Executive Office of Public Safety and Security
Cross-Tracking Charges and Convictions Dashboard FAQs

Q: What is Cross-Tracking?
A: Cross-Tracking is the Commonwealth's new statewide data initiative to standardize criminal justice information. Conceived as part of the criminal justice reform law signed by Governor Charlie Baker, 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 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 Supervision.

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. EOPSS supported the Sheriff Office Offender Management System upgrade to allow for the collection of the consistent data elements. EOPSS further coordinated with various Sheriff 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 the public-facing visualization designs. This is the fourth 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 are the counties referred to in the graphs?
A: In the Commonwealth of Massachusetts, there are 14 counties: Barnstable, Berkshire, Bristol, Dukes, Essex, Franklin, Hampden, Hampshire, Middlesex, Nantucket, Norfolk, Plymouth, Suffolk, and Worcester. Except for Nantucket, each County Sheriff's Office holds incarcerated individuals. Individuals convicted and/or arrested on Nantucket are transferred to the Barnstable County Sheriff's Office.

Q: What is a house of correction, jail, state facility, and prison?
A: There are several kinds of correctional facilities in the Commonwealth of Massachusetts.

Each County Sheriff's Office, excluding Nantucket, oversees a Jail. A Jail is a pretrial holding facility where individuals awaiting trial or sentencing are housed at the discretion of a judge.

The Sheriffs oversee Houses of Correction. An Offender sentenced to a House of Correction will receive a sentence limited to 2.5 years. But an Offender with a state prison sentence, may also be transferred to a House of Correction and subsequently released to a DOC institution.

DOC operates state correctional facilities (also referred to as prisons) housing various Offenders. Depending on their security and programming needs, individuals entrusted to DOC's care live in a pre-release, minimum, medium, or maximum-security facility.

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. To preserve anonymity, any data point resulting in an amount less than five, is not shown in the dashboard.

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 charges and convictions dashboard displays information for sentenced offenders in custody on January 1st for the years 2017 through 2023.

Excluded from these counts are:
- Pre-trial individuals;
- Civilly Committed Individuals;
- Juveniles;
- Individuals under the jurisdiction of the federal government, or another state's jurisdiction through an Interstate Compact Agreement;
- Any person sentenced in Massachusetts and serving custody in another jurisdiction via interstate compact;
- 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 pretrial or convicted); and
- Regional Lockups
- Any case that has been sealed or resulted in a not guilty disposition.

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: How is the age of the offender determined?
A: Age is defined as the age of the offender at the custodial date, that is the January 1st date when the offender was in custody. 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: Will additional data become available in the future?
A: Yes, the dashboard will expand to include additional statutory data fields. When fully achieved, Cross-Tracking will provide quality, standardized data to all agencies improving the efficiency and effectiveness of the criminal justice system. Equally important, the Cross-Tracking dashboards will provide anonymized and comprehensive data to the public and any interested party.

Q: What charges and convictions are included in the dashboard?
A: The dashboard includes all cases, charges, and convictions associated with the custodial placement of the offender on January 1st of the sampling year. Cases that were associated with probation transfers and parole revocations were not included in the dashboard.

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

Q: How were all charges and convictions captured?
A: Custodial agencies maintain detailed records on all charges associated with custodial placement. For sentenced Offenders this includes only those charges that resulted in a conviction and a sentence of incarceration. In contrast, the Trial Court maintains records on all charges and the disposition of each charge. To consistently report all charges and convictions for sentenced offenders, the dashboard linked the docket numbers and other information maintained by custodial agencies with MassCourts records maintained by the Trial Court.

Q: What is the difference between cases, charges, and convictions?
A:
- **Case(s)** – A criminal case is represented by a docket number and includes one or more criminal charges. An Offender may be in custody for one or more cases. The case filing date will be used to ensure that applicable cases are considered in the dashboard.

- **Charge(s)** – A case has one or more charges, i.e., crimes. The model will display a count of all charges associated with a court case, as recorded in MassCourts. If an Offender has more than one case, then the charges will be the total of charges associated with the case responsible for the custodial placement. The case filing date will be used to ensure that the correct charges are considered in the dashboard.

- **Conviction(s)** – A final disposition requiring a finding of guilt. In this dashboard, convictions are represented by all charges resulting in a conviction. The Trial Court disposition field identifies the disposition type. The model will distinguish between convicted dispositions and non-convicted dispositions. The count of convictions will include all convicted charges, even if the conviction did not result in a sentence to incarceration. If an Offender has more than one case, then the convictions will be the total of convicted charges across all applicable cases. The disposition date for the charge will be considered to ensure that the correct convictions are considered in the dashboard.

Q: How is the governing offense determined?
A: Pursuant to 501 CMR 18.00 "As determined by the Department of Correction or House of Correction, is the offense for which an Offender is committed to the Department of Correction or a House of Correction and which controls the overall sentence structure." For purposes of this dashboard, Governing offense applies only to sentenced Offenders in IMS, JMS, and the DOC. The DOC and JMS identify the governing offense. In OMS there is no designation. For custodial records where there is no identifiable governing offense designation, the dashboard will show the first felony charge listed resulting in a sentence to incarceration associated with the docket with the earliest filing date and the lowest docket number. If there are no applicable felony charges, then the first misdemeanor charge listed resulting in a sentence to incarceration associated with the docket with the earliest filing date and the lowest charge number is selected.

Q: What is offense severity?
A: Refers to the statutory penalty structure of the offense. Any offense for which a state prison sentence could be imposed is a felony. All other offenses are misdemeanors. This does not imply that a state prison sentence was imposed, only that a state prison sentence was an option for this charge. (see MGL Chapter 274, Section 1).

Q: What are offense types?
A: The public dashboard will display the total level broken down by offense type. The offense type will be determined by the statutory reference that is included in the charge action code associated with each charge in a docket number. Massachusetts General Laws (MGL) contains the statutory basis for criminal charges. Criminal charges are organized by statutory chapter. For example, MGL Chapter 265 is entitled "CRIMES AGAINST THE PERSON" and Chapter 94C is entitled "CONTROLLED SUBSTANCES ACT". For purposes of this dashboard, these chapter designations are used to aggregate offenses into offense types. The public dashboard displays all charges and convictions according to the following offense type categories:

M.G.L Chapter Reference	Offense Type
265	Person

266	Property
94C	Drug
90	Motor Vehicle
269	Weapons
Other	All other M.G.L. chapters, CMR, or municipal offenses

Q: What are offense sub-types?
A: The public dashboard displays data broken down offense sub-types. All charges were grouped into the offense types by statutory chapter reference and into offense sub-types.   The following table shows the offense types and offense sub-types available on the public dashboard:

Drug
    Distribute Class A
    Distribute Class B
    Distribute Class C
    Distribute Class D
    Distribute Class E
    Distribute School Zone
    Other Drug
    Possess Class A
    Possess Class B
    Possess Class C
    Possess Class D
    Possess Class E
    Traffick Class B/Cocaine
    Traffick Heroin
    Traffick Marihuana
Motor Vehicle
    Motor Vehicle Other
    MV Homicide
    MV OUI
Other
    License Violation
    Other
    Public Order
    Restraining Order, Violate
Person
    Assault
    Assault & Battery
    Kidnap
    Murder/Manslaughter
    Other Person

Robbery

Sex

Property

Arson/Burn

B&E / Burglary

Forgery

Fraud

Larceny

Motor Vehicle

Other Property

Shoplifting

Trespassing

Weapon

Dangerous Weapon

Firearm

Other Weapon