



OFFICE OF THE DISTRICT ATTORNEY
TWENTIETH JUDICIAL DISTRICT

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The Path Forward

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Across the United States, there have been deeply felt expressions of the anguish and outrage at the murder of George Floyd. Until our country fully addresses the problem of racial inequality, we will continue to see racial inequities in our communities and justice systems. We must make real progress. Together, we will weather this storm -- and our guiding light must be the shared goal of making real progress. We must now find a path forward.

Even in the short time since Mr. Floyd's murder and the charging of the police officers involved, there are signs that change will happen.

Earlier this week, all of the twenty-two (22) District Attorneys of Colorado united in the call for justice for the murder of George Floyd and in support of concrete reform measures for our criminal justice system.

Additionally, this week, all eight (8) law enforcement agencies for Boulder County and the District Attorney's Office joined in publicly stating, "Black lives matter. There is no room for any law enforcement professional who is biased against any group of people to be a part of our profession." The statement went on, "We are, and will continue, our commitment to find ways to do better as a community. We will not stop until members of our community no longer fear those who are there to protect them."

As reflected by the statements from the state's District Attorneys and Boulder County's law enforcement agencies, this painful crisis is creating an opportunity and an obligation for real, meaningful change. We must use this time and the power of this moment and never lose this urgency. To truly honor George Floyd and the victims before him requires that we do so.

The Boulder County District Attorney's Office has a long history of innovation and leadership in criminal justice reform and now is the time to do more. We must deliberately work to dismantle the current systems that lead to disparate outcomes and leave the community no safer. We must envision and build a better justice system.

Our office was already working with the many exceptional members of Boulder County law enforcement and implementing many initiatives, which we will continue to augment to achieve the changes we seek as a community. We must continue to partner with our allies including law enforcement agencies, the NAACP, Out Boulder, and the many groups representing our immigrants and other marginalized groups.

The Boulder District Attorney's Office was chosen earlier this year as a partner site of the Vera Institute of Justice's Reshaping Prosecution Program. Their data analysis will focus on racial disparities and inequities, to identify patterns in cases and to generate further policy and reform recommendations.

Additionally, we continue to partner with Prosecutor Impact, which provides our office leadership and prosecutors with training and education to better achieve just prosecutorial goals. This program gives special emphasis to ending mass incarceration and to practices that unfairly penalize vulnerable communities, while also supporting a victim-centered approach to prosecution that increases public safety. The Boulder District Attorney's Office is also a member of multiple reform-minded organizations and frequently consults with DA's Offices across the country to support local and national reform efforts.

The District Attorney's Office continues to expand its robust Diversion and Restorative Justice Programs. We are working towards identifying additional cases for diversion, to match individuals to the right level of intervention based on risk and need, to help offenders get on the right track rather than perpetuate a cycle of arrest and release.

With input from our partners in the community and law enforcement, our office will continue to focus on specific goals to further improve the justice system.

Adam Foss - of Prosecutor Impact - stated, "We look forward to our continued partnership with and support of the men and women at the Boulder County District Attorney's Office in their commitment to achieving better outcomes for the people touched by the criminal legal system, to repairing the historic harms caused by the system, and to strengthening the communities they are sworn to serve."

Akhi Johnson - of the Vera Institute of Justice - stated, "The current moment highlights the need for substantive policy changes that center racial justice at a systemic level. We admire the willingness of the Boulder County DA's office to examine how they contribute to racial inequities, and their desire to pursue data-based reforms in line with community needs."

District Attorney Michael Dougherty stated, "We must work together to forge a path forward. Our office is committed to enhancing community safety and improving the justice system. Those goals go together. Law enforcement and prosecutors cannot protect the community if we do not have the trust of the community. I am grateful to the leaders of Boulder County law enforcement for their united response to this crisis and their shared commitment to the work ahead. With the Boulder community, as well as the outstanding women and men in law enforcement and the DA's Office, I am confident we can continue creating lasting improvements to the justice system."