMENT STRATEGY? WHAT TOOLS (E.G., GROUND RULES, FACILITATION TOOLS, AGENDA ITEMS, RESEARCH OR DATA, DISCUSSION PROMPTS, ROOM SET-UP, CONSENSUS PROCESSES) WILL BE MOST USEFUL?

## **Design engagement strategies specific to each phase**

### **PHASE II: USING DATA TO MONITOR AND IMPROVE YOUR INITIATIVE**

WHAT DO WE WANT TO LEARN? WHAT QUESTIONS DO WE NEED ANSWERED?

WHAT ARE THE POWER DYNAMICS OR OTHER INTERPERSONAL DYNAMICS AT PLAY THAT MIGHT MAKE AMPLIFY SOME VOICES AT THE EXCLUSION OF OTHERS? HOW CAN THESE DYNAMICS BE BALANCED?

WHEN AND HOW WILL WE ENGAGE FOLKS (E.G., ONE-ON-ONE, IN SMALL GROUPS, AS A FULL COLLABORATIVE) TO ANSWER EACH QUESTION?

WHO IS BEST SUITED TO FACILITATE EACH PART OF OUR ENGAGEMENT STRATEGY? WHAT TOOLS (E.G., GROUND RULES, FACILITATION TOOLS, AGENDA ITEMS, RESEARCH OR DATA, DISCUSSION PROMPTS, ROOM SET-UP, CONSENSUS PROCESSES) WILL BE MOST USEFUL?

**Design engagement strategies specific to each phase**

**PHASE III: PROTECTING AGAINST DATA RISKS AND HARMS**

WHAT DO WE WANT TO LEARN? WHAT QUESTIONS DO WE NEED ANSWERED?

WHAT ARE THE POWER DYNAMICS OR OTHER INTERPERSONAL DYNAMICS AT PLAY THAT MIGHT MAKE AMPLIFY SOME VOICES AT THE EXCLUSION OF OTHERS? HOW CAN THESE DYNAMICS BE BALANCED?

WHEN AND HOW WILL WE ENGAGE FOLKS (E.G., ONE-ON-ONE, IN SMALL GROUPS, AS A FULL COLLABORATIVE) TO ANSWER EACH QUESTION?

WHO IS BEST SUITED TO FACILITATE EACH PART OF OUR ENGAGEMENT STRATEGY? WHAT TOOLS (E.G., GROUND RULES, FACILITATION TOOLS, AGENDA ITEMS, RESEARCH OR DATA, DISCUSSION PROMPTS, ROOM SET-UP, CONSENSUS PROCESSES) WILL BE MOST USEFUL?