



# ENHANCING PROSECUTORIAL INTEGRITY

## VALUE

When a member of our community faces trial within the criminal justice system, we want to know that the system is operating in a fair and honorable manner. Prosecutors represent the government – and in extension, us - and therefore must reflect the highest levels of integrity and ethics in their work. We expect our prosecutors to be unbiased, fair, and committed to transparent administration of justice.

## PROBLEM

Unfortunately, studies show that prosecutors are frequently biased against low-income defendants and defendants of color. And currently, there are nowhere near enough systems in place to prevent prosecutorial biases.

## SOLUTION

Transparency and accountability measures can provide incentives for prosecutors to uphold the highest standards of integrity. For example, by collecting data about which charges prosecutors decline to pursue, or which sentences they request, supervisors can provide more effective guidance to junior prosecutors. They may discover, for example, that some lawyers are seeking more severe penalties for some defendants than for others who have engaged in similar acts. Therefore, data and transparency in the prosecutorial decision-making process are crucial to ensuring integrity.

## ACTION

Urge your state government to require the independent review of the administration of prosecutors' office to ensure that there is equity in prosecutorial decision-making; and data collection on prosecutorial decision-making, that shows how offices are treating people of different races, religions, ethnicities, and other categories.