uvenile arrest rates, including for violent crimes, fell by approximately 50 percent from 1997 to 2011, to their lowest level in more than 30 years.[1] In combination with this sharp drop in arrests, state and local reforms have had an extraordinary impact: from 1997 to 2011, youth con nement rates declined by almost half.[2] The juvenile justice eld deservedly celebrates this success and continues to push for further reductions in con nement rates. Many states are also striving to ensure that youth who have been diverted from con nement, as well as those returning home after time spent in a facility, receive supervision and services that reduce recidivisey, receiv98while they are under juvenile justice supervision and afterward?

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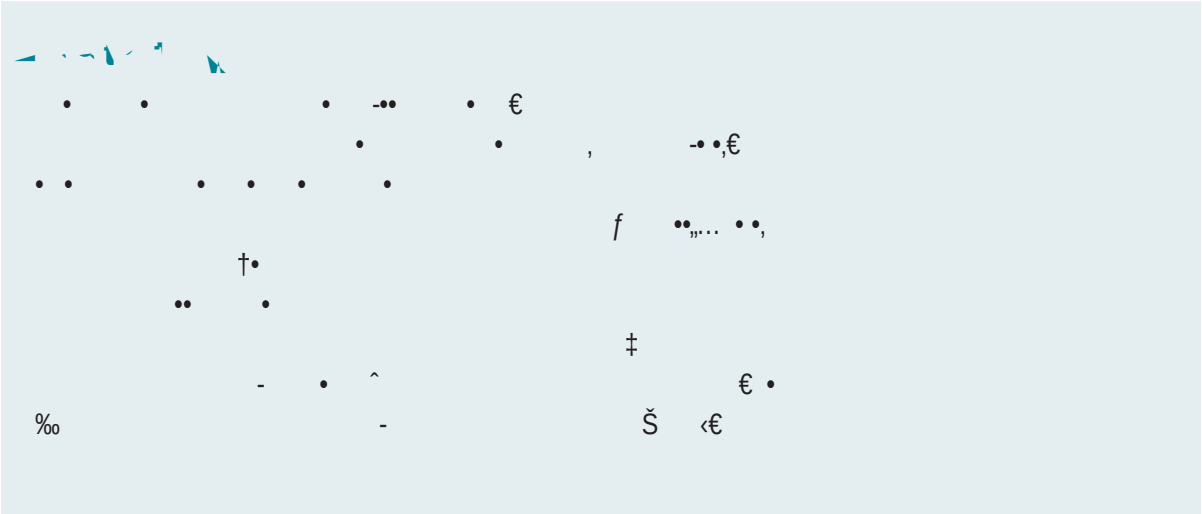
To understand to what extent states currently track recidivism data for youth involved in the juvenile justice system and use that information to inform policy and funding decisions, the Council of State Governments Justice Center, The Pew Charitable Trusts' Public Safety Performance Project,[3] and the Council of Juvenile Correctional Administrators surveyed juvenile correctional agencies in all 50 states.[4] This issue brief highlights the key ndings of the survey and provides state and local policymakers with ve recommendations for improving their approach to the meaan <</MCIt (n)12.1.4(eumC /S.()D5 /ST1.7343c0()-7 0 Tw 30 0 0 30 426.9027 688.9498 Tm ( )Tj ET EMC /Span

The survey responses summarized in this issue brief pertain to youth committed to and released from state custody. The majority of youth involved with the juvenile justice system, however, are not committed to state custody. Rather, they are under the supervision of state probation agencies or local/county correctional or probation agencies.[5] Most local juvenile justice systems don't have a way to evaluate recidivism effectively across locales because local systems typically have limited capacity to track these data. For this reason, although the survey findings presented here reflect state government practices, the recommendations in this brief are relevant to both state and local juvenile justice agencies. Ideally, state and local government officials will consider together how they can use the recommendations in this brief to improve the measurement and use of recidivism data to inform policy, practice, and resource-allocation decisions statewide.



1. **Measure recidivism for youth involved with the juvenile justice system, considering the multiple ways they may have subsequent contact with the justice system.** Most states track recidivism for youth in their custody. Yet, one in five (11 states) reported that they don't track recidivism rates at all for the youth under their system supervision. Of the 39 that do, 46 percent (18 states) use only one type of event (e.g., rearrest or reincarceration) to track recidivism.
2. **Analyze recidivism data to account for youth's risk levels, as well as other key youth characteristics and variables.** Of the 39 states that collect recidivism data, only half (21 states) analyze recidivism by youth's assessed risk levels and even fewer examine recidivism rates by key variables such as youth's needs (13 states), lengths of stay in facilities (12 states), or participation in different service programs (11 states).
3. **Develop and maintain the infrastructure necessary to collect, analyze, and report recidivism data.** Almost half of all states rate their capacity to collect and report recidivism and other performance data as "Strong" or "Very Strong," but the other half rated their capacity as "Average," "Below Average," or "Weak."
4. **Make recidivism data available to key constituents and the general public.** Of the 39 states that collect recidivism data, the vast majority shares these data with the legislature and governor; 64 percent (25 states) share these data with the judiciary; and 74 percent (29 states) make these data publicly available.

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The majority of states share recidivism data with at least some key constituents, but signi cant gaps exist in many states' reporting practices. Of the 39 state agencies that track recidivism:

- The majority of states report sharing these data with the legislature and the governor.
- 64 percent (25 states) share these data with the judiciary.
- 56 percent (22 states) share these data with other state youth-service agencies and 41 percent (16 states) share these data with State Advisory Groups.
- 74 percent (29 states) make their recidivism data available to the public.

To ensure that all agencies, organizations, and individuals who have a role to play in shaping juvenile justice system decisions and interventions have the most accurate information on system performance, policymakers should:

Require regular reporting of recidivism data

Juvenile justice agencies should generate annual performance reports that share recidivism trends for youth under their supervision. Agencies should formally report these data to all branches of government, court personnel, State Advisory Groups, service providers, other key system stakeholders, and the public. Ten of the 39 states that currently collect recidivism data have passed legislation that requires juvenile justice agencies to regularly report it.

States that collect recidivism data typically use them for a general evaluation of system functioning and rarely

Set improvement targets.

Using recidivism data from a single point in time to evaluate system performance does not enable policymakers and agency leaders to know whether the policies and practices they are putting into place to improve youth outcomes are making a measurable difference. Policymakers should work with juvenile justice systems to identify baseline (historical) recidivism rates and set annual targets for recidivism reduction that are ambitious but achievable. A measurable improvement goal, for example, could be a 10-percent reduction in technical violations of probation over a 1-year period.

Use recidivism data to promote accountability and the e cient use of resources.

Policymakers should hold agencies accountable for achieving improvement targets. The budget development process offers an opportunity to tie overall agency funding, as well as resources for speci c programs and reform

Juvenile justice systems have made extraordinary strides in the last decade to reduce their dependence on con nement. To make sure that new policies—and funding reallocated to community-based supervision and services for youth on probation and those returning from con nement—reduce subsequent contact with the justice system, states need to track recidivism rates. This brief re ects that nearly 80 percent of states do track some recidivism data, but 20 percent still do not, and most states don't generate the recidivism data analysis that should undergird important system decisions. State and local governments are encouraged to build on their success to date and ensure that all youth who come into contact with the juvenile justice system have their outcomes tracked in a comprehensive and accurate way.

Policymakers and juvenile justice system leaders should use the recommendations in this brief to assess their current capacity to accurately measure recidivism rates and to guide their efforts to collect, analyze, report, and use this data to promote accountability, and ultimately, a more effective system that improves outcomes for youth. Just as policymakers seek to hold their law enforcement agencies or education systems accountable for quanti able results, it is important that juvenile justice systems are held responsible for public safety and supporting young people to transition to a crime free and productive adulthood. As states and counties divert increasing numbers of low-risk youth out of the juvenile justice system altogether, and those youth who remain under system supervision are higher risk, the need for such accountability will become even more critical.

Connecticut: The Connecticut Department of Children and Families does not currently collect or report juvenile recidivism information. However, the Support Services Division in the judicial branch published a report in 2011 on juvenile recidivism for both probation and facility release cohorts and routinely tracks recidivism for youth under community supervision.

Hawaii: The Hawaii Of ce of Youth Services does not currently collect or report juvenile recidivism information. However, the Department of the Attorney General published a report in 2010 on recidivism for a sample of committed youth released from the Hawaii Youth Correctional Facility.

Iowa: The Iowa Department of Human Services does not currently collect or report juvenile recidivism information. However, the Iowa Department of Human Rights' Division of Criminal and Juvenile Justice Planning has the capacity to track and report recidivism data for youth in state custody as well as the eight judicial districts, but they do not do so on a regular basis, and is therefore included in the list of states that do not collect or report this information.

Montana: The Department of Corrections' Youth Services Division does not currently collect or report juvenile recidivism information. However, the Montana Supreme Court, Of ce of the Court Administrator, publishes recidivism in its yearly report card and has partnered with the University Of Montana School Of Social Work on studies related to the recidivism of youth on probation.

Pennsylvania: The Pennsylvania Bureau of Juvenile Justice Services does not currently collect and report recidivism information. However, the Juvenile Court Judges' Commission tracks and reports on recidivism data>>BDC BT

[1] Charles Puzzanchera, *Juvenile Arrests 2011* (Washington, DC: Of ce of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention, 2013), available at www.o jjdp.gov/pubs/244476.pdf.

[2] Melissa Sickmund, et al., "Easy Access to the Census of Juveniles in Residential Placement," (Washington, DC: Of ce of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention, 2013), available at www.ojjdp.gov/ojstv/pw1>>BDC2O91211.6(7(e).737.94 Tm3 .664 00.067)57.2.1((o)4.6(n)0.5(Tm