Criminal Justice Administrative Records System (CJARS)

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Criminal Justice Administrative Records System (CJARS)

- Data infrastructure project to support the next generation of statistics and research on the criminal justice system
- Partnership between Census Bureau and University of Michigan (UM) started in 2016
- UM collects and harmonizes state and local criminal justice data
- At Census Bureau, these data can be linked to survey and administrative records

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CJARS project goals

- Collect, harmonize, and link longitudinal, multi-jurisdictional CJ data to track individuals and cases across space and time
- Enable timely and innovative federal statistical products about CJ system and justice-involved population
- Provide national research platform for qualified researchers on approved projects

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CJARS stakeholders

- **University of Michigan** acquires and harmonizes data from **criminal justice agencies**, including law enforcement, judicial, and corrections agencies
- **Census Bureau** links CJARS with other socioeconomic data to build data products for data providers, develop new data products, and improve operations
- Qualified **researchers** on approved projects analyze anonymized CJARS data in the FSRDCs
- **Communities and policymakers** use CJARS-derived statistical products to understand the performance of the criminal justice system

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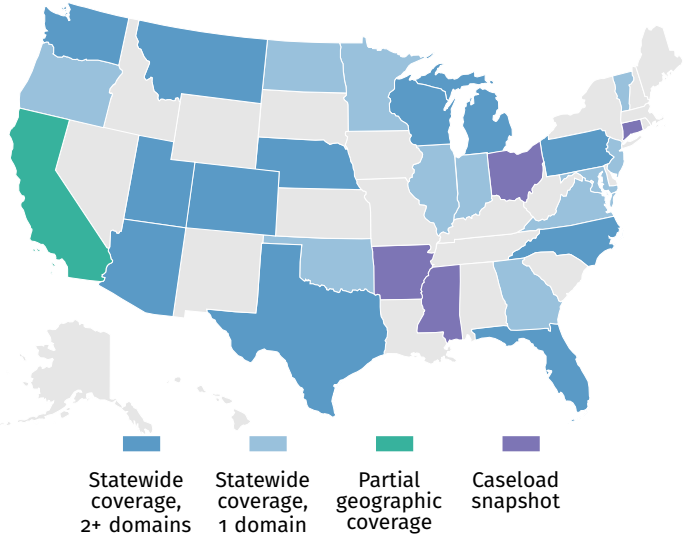
CJARS data coverage

- >300 data providers
- >1000 counties
- States with coverage of state court, state DOC, and/or state repository represent >59% of U.S. population
- 3b records
- 177m CJ events
- 38m unique individuals



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CJARS innovations in this session

- Offense classification tool supports work at other agencies and projects
- Automated data quality methods enable a small staff to harmonize data from many agencies
- Important research demonstrates the value of using CJARS within the Census Bureau's Data Linkage Infrastructure

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Additional resources

- Project website at Census: `https://census.gov/cjars`
- Project website at UM: `https://cjars.isr.umich.edu`
- Data documentation: `https://cjars.isr.umich.edu/data-documentation-download`
- Offense classification tool: `https://cjars-toc.isr.umich.edu`

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Thank you

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Project scope and data collection

3k sheriff's offices/3k jails

3k prosecutor's offices

50 state court admins/3k criminal courts

50 state departments of corrections

Arrest | Pre-trial detention | Adjudication | Probation | Incarceration | Parole

18k police departments

50 state criminal records repositories

community corrections agencies

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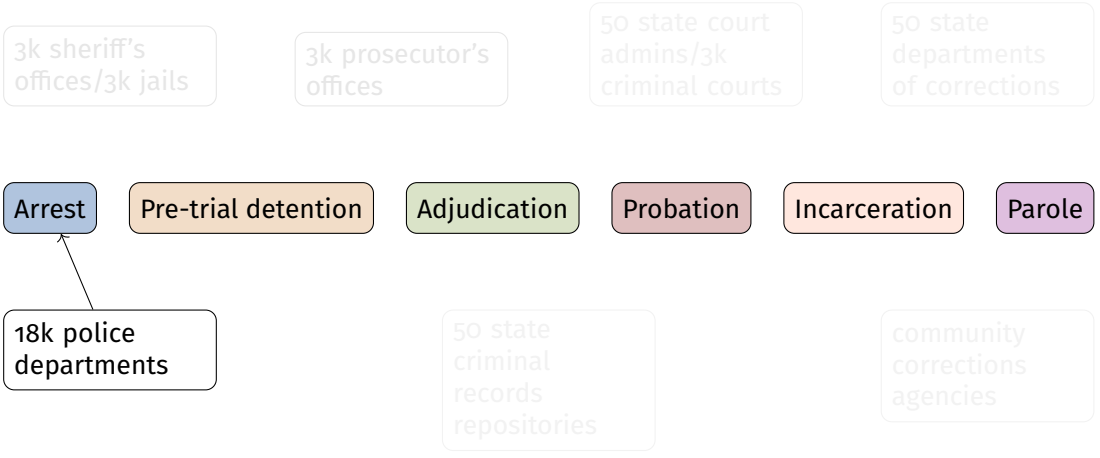

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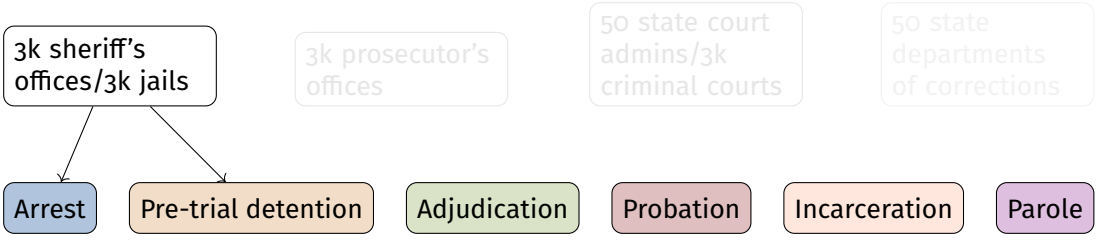

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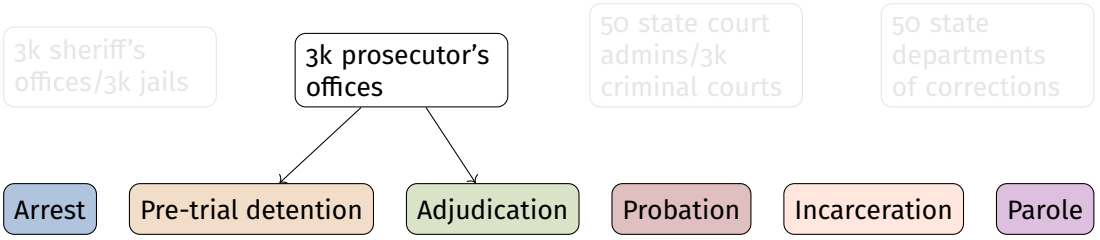

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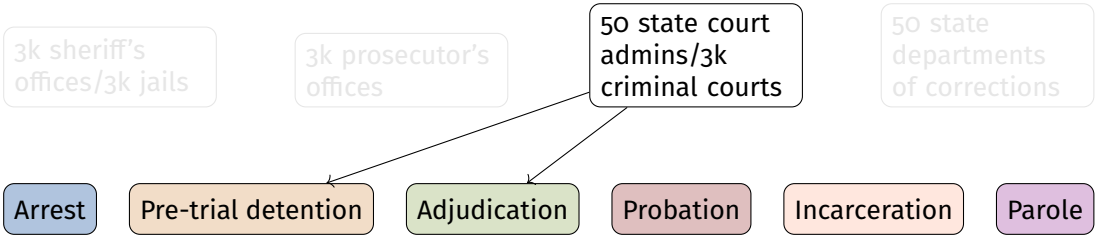

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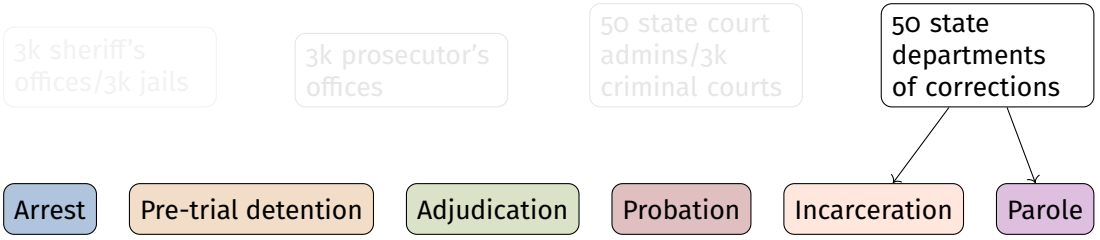

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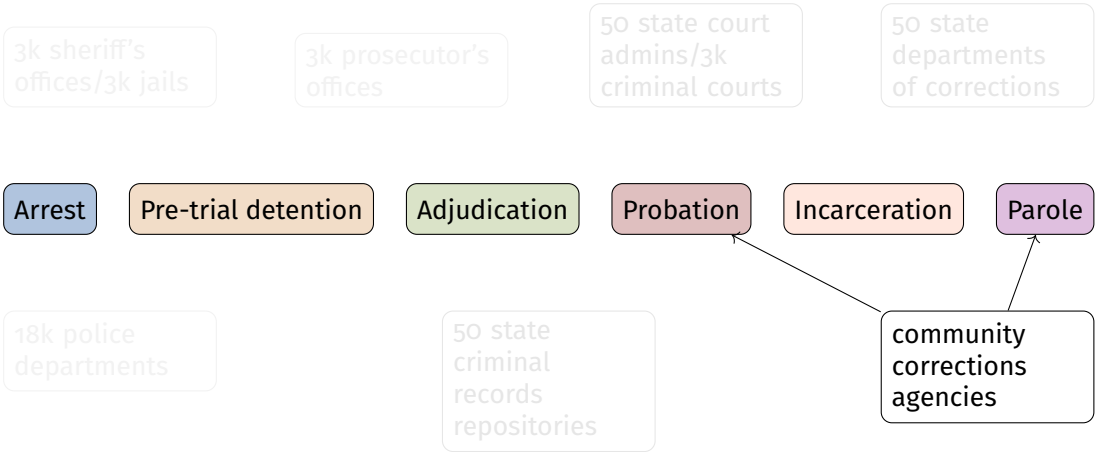

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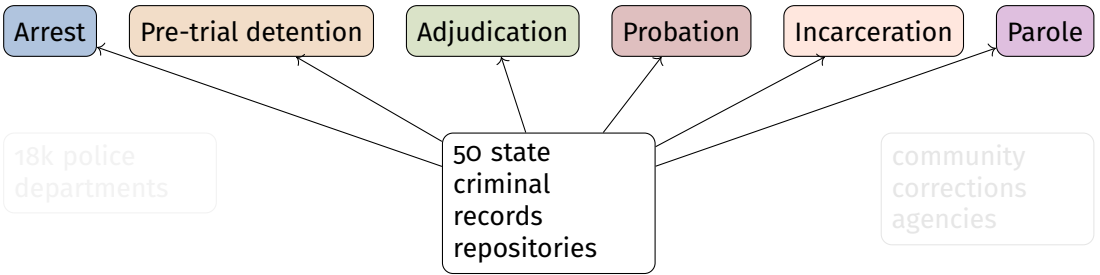

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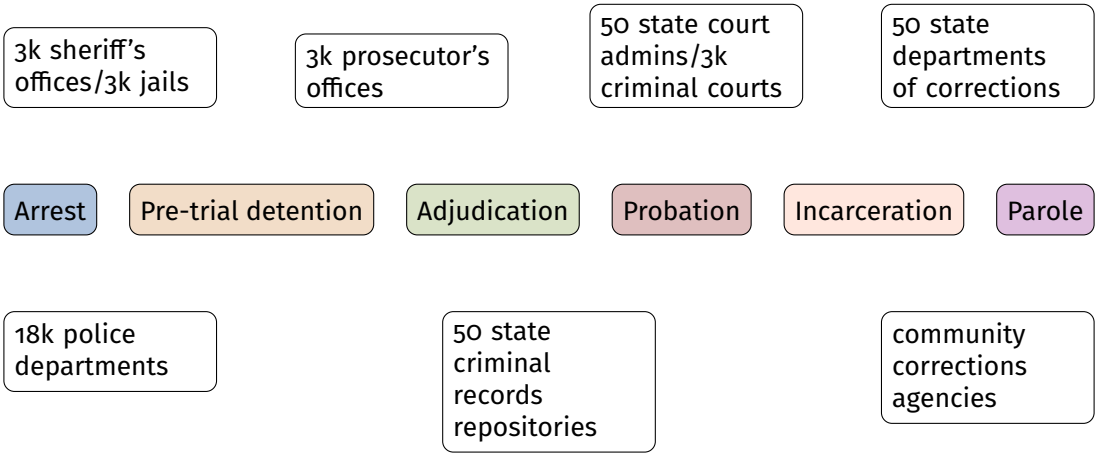

Out of scope: civil court proceedings, traffic offenses below misdemeanor level, crime reports not associated with arrest, juvenile records not transferred to criminal court, records without personally identifiable information

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