



National Prosecutors' Consortium

Survey Highlights

New Jersey

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NEW JERSEY REPORT

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

Background.....	1	Specialty Courts.....	9
Methodology.....	1	Alternatives to Incarceration.....	11
The Current State: New Jersey.....	2	Specialized Programs.....	12
Overview: Types of Cases.....	2	Community Programs.....	13
Chief Prosecutor.....	4	Technology.....	14
Office Budget.....	4	Body-Worn Cameras.....	14
Starting Salaries.....	6	Websites.....	16
Case Processing	6	Research.....	16
Number of Employees.....	7	Conclusions.....	17
Prosecutor Initiatives.....	9		



BACKGROUND

The National Prosecutors' Consortium (NPC), a collaboration between Justice & Security Strategies (JSS) and the Prosecutors' Center for Excellence (PCE), is designed to collect information on innovative programs employed by prosecutors' offices, to assist prosecutors in developing and deploying new programs, and to expand the research capacities of prosecutors' offices. The team developed a survey that is being administered at the county level across the United States on a state-by-state basis. This survey seeks to accomplish two objectives to support prosecution needs: 1) collection of a thorough baseline of information on the operation of county prosecutors' offices across the country, and 2) identification of those offices that have adopted innovative programs.



METHODOLOGY

NPC conducted focus groups with prosecutors and prosecutor coordinating offices. As part of this effort, NPC identified the desired topic areas and reviewed survey questions. The survey is designed as an agency-based questionnaire intended to collect data on the characteristics and operations within each prosecutor's office. The survey is delivered through an online, secure, cloud-based service using the Qualtrics survey platform. States will be offered this survey on a rolling basis.

As part of the data quality assurance process, we have identified a battery of 84 questions that provide the core information of the survey. To minimize the proportion of missing data, the weighted number of completed responses is compared to a threshold. Offices in counties where the responses did not pass this threshold will be contacted and additional responses will be requested. This report discusses responses from all partially complete surveys, but there may be changes in the number of valid cases for some questions as follow-ups with agencies continue.

THE CURRENT STATE - NEW JERSEY

This report discusses preliminary results from the state of New Jersey. Out of the 21 counties that were contacted in New Jersey, at the time of this report, 20 counties (95%) completed the survey. **Figure 1** presents the counties in New Jersey that were asked to participate.

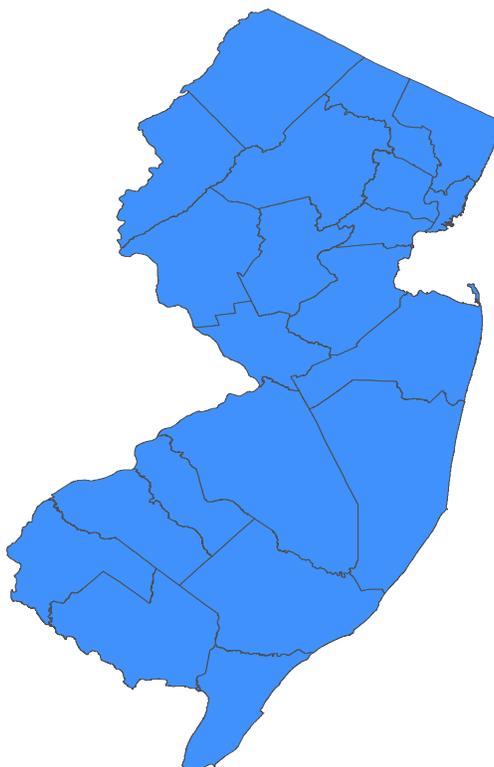


Figure 1. County Prosecutors' Offices in New Jersey

TYPES OF CASES

Figure 2 depicts the percentage of prosecutors' offices handling specific types of cases. All offices reported handling felonies, 95% reported handling juvenile cases, and 60% reported handling misdemeanors. Three offices reported handling infraction cases. Approximately 85% of the responding offices (N = 17) reported handling civil matters. Figure 3 highlights the percentage of prosecutors' offices involved in various types of civil matters. Of the 17 offices that reported involvement in civil matters, only two offices reported handling child protection matters, and one office reported handling child support matters. Slightly more offices reported handling adult protection and mental health commitment cases. Finally, 17 offices reported handling Civil Forfeitures and FOIA or Public Information Requests.

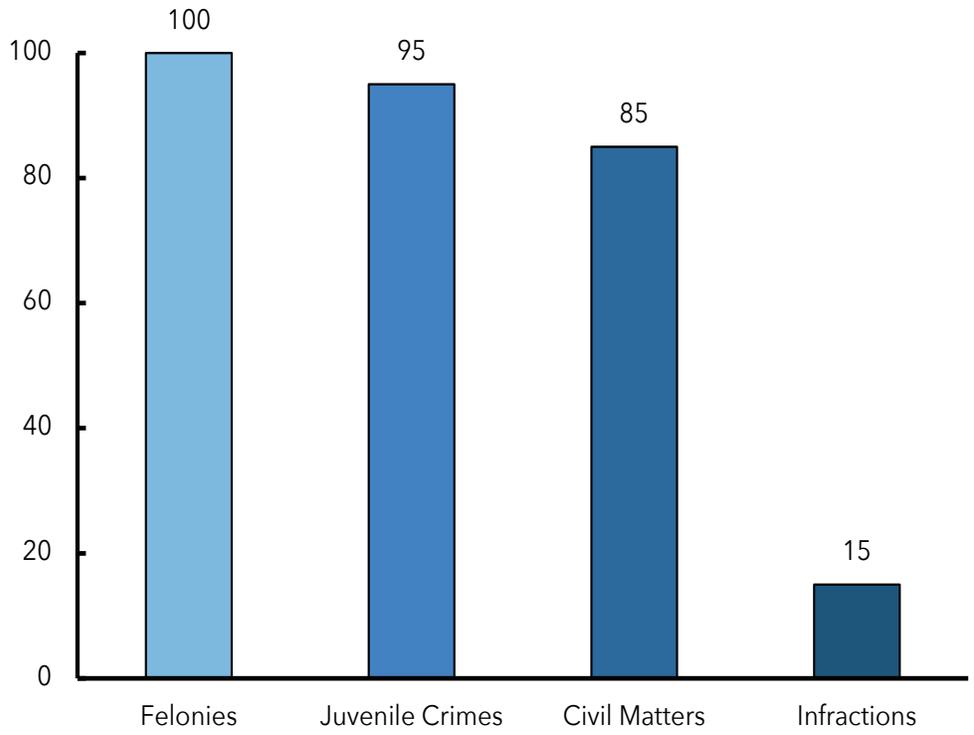


Figure 2. Percentage of Prosecutors' Offices with Jurisdiction over Cases by Type (N =20).

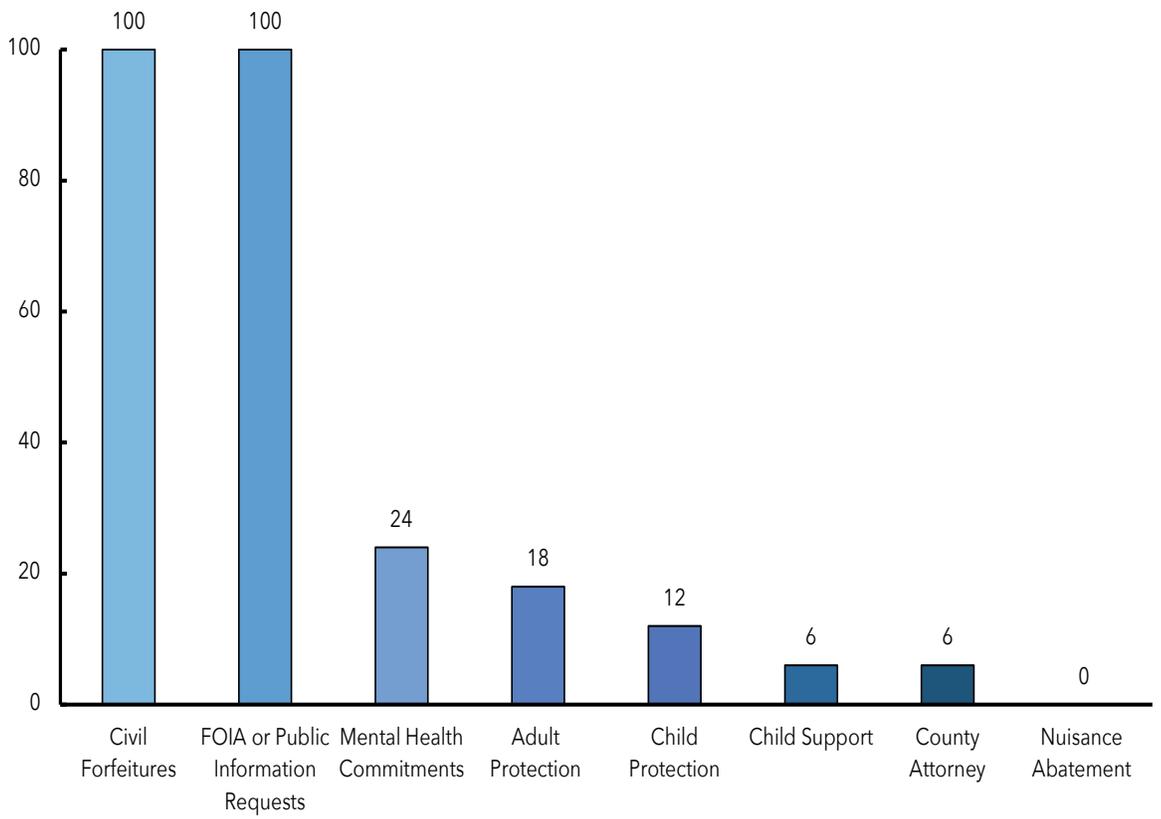


Figure 3. Percentage of Prosecutors' Offices with Jurisdiction over Civil Matters by Type (N = 17).

CHIEF PROSECUTOR

Of the 20 offices that responded, all indicated that their Chief Prosecutor was appointed. On average, the Chief Prosecutor has been in office for approximately 4 years. The tenure of the Chief Prosecutor ranges from 6 months to 10 years. As seen in **Figure 4**, 40% of the Chief Prosecutors have served for six months to 2 years, 15% have served 3-4 years, 30% between 5 and 7 years, and 15% between 8 and 10 years.

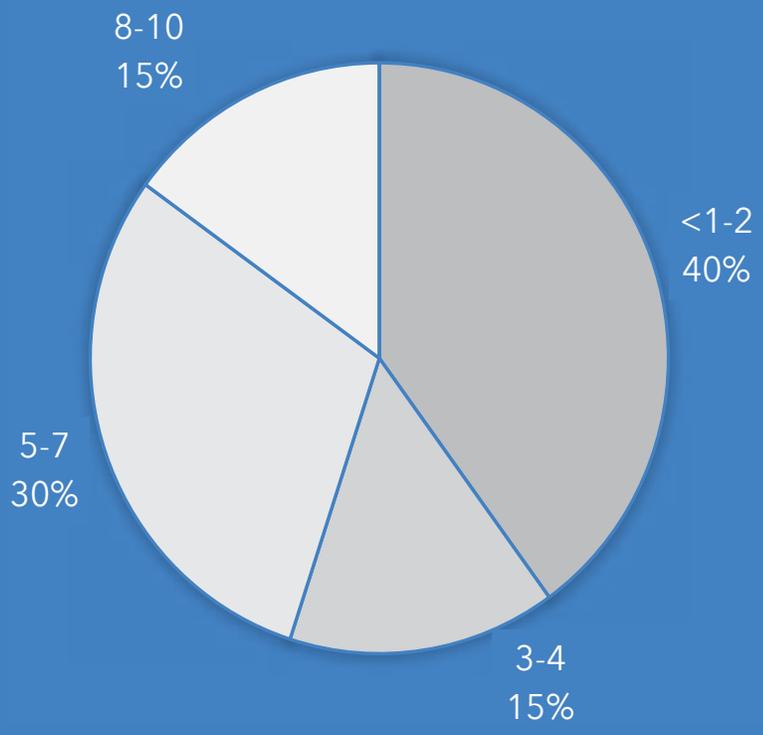


Figure 4. Chief Prosecutor Years in Office (N =20).

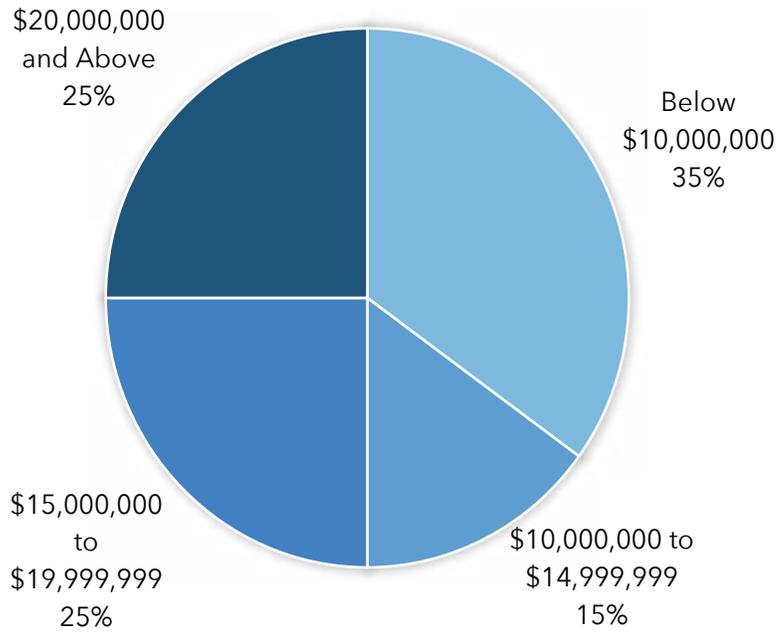


Figure 5. Ranges of 2018 Total Budgets (N = 20).

OFFICE BUDGET

The average 2018 budget for New Jersey prosecutors' offices is \$15,596,426 with a range of \$3,745,600 to \$31,200,000. **Figure 5** shows that 35% of offices have a budget of less than \$10,000,000, 15% have a budget between \$10,000,000 and \$14,999,999, 25% have a budget between \$15,000,000 and \$19,999,999, and 25% have a budget over \$20,000,000.

Figure 6 presents the personnel budget for prosecutors' offices. The average 2018 personnel budget is \$14,571,022 and ranges from \$2,245,600 to \$29,730,000. Approximately 35% of offices have a personnel budget of less than \$10,000,000, 20% have a budget between \$10,000,000 and \$14,999,999, 20% have a budget between \$15,000,000 and \$19,999,999, and 25% have a budget over \$20,000,000.

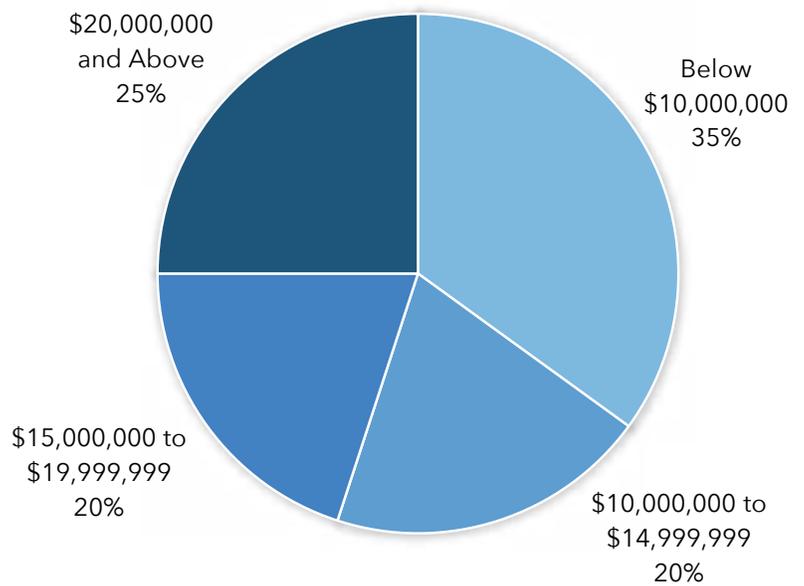


Figure 6. Ranges of 2018 Personnel Budgets (N = 20).

The average percentage of personnel to total budget by budget category is displayed in **Figure 7**. Agencies with budgets under \$10,000,000 on average spend the lowest percentage of total budget on personnel. These percentages were very similar across categories, however, with the percentage of total budget spent on personnel ranging from 90% to 94%.

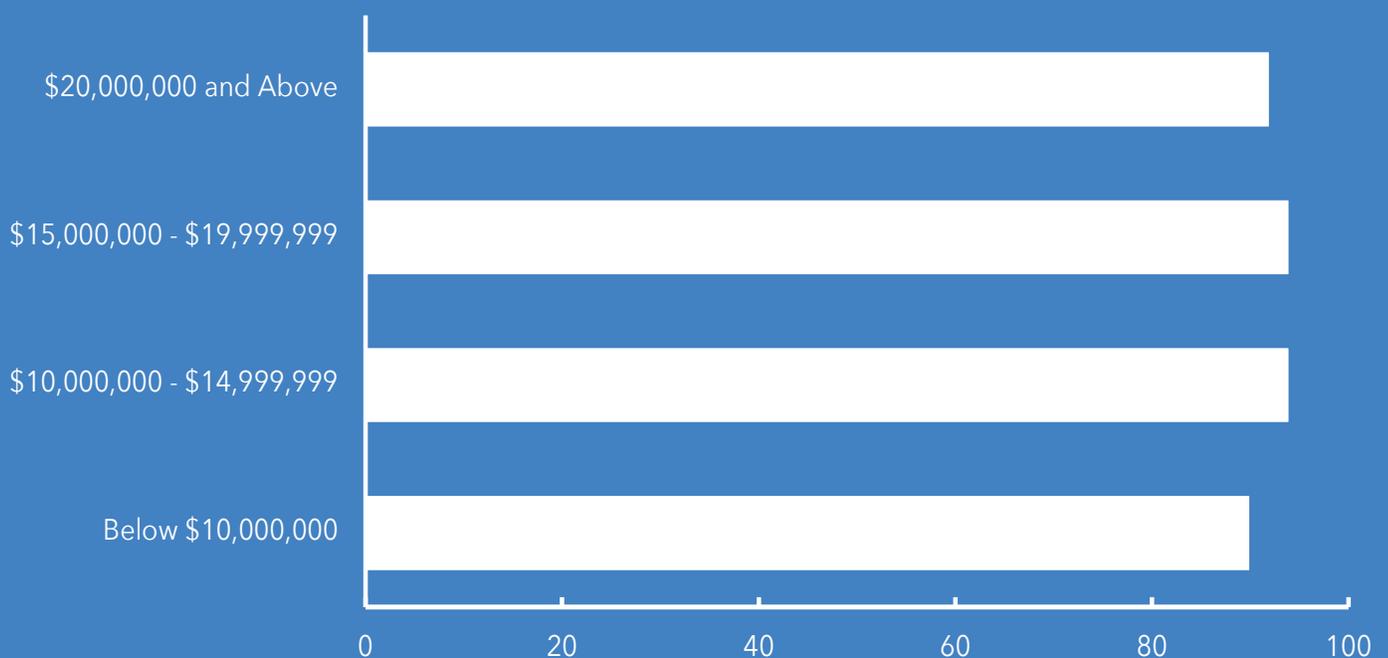


Figure 7. Average Percentage Personnel to Total Budget by Budget Category (N = 20).

STARTING SALARIES

The 2018 starting salaries of recently graduated law students hired as prosecutors in New Jersey ranged from a minimum of \$51,500 to a maximum of \$64,997. The average of the 20 responding offices was \$58,435.

CASE PROCESSING

In 2018, the offices surveyed reviewed on average 5,149 felony cases, resulting in 1,830 cases being charged, 1,456 cases with at least one conviction, and 440 cases diverted. In the state of New Jersey, County Prosecutors' Offices handle all indictable crimes and typically only handle misdemeanors if an indictable offense is associated with the indictable crime. Otherwise, Municipal Courts hear all disorderly, petty-disorderly offenses (misdemeanors), and municipal ordinance violations. On average, the offices review 756 juvenile cases, resulting in 361 cases charged, 349 cases with at least one conviction, and 204 cases diverted.

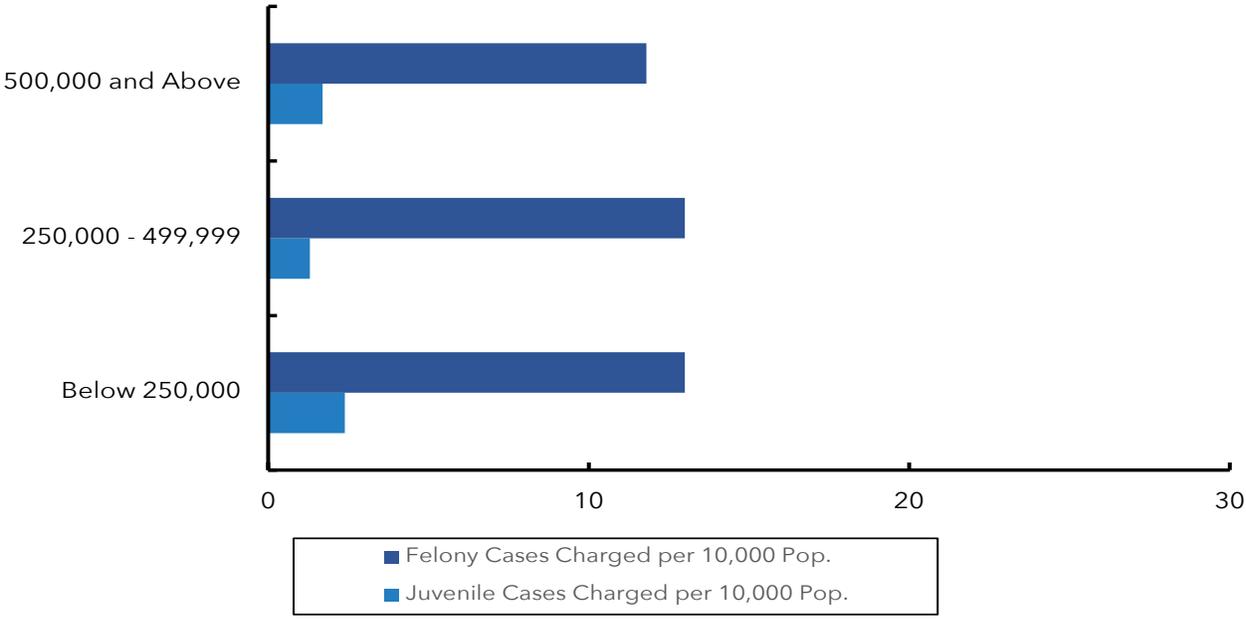


Figure 8. Cases Reviewed in 2018 per 10,000 Population by Population Category (N = 20)

Figure 8 presents the number of felonies, misdemeanors, and juvenile cases charged by county population category. Counties with over 500,000 residents reviewed slightly fewer cases per 10,000 residents compared to smaller counties. Further, counties with fewer than 250,000 residents reviewed slightly more juvenile cases per 10,000 residents.



NUMBER OF EMPLOYEES

On average, prosecutors' offices in New Jersey reported employing 46 full-time and 0.6 part-time attorneys. Offices also reported employing 112 full-time and 1.4 part-time non-attorneys.

Figure 9 presents the number of full-time employees per 10,000 population by population category.¹ Counties with fewer than 250,000 residents reported the largest number of employees per 10,000 residents. This difference is driven nearly exclusively by an increase in the number of non-attorney employees per 10,000 residents.

¹ In other reports, this chart is based on the number of cases charged. This report uses number of cases reviewed as there were some inconsistencies in the number of charged crimes for some New Jersey county prosecutors' offices. For this reason, comparisons to other state charts are not valid.

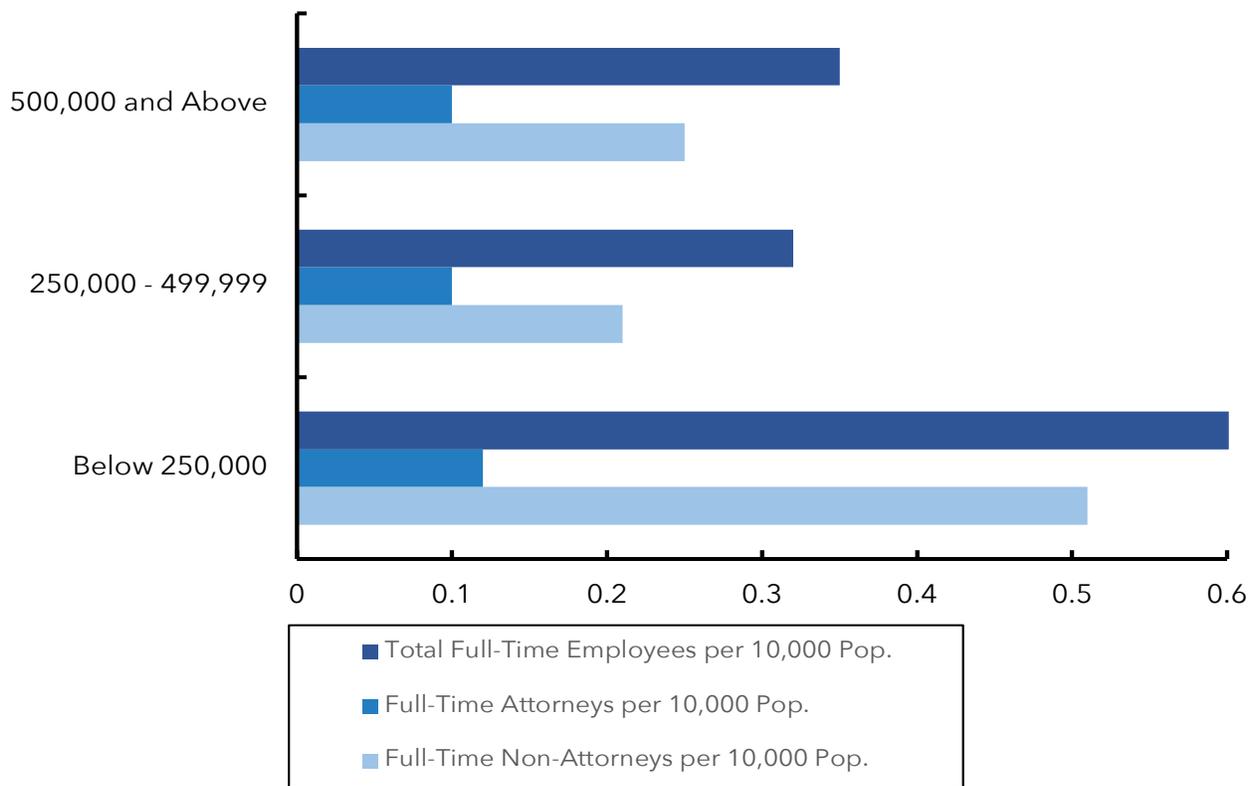


Figure 9. Full-Time Employees per 10,000 Population by Population Category (N = 20).

A different strategy for examining staffing information is to examine the ratio of staff to a measure of workload. **Figure 10** presents the average number of full-time employees per 1,000 felony cases reviewed.² Counties with fewer than 250,000 residents employ a larger number of non-attorney employees and total employees per 1,000 felony cases reviewed.

² Again, the information in this table differs from other reports as it is based on the number of felony cases reviewed instead of the combined number of felony and misdemeanor cases charged.

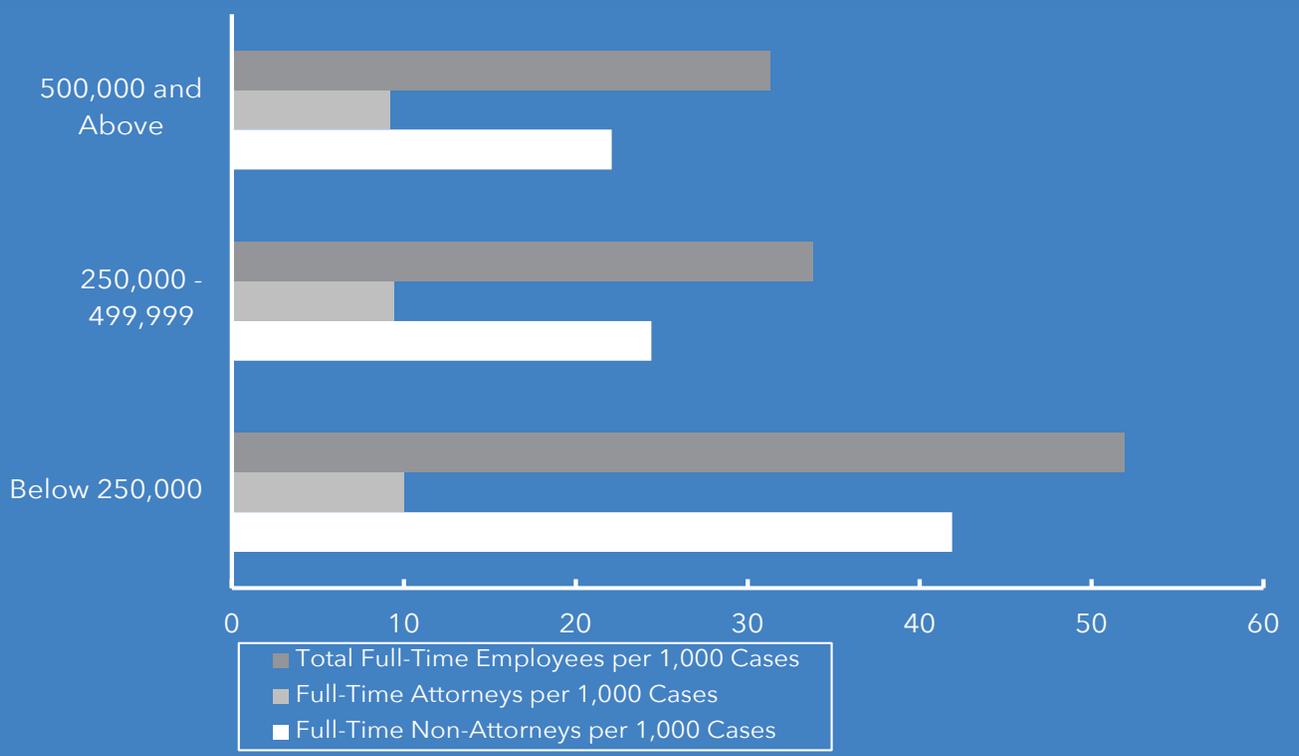


Figure 10. Average Number of Employees per 1,000 Felony and Misdemeanor Cases by Population Category (N = 20).



PROSECUTOR INITIATIVES

A total of 90% of offices reported engaging in problem solving courts or other programs that offer alternatives to incarceration in 2018. Over half of the counties reported that individuals with offenses involving low-level felonies (61%) and non-violent felonies (56%) are eligible for participation in these programs. A smaller number of counties reported that offenders with violent felonies (28%) are eligible for these programs. No counties allow misdemeanor offenders to participate in these programs.

SPECIALTY COURTS

We asked respondents about nine different types of specialty courts: Drug courts, Veterans' courts, Mental Health courts, Human Trafficking courts, Homeless courts, Alcohol/Sobriety courts, Domestic Violence courts, Community courts, and Re-entry courts. **Figure 11** provides the frequency of counties with each type of specialized court in 2018. While a large majority of counties reported Drug courts (100%), Veterans' courts (80%), and Domestic Violence courts (50%), fewer than half reported specialized Alcohol/DUI and Mental Health courts. None of the participating counties reported specialized Human Trafficking, Homeless, Re-entry, or Community courts.

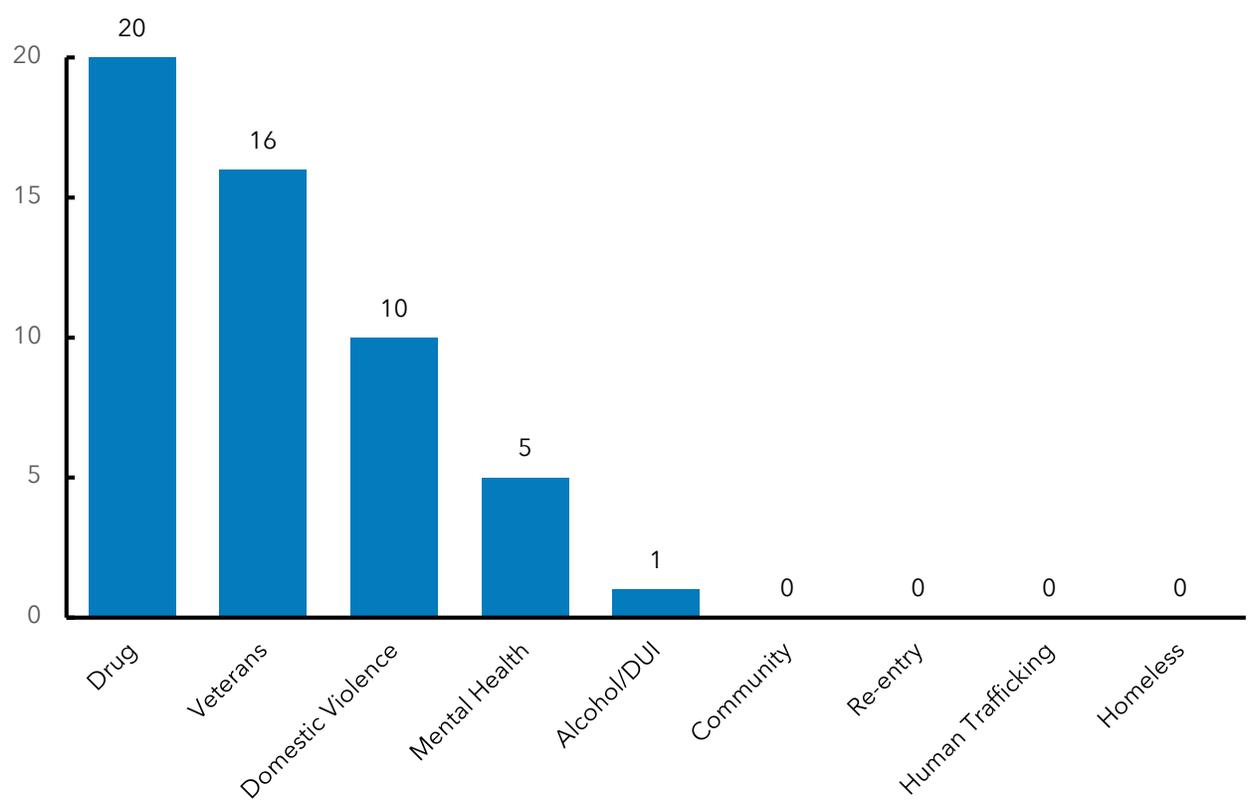


Figure 11. Number of Counties Reporting Specialized Courts by Type (N = 20).

Figure 12 shows the number of special court types compared to the population category of the county. From this table, counties with over 500,000 residents on average have access to only two types of specialized courts while counties with fewer residents have access to over three types of specialized courts.

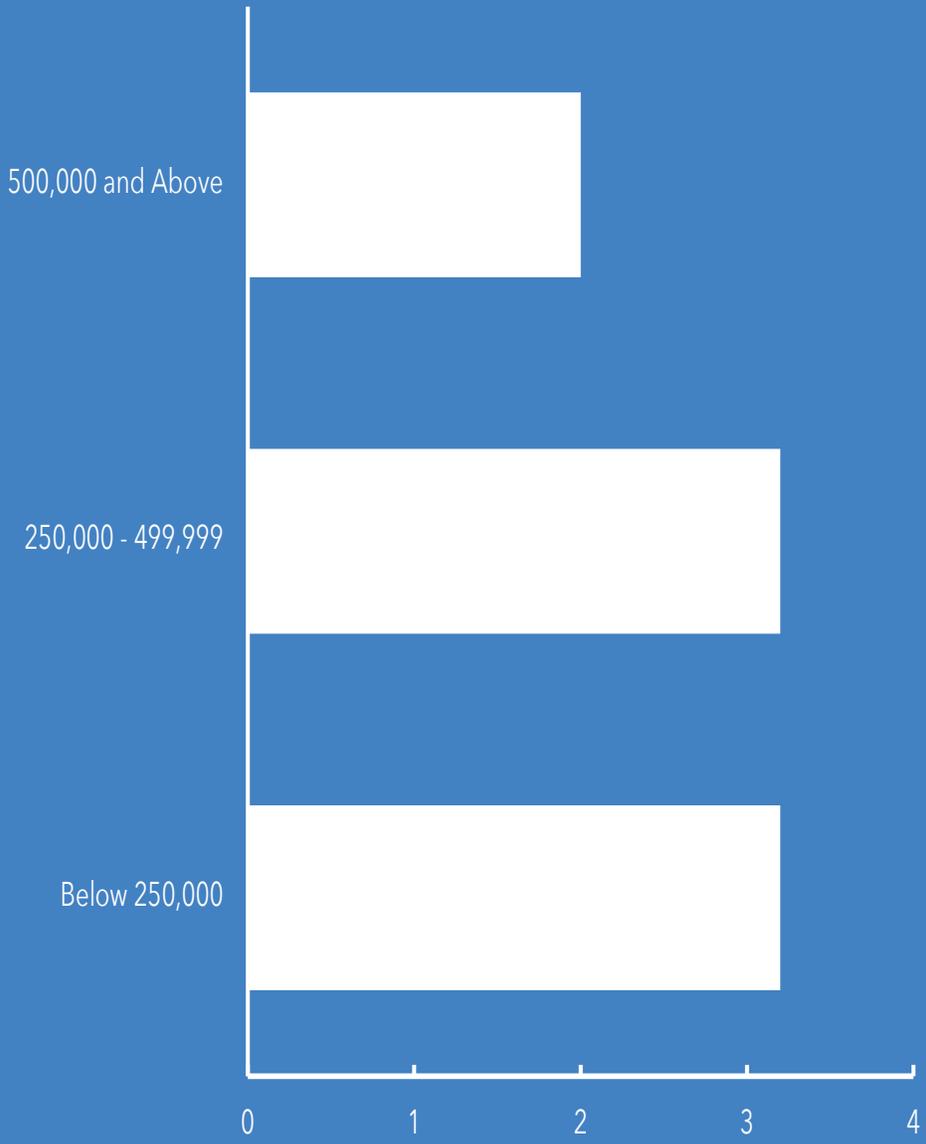


Figure 12. Average Number of Special Court Types by Population Category (N = 20).



ALTERNATIVES TO INCARCERATION

We also asked whether the offices in each county offered alternatives to incarceration in 2018, as shown in **Figure 13**. About 40% of offices reported offering mental health programs. Drug treatment was offered in 35% of counties. Less often were anger management (25%), training/education (20%), community service (20%), deflection (15%), and restorative justice (10%) programs offered as alternatives to incarceration.

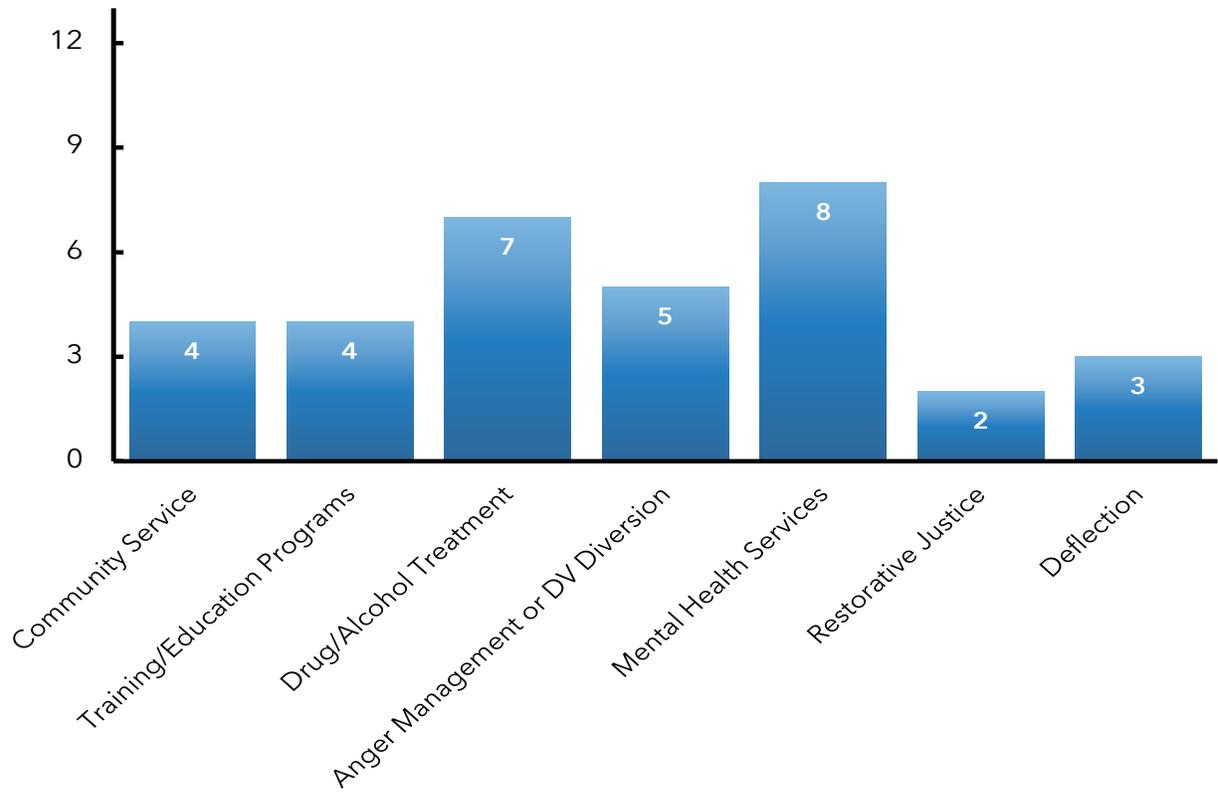


Figure 13. Number of Counties Reporting Alternatives to Incarceration by Type (N = 20).

SPECIALIZED PROGRAMS

Figure 14 presents the number of prosecutors' offices that reported operating specialized programs. The most common program was Victim Assistance, which was reported by 100% of offices. Slightly less common were Witness Assistance (95%), Victim Services with no Arrest (95%), Community Affairs Units (80%), Restitution programs (70%), Crime Strategies Units (60%), and Victim/Witness Relocation programs (50%). Rarely did prosecutors' offices report running Conviction Review (30%) and Community Prosecutor programs (15%).

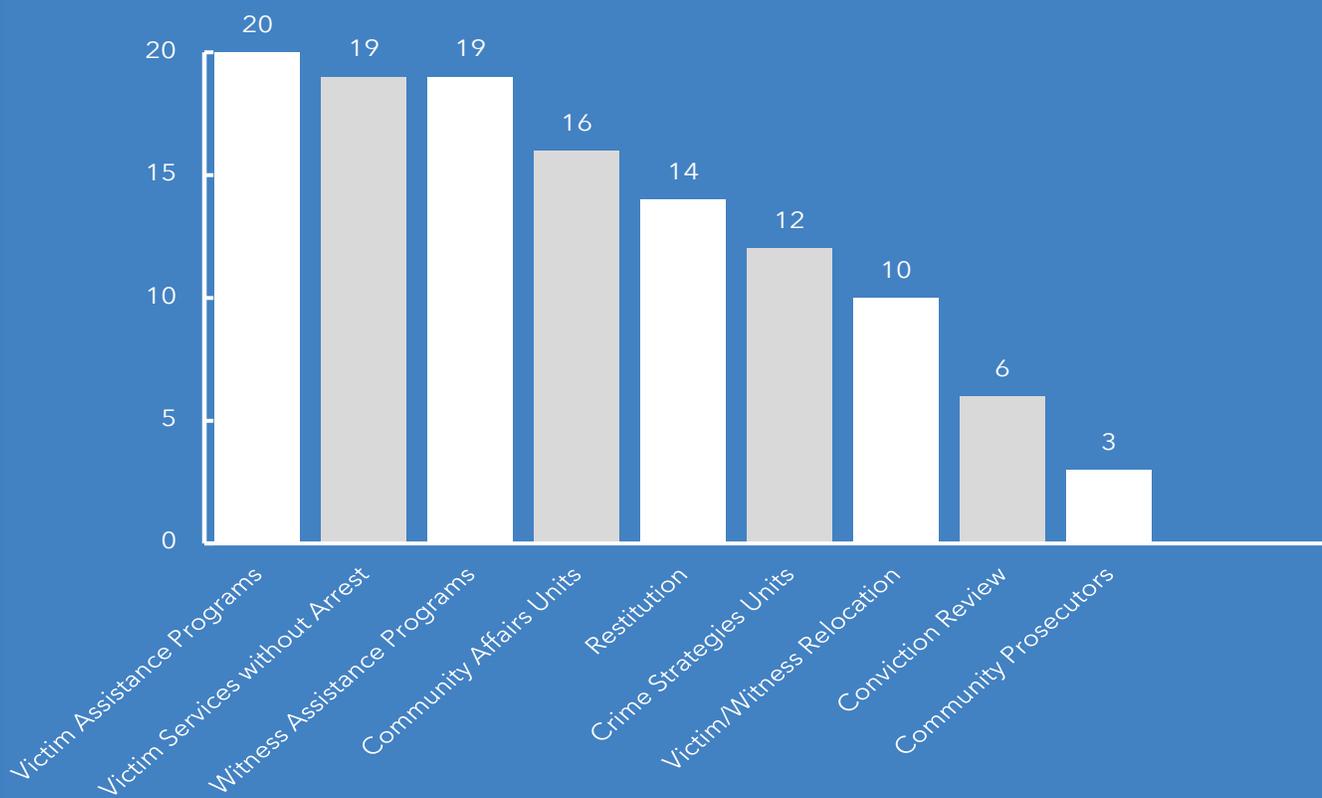


Figure 14. Counties Reporting Specialized Programs by Type (N = 20).



COMMUNITY PROGRAMS

Finally, we asked whether the prosecutors' offices either ran or participated in several different community programs. These results are presented in **Figure 15**. The majority of offices reported participating in Youth Education programs (100%), Co-Located Child Abuse programs (90%), Adult Education programs (90%), and Community Engagement programs (90%). Slightly fewer offices reported participating in Violence Reduction programs (85%), Co-Located Domestic Violence programs (60%), and Sports programs (35%). Considerably fewer offices reported participating in Re-entry (15%), Neighborhood Clean-Up (10%), Children of Inmates (10%), and Truancy programs (5%). No offices reported participating in Neighborhood Courts.

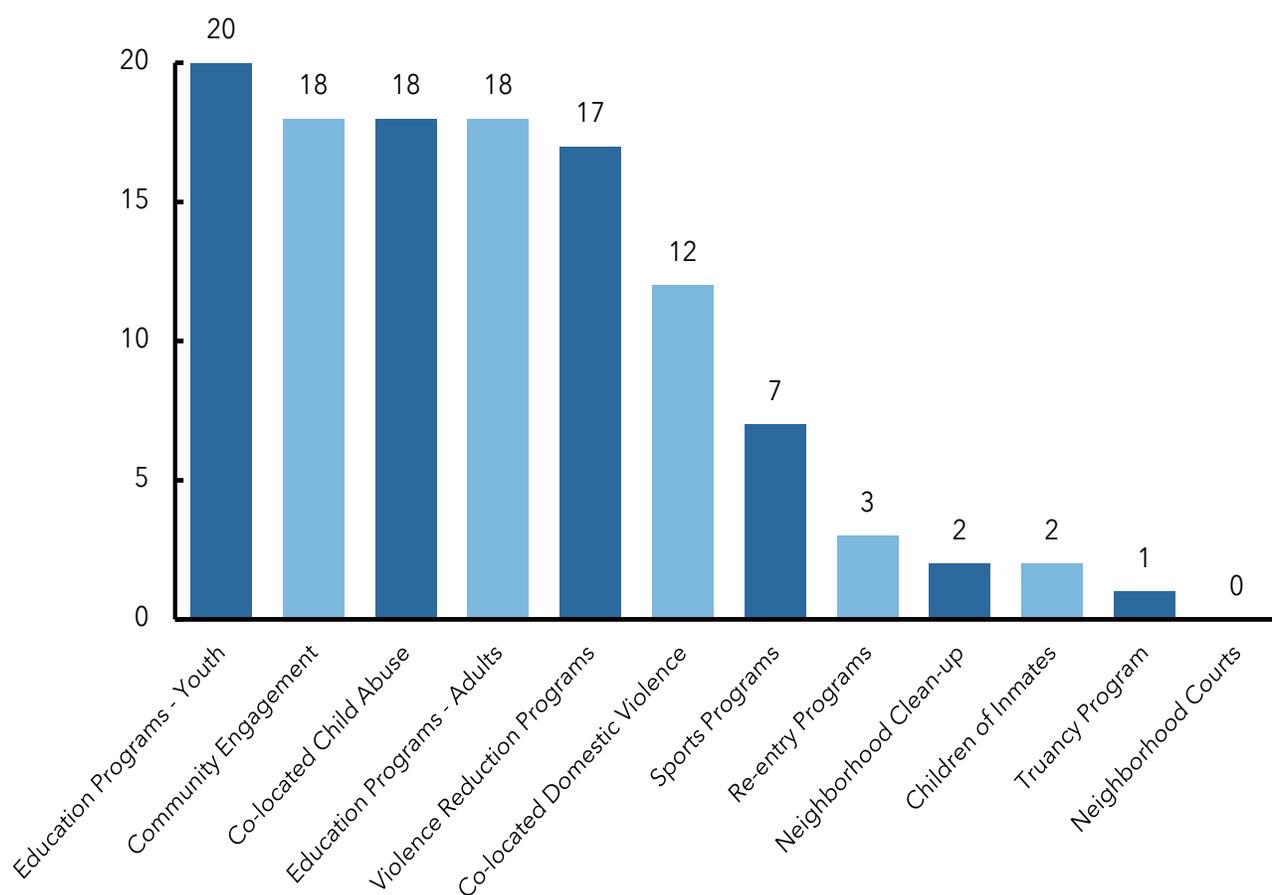


Figure 15. Participation in Community Programs by Type (N = 20).

TECHNOLOGY

In the following section, we asked respondents about the use of technology within their agencies. Ninety-five percent (95%) of the offices responded that they have a technology unit responsible for the computers, data, software, and hardware that function within their own office. All offices (100%) responded that they are using an electronic case management system, and 90% of the offices currently use electronic discovery. All offices (100%) reported using technology in the courtrooms, and 85% reported having staff to support them with use of this technology.

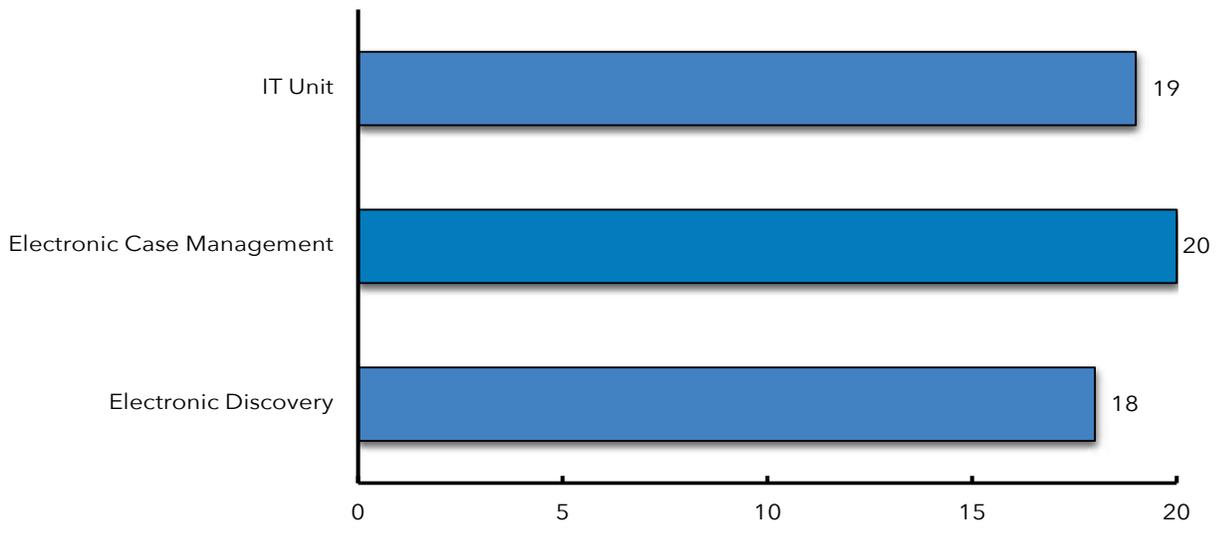


Figure 16. Technology Use within Prosecutors' Offices by Type (N = 20).



BODY-WORN CAMERAS

In addition, 90% of the respondents have at least one police agency within their county that has implemented a body-worn camera (BWC) program. **Figure 17** presents the method of delivery for BWC video. Of those receiving BWC video, 17% are using cloud-based interfaces, 28% are using DVDs, 50% are using both cloud and DVD interfaces, and 6% are using other means.

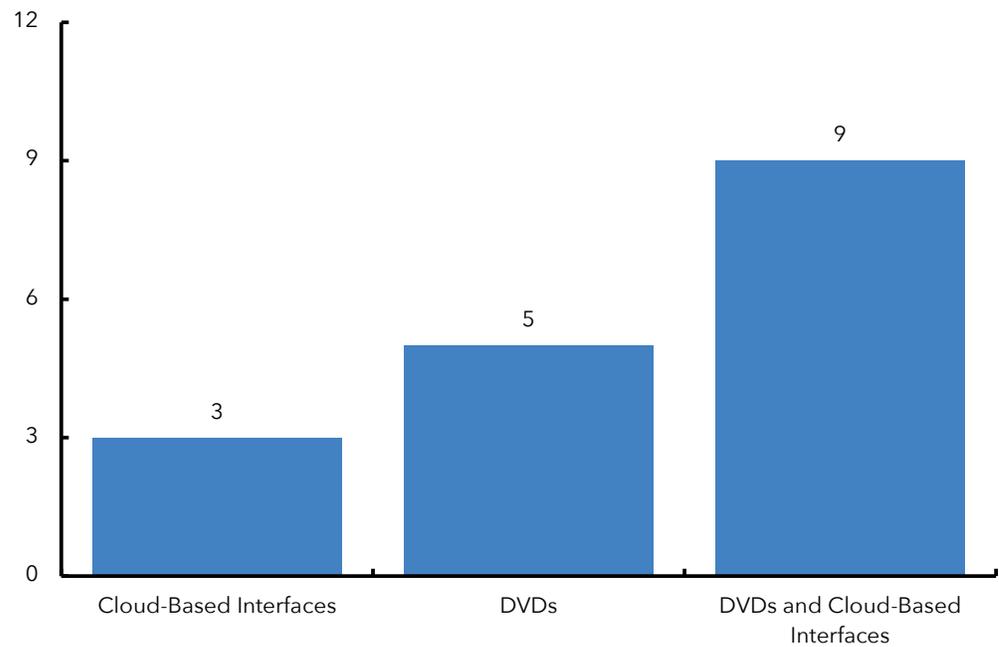


Figure 17. BWC Recordings Received by Prosecutors' Offices by Type (N = 18).

Of the offices reporting that at least one police agency within their jurisdiction uses BWCs, over 72% of respondents reported needing additional staff to view and manage the evidence collected by BWCs. **Figure 18** presents the percentage of offices requiring additional personnel for reviewing BWC evidence by population category. About 50% of offices in counties with over 500,000 residents, 100% of offices in counties with between 250,000 and 499,999 residents, and 75% of counties with fewer than 250,000 residents reported needing assistance with reviewing BWC video.

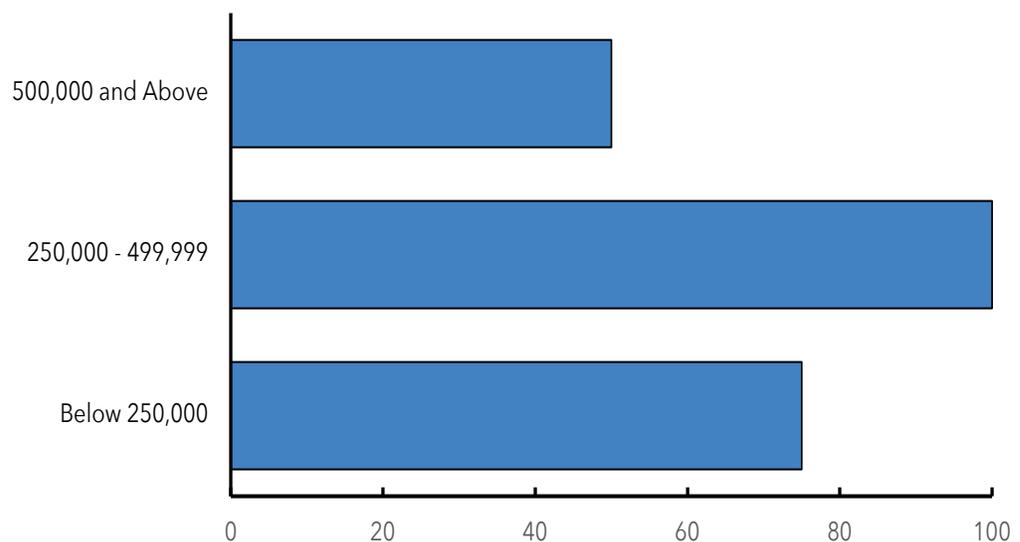


Figure 18. Percentage of Offices Requiring Additional Personnel for Reviewing BWC Video by Population Category (N = 18).

WEBSITES

Asked what they share with the public online, 100% of survey respondents reported having office websites, and all offices update their websites routinely (monthly, quarterly, or annually).

RESEARCH

Research and analysis were reported by a minority of the responding offices. Twenty-five percent (25%) of offices reported involvement in a research project in the last two years with a university, college, consultant, or independent research firm.

Eighty-five percent (85%) reported analyzing crime data, caseloads, or other types of information routinely on a monthly, quarterly, or annual basis. Approximately 80% of offices provide an annual report to the public on the work of the office.

Eighty percent (80%) of the responding county offices have participated in major U.S. Department of Justice grant-based programs. Two offices have participated in Project Safe Neighborhoods programs, 13 offices have participated in Violence Against Women Act programs, 10 respondents have participated in Federal Victims of Crimes Act programs, and one office has participated in a Smart Prosecution Initiative or Innovative Prosecution Solutions program.



CONCLUSIONS

The statewide survey administered by JSS and PCE provides many insights into the day-to-day functioning of New Jersey prosecutors' offices. From the survey, we can determine that all responding New Jersey prosecutors' offices handle felonies and most handle juvenile cases. The majority of responding offices also handle misdemeanors and civil matters.

All responding prosecutors' offices have appointed chief prosecutors serving an average of four years. About 35% of offices have a budget of less than \$10,000,000, 15% have a budget between \$10,000,000 and \$14,999,999, 25% have a budget between \$15,000,000 and \$19,999,999, and 25% have a budget over \$20,000,000. Smaller offices have a higher number of full-time employees per 10,000 population, due to a higher number of non-attorneys per 10,000 population. Across all population categories, the per capita rates of felony and juvenile cases charged are very similar.

All offices offer specialized or problem solving courts. While a majority of offices reported offering Drug Courts and Veterans' courts, few reported offering Alcohol/DUI or Mental Health courts, and no offices offered Homeless, Community, Re-Entry, or Human Trafficking courts.

Most offices reported running several specialized programs. By far the most common specialized programs offered fell under the headings of Victim Assistance, Witness Assistance, and Victim Services without Arrest. On the other hand, only a few offices offered Community Prosecutor programs and Conviction Review Units.

All respondents reported providing specific community programs to the areas they serve. The most common offerings were Youth Education, Adult Education, Co-Located Child Abuse, and Community Engagement programs.

This research has provided great insight into the basic needs of prosecutor's office. Further research based on these findings should focus on prosecutors' caseloads. Specifically, researchers should continue to investigate ideal caseloads for prosecutors and evaluate proper resource management.

All in all, the New Jersey offices that completed the statewide prosecutor survey have provided vital data that have increased the knowledge base on the functioning of New Jersey prosecutors' offices as well as on the role of New Jersey prosecutors.

