

Letter of Request Template – Founding States Program

A letter of request is one way a state can demonstrate broad commitment from criminal justice agencies for participating in Justice Counts. When a state submits a letter with the required signatures, the CSG Justice Center will follow up to discuss 1. If a spot as a founding Justice Counts state is currently available and what technical assistance might be available as part of that opportunity, or 2. If the state will be placed on the waiting list for Justice Counts technical assistance and what support may be available during the waiting period or if all Founding States Program slots are taken.

Please send the completed letter to the Justice Counts team at justicecounts@csg.org

Heather Tubman-Carbone, PhD
Senior Policy Advisor
Bureau of Justice Assistance
810 Seventh Street NW
Washington, D.C. 20531

Dear Dr. Tubman-Carbone,

As state and local leaders, we share the priorities of safety and justice for all [state] residents. Like many states across the country, the lack of access to timely and accurate criminal justice data is an issue for [State]. The COVID-19 pandemic showed us that it is possible for government agencies to publish ongoing, recent data to meet clear and present public needs. [State specific CJ issue examples].

Now more than ever, it is clear that [State] must commit to making this kind of accessible data a permanent reality across the criminal justice system from law enforcement and prosecutors to courts and prisons. Smarter criminal justice policy requires better data: data that are up to date, consistently available, and easy to understand and utilize. To accomplish this, we need metrics that are feasible for agencies while being useful for policymakers, committed agency leaders to input data accordingly, and digital infrastructure that is easy to use for agencies and visual displays that are easy to understand for policymakers.

We aim to ensure that we and our fellow state leaders have accurate, accessible, and actionable data to drive decisions about our criminal justice system. We write to request the technical assistance support of The Council of State Governments (CSG) Justice Center and the support of the U.S. Department of Justice's Office of Justice Programs' Bureau of Justice Assistance (BJA) to participate in the Justice Counts Initiative's Founding States Program. This support will provide the hands-on help that will benefit our agencies in sharing Justice Counts metrics, will steward the publication of those metrics, and help [State] policymakers effectively use Justice Counts data in their decision-making going forward.

The co-signers of this letter recognize that cross-system implementation of Justice Counts is critical to its success and impact. We each pledge to make our individual agencies a Justice Counts agency and will work in as a coalition to encourage other agencies to join our charge.

We hope to work with the CSG Justice Center and BJA to take this monumental step forward toward better criminal justice data and policy and to make justice count in [State].

Sincerely,

Law enforcement signatory

Prosecution signatory

Defense signatory

Pretrial/Courts signatory