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# Evidence-Based Decision Making (EBDM) Initiative: A History and Looking Forward to Phase V

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# Why EBDM?

- Growing body of evidence that can (and does) inform justice system agencies' performance and increase effectiveness
- Historically, there have been demonstrations of successful approaches/changes within *individual* operating agencies around the country, *not systemwide*
- A primary perceived barrier is the lack of system collaboration around a common set of outcomes and principles

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# The Vision of the EBDM Initiative

- What if we create and test a “Framework” for evidence-based decision making that
  - brings partners together in a new way, a truly collaborative way?
  - encourages these partners to find consensus around what the justice system in their community – however large or small – hopes to achieve?
  - led to a new way of making decisions – about individuals and about the system itself?

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# Through the EBDM Initiative we hoped to...

- Affirm existing practices that have been demonstrated to be effective
- Inspire and challenge practices that can be improved
- Create tools and processes that can be replicated elsewhere
- Address those thorny issues that are barriers to advancement, especially those that are barriers to true collaboration

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# EBDM OVERARCHING GOAL

To create a framework for justice systems that will result in improved system outcomes

*through true collaborative partnerships,  
systematic use of research,  
and a shared vision of desired outcomes.*

*“A permanent shift in expectations about what is possible.”  
--Joe McCannon, Wisconsin EBDM Summit, Jan 2014*

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“To reach their full potential, **evidence-based practices** cannot simply be placed alongside past practice or through the piecemeal exchange of one past practice for a new one. Instead, an **evidence-based decision making process**—a systemic approach that uses research to inform decisions at all levels—offers the greatest promise for harm and risk reduction and the potential for a tremendous return...”

*–EBDM Framework, p. 39*

# Overview of Local Level EBDM 2008-2013

## Phase I

Framework Development  
May 2008-March 2010

## Phase II

Planning Process  
June 2010-August 2011

## Phase III

Implementation  
August 2011-Dec 2013

- NIC began its sponsorship of the *Evidence-Based Decision Making in Local Criminal Justice Systems* (EBDM) initiative in May 2008
- In Phase I, we built the EBDM “Framework”
- In August of 2010, NIC selected, on a competitive basis, seven local jurisdictions from across the country to participate in Phase II
- The same seven sites continued on to the Implementation Phase (Phase III)

# Phase I

## Phase I

Framework Development  
May 2008-March 2010

## Phase II

Planning Process  
June 2010-August 2011

## Phase III

Implementation  
August 2011-Dec 2013

- Worked with NIC and a multidisciplinary advisory committee
- Defined risk and harm reduction as fundamental goals of the justice system
- Reviewed and summarized the research on risk and harm reduction
- Conducted a national public opinion survey
- Outlined a conceptual framework and set of principles for achieving EBDM
- Developed *A Framework for Evidence-Based Decision Making in Local Criminal Justice Systems*
- Convened discipline-specific focus groups to “field test” the Framework

# Phase II

## Phase I

Framework Development  
May 2008-March 2010

## Phase II

Planning Process  
June 2010-August 2011

## Phase III

Implementation  
August 2011- -Dec 2013

- Selected seven EBDM sites
- Assisted sites to:
  - Develop the processes /infrastructure to implement Framework
  - Assess current policy and practice and determine methods to more effectively integrate research at key decision points
  - Develop Phase III work plans for implementation of EBDM
- Conducted independent evaluation of the effectiveness of the technical assistance
- Developed tools and resources for EBDM sites and other interested jurisdictions

# Phase III

## Phase I

Framework Development  
May 2008-March 2010

## Phase II

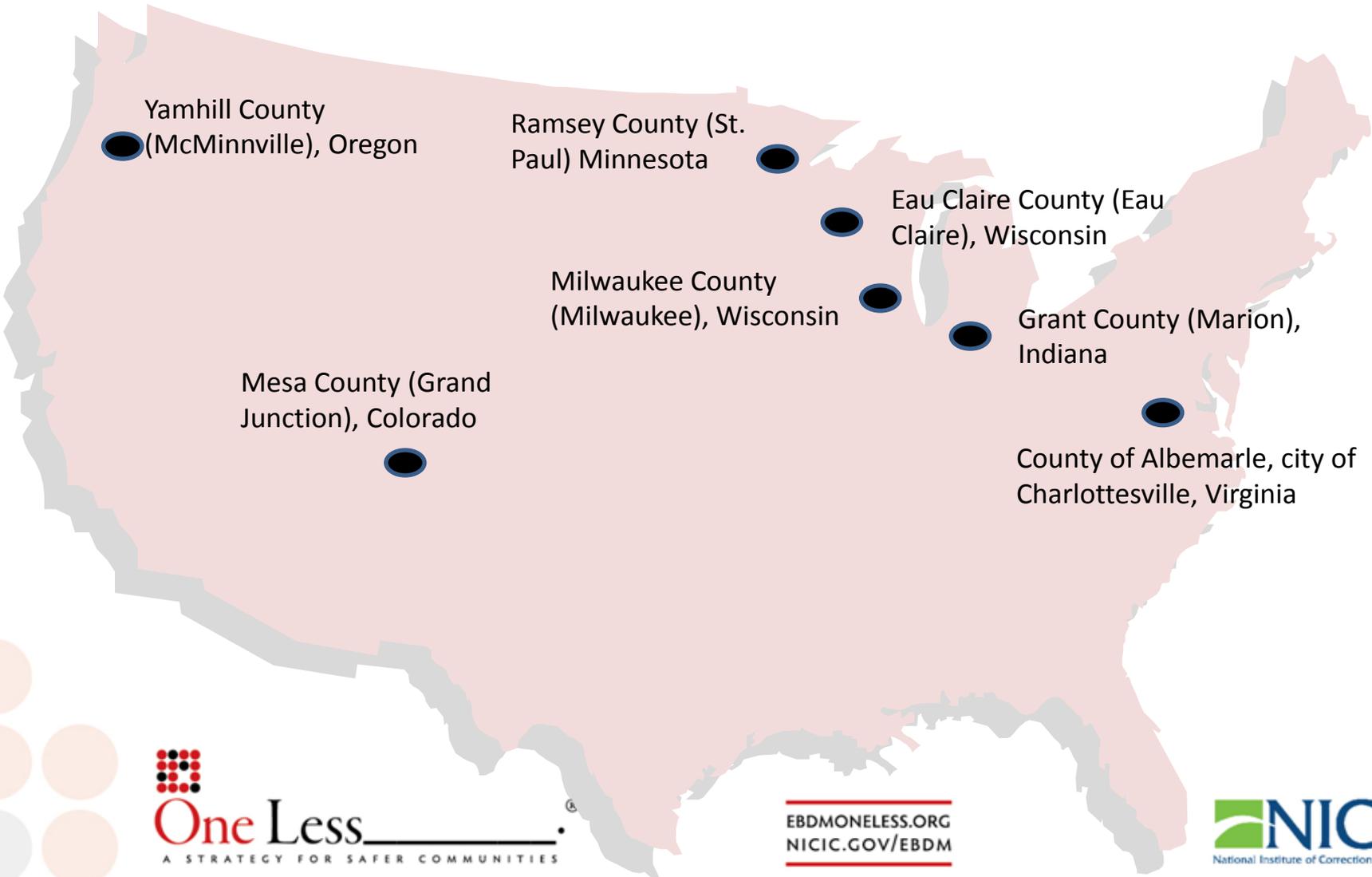
Planning Process  
June 2010-August 2011

## Phase III

Implementation  
August 2011-Dec 2013

- Assisted local sites to:
  - Implement their change strategies
  - Expand activities to become systems characterized by evidence-based decision making
  - Implement communication strategies

# EBDM Local Sites (Phases II & III)



# Overview of Statewide EBDM 2013 and Beyond

## Phase IV

Preparation for Expansion  
Sep 2013 – Dec 2014

- Participate in a process designed to prepare teams within the state for the EBDM planning phase
- Engage in EBDM planning activities at state level and in multiple local jurisdictions (i.e., a state team + approx. 5 local teams)

## Phase V

Planning Process  
Mar 2015 – Jun 2016

- Engage in EBDM implementation activities at state level and in multiple local jurisdictions

## Phase VI

Implementation  
Fall 2016

# Phase IV

## Phase IV

Preparation for Expansion  
Sep 2013 – Dec 2014

## Phase V

Planning Process  
Mar 2015 – Mar 2016

## Phase VI

Implementation  
Timing TBD

- States participated in a process designed to prepare teams within the state for the EBDM planning phase (i.e., a state team + approx. 5 local teams)
- Engaged additional in-state partners/built awareness of EBDM
  - Local partners
  - State partners
- Preparing Phase V applications

# Phase V

## Phase IV

Preparation for Expansion  
Sep 2013 – Dec 2014

## Phase V

Planning Process  
Mar 2015 – Jun 2016

## Phase VI

Implementation  
Timing TBD

- Selected states will prepare to implement systemwide change strategies (through a series of planning activities) that will align local and state jurisdictions with one another and with the principles of EBDM
- Phase V is a planning phase, similar to the Phase II planning the EBDM local sites experienced

# Phase VI

## Phase IV

Preparation for Expansion  
Sep 2013 – Dec 2014

## Phase V

Planning Process  
Dec 2014 – Feb 2015

## Phase VI

Implementation  
Fall 2016

- If funding becomes available, selected states will be expected to implement the change strategies developed at the state and local levels during Phase V

# EBP vs. EBDM

- EBPs are policies, practices, and/or interventions supported by research
  - Research finding: empirically-based tools predict risk better than professional judgment alone
  - EB practice: use of a risk tool to determine appropriate amount of intervention
- EBDM is a disciplined approach to using data and research to inform and guide decision making across the justice system
  - Who do we divert?
  - What do we want to achieve by diverting?
  - What does the research tell us about the most effective method of achieving our goal?

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# EBDM Principles

EBDM Principle 1: The professional judgment of criminal justice system decision makers is enhanced when informed by evidence-based knowledge.

EBDM Principle 2: Every interaction within the criminal justice system offers an opportunity to contribute to harm reduction.

EBDM Principle 3: Systems achieve better outcomes when they operate collaboratively.

EBDM Principle 4: The criminal justice system will continually learn and improve when professionals make decisions based on the collection, analysis, and use of data and information.

# Decision Makers at the Local Level

- Law Enforcement Officials
- Pretrial Officials
- Victim Service Providers
- Prosecutors
- Defense Attorneys
- Jail Administrators
- Court Administrators
- Judges, Commissioners, Magistrates
- Probation/Parole/Community Corrections Officials
- City/County Managers/Commissioners
- Community Representatives (e.g., civic leaders, members of faith-based organizations, service providers)
- Behavioral Health and Human Service Representatives

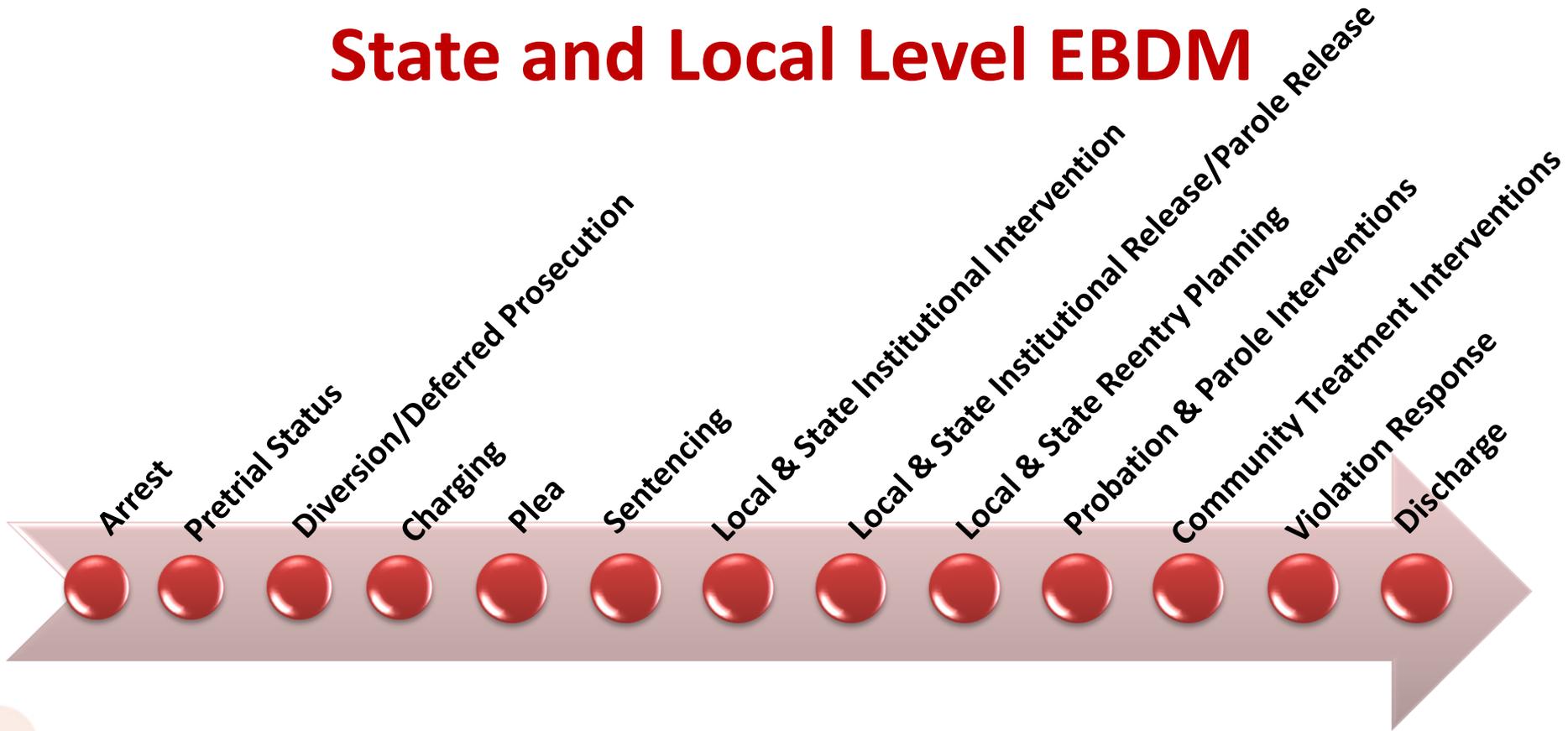


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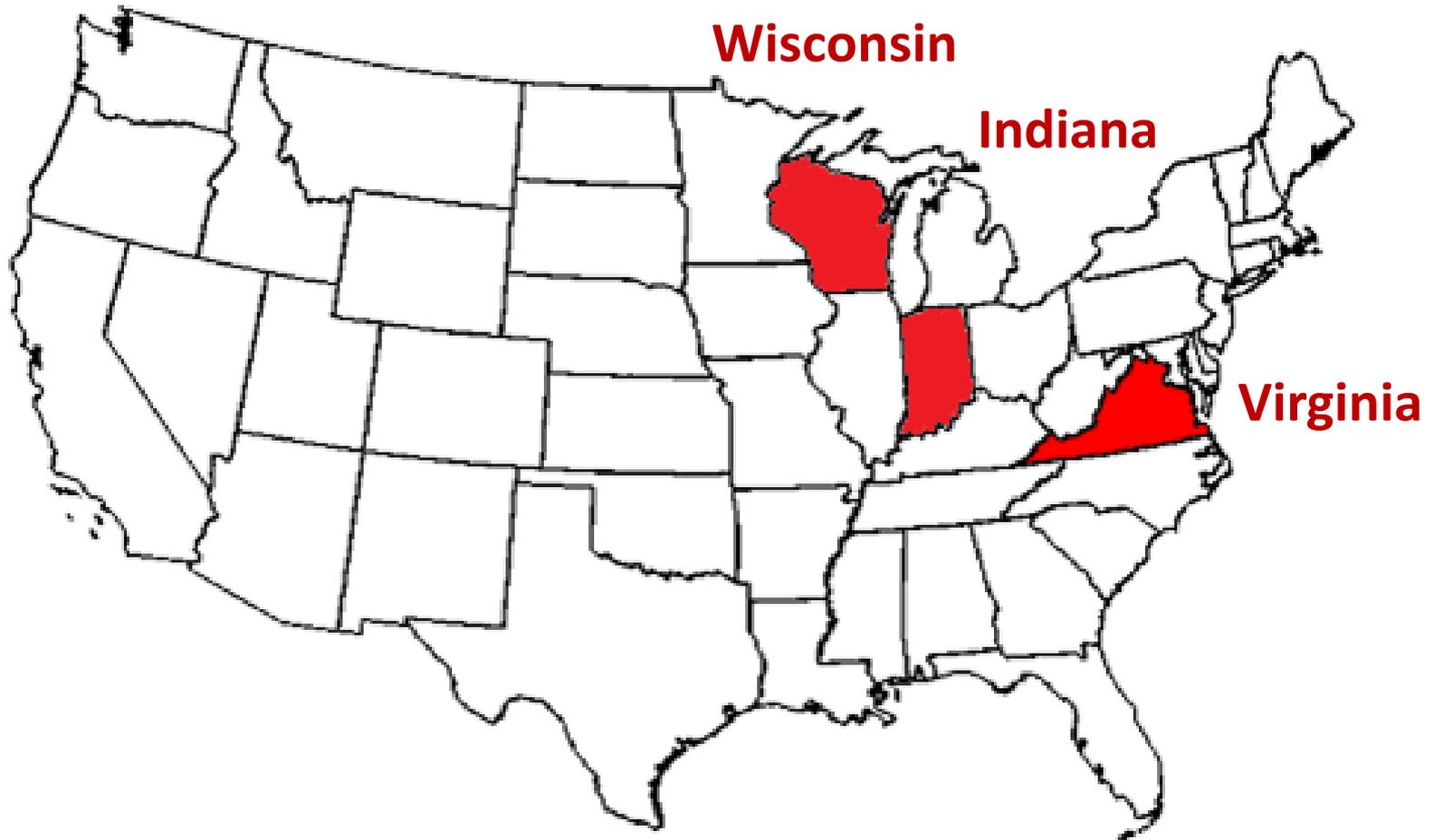
# Decision Makers at the State Level

- The Governor's Office and Cabinet
- State Supreme Court, Judicial Department, Court Rule Making Authority, Administrative Office of the Courts
- State Legislators (Chairs or representatives of standing or ad hoc judiciary, corrections or sentencing committees, joint judiciary and budget committees)
- Office of the Attorney General
- State Defense Bar
- State Directors of Corrections; probation and parole/community corrections
- State Pretrial Administrator
- Paroling authority
- Victim Service Providers
- Directors of State Behavioral Health, Health, Employment, Family Services, Housing, Veterans Affairs, Financial Assistance, and other agencies serving justice-involved individuals
- Families of offenders/advocacy groups
- Representatives of State Criminal Justice Coordinating Groups, Advisory Boards, Sentencing Commissions, Criminal Justice Advocacy Groups, and Reform Coalitions (e.g., mental health alliances)
- State Defense Counsel Association
- State Judges' Association
- State Prosecutors' Association
- State Law Enforcement (sheriff, police, jail administrators) Association

# Key Justice System Decision Points: State and Local Level EBDM



# Phase V States



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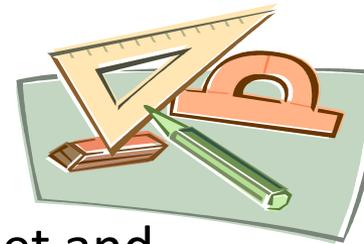
# NIC's Goals for Phase V

- Assist state and local-level policy teams as they conduct **a series of planning activities** to implement systemwide change strategies that will
  - Align local and state jurisdictions with one another and with the principles of EBDM
  - Assist teams in reaching their individual and collective harm reduction goals
- By the end of Phase V, sites are expected to
  - have a fully developed strategic action plan for achieving their change targets, and
  - *to the extent possible*, begin implementing change strategies

# What is the Phase V Roadmap?

## The Phase V roadmap is basically a tool...

- Designed for use by multidisciplinary criminal justice teams
  - Who have agreement about the EBDM Framework
  - Are committed to working together
- To help these teams build their capacity to engage in EBDM
- To guide them through the Phase V planning process
- Outlining a core set of activities to advance system alignment
- That breaks the planning process into concrete, discreet and manageable steps
- Ultimately for assisting teams in preparing for the implementation of EBDM strategies to achieve their harm reduction goals (Phase V)





Core Activities	Likely Action Steps (Others may be added, where needed)	By the end of Phase V, the EBDM teams will have...
<p><b>Ensure that EBDM efforts are coordinated across the policy teams and across the state.</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Develop methods to facilitate genuine and meaningful collaboration between and among state and local EBDM representatives.</li> <li>• Identify areas where county and state-level collaboration could be strengthened.</li> <li>• Develop processes for cross-team sharing and partnerships in the advancement of EBDM statewide.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The establishment or enhancement of a true and meaningful collaborative partnership within and among state and local criminal justice system stakeholders.</li> <li>• An infrastructure to support coordination and collaboration of EBDM advancements throughout EBDM jurisdictions.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Build individual state and local-level agencies that are collaborative and in a state of readiness for change.</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Engage staff in the EBDM Initiative in specific, purposeful ways (e.g., establish an internal working team to collect information, provide input, and assist in accomplishing specific objectives).</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• State and local agencies and staff that demonstrate a collaborative climate and readiness for change.</li> <li>• An engaged staff that provides meaningful, ongoing input into evidence-based policy and practice changes.</li> </ul>

Core Activities	Likely Action Steps (Others may be added, where needed)	By the end of Phase V, the EBDM teams will have...
<p><b>Understand current practice within each agency and across the local and state criminal justice systems.</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Develop a system map at the state level.</li> <li>• Conduct policy/practice assessments around each decision point to determine the use of evidence-based practices/decision making and continuous quality improvement (CQI) strategies.</li> <li>• Identify barriers to achieving harm and risk reduction goals at the state and local levels, in partnership with local-level teams/state team.</li> <li>• Gather baseline data.</li> <li>• Identify strengths/challenges.</li> <li>• Develop strategies to address barriers between state and local- level criminal justice policies/practices.</li> <li>• Identify prioritized change targets.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A full understanding of the basis upon which decisions are made at key points within and across agencies at the state and local levels.</li> <li>• A set of agreed-upon strengths.</li> <li>• A set of agreed-upon targets for change.</li> <li>• A work plan for addressing barriers to achieving harm and risk reduction goals.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Understand and have the capacity to implement evidence-based practices.</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Administer a knowledge survey to the policy team and agency staff.</li> <li>• Assess staff skills in core competency areas.</li> <li>• Develop specific strategies to augment knowledge and competencies, where needed.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A common understanding of the research (and its limitations) across all relevant agencies/staff.</li> <li>• An understanding of the implications of these findings for future policy and practice.</li> </ul>

Core Activities	Likely Action Steps (Others may be added, where needed)	By the end of Phase V, the EBDM teams will have...
Develop logic models.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Develop a system model.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Sound and testable logic models at the state and local levels.</li> </ul>
Establish methods to collect, analyze, and utilize data to inform decision making.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Agree on key definitions (e.g., “recidivism,” “probation violation”).</li> <li>• Develop scorecard items/outcomes.</li> <li>• Identify baseline data.</li> <li>• Develop performance measures.</li> <li>• Assess data system capacity, collection methods, storage, usage, and sharing.</li> <li>• Build capacity, where needed.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A set of agreed-upon performance measures that will enable an objective, empirical evaluation of the effectiveness of the justice system agencies in achieving their agreed vision.</li> <li>• Benchmarks against which longer-term outcomes can be measured.</li> <li>• Methods to collect, analyze, and share data on an ongoing basis to inform policy and practice.</li> <li>• Recommendations for enhanced data integration between agencies and systems.</li> <li>• A systemwide scorecard.</li> </ul>

Core Activities	Likely Action Steps (Others may be added, where needed)	By the end of Phase V, the EBDM teams will have...
<p><b>Develop a communications strategy to engage a broader set of stakeholders and communities throughout the state.</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Analyze the systems and vehicles in place for communicating with criminal justice and allied policymakers and practitioners, and with the public.</li> <li>• Conduct a public opinion survey (resources permitting).</li> <li>• Compile information/a clear set of messages the team and individual stakeholders can use to inform and engage the community.</li> <li>• Define the desired role of the community in justice system activities.</li> <li>• Identify individuals/groups within the community who are appropriate for outreach.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A communications strategy for engaging additional stakeholders and the community in meaningful dialogue about the vision/goals of the justice system, the state of knowledge and research, and the system’s performance in achieving these goals.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Develop a strategic action plan for implementation.</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Conduct an analysis of potential barriers to implementation.</li> <li>• Develop a plan of action for implementing specific policy and practice changes—who, what, when, where, how.</li> <li>• Ensure that state and local change targets align and complement one another.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A clear, specific, measurable plan for implementing policy and practice changes that advance evidence-based decision making and further support the achievement of the justice system’s vision and goals.</li> </ul>