



# Multnomah County District Attorney's Office

STEP Court

*August 23, 2024*



## Questions

- What drove the decision to publish the data?
- What were the impacts of sharing the data?
- Why recidivism was based on arrests rather than conviction?



## What drove the decision to publish the data?

- Spirit of transparency drove decisions early on at development stage (e.g. racial disparities, disparities in diversion offers)
- Analyzed case data prior to eligibility decisions and for post-programming comparisons
- Publishing data holds us accountable



Data collection and analysis was built into the program model from the start:

The parties are committed to exploring diversion options for this cohort while maintaining public safety. **This includes a commitment to collect data and review outcomes** including, but not limited to: the number of cases/defendants *eligible* for STEP Court consideration, the number of cases/defendants *diverted* into STEP Court or other appropriate probation program, the number of defendants *transferred* into STEP Court, the demographic breakdown of participants, quadrant placement breakdown, and recidivism/revocation rates. Data will influence whether program revisions need to be made or whether policies or processes should be modified.



## Analyzed 2019 BM11 Robbery I & Assault I cases

### Robbery I

- 43% BIPOC defendants
- 16% prison diversion rate

### Assault I

- 50% BIPOC defendants
- 0% prison diversion rate



## What drove the decision to publish the data? (Continued)

- Good Neighborhood Agreement modification (VOA Men's Residential Center)
- Grant applications
- Continued State, County and community support for the program



## STEP Court Data sharing examples:

- ❖ Community group presentations
- ❖ Multnomah County Specialty Court Advisory board
- ❖ Social Media (X, Instagram) posts
- ❖ Grant applications
- ❖ Presentations to leaders/county commissioners
- ❖ Practitioners (e.g. judges brown bags, defense, prosecution, DCJ)
- ❖ CLEs/trainings
- ❖ MCDA [Website](#)

# Why is STEP Court needed in Multnomah County?

- 95% of offenders return to our neighborhoods after being convicted of a crime
  - Roughly 50% reoffend. That means **more crime** and **more victims** after our current justice system has “done its job”.
  - **50% is an “F”**
- **STEP Court** leverages the best possible research, evidence and data to reduce recidivism, meaning to rate at which an offender reoffends. That means **less crime** and **less victims**.
- To date, **zero** STEP Court participants have reoffended since entering the program.



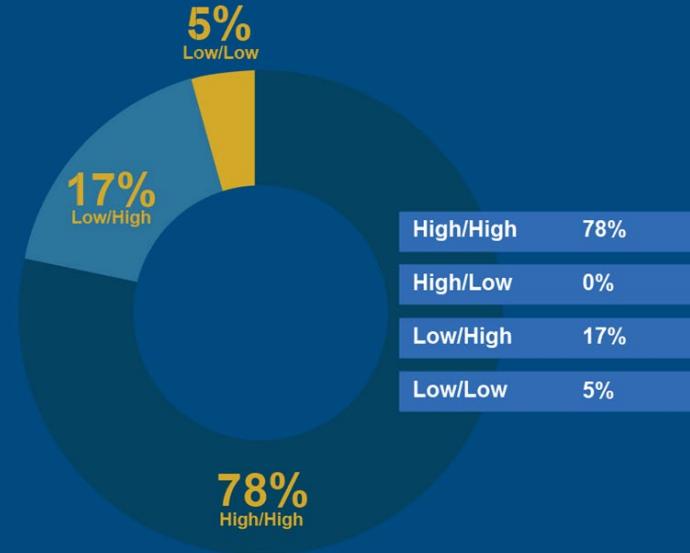
Example Community Presentation Slide (6 months after program start date)

# Who is accepted into STEP Court?

- STEP Court is selective of its participants
- Not all “presumptively eligible” defendants are offered probation or accepted into STEP Court
- 63 “presumptively eligible” sentences since start of STEP Court
  - 13 defendants accepted into STEP Court to date
    - 6 of the 13 defendants are BIPOC
    - 50 defendants did not receive a STEP Court sentence
- To date, **zero** STEP Court participants have reoffended since entering the program
- Third-party researchers to vet efficacy and success of STEP Court



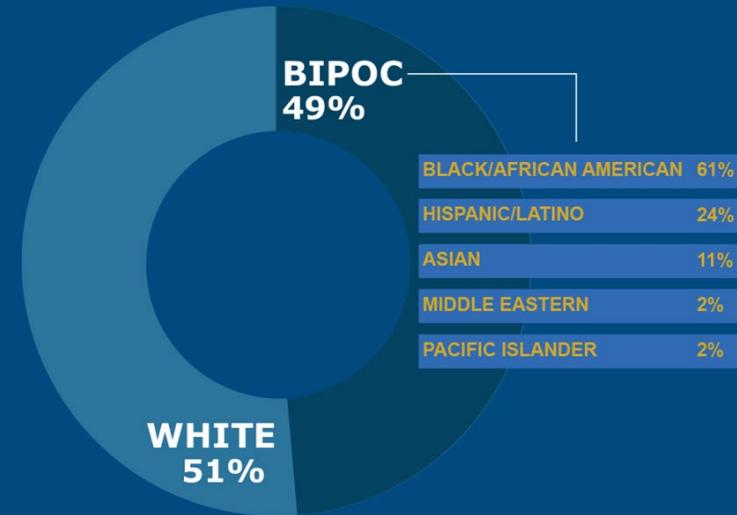
## Public Safety by the Numbers STEP COURT - RISK/NEED ASSESSMENT



\*Analysis based on active STEP participants

Data source: Oregon Judicial Department

## Public Safety by the Numbers STEP COURT - DEMOGRAPHICS



\*Analysis based on all STEP participants

Data source: MCDA Database



## What have been the impacts of sharing the data?

- Modified good neighbor agreement → from skeptical to advocates. Neighborhood associated drafted letter for full funding.
- Created interest in the program and the CJ system in general → Invited community members to sit on our Specialty Court Advisory Committee. Fostered community participation and input.
- Support of funders → security and consistency (confidence in funding due to transparency).
- Research interest & research funding (CJC/PSU, etc.).



## Why was recidivism based on arrests rather than conviction?

- HB 3194 (2013) recidivism definition codified under ORS 423.557. “Recidivism” defined for statistical evaluations—standard evaluation definition across Oregon.

As used in this section, “recidivism” means the arrest, conviction or incarceration of a person who has previously been convicted of a crime, if the **arrest, conviction or incarceration** is for a new crime and occurs:

- (a) Three years or less after the date the person was convicted of the previous crime; **or**
- (b) Three years or less after the date the person was released from custody, if the person was incarcerated as a result of the conviction for the previous crime.
- Jurisdictional policies and issues impacting prosecution can distort conviction recidivism numbers (e.g. diversion, lack of appointed counsel/case dismissals, court closure due to pandemic, etc.)



**Challenge:** What to do when there's a premature request for data?

- ❖ Work with what you've got (and be transparent about it)
- ❖ Use the appropriate data metric (e.g. small numbers = raw numbers/rates as opposed to RRI)