

# Research Recap: Increasing data quality and transparency in the Shelby County criminal justice system

July 2025

The Shelby County criminal justice system does not currently report aggregate data on the following three key metrics relative to the **prosecution** of criminal cases.

## Metric 1

Charges at booking

### Definition

The charges approved by the Judicial Commissioner or on a warrant when the defendant is booked.



### Is it reported? Is it collected?

Aggregate data is not reported. The data is collected by the Shelby County Sheriff's Office. There are limitations preventing the Shelby County Sheriff's Office from accessing this information for defendants held in other municipal jails within Shelby County.

## Metric 2

Documentation of dismissal/  
nolle prosequi

### Definition

Why a charge against a defendant was dismissed. Examples include: dismissed lack of prosecution due to unavailable witnesses, dismissed lack of prosecution for evidentiary reasons, dismissed due to conviction on a separate higher charge, dismissed due to conviction on a separate equal charge, dismissed due to conviction on a separate lesser charge, etc.



### Is it reported? Is it collected?

Aggregate data is not reported. The reasons for dismissals were stated in court during OREA's court observations conducted in August and September 2024.

## Metric 3

Plea agreement offer

### Definition

The charges that a defendant pleads guilty to via a plea agreement. If there is a recommended sentence negotiated as part of the agreement (including a recommendation to place the defendant on judicial diversion), this should be included as well.



### Is it reported? Is it collected?

Aggregate data is not reported. The data OREA received from the Shelby County Criminal Court Clerk's Office indicates if a charge is disposed of via guilty plea but does not specify if the plea was the result of a plea agreement. Recommended sentences from plea agreements are not collected but are likely included on the judgement form.

The Comptroller's March 2025 report includes recommendations for enhancing the transparency, accessibility, and usability of aggregate data on the operations and outcomes of the Shelby County criminal justice system. See the [full report](#) for more, including all 18 metrics for the system that would increase accountability and transparency. An [executive summary](#) of the full report is also available.