

2024 CSAC Challenge Awards – Executive Summary
Santa Barbara County Master Name Index (MNI) Project

Overview: The County’s MNI project is a data exchange infrastructure that ensures accurate data sharing across agencies’ disparate data systems, thereby enhancing efficiencies, outcome measurement, and customer service countywide.

Challenge: Several years ago, an inter-agency group that would later become the Santa Barbara County Data Sharing Committee (SBCDSC) was formed to explore and facilitate data sharing among County criminal justice agencies. The “challenge” was to improve the effectiveness and efficiency of departments by utilizing technology to improve data collection and analysis, outcome measurement, and reporting of shared clients, while also realizing workload efficiencies and improving customer service. Historically there have been two key roadblocks to data sharing: 1) data accuracy – matching common clients across disparate County systems, and 2) data governance – defining what is shared, who has access, how it is used, and for what purpose. In Santa Barbara as in many other counties, data privacy laws and regulations have led to data being siloed and not shared. The MNI project needed to overcome the siloing of data in disparate County systems—facing legal/regulatory data privacy restrictions as well as technical/governance challenges.

Solution: The MNI project resolves the core issue of cross-agency data sharing by creating a countywide unique identifier that can be associated with every County agency’s own data system. This virtual ‘handshake’, or index, allows disparate systems to identify common clients. With the index in place, partner agencies can connect data through the County Integrated Information System (CIIS), allowing the entire system to better utilize comprehensive information for decision- and policy-making. This has allowed contributing agencies to explore workload efficiencies and applications to improve customer service as well as leverage business intelligence and mobile technology to display dynamic, up-to-date data visualizations. The MNI employs a flexible technological architecture to support the addition of more County partners as the project scales over time, and the group is expected to expand to include other health & human services departments.

Innovation: Since its inception, the SBCDSC has focused on developing an infrastructure that incorporates robust governance and technical solutions to ensure appropriate data sharing, while preventing oversharing. As a result of a multi-agency partnership of County agencies and the Superior Court, the innovative MNI project and its accompanying infrastructure have improved data integration across agencies— previously hampered by both external and internal hurdles—to enable confident data sharing, thereby improving service delivery to community members.

Results: Due to the partnerships established through the SBCDSC and data exchanges facilitated through MNI, the County has realized positive results from many successful projects that support the County's goals of safe jail population reduction, reduced recidivism, and improved wellbeing and community supports for justice-involved individuals:

- Data Dashboards – Utilizing the infrastructure and collaboration of the SBCDSC and the CIIS, the [Probation Department launched a public-facing data dashboard](#) in 2021, improving transparency of criminal justice data. This iterative project has continually improved, and since then the [Sheriff's Office also launched a data dashboard](#).
- Jail Population Planning – Data utilized to report on County long-term jail population projections and policy options to reduce the jail population, along with associated projected impacts of implementing each policy. This information will assist the Board in critical determinations of necessary jail facility capacity and staffing.
- CREDO-47 Program Evaluation and Recidivism Analysis – Data utilized for Behavioral Wellness department to report recidivism data to the State for Proposition 47 grant requirements.
- Incompetent to Stand Trial (IST) – Data utilized to analyze the intersection of justice-involved and behavioral health populations, to better understand individuals declared IST, and adapt policy and practice opportunities accordingly.
- Discharge Planning for Special Populations – Data utilized to enhance discharge planning services to Medication-Assisted Treatment (MAT) patients, individuals being discharged from the Sheriff's specialized Behavioral Health Units (BHUs), and those with chronic care needs and/or serious mental health needs.
- CSAC Support Hub for Criminal Justice Programming (f.k.a. Results First Initiative) – The County is now able to confidently pull and report recidivism data on individuals supervised through Probation.
- Jail Booking Photo – Workload efficiency for departments (e.g. Probation) to streamline photos needed at intake.
- Jail Booking and Release Information – Supports discharge planning and completion of violation or Court reports.

Replicability: Other California counties can implement a similar structure with a strong collaboration among their public safety and health & human services departments. Each jurisdiction can tailor requirements and data agreements to meet their specific needs and comfort levels, to enhance service to individuals interacting with multiple county agencies.

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Additional Materials: N/A