In this issue

- Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Efforts
- BCA Crime Data Portal Now Live
- NIBRS and Minnesota Offense Codes

Promoting Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion in Minnesota’s Judiciary

Advisory Group Member Kristin Trebil and Kim Larson, deputy director at Minnesota Judicial Branch, provided a presentation about the court’s Committee for Equality and Justice. The committee’s mission is “to advance efforts to eliminate bias from court operations, promote equal access to the court, and inspire a high level of trust and public confidence in the Minnesota Judicial Branch.” The Advisory Group’s Diversity and Inclusion Subcommittee requested the presentation to help the Advisory Group learn about diversity initiatives in the organizations of its members.

The Committee for Equality and Justice has four broad tasks:

- Recommending education programs and materials for judges and staff.
- Promoting diversity in employment and appointments to committees and boards in the Minnesota Judicial Branch.
- Recommending changes to improve processes, procedures, and policies related to protected identity groups.
- Providing assistance to judicial districts for local community outreach.

The committee’s 28 members are justice system partners, court employees, judicial officers, and members of the public, each serving two-year terms. The committee has four subcommittees, each chaired by a judge:

- Access and Fairness
- Community Outreach
- Diversity and Inclusion Education
- Civil Justice

Have a question or suggestion?

Contact Matthew Pizza (651-793-2595 or matthew.pizza@state.mn.us) for more information.

The committee also features an Equal Justice Committee (EJC) in each Minnesota judicial district. The EJCs continue the committee’s efforts at the local level, supporting community outreach, promoting diversity, equity, and inclusion with colleagues, employees, and justice partners, reviewing and discussing data, and developing plans to address disparities and gaps.

Trebil and Larson offered the creation of a jury instruction guide on implicit bias and an implicit bias bench card for judges as examples of the committee’s work.

Information on the activities of the Committee for Equality and Justice is available on the Minnesota Judicial Branch website.

Diversity Subcommittee Update

The Advisory Group Subcommittee on Diversity and Inclusion provided an update for members on its action plan.

The subcommittee is developing a list of organizations that focus on historically oppressed social identities and may have knowledge or interest in criminal justice information. So far, the subcommittee has identified the following groups:

- Minnesota Council on Latino Affairs
- Council for Minnesotans of African Heritage
- Minnesota Indian Affairs Council
- Minnesota Council on Asian Pacific Minnesotans

The goal is to find individuals representing these groups who are knowledgeable about criminal justice information and can speak before the Advisory Group about relevant topics.

The subcommittee also proposed two possible topics that could be presented to the Advisory Group.
• The Council of State Governments could talk about the recently completed Justice Reinvestment Initiative in Minnesota, which looked at inequities in the state’s probation system.

• The BCA and the Minnesota Judicial Branch could explain how they make data public.

The subcommittee encourages other Advisory Group members to bring forth presentation topics or ideas from their own organization’s diversity, equity, and inclusion efforts.

The subcommittee also reiterated its suggestion that the Advisory Group explore a change to its statutory membership requirements to include permanent voting members from groups representing historically oppressed social identities.

Minneapolis Crime Data Explorer

The BCA’s Minneapolis Crime Data Explorer, a searchable, easy-to-view database of NIBRS crime data, was launched in October 2021 and is available at https://cde.state.mn.us/.

Users are able to directly access and filter or drill down on crime data in ways that weren’t possible before, such as querying by victim and offender information like age, race, and sex.

The Minneapolis Crime Data Explorer currently contains firearms discharge and use-of-force data, but will add data on pursuits, bias crimes, and property offenses in the next few weeks. Additional data will be added throughout 2022.

The BCA will provide a presentation about the Minneapolis Crime Data Explorer at the Advisory Group’s next meeting in May.

Other Discussions

The Advisory Group briefly discussed the potential for responsibility for juvenile justice in Minnesota to move from the Department of Corrections to the Department of Public Safety Office of Justice Programs. Some members expressed concerns about shifting from a diversion/public health focus to a public safety focus—especially during the current climate on crime, justice and police perception.

The Advisory Group also briefly discussed the planned sunsetting of Minnesota Offense Codes (MOCs). The move has the support of the Dept. of Corrections, State Court Administration, prosecution and the BCA. The Minnesota Sentencing Guidelines Commission, whose prior leadership supported the move, is wanting to learn more first about how other tools – like NIBRS or eCharging – may help them meet their legislative reporting needs.

Next Advisory Group Meeting
Friday, May 13, 2022
9 a.m. – 11 a.m.
Location TBD