Executive Office of Public Safety and Security

Cross-Tracking Risk and Needs Assessments Dashboard FAQs

Q: What is Cross-Tracking?
A: Cross-Tracking is the Commonwealth's statewide data initiative to standardize criminal justice information. Conceived as part of the criminal justice reform law, the fully integrated data framework is designed to enhance transparency, improve access to criminal justice data, and facilitate high-level analysis for the public, stakeholders, and researchers to inform public policy and improve public safety.

Q: Why create this dashboard, and what impact will it have on justice involved individuals?
A: Criminal Justice Reform required the Executive Office of Public Safety and Security (EOPSS), in consultation with the Executive Office of Technology Services and Security (EOTSS), to create a data collection and Cross-Tracking system for criminal justice agencies and the Trial Court.

The system was designed to provide a streamlined, 360-degree view of an individual's engagement with the criminal justice system following them from the point of arrest to entry into a custodial institution and eventual release to Parole/Probation Supervision when applicable.

The integrated data system has six primary goals:

- Drive operational efficiency and effectiveness
- Connect individual records across the criminal justice system
- Increase criminal justice data availability, quality, and public trust
- Empower data-driven decision making and monitoring
- Analyze disparities and evaluate effectiveness of reform programs
- Enable internal and independent studies of recidivism and other criminal justice research

Q: What steps has EOPSS taken thus far to develop the Cross-Tracking system?
A: EOPSS approached this complex process knowing that it required technological expertise

and consensus among public safety partners. The integrated Cross-Tracking system required state leaders to develop uniform data collection and reporting standards across a broad range of agencies and independent constitutional offices. EOPSS promulgated regulations to this end which established consistent data definitions, defined the governance framework, outlined integration requirements, and developed operational and implementation procedures. Additionally, EOPSS supported the Sheriffs' Offices' Offender Management System upgrade to allow for the collection of the consistent data elements. EOPSS further coordinated with various Sheriffs' Offices in securing LiveScan devices to provide more fingerprinting capabilities during the booking procedure. EOPSS also secured a Data Use License Agreement from each phase one criminal justice partner agency.

Together, the partners strategized how to standardize data for presentation, moved data securely from agencies to the dashboard, and developed public-facing visualization designs. This is the sixth dashboard that EOPSS has created for Cross-Tracking and the first of its kind. EOPSS is excited for users to engage with this dashboard, review data trends, and provide feedback to EOPSS. As the first of its kind, EOPSS anticipates improvements throughout the development of Cross-Tracking.

Q: What agencies are referred to in the dashboard?
A: Three agencies are represented in the dashboard: Massachusetts Parole Board (Parole), Massachusetts Probation Service (Probation), and the Massachusetts Department of Correction (DOC). Future dashboards will also include other criminal justice agencies, including the Sheriffs' Offices.

Q: Will the dashboard allow members of the public to access information about a specific person?
A: No, due to Criminal Offender Record Information Laws (CORI) which prohibit the dissemination of justice-involved individuals to the public, the public facing information does not include any personally identifiable information. While criminal justice agencies can access person-specific information to develop effective, personalized rehabilitation plans, the public facing dashboard should be used to understand trends across the larger system.

For more information about a specific individual, you may request access through the Department of Criminal Justice Information Services (DCJIS).

Q: Were any data exclusions made?
A: These population counts include individuals under Parole or Probation supervision or DOC custody. Excluded from these counts are:

- Civilly Committed Individuals;
- Juveniles;
- Individuals under the jurisdiction of the federal government, or another state's jurisdiction through an Interstate Compact Agreement under supervision by Parole or DOC;

- Any person sentenced in Massachusetts and serving custody or on parole in another jurisdiction via interstate compact; and
- Any individual booked by another criminal justice agency and held temporarily at a Jail or House of Correction under a Safe Keep Agreement. A person who was previously booked by another criminal justice agency and then transported to a Jail or House of Correction to be held for pre-arraignment or detention purposes. This is known as a "Safe Keep." (not pre-trial or convicted)

Q: How does the dashboard display data that predates Criminal Justice Reform (CJR)?
A: Given that data submitted by the participating criminal justice agencies predates the CJR data reporting standards outlined in the new governing regulations, EOPSS has taken great care to review and match the records from the various agencies to consolidate the data seen in the dashboard. In doing so, some of the older data, known as legacy data, was not able to meet these matching criteria and therefore, is not shown in the dashboard. EOPSS will continue to work through the legacy data with its stakeholders to ensure accuracy to be able to display it on the dashboard.

Q: Will additional data become available in the future?
A: Information on risk and needs assessments from other criminal justice agencies, including the Sheriffs' Offices, will be incorporated into the dashboard in 2025.

Q: What guidelines were used to protect the privacy of individual offenders?
A: When the number of cases in the dashboard falls below 5, the user will see <5. This is done to protect the privacy of individual offenders.

Q: What cohorts are in the model?
A: The risk and needs assessment dashboards display information for offenders in custody in the DOC or under community supervision by Parole or Probation on January 1st for the years 2020 through 2024.

Q: Can offenders be included in the dashboard more than once?
A: Yes, if the offender was in custody or under community supervision on January 1st of different years, then they will be in the sample more than once. This can occur if the offender has a long sentence of incarceration or community supervision, so they are in custody or under supervision over multiple January 1st dates, or if the offender was released from custody and then reincarcerated or supervised in the community at some later point.

Q: How is the age of the offender determined?
A: Age is defined as the age of the offender at the snapshot date, that is the January 1st date when the offender was in custody or under community supervision. Ages will be assigned to the following groups consistent with the existing public dashboard:

- 18 to 24
- 25 to 29

- 30 to 39
- 40 to 49
- 50 to 59
- 60 and above

Q: How is the race and ethnicity of the offender determined?
A: Race has six values (American Indian / Alaska Native, Asian / Pacific Islander, Black / African American, Other / Unknown, White, and Unavailable) and ethnicity has three values (Hispanic/Latino, Not Hispanic / Latino, and Unavailable). If the records management system indicated that the race was Hispanic or no information was available on the source race field, that appears in the "unavailable" category. If there was some other value, that appears in the "other/unknown" category. If there was no information in the ethnicity field, that appears in the "unavailable" category.

Q: What additional filters are available on the dashboard?
A: Additional filters are available for Probation and Parole:

For Probation, users can filter by the court department and county of the court responsible for the supervision of the offender.

For Parole, users can filter by the regional office responsible for the supervision of the offender. The name of the regional office represents the location of that office. Labels may change over time reflecting the relocation of offices or the reallocation of regions.

Q: Are classification instruments included in the dashboard?
A: No. Classification instruments are widely used by custodial agencies to assess factors such as age, gender, and legal reasons for detention to determine security and housing placements. Examples include Prison Rape Elimination Act (PREA) screening, Booking questionnaires, initial classification screening, 60-day general reviews, or internal housing risk factors. Scores on classification instruments are not ingested into the platform and will not be included in the public dashboard.

Q: Is the level of supervision shown in the dashboard?
A: No. Level of supervision refers to the amount and type of oversight that a parolee or probationer receives in the community. This may include the number of visits with the supervising officer, restrictions on movement in the community, and other oversight mechanisms. The level of supervision is informed by the results of risk and needs assessments.

Q: If offenders have more than one risk and need assessment, which one is shown in the dashboard?
A: The dashboard will display the risk and need assessment information with the date closest to and preceding the snapshot date. The date the risk and needs assessment instrument was completed is the assessment date. It is expected that risk and needs assessments will be administered at an initial date when the offender begins a period of custodial or community placement. Offenders may be reassessed to capture any changes in dynamic factors that impact the assessment of risk and needs or to reflect breaks in periods of incarceration. Updates will

often occur at regular intervals. In the subcomponents dashboard, the DOC Identified Needs Assessment – Academic is updated dynamically and the most recent value is shown and may not be prior to the snapshot date.

Q: What risk and needs assessment tools are used?
A: There are many risk and need assessment instruments that are used in Massachusetts custodial and community supervision agencies. Each assessment tool uses a unique set of questions and scoring criteria as to assess risk levels. Probation uses two instruments – the ORAS-CSST and the ORAS-CST. Instruments and agencies that utilize each instrument are set forth below:

Instrument	Agency Utilizing the Instrument
COMPAS – Correctional Offender Management Profiling for Alternative Sanctions	Massachusetts Department of Correction
LS/CMI – Level of Service/Case Management Inventory	Massachusetts Parole Board
ORAS – CSST – Ohio Risk Assessment Community Supervision Screen Tool	Massachusetts Probation Service
ORAS – CST – Ohio Risk Assessment Community Supervision Tool	Massachusetts Probation Service

Q: How are risk and need instruments scored?
A: Each assessment tool uses a unique scoring criteria to assess risk levels and generate final scores. The ORAS – CSST was changed from a 4-item scale to a 9-item scale in 2019. The tools generate final scores as follows:

Instrument	Total Risk Score
COMPAS – Correctional Offender Management Profiling for Alternative Sanctions	IMS is providing High, Medium, and Low values
LS/CMI – Level of Service/Case Management Inventory	Very High: 30-43, High: 20-29, Medium: 11-19, Low: 5-10, Very Low: 0-4
ORAS – CSST – 4 Item Ohio Risk Assessment Community Supervision Screen Tool	Male: High: 3+, Low: 0-2 Female: High: 4+, Low: 0-3
ORAS – CSST – 9 Item Ohio Risk Assessment Community Supervision Screen Tool	Male: High: 3+, Low: 0-2 Female: High: 3+, Low: 0-2
ORAS – CST – Ohio Risk Assessment Community Supervision Tool	Male: Very High: 34+, High: 24-33, Moderate: 15-23, Low: 0-14 Female: High: 29+, Moderate: 22-28, Low-Moderate: 15-21, Low: 0-14

Subcomponents and Scales for Assessments

Assessment Type	Component	Scale
COMPAS - Male	Anger	High, Medium, Low
COMPAS - Male	Criminal Thinking	High, Medium, Low
COMPAS - Male	Substance Abuse	High, Medium, Low
COMPAS – Male	Vocational	High, Medium, Low
COMPAS - Female	Neg_Social_Cognition	High, Medium, Low
COMPAS - Female	Parental_Stress	High, Medium, Low
COMPAS - Female	Reentry Housing	High, Medium, Low
COMPAS - Female	Relationship Dysfunction	High, Medium, Low
COMPAS - Female	Substance Abuse	High, Medium, Low
COMPAS - Female	Vocational	High, Medium, Low
Identified Assessment	Academic	Yes, No
Identified Assessment	MA_Sex_Offender	Yes, No
ORAS CSST – 4 Item	Criminal Friends	Majority Criminal Friend (2); Some Criminal Friends (1); No Criminal Friends (0)
ORAS CSST – 4 Item	Currently Employed	Not Employed or Employed Part-time (1); Yes, Full-time, Disabled, Retired (0)
ORAS CSST – 4 Item	Drugs Readily Available in Neighborhood	Yes, Easily Available (2); Yes, Somewhat Available (1); No, Generally Not Available (0)
ORAS CSST – 4 Item	Number of Prior Adult Felony Convictions	Three or More Felony Convictions (2); One or Two Felony Convictions (1); No Felony Convictions (0)
ORAS CSST – 9 Item	Current Financial Situation	Problems (1); Stable/Minimal Problems (0)
ORAS CSST – 9 Item	Currently Employed	Not Employed or Employed Part-time (1); Yes, Full-time, Disabled or Retired (0)
ORAS CSST – 9 Item	Drug Use Caused Problems	Current Problems (2); Past Problems (1); No Problems (0)
ORAS CSST – 9 Item	Highest Education	Less than High School or GED (1); High School Graduate or Higher (0)
ORAS CSST – 9 Item	Most Serious Offense Under Age 18	Yes, Felony (2); Yes, Misdemeanor (1); None (0)
ORAS CSST – 9 Item	Number of Prior Adult Felony Convictions	Three or More Felony Convictions (2); One or Two Felony Convictions (1); No Felony Convictions (0)

ORAS CSST – 9 Item	Prior Sentence to Community Supervision as an Adult	Yes (1); No (0)
ORAS CSST – 9 Item	Received Official Misconduct while Incarcerated as an Adult	Yes (1); No (0)
ORAS CSST – 9 Item	Walks Away from a fight	Rarely (2); Sometimes (1); Yes (0)
ORAS - CST	Criminal Attitudes and Behavioral Patterns	High (9-13), Moderate (4-8), Low (0-3)
ORAS - CST	Criminal History	High (7-8), Moderate (4-6), Low (0-3)
ORAS - CST	Education, Employment and Financial Situation	High (5-6), Moderate (2-4), Low (0-1)
ORAS - CST	Family and Social Support	High (4-5), Moderate (2-3), Low (0-1)
ORAS - CST	Neighborhood Problems	High (2-3), Moderate (1), Low (0)
ORAS - CST	Peer Associations	High (5-8), Moderate (2-4), Low (0-1)
ORAS - CST	Substance Use	High (5-6), Moderate (3-4), Low (0-2)
LS/CMI	Alcohol/Drug Problem	Very High (7-8), High (5-6), Medium (3-4), Low (1-2), Very Low (0)
LS/CMI	Antisocial Pattern	Very High (4), High (3), Medium (2), Low (1), Very Low (0)
LS/CMI	Companions	Very High (4), High (3), Medium (2), Low (1), Very Low (0)
LS/CMI	Criminal History	Very High (8), High (6-7), Medium (4-5), Low (2-3), Very Low (0-1)
LS/CMI	Education/Employment	Very High (8-9), High (6-7), Medium (4-5), Low (2-3), Very Low (0-1)
LS/CMI	Family/Marital	Very High (4), High (3), Medium (2), Low (1), Very Low (0)
LS/CMI	Leisure/Recreation	High (2), Medium (1), Very Low (0)
LS/CMI	Procriminal Attitude/Orientation	Very High (4), High (3), Medium (2), Low (1), Very Low (0)

Q: Why are some offenders not assessed?
A: Risk and need assessments are not generally conducted for every offender under the supervision of a custodial or community supervision agency with one exception: Parole. Parole performs a risk and needs assessment on all incarcerated individuals before they are released on parole supervision. Conducting a risk and needs assessment uses substantial agency resources and the results are most useful when they inform placement into programming in preparation for success in the community.

It is estimated that conducting a risk and needs assessment takes a minimum of 40 minutes to administrate and additional time to enter the data into the records management system. The CST takes upwards of 5-6 hours to complete: The assessment includes a series of visits that take place initially, one being a scheduled home visit, in which individuals are interviewed and asked to fill out a self-report. Both the interview, the self-report, and the Probation Officer's additional efforts reviewing collateral information (criminal records, DOC/HOC disciplinary reports, previous

probation notes which would include treatment history, information from family and friends, etc.) help in scoring out the actual tool. If there are questions on scoring throughout the process, Probation Officers also reference an ORAS scoring guide to help. Probation Officers must also prepare a case plan based off the assessment results.

For DOC and Probation, examples of offenders for whom risk and need assessments may not be available include:

- Offenders on Pre-Trial status
- Offenders recently sentenced to a custodial or community supervision placement
- Offenders with short custodial sentences (e.g., under 30 days)
- Offenders with a first-degree life sentence
- Offenders who refuse or are unable to participate due to medical reasons
- Offenders placed on Administrative, Driving Under the Influence of Liquor, Pre-Trial Probation or Pre-Trial Conditions of Release
- If an alternative risk assessment evaluation is conducted by an expert chosen by the attorney representing the client

Q: What is the difference between risk and need?
A: "In many justice contexts, risk is discussed in conjunction with needs. Needs commonly refer to changeable criminogenic factors that are related to the likelihood of reoffending, such as substance dependence… risk is the likelihood of re-offense, and it tells the justice system who to focus on, whether for detention or release, level of supervision, or intervention. Need factors provide targets for programming and services intended to change behavior and thereby reduce risk. They can also be used to predict risk along with other risk factors, but their use in risk assessment (i.e., prediction) is not the same as their role in needs assessment (i.e., problem identification)."

> *Source: Bureau of Justice Assistance, Public Safety Risk Assessment Clearing House (https://bja.ojp.gov/program/psrac)*

Q: Why is the number of cases measuring need sometimes less than the number of cases for measures of risk?
A: At the DOC, if an offender is assessed as medium or high risk, then the offender is subsequently administered the need assessment to identify one's specific criminogenic need areas.