



## Statement on Racial Justice

Crime Research Group is a non-profit research center that provides statistical analysis services for the State of Vermont. As an independent research organization, we consider of utmost importance CRG's integrity, neutrality, and objectivity in our research as we collect, analyze, and disseminate criminal justice data, and conduct policy-relevant research and evaluations. To these ends we are guided by our Mission and Vision:

### **Mission**

We provide research to policymakers, public and private sector clients, and the community to encourage evidence-informed practices to promote a fair and effective justice system.

### **Vision**

CRG works to strengthen the justice system to reduce and prevent crime, reduce recidivism, achieve safer and healthier communities, and ensure fairness, justice, and equal treatment under the law.

While we conduct our research through the employment of unbiased and impartial methodology, we also fully recognize that systemic racism is pervasive throughout the criminal justice system. Consequently, and following engagement with stakeholders, CRG identified areas of concern related to racial equity within Vermont's criminal justice system and, further, developed research projects to explore these recognized racial equity concerns.

Moreover, Crime Research Group continues to remain committed to recommending improvements to data quality and to use best-practice analyses supported by evolving research literature to facilitate understanding of the inequities built into the administration of Vermont's criminal justice system. To that end, the following current projects are designed to understand how policies or processes result in the disparate treatment of people of color and/or other groups, and where possible to tell the data stories of those who are affected by the criminal justice system.

1. Traffic Stop and Race Data Collection-
  - A. What we Heard: That people of color are stopped multiple times on a drive home, or every time they enter a particular town.
  - B. What we did: The original statutory elements of the traffic stop and race data did not capture these stories. We worked with all law enforcement agencies to add additional elements that will help highlight these stories. For example, with the year, make, model of the vehicle and the state of the plate in addition to demographics of a driver, multiple stops for one person can be identified.
  - C. What we're suggesting: Local police departments review their data and identify multiple stops for the same person that take place in a short period of time, especially for vehicle equipment violations or other violations that are a result of or could lead to economic hardship or escalate into a criminal citation.

## 2. Race and Sentencing

- A. What we Heard: Black people are disproportionately represented in Vermont's correctional facilities.
- B. What we did: At the request of the Legislature, we looked at the sentencing decision to determine if race played a part in the decision to incarcerate. We found that out of state criminal history records did play a part - including out of state records from police departments who have known racist policing practices, such as the NYPD.
- C. What we are suggesting: Criminal justice practitioners should carefully consider the use of criminal histories in sentencing decisions and should consider using evidence-based alternatives regarding the seriousness of the offense and risk to reoffend.

## 3. Disparities in the Correctional Facilities

- A. What we heard: Black people are disproportionately represented in our correctional facilities.
- B. What we are currently doing: We have two studies under way that are intended to illuminate the structural influences on the disproportionate representation of Black people in our correctional facilities. The first study is a descriptive analysis of incarcerated people to create an understanding of what leads to the disproportionality in the facilities. The second study is an analysis of the alternative justice system to explore if people of color are served in these programs.
- C. A third study will provide a descriptive analysis of people on probation, parole, and furlough to identify any discrepancies in the treatment of people of color.

## 4. Victims and Racial Disparities

- A. What we heard: Communities of color disproportionately experience crime and have less access to justice and worse outcomes than White communities.
- B. What we're doing: We are cataloging the crimes people of color are experiencing. We will also track criminal cases and look for disparities in the way the system treats victims of color.

The CRG Board and staff have heard what the stakeholders have shared about their lived experiences, reflected on what they've said, and in the future CRG will continue to include a critique in every report conclusion about how end users can and cannot interpret the data, especially as it pertains to structural racism. We take this small step as a research institution which recognizes that during these difficult times it is incumbent on all organizations and institutions, particularly within the criminal justice community, to resolve that we can in fact aspire to be anti-racist without compromising our independence and our neutrality.