

**INNOVATIVE  
SOLUTIONS IN PUBLIC DEFENSE**

# Wisconsin

*Making Better Use of Data to Improve Public Defense Services*



## Problem

For years, the Wisconsin State Public Defender (SPD) had been hampered by limited resources to gather and analyze statewide data on cases it handles. Although SPD had a data system that was partially integrated with the state's Consolidated Court Automation Program (CCAP) court records system, there was limited ability for SPD to extract, compile, and analyze combined SPD and courts data, and thus to make data-driven arguments about the impact of public defense on the rest of the justice system.

In addition, SPD's case management system did not provide measures to allow for quality indicators of the work of private attorneys, who are appointed in about 40% of SPD's cases.

## Solution

Twenty years after the creation of its home-grown case management system, SPD sought to upgrade its data collection and analysis. As a statewide public defense system, SPD sought to effectively measure quality indicators and to incorporate evidence-based decision-making into day-to-day operations.

Through the Reporting, Analysis, and Mining Project (RAMP), SPD programmers constructed a data warehouse that fully integrates CCAP's aggregate data with the case-level data of SPD's current system. This two-year process included mapping data elements for both systems, transferring data, and developing more powerful, user-friendly reporting functions for attorneys and managers. Building this data infrastructure will transform the efficiency and accuracy of SPD's internal and external decision-making.

## Program

The SPD, in collaboration with the University of Wisconsin Population Health Institute, implemented a data-driven strategy to enhance decision-making on individual cases, assess attorney performance, and enhance budget and legislative policy input through RAMP. RAMP was

## By the Numbers

**277,468**

*total cases reported on through the RAMP system over two years*

**131**

*different indicators for quality representation tracked through the RAMP system, including 96 for litigation events, 15 for litigation outcomes, and 18 for attorney-client relationship and interaction*

**600+**

*SPD staff members surveyed to gather feedback on the SPD's eOPD case management system*

**63%**

*of private attorneys surveyed said that the assigned counsel billing system was very easy or somewhat easy to use*

developed to address two of the ABA Ten Principles of Public Defense Delivery System, which recommend that “[d]efense counsel’s workload [be] controlled to permit the rendering of quality representation” (Principle #5) and that “[d]efense counsel [be] supervised and systematically reviewed for quality and efficiency according to nationally and locally adopted standards” (Principle #10).

## Results

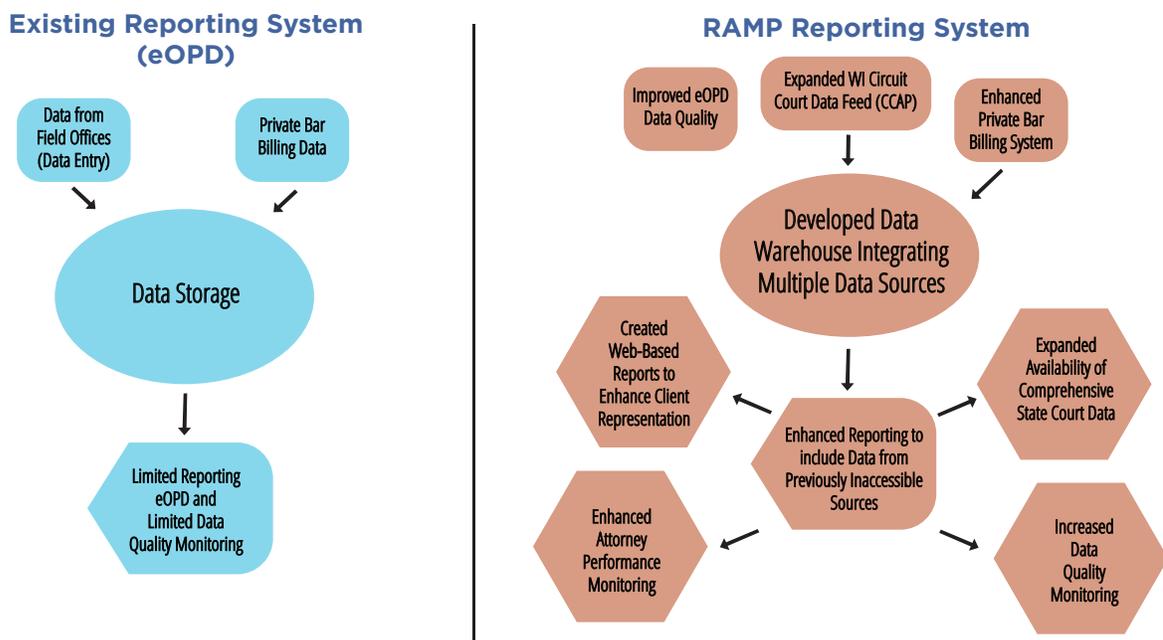
The automated reports allow SPD staff to access agency-level data as well as detailed information about some of SPD’s most pressing issues at both the system and individual client levels. Prior to RAMP, integration of the existing SPD case management system with CCAP was limited to populating data fields and links to access CCAP data. With the addition of the RAMP tool, it is easier to extract, compile, and analyze combined SPD and courts data. As the tool gets phased in, initial reports are primarily focused on data points about direct client representation. For example, RAMP can produce reports on average plea offers, or sentencing recommendations, equipping SPD attorneys with information to provide even higher service to their clients. Over time RAMP will be expanded to produce cost-associated reports.

Outside of the RAMP reporting system, the SPD also modified its assigned counsel billing system. The modifications to the billing system allow SPD to collect detailed information on assigned counsel work and build reports using the information. SPD management, staff, and attorneys will use RAMP data to improve agency operations, assess attorney performance and workload, and enhance quality representation of clients.

Finally, the new tool allows for faster and more accurate conflict checks. SPD struggles with locating private practice attorneys who are available to represent clients in conflict cases, particularly in rural areas. Reducing the time it takes to verify cases in which SPD staff attorneys have a conflict of interest is critical to getting conflict counsel identified and appointed as quickly as possible.

### Wisconsin Smart Defense Reporting, Analysis and Mining Project (RAMP) Reporting System Comparison.

Developed by the Wisconsin State Public Defender’s Office and the University of Wisconsin Population Health Institute.



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