

MEASURING SUCCESS



CREATING AN ARREST ALERT SYSTEM

About the Series

New York County (Manhattan) District Attorney Cyrus R. Vance, Jr. created the Crime Strategies Unit to develop and implement intelligence-driven prosecution strategies. Among the new strategies the Unit developed was the Arrest Alert system: customized software that notifies prosecutors by email of priority arrests involving a specific individual, a specific charge, or a specific arrest location. By swiftly alerting prosecutors of high-priority arrests, the system ensures that prosecutors have detailed and updated information to make the most appropriate charging decisions, pretrial release or detention requests, and sentencing recommendations.

THE FACT SHEETS

1. What is an Arrest Alert?
2. Identifying and Managing Priority Arrests
3. Developing the Technology
4. Measuring Success
5. Examples of How Arrest Alerts Can Be Helpful

Fact Sheet #4 provides a brief guide on the components and methods necessary to conduct basic performance monitoring and evaluation of an arrest alert system.

Performance Monitoring

Performance monitoring is a vital tool that can be used to determine if the arrest alert system is operating as intended and is producing the expected outcomes. Performance monitoring does not necessarily require complex statistical analysis; however, it does require the researcher to, at a minimum, be familiar with the program and general research methods.

Identifying Performance Measures

Performance measures are specific and quantifiable measures that indicate whether and to what extent the arrest alert system is accomplishing its pre-established goals. In general, performance measures should be identified early in the planning process. They should be easy to document and always take the form of numbers, percentages, proportions, or answers to simple yes/no questions regarding whether or not an activity is taking place.

Below are a few examples of performance indicators to consider for monitoring or evaluating an arrest alert system.

1. Criteria for Priority Arrests:

- a. General criteria have been established for the entire prosecutorial jurisdiction, or varying neighborhoods within it, for the kinds of individuals, charges, and locations that should be classified as priorities (yes/no)
- b. Neighborhood or area-specific criteria have been created for identifying priority locations (e.g., a housing complex, range of blocks, or a zip code) (yes/no)
- c. Number of neighborhoods or areas in which priority individuals reside. (It is assumed that each neighborhood will have distinct crime problems that influence the kinds of individuals classified as priorities.) (number)



2. Identifying Specific Individuals, Charges, and Locations as Priorities:

- a. Number of priorities identified by law enforcement in the past year (number)
- b. Number of priorities identified by prosecutors in the past year (number)
- c. Number of priorities identified by community stakeholders or others in the past year (number)

3. Priority Arrest Volume:

- a. Number of priority individuals, charges, and locations overall for the jurisdiction and by specific neighborhood or area of interest (numbers)
- b. Number of new priority individuals, charges, and locations identified and entered into the system in the past year for the jurisdiction and by specific neighborhood or area of interest (numbers)

4. Engaging with Partners:

- a. Number of meetings prosecutors have held in past year with local law enforcement regarding the arrest alert system and priority arrests (number) and number of police precincts or commands with whom meetings have been held (number)
- b. Number of meetings with community leaders prosecutors involved with implementing the arrest alert system have attended (number)

5. Use by Prosecutors:

- a. Written policy or protocol developed for arrest alert system (yes/no)
- b. Training held on arrest alert system for line prosecutors (yes/no)
- c. Number of prosecutors trained in using the arrest alert system (number)
- d. Number of prosecutors not yet trained in using the arrest alert system (number)

- e. Number of supervisory reviews of line prosecutors that include the knowledge and use of arrest alert system (number)

In addition to these examples, a prosecutor’s office may also want to gain a precise understanding of how prosecutors actually use the arrest alert system.

For example, how frequently do prosecutors receive arrest alert notifications? At what stage of the criminal process is the intelligence associated with arrest alert notifications most useful— i.e., pre-arraignment, investigation stage, or post-disposition? And how often do prosecutors adjust their decisions (e.g., pretrial release or detention requests, whether to debrief a defendant, plea offers, or sentencing recommendations) in response to arrest alerts?

This kind of information may be difficult to track through database or record-keeping methods. If so, prosecutor’s offices might consider administering occasional surveys to line prosecutors. These surveys can be web-based making them easily accessible and may include measuring the frequency of usage and any barriers that prosecutors have encountered in accessing information, interpreting it, and taking concrete actions in response.

Performance measures are essential in constructing a logic model and conducting an evaluation as they become the outputs and outcomes that are key components to any evaluation.

Creating A Logic Model

Logic models are visual diagrams and can be thought of as road maps that display how resources are transformed into activities and how these activities are linked to particular outcomes. Information necessary to create a logic model for an arrest alert system includes program goals and objectives, policies, staffing,

performance measures (outputs and outcomes), and data sources. In general, logic models (see Figure 1 on page 4) often include four concepts to demonstrate program functioning:

1. Resources include any investments into the arrest alert system. These investments may require additional money, staff, office space, computers, and other materials.

The resources in the Manhattan District Attorney’s Office’s (Manhattan D.A.’s Office) logic model included:

- *The Crime Strategies Unit—staffed by a chief, five Assistant District Attorneys, several crime analysts and an administrative assistant—was created. The attorneys do not have an active caseload, but instead work to identify and collect intelligence on priority individuals, charges, and locations. This gathered intelligence forms the basis of Manhattan’s Arrest Alert system.*
- *The cooperation and support of the New York City Police Department (NYPD), community leaders, and other law enforcement agencies.*
- *Information technology staff.*

2. Activities include any actions or events undertaken by staff working with the arrest alert system.

In establishing and managing the Arrest Alert system, the Manhattan D.A.’s Office’s Crime Strategies Unit engaged in the following activities:

- *Established relationships with the NYPD and community leaders. One of the ways to secure these relationships involved its staff attending monthly community and police led meetings.*
- *Requested NYPD precinct commanders to identify 25 crime drivers. Once this information was received from all 22 precincts, the Crime Strategies Unit staff began collecting, storing, and organizing intelligence on these individuals who became the first wave of priority offenders with arrest alerts.*

These actions established the foundation in which the Crime Strategies Unit staff could engage in program activities. These activities included, among other activities, establishing web-based resources to house the intelligence gathered on priority individuals, and conducting numerous lectures and trainings in order to inform potential users (prosecutors) about Arrest Alert and how to use it.

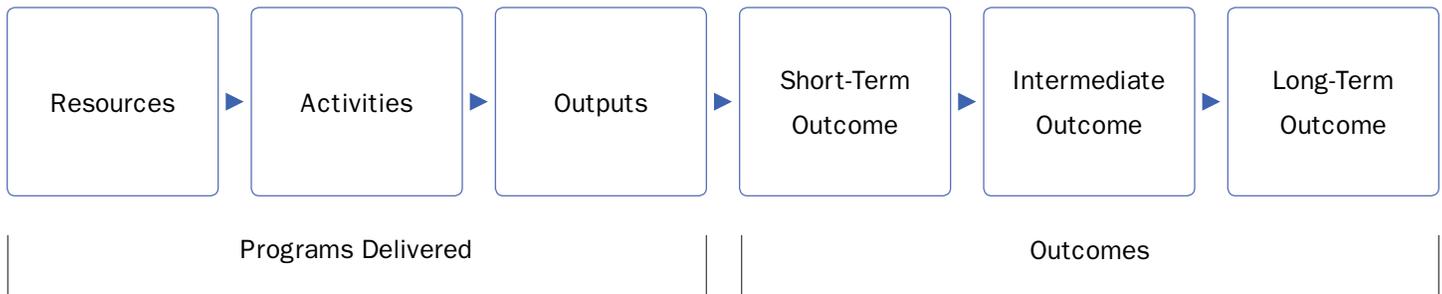
3. Outputs are the direct result of activities, are typically quantified, and can include the size and scope of services and products created.

The Crime Strategies Unit produced numerous outputs which include the Arrest Alert system. The Crime Strategies Unit also created electronically accessible databases which provide prosecutors with a wealth of information regarding homicides, shootings, and gangs. These databases also feature contact information for law enforcement officials by police precincts, general information regarding the geography of public housing buildings in Manhattan, as well as photo sheets of defendants (i.e., mug shots) who are identified as gang members. The Crime Strategies Unit also created a web-based form, “DANY311,” in which prosecutors and paralegals can submit inquiries regarding defendants, victims, and witnesses. This web-based system also tracks questions and responses allowing the Crime Strategies Unit to examine and identify trends in inquiries as well as the response time by staff.

4. Outcomes include the anticipated benefits that program activities and their immediate outputs produce. Outcomes can be separated into three types: short-term, intermediate, and long-term.

Short-term outcomes for the Manhattan D.A.’s Office’s Crime Strategies Unit included an accurate understanding of the nature of crime issues in different communities. Intermediate outcomes included enhanced prosecutions, which could manifest themselves as a change in charging

Figure 1. Basic Logic Model ¹



decisions, pretrial release or detention (including monetary bail bond) requests, or sentencing recommendations. The long-term outcome for the Manhattan Crime Strategies Unit is an increase in public safety.

As indicated in Figure 1, resources, activities, and outputs are inherent in the program. They should immediately reflect what an arrest alert system is doing and what staff or other resources it is using to accomplish its activities. By comparison, short-term, intermediate, and long-term outcomes may all be thought of as less under the direct control of program staff or as less inherent in program activities. Rather, outcomes are the results that the program achieves after the work of the program is done. In the case of an arrest alert system, examples of outcomes would be changed pretrial release or detention requests, plea recommendations, and sentencing recommendations (due to more available information), less crime, less re-offending, increased ability to prosecute cold cases, etc.

Once the logic model is constructed, an evaluator can use the model as a guide in developing a process and outcome evaluation.

Developing a Process Evaluation

Process evaluations document policies, procedures, organizational structures, technological resources or innovations, and the characteristics of those using the arrest alert system.

Arrest alert systems may vary substantially based on the characteristics of the region, jurisdiction, or neighborhood where they are used, and based on the nature of priority individuals (felony offenders, violent offenders, or persistent low-level offenders). In order to conduct a basic process evaluation, the evaluator must use a variety of data sources including documentation that describes the original goals, objectives, policies, and staffing associated with the arrest alert system, as well as interviews or focus groups with community leaders. Interviews or focus groups should include discussions with the individuals who are in charge of the arrest alert system, as well as a sample of line prosecutors who have experience using it. Another strategy is to ask prosecutors to complete a brief survey in which they can indicate how frequently they create and/or use arrest alerts and which of their decisions are influenced by the system (see example of a brief survey on page 7).

¹ Adapted from Wholey, J.A., Hatry, H.P. and Newcomer, K.E. (Eds.). (2004). Handbook of Practical Program Evaluation. Jossey-Bass, San Francisco: CA.

The following is a list of questions that can be used when evaluating an arrest alert system.

1. How are priority individuals, charges, and locations identified?
 - What is the role of input from local law enforcement or community members?
 - Do priority individuals, charges, and locations vary within a jurisdiction depending on the needs or priorities of specific neighborhoods?
 - Do priority individuals throughout the jurisdiction share common characteristics (i.e., gang members, violent offending, weapons offending, drug crime, prostitution, or other low-level offenses)?²
2. Is the arrest alert system being implemented as planned?
 - Are local law enforcement and community members providing input or coordinating with the prosecutor’s office as intended?
 - What type of information is included in the arrest alert?
 - Is there anything that can be added/removed to improve the usefulness of the arrest alerts?
 - Are outdated arrest alerts being identified and removed from the system in a timely manner (i.e., this includes defendants who may have been sentenced to long prison terms, left the state, or passed away)?
 - Are the services and resources being delivered to the intended persons (prosecutors)?
3. Do a sufficient number of prosecutors use the arrest alert system?
 - At what stage of the criminal process are line prosecutors most likely to utilize arrest alerts?
 - Which decisions are influenced (pretrial release/ detention, debriefing decision, dispositions/

sentencing, etc.) and, according to prosecutors, how often are decisions influenced and are decisions influenced in the intended ways?

4. Are prosecutors provided the information necessary to know how to use and create arrest alerts?
5. What is the quality of the relationship with local law enforcement, and does this relationship vary within the jurisdiction (from one neighborhood/ area to another)?
6. What are the perceptions of the usefulness and ease of navigation of the arrest alert system?
7. Are there any implementation obstacles?
8. In what ways has the arrest alert system deviated from the original goals and policies? Is this deviation seen as a necessary adaptation or maladaptation?

Once the plan for a process evaluation has been put into place it is important to develop a strategy for collecting important quantitative data demonstrating the scope and reach of the system.

Developing Additional Quantitative Performance Measures

The intent of the additional measures that follow is to quantitatively measure the degree to which the arrest alert system has achieved its intended outputs as well as immediate and intermediate outcomes. This differs from the purpose of an impact evaluation, which is utilized to measure long-term outcomes and requires the use of a comparison group.

² Prosecutors’ offices should be aware of potential disparate impact of decisions on racial and ethnic groups, and accordingly, strive to adopt measures that promote equity throughout all stages of the criminal justice continuum.

Specifically, interviews, focus groups, and surveys, as well as review of the information in the data-tracking tools can all be used as a way of answering questions such as:

1. How many arrest alerts have been created since the implementation of the program (or over select periods of time, Year 1 v. Year 2 v. Year 3, etc., where the expectation is that use will grow over time)?
2. How many prosecutors use the arrest alert system and how often do they use it?

If a comparison group can be identified from similar defendants who were not subject to an arrest alert, then it is possible to examine project impacts, such as:

1. Is the arrest alert system producing intended immediate and intermediate outcomes (i.e., enhanced charging decisions, locating uncooperative witnesses, pretrial release or detention requests, and sentencing recommendations for priority targets)?
2. Can these be quantified?

SAMPLE SURVEY

About this Sample Survey: The following is a web-based survey administered to Manhattan Assistant District Attorneys in 2015. Questions address their use of the arrest alert system as well as their contact with the office’s Crime Strategies Unit (CSU).

District Attorney of New York County Intelligence Driven Prosecution Survey 2015

With funding from the Bureau of Justice Assistance, the New York County District Attorney’s Office is working with the Association of Prosecuting Attorneys and the Center for Court Innovation to conduct an evaluation of the Office’s intelligence-driven prosecution model. This evaluation focuses on the Office’s arrest alert system and aims to develop a program and tools to support this model’s replication in other jurisdictions.

The purpose of this survey is to collect information regarding how ADAs and others use the arrest alert system and its related resources, and how this information sharing affects decision making. Your responses will provide valuable feedback as to how the current system is utilized and can help improve the Office’s ability to provide appropriate resources to ADAs in the prosecution of their cases.

All information is anonymous. Responses will be collected, tabulated, and analyzed by the Center for Court Innovation and included in a summary report. Individual responses will not be disclosed.

If you have any questions about this survey, please contact Erin J. Farley, Senior Research Associate at the Center for Court Innovation, at [include contact information].

Respondent Information

1. What is your current position in the Manhattan District Attorney’s Office?
2. How long have you worked in this position?
___ years (drop down) <1,2,3,4,5,6,7,8,9,10+
3. In the past six months, have you been assigned to ECAB³ (excluding supervisor shifts)?
___ Yes
___ No
___ NA (I am not an ADA)

Section I: Contact with CSU

In answering Questions 4 through 16, only consider the past 6 months.

4. Has CSU contacted you without you contacting them first?
___ Yes
___ No [If no, skip to Question 8]
5. Approximately how many cases or investigations has CSU contacted you regarding?
1-5, 6-10, 11-15, 16-20, 21 or more
6. How frequently did CSU use the following methods to contact you?
1 – never, 2 – rarely, 3 – occasionally,
4 – frequently, 5 – very frequently
___ Phone
___ Email
___ Other (please describe) _____

³ “ECAB” refers to the Manhattan District Attorney’s Office’s Early Case Assessment Bureau.

- 7. When was CSU most likely to contact you?
 - Pre-arrest/investigation phase
 - ECAB
 - Misdemeanors – post criminal court arraignment
 - Felonies – post-criminal court arraignment, pre-Grand Jury presentation
 - Felonies – post-Grand Jury, pre-Supreme Court arraignment
 - Felonies – post-Supreme Court arraignment (through trial or plea)
- 8. Have you contacted CSU, either directly or via a DANY 311 request, without CSU first making the initial contact?
 - Yes
 - No (If no skip to question 17)
- 9. On approximately how many cases or investigations have you contacted CSU (including via a DANY 311 request) about?
1-5, 6-10, 11-15, 16-20, 21 or more
- 10. Please indicate your primary reason(s) for contacting CSU.
 - To check for video camera locations
 - To obtain general background or intel on a particular person
 - To obtain general intel on a particular gang or geographic area
 - To get help reaching out to a member of the police department
 - To search for additional contact information for a witness
 - To learn whether a particular person is active on social media
 - To set up an arrest alert
 - To expedite a subpoena process
 - Other (write in) _____
- 11. On a scale of 1 to 5, how frequently did you use the following methods to contact CSU?
1 – never, 2 – rarely, 3 – occasionally, 4 – frequently, 5 – very frequently
 - Phone
 - DANY 311
 - Email
 - Other (please describe) _____
- 12. At what point(s) during a case or investigation were you most likely to initiate contact with CSU (including DANY 311 requests)?
 - Pre-arrest/investigation phase
 - ECAB
 - Misdemeanors – post criminal court arraignment
 - Felonies – post-criminal court arraignment, pre-Grand Jury presentation
 - Felonies – post-Grand Jury, pre-Supreme Court arraignment
 - Felonies – post-Supreme Court arraignment (through trial or plea)
- 13. On what types of cases or investigations did you reach out to CSU or DANY 311? Select all that apply.
 - Violent felonies
 - Non-drug non-violent felonies
 - Drug felonies
 - Domestic violence felonies
 - Non-Domestic violence non-drug misdemeanors
 - Domestic violence misdemeanors
 - Drug misdemeanors

14. How frequently did you use the following resources or links provided on the CSU SharePoint website?
1 – never, 2 – rarely, 3 – occasionally,
4 – frequently, 5 – very frequently
- a. DANY 311
 - b. Glossary of street slang
 - c. DANY InPho (Inmate call summary form)
 - d. Homicides/shootings by precinct
 - e. Precinct information
 - f. NYCHA map
 - g. Photosheets
 - h. SCIM
 - i. Gangs/crews
 - j. Bureau based projects
 - k. Violent crime statistics
 - l. I was unaware of the CSU SharePoint website's existence
 - m. I am aware of the CSU SharePoint website, but I have not used it in the past six months.
15. At what stage of a case or investigation were you most likely to seek out the information provided on the CSU SharePoint website? Please rank from 1 to 6. (Skip to Question 16 if you have not used the CSU SharePoint website in the past six months.)
- Pre-arrest/investigation phase
 - ECAB
 - Misdemeanors – post criminal court arraignment
 - Felonies – post-criminal court arraignment, pre-Grand Jury presentation
 - Felonies – post-Grand Jury, pre-Supreme Court arraignment
 - Felonies – post-Supreme Court arraignment (through trial or plea)
16. What type(s) of information were you provided by CSU or DANY 311 that was not apparent from the defendant's RAP sheet? Select all that apply.
- Defendant/witness gang affiliation
 - Defendant as a suspect in unsolved crimes
 - Defendant victimization information
 - Defendant or witness nickname or other personal information
 - Social media information
 - Crime data
 - Geographic context
 - Priority recidivist for DANY or NYPD;
 - Other (please describe): _____
- In answering Questions 17 through 20, only consider cases or investigations where you received information from CSU or DANY 311 within the past six months:
17. How frequently did information provided by CSU impact your case or investigation at any point?
1 – never, 2 – rarely, 3 – occasionally,
4 – frequently, 5 – very frequently
18. How frequently did the information provided by CSU or DANY 311 impact your decisions or recommendations to the court during the following stages of your case or investigation?
1 – never, 2 – rarely, 3 – occasionally,
4 – frequently, 5 – very frequently
- Investigation
 - Charging
 - Bail Recommendation (including specific bail amount)
 - Plea Offer or Sentencing Recommendation
19. On average, how much did the information you received from CSU or DANY 311 affect the amount of bail you requested?
1 – did not affect, 2 – slightly affected,
3 – moderately affected, 4 – strongly affected

20. On average, how much did the information you received from CSU or DANY 311 affect your plea offers or sentencing recommendations?
1 – did not affect, 2 – slightly affected,
3 – moderately affected, 4 – strongly affected

Section II: Your Use of the Arrest Alert System

In answering Questions 21 through 33, only consider the past 6 months.

21. Approximately how many arrest alerts do you have (excluding automatically generated open case arrest alerts)?
0, 1-5, 6-10, 11-20, 21-30, 31-40, 41 or more
22. How many of those arrest alerts have been added (by you or someone else) in the past six months (excluding automatically generated open case arrest alerts)?
0, 1-5, 6-10, 11-20, 21-30, 31-40, 41 or more
23. How many of those added arrest alerts are for witnesses or victims?
0, 1-5, 6-10, 11-20, 21-30, 31-40, 41 or more
24. How many of those added arrest alerts do not include witnesses or victims?
0, 1-5, 6-10, 11-20, 21-30, 31-40, 41 or more
25. Have you received an arrest alert notification in the past six months?
 Yes
 No
 NA (I don't have any arrest alerts)
26. Have you received an arrest alert notification for a witness or a victim in the past six months?
 Yes
 No
 NA (I don't have any arrest alerts for victims or witnesses)
27. Please rank your primary reasons for creating an arrest alert for a witness or a victim.
 Giglio reasons (i.e. to ensure that you are informed if a witness or a victim with a prior criminal history is re-arrested.)
 To attempt to locate a missing witness or victim and/or to produce a witness or a victim for a court appearance
 Other (write in) _____
28. Has another ADA reached out to you regarding an arrest alert that you created?
 Yes
 No
 NA (I have not created an arrest alert)
29. When you are drafting a felony case in ECAB, do you routinely check to see whether an arrest alert for that defendant exists?
 Yes
 No
 NA (I do not draft felony cases)
 NA (I have not been in ECAB in the past six months)
30. When you are drafting a misdemeanor in ECAB, do you routinely check to see whether an arrest alert for that defendant exists?
 Yes
 No
 NA (I have not been in ECAB in the past six months)
31. While in ECAB, approximately how many times has someone reached out to you regarding an existing arrest alert before or while you are drafting the case associated with that alert?
NA (I have not been in ECAB in the last six months)
0,1-5, 6-10, 11-20, 21-30, 31-40, 41 or more

32. How many times have you found the information contained in an arrest alert useful while you were drafting a case in ECAB?
NA (I have not been in ECAB in the last six months)
0, 1-5, 6-10, 11-15, 16-20, 21 or more
33. Approximately how many times has the arrest alert system caused you to take an investigative step that you would not have otherwise taken? (i.e. reach out to a police officer, reach out to another ADA, reach out to a defense attorney, attempt to take a statement or debrief the defendant)
0, 1-5, 6-10, 11-15, 16-20, 21 or more

Section III: Suggestions

34. Do you have any suggestions about how the office's intelligence-driven prosecution model, CSU, or the arrest alert system can be of additional value?

Thank you for your cooperation!

For More Information

Please visit www.creatingarrestalert.com, contact the Association of Prosecuting Attorneys at info@apainc.org, visit <http://manhattanda.org/intelligence-driven-prosecution-crime-strategies-unit>, or contact the Manhattan District Attorney's Office's Crime Strategies Unit at IDP@dany.nyc.gov.

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