

# SYSTEMS EVALUATION PROJECT CHECKLIST

## From Agency Readiness through Data Preparation

### # 1 CONSIDER TIMING



- Checked the project landscape in your agency (current/future)
- Checked the project landscape in your state as it applies to your agency (current/future)
- Met/discussed with agency administration to identify timing impediments
- Researched what is on the horizon for your criminal justice community in terms of legislation, initiatives, projects, data sharing agreements etc. that could help or hinder your project
- Met with decision-makers: endorsed this project at this time? *Move on to #2***

### # 2 ASSESS AGENCY RESEARCH CAPABILITIES AND EXPECTATIONS



- Identified an in-house person with some research knowledge or one willing to learn
- Surveyed (formally or informally) agency staff to determine if there are people who understand statistics and data analysis or are willing/able to learn
- Determined the basic timeline and work expectations for the project manager and in-house staff based on this being a part-time or full-time effort (dedicated staff)
- Based on above item, determined if staff have time and permission to work on project
- Can you identify staff to fill these some or all of these roles:
  - Research Person:* This may be you or a combination of staff members versed in/ willing to learn how to implement a research methodology.
  - Attorney/Training Director:* It would be ideal to have an attorney who understands practice, procedures and outcomes for all levels of practice.
  - Administrator:* Having an agency administrator on board to vet your plans and provide support and feedback would help avoid upcoming roadblocks.
  - Front Line Staff (attorneys, investigators, etc.):* Person(s) available for consultation on what really happens in a case. Constant feedback at this level will help you identify discrepancies in your methodology and your data and also will eventually assist you in making sense of and reporting your outcomes.
  - Support Staff/Research Assistant:* A support person willing and able to enter data when necessary, clean data and perform the functions of a research assistant.
  - Court/Data Source Contact Person:* Although you will have or develop a data dictionary for the data extract you receive from the Court system, it is helpful to develop a relationship with someone from that system who can answer your questions about fields, attributes/values and other concerns.
- Prepared all involved staff with an outline of: how often you need to meet, conference call, email or other forms of communication as well as the expectations of each person
- With the support of administration, appropriate timing, common expectations and access to resources we are ready to move forward with the project. *Move on to #3 & #4***

### # 3 OBTAIN THE DATA EXTRACT



- Identified those in the court system who will ultimately decide if and how you get a data extract.
- Talked with internal IT personnel about your system's capability for accepting a data extract and ensuring the security of the data while in your agency's possession
- Arranged a meeting with the "data keeper(s)" with your administration's support
- Prepared for the meeting with the "data keeper(s)":
  - Gathered*: training manuals, codebooks, field names and any other information you can in order to familiarize yourself with the database from which you are seeking an extract
  - Invited*: knowledgeable internal IT staff to the meeting
  - Discussed*: with IT staff person what you need
  - Identified*: exactly what information you need from the "data keeper(s)" and, if possible, identified that information by the "data keeper(s)" field names
  - Located*: Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) from another state or developed one in the event that the "data keeper(s)" do not have one they use
  - Stipulated the format, extent, and organization of the data extract

### # 4 PREPARE THE DATA



- Ensured the extract contains the data fields you requested*: (nothing more, nothing less) and the number/range of records you requested
- Checked data integrity*: Randomly chose ten to twenty records and compared them against a secondary source
- Checked Data Validity*: The data is of lower quality than expected or believed. Some data fields may be populated unreliably (e.g., left blank), inconsistently (e.g., a single field containing text in some records and numeric data in others), or inaccurately.

### OTHER



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