



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
May 25, 2017

CONTACT: Jim Bray
217-494-5532

New Website Explains Overrepresentation of Minority Youth in Chicago's Juvenile Justice System

Open Source Data Can Be Downloaded for Deep Dive

CHICAGO – A new website, JusticeDivided.com, will increase public awareness of the overrepresentation of minority Chicago youth in the juvenile justice system and provide open source data for research by community members and journalists, eventually leading to changes in practices and policies.

“The purpose of the website is to call attention to the overrepresentation of minority youth in the juvenile justice system and to provide factual and easy-to-access data from verified public data sources,” said Hannah Cushman, Developer at DataMade, a civic technology company based in Chicago. “By using accurate information, the public can have a better understanding of the degree of the problem and learn how to reduce the inequality.”

“The site is targeted to inform youth, provide them with tools to become engaged in policy reform efforts and provide resources to help them overcome the collateral consequences of having an arrest record,” said Era Lauder milk, Deputy Director of the Illinois Justice Project.”

Some visitors will be surprised to learn that black youth make up only 42 percent of Chicago's youth population but account for 79 percent of arrests and 87 percent of imprisonments.

“The website is intended to encourage a public discussion of inequity: for example, while black and white youth have the same rate of marijuana use, blacks are arrested far more often,” Lauder milk said. “The website also is a resource to spur discussion of how to develop and implement policies and practices to reduce disproportionate minority contact, as well as information to help kids in trouble stay out of trouble.”

– more –

Because the data includes neighborhood breakdowns of youth arrests by race, a visitor can find demographic arrest data for every police district and compare districts on a map of the city.

DataMade built the website in partnership with the Adler University, Project NIA and the Illinois Justice Project. Funding was provided by the Polk Bros. Foundation, which partners with local nonprofit organizations that work to reduce the impact of poverty and provide area residents with better access to quality education, preventive health care and basic human services.

“Disproportionate Minority Contact in the juvenile justice system is not unique to Chicago, but it must not be viewed as a problem that is so ingrained that it cannot be eliminated,” said Dan Cooper, Executive Director of Adler University's Center for Equitable Cities. “While it directly impacts minorities, it touches all of us. Because youth of color are arrested more often and receive harsher penalties, there are long lasting, damaging effects that can include interruption of education, difficulty finding a job and can create behavior problems that send youth even deeper into the justice and prison systems.”

###

About the Illinois Justice Project

Working at the state and local levels, the **Illinois Justice Project (ILJP)** uses research findings to advance proven criminal justice reforms of policies and practices that make communities safer and make the justice system more equitable. Established in 2014 as a legacy project of Metropolis Strategies, the non-profit ILJP is a supporting organization of the Chicago Community Trust and an affiliate of The Commercial Club of Chicago. www.ILJP.org

About Our Partners:

Adler University continues the pioneering work of the first community psychologist Alfred Adler by graduating socially responsible practitioners, engaging communities, and advancing social justice.

Project NIA offers a new way of thinking about crime and violence. Project NIA uses the principles of participatory community justice – often called restorative or transformative justice – which has been shown to meet the needs of victims, reduce recidivism, and improve satisfaction with the legal system.