



Frequently Asked Questions

What is the Justice Lab?

The Justice Lab is an initiative of the state Division of Criminal Justice Services (DCJS) that will publish timely, relevant, objective and research-based evidence on justice programs, policies, and strategies in New York State and use that research to inform justice policy and planning. The Justice Lab will leverage the expertise of DCJS staff who have a clear understanding of justice policies and practices, the data maintained by the agency, and the agency's data collection systems. Drawing upon this subject matter expertise, staff will ask, analyze and answer questions about the impacts of justice policies in New York State, allowing the Justice Lab to build upon on the agency's commitment to promoting evidence-based policymaking to improve the state's criminal and youth justice systems.

How is the Research Consortium, another DCJS initiative, different from the Justice Lab?

The Justice Lab conducts research on behalf of DCJS that focuses on statewide criminal justice priorities. The [Research Consortium](#) supports partnerships between local criminal justice agencies and academic researchers to assess local initiatives designed to address community-specific crime and justice issues.

What is expected of professionals interested in becoming Justice Lab affiliates?

Completing the Justice Lab Affiliate Information Form indicates your interest in the Justice Lab as a Research Partner and/or Review Panel member and provides information about your area(s) of expertise. Justice Lab staff will use this information to contact affiliates on a project-by-project basis, depending on their experience and expertise, to see if they wish to participate as a Research Partner and/or Review Panel member.

Who is eligible to become a Research Partner and what is expected?

The Justice Lab seeks bona fide researchers and research organizations to become Research Partners for projects contracted through the Justice Lab. Research Partners will work closely with the Lab staff to develop pre-analysis plans that will outline the research questions, data sources, and methodology. The project's Review Panel will review pre-analysis plans that will be available upon request. Research Partners will conduct the research and summarize results in reports and/or presentations, which also will be provided to Review Panel members for their insight and input.

What is a pre-analysis plan?

A pre-analysis plan describes all aspects of the proposed research project before the analysis begins. The level of detail of each plan will vary and depend on the specific research project. The plan may include, but not be limited to, the research questions to be asked, proposed data sources and proposed methodologies. The plan will be reviewed by a Research Panel, members of which will provide input. Justice Lab staff and the researcher will make the final decisions regarding the plan. In most cases, any contracts to conduct research on behalf of the Justice Lab will cover work and time spent developing the pre-analysis plan.



How will the Justice Lab contract with Research Partners?

The Justice Lab may contract with academic and/or non-academic researchers on certain projects. These projects are expected to be completed within 12 to 24 months, with the level of funding and type of procurement based on the specifics of each research project. DCJS will contract with the institution or agency for which a researcher works, not with the individual conducting the research.

What level of independence will research partners have in the process?

As noted, research partners conducting research on the Justice Lab's behalf will develop a pre-analysis plan with Lab staff that will be shared with a Review Panel. While the scope of the Review Panel's involvement will be limited to providing comments and suggestions based on their expertise, the Justice Lab may require researchers to implement some of the Review Panel's suggestions. All presentations, reports, publications, and other materials that Research Partners seek to disseminate must be reviewed and approved by DCJS prior to release.

Will Research Partners be permitted to publish findings based on the project?

Researcher Partners must submit draft reports for review by Justice Lab staff and the project's Review Panel. Final reports that incorporate any feedback from the Review Panel must be submitted to the Justice Lab for final review and approval. Once a project is completed, Justice Lab staff will write a research brief to be published online by DCJS. Researchers who wish to submit findings for publication in academic or other journals must seek DCJS approval, which will be granted on a case-by-case basis.

Who is eligible to become a Review Panel member and what is expected?

A Review Panel may consist of community members, researchers and practitioners who have experience, subject matter expertise, and/or data and analytic expertise on the research topic. It will offer feedback on proposed projects but not be a decision-making body. The Review Panel will not determine final approval of Justice Lab projects or funding. The panel will provide, to the extent possible, anonymous review of research plans and reports and provide input on the reasonableness, rigor, and practical utility of the project. The panel will review pre-analysis plans, including research questions asked, proposed data sources and methodologies, to ensure conclusions drawn are reasonable. The Review Panel also will review final work products to ensure they provide accessible, actionable information for practitioners and policymakers. Review panels likely will include different participants for each project, as relevant experience will vary by project. All panel members are not expected to be experts in research or statistics.

Are Review Panel members still eligible for research partnerships on other projects?

Yes, Justice Lab affiliates participating as Review Panel members are eligible to participate as Research Partners on other Justice Lab projects and/or DCJS research opportunities. Individuals cannot serve as a Research Partner and Review Panel member on the same project. Research Partners are selected on a project-by-project basis.



Are Review Panel members compensated for their time?

No. Review Panel members may include their participation with the Justice Lab as part of their professional credentials: on a curriculum vitae or in a bio, for example. Participants will receive a letter from DCJS thanking them for their service.

Further questions? Please contact the Justice Lab at JusticeLab@dcjs.ny.gov.