



## Comprehensive Review Public Engagement Planning

Minnesota Sentencing Guidelines Commission | February 8, 2024

# Implications for engagement

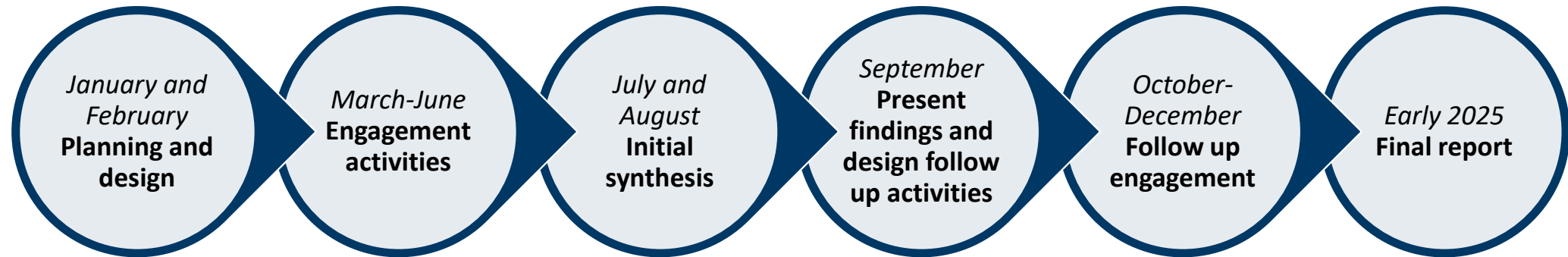
## **Broadly engage the public**

- Meet people where they are
- Reach communities across the state
- Identify and engage community groups
- Actively seek input from community groups, non-profits, service clubs, and organizations
- Recognize of busy schedules

## **Thoughtfully consider engagement formats and questions**

- Balance types of questions
- Avoid suggestive questions
- Utilize open-ended formats
- Involve commissioners, experts in engagement planning

# 2024 engagement timeline



- Identify events and organizations
- Design methods for engagement, such as listening sessions and focus groups
- Develop materials, such as facilitator guides and participant FAQs

- Host up to 30 engagement sessions across the state
- Join existing events, create new events to fill gaps
- Program and administer survey for people not able to participate in scheduled events

- Summarize and synthesize high level findings across activities
- Identify priority concerns for different groups
- Confer with researchers and MSGC staff

- Share findings with Commission
- Based on Commission feedback, select follow up activities
- Design follow up activities

- Conduct follow up listening sessions, focus groups, survey, or other activities based on input from Commission

- Write final report documenting engagement process, activities, and findings

# Topics and methods of engagement

Charlie Sellew, Management Analysis and Development

# Topics implied by guiding principles

## ***Topics to explore with people who have direct familiarity with the sentencing guidelines:***

- What is working well with the current sentencing guidelines?
- What are the challenges with the current sentencing guidelines?
  - Which provisions are confusing or have different interpretations?
  - What suggestions do people have for improvement?

## ***Topics to explore with people without direct familiarity with the sentencing guidelines:***

- What characteristics or features would make sentencing more fair and just?
- What characteristics or features would make sentencing more understandable to practitioners and the public?

Are these topics the right “research questions” for us to explore?

What do you need to know from practitioners and the public  
to guide your decision-making?

# Early concepts for engagement formats

## ***Format for people who have direct familiarity with the sentencing guidelines:***

- Listening session format (individual reflection and written comments, followed by participants speaking sequentially; comments may be separate from one another based on what participants came wanting to give input on)
- Open ended questions that get directly to topics we are seeking input on
- Mix of medium and large size groups

## ***Format for people without direct familiarity with the sentencing guidelines:***

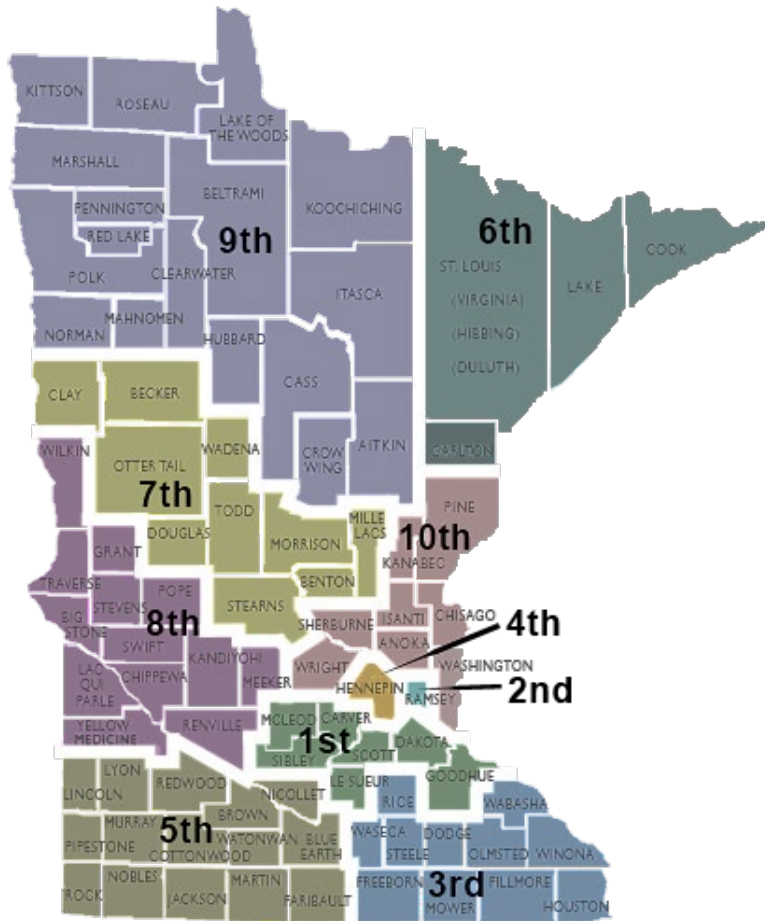
- Focus group format (open discussion with prompting by facilitators to those we hear less from; comments build on each other based on what participants say in conversation with one another)
- Open ended questions that build a conversation towards the topics we are seeking input on
- Mix of small and medium size groups

# Audiences for engagement

Shamsa Dhayow, Management Analysis and Development



# Reaching Minnesotans across regions and identities



Group together judicial districts into regions (1/10, 2/4, 3/5/8, 6, 7/9) for engagement purposes, committing to at least one in person event in and at least one online event focused on each region.

# Audience categories

- Practitioners with work experience interacting with the sentencing guidelines:
  - Judges and judicial staff
  - Prosecutors and county attorney staff
  - Public defenders and other defense attorneys
  - Law enforcement
  - Social workers
  - Correction and probation officers
  - Treatment and rehabilitative service providers
- People with lived experience interacting with the criminal justice system:
  - Crime victims and their families
  - Criminal defendants, incarcerated people, and their families
- People without direct interactions with the criminal justice system

For each category:

- Contact professional and advocacy organizations, as well as other key informants
- Ensure we reach communities experiencing sentencing disparities
- Ensure we reach organizations and individuals across different geographic regions

# Examples of organizations and events (1/2)

## Practitioners with work experience interacting with the sentencing guidelines

### Prosecutors

- **MN County Attorneys Association (MCAA)**

### Defense attorneys

- MN Board of Public Defense
- MN Association of Criminal Defense Lawyers (MACDL)

### Judges

- MN District Judges Association (MDJA)
- **Tribal Court State Court Forum (TCSCF)\*\***

### Law enforcement professionals

- MN Police and Peace officers Association (MPPOA)
- **MN Chiefs of Police Association\*\***
- **MN Sheriffs Association\*\***
- **MN Jail Programs and Services (MJPS)**

### Correction and probation officers

- **MN Association of Community Corrections Act Counties (MACCAC)**

- MN Association of County Probation Officers (MACPO)
- **MN Corrections Associations (MCA)\*\***
- Minnesota Transition Coalition

### Legal aid providers

- MN Association for Justice
- Indian Child Welfare Act Law Center
- Innocence Project of Minnesota
- Neighborhood Justice Center
- Anishinabe Legal Services
- Legal Rights Center
- Children's Law Center

### Social workers

### Release/reentry programs

- AMICUS (Twin cities)
- Central MN Re-Entry Project
- MN Comprehensive Offender Reentry Program (MCORP)
- Challenge Incarceration Program (CIP)

### Treatment and rehabilitative service providers

- MN Rehabilitation and Reinvestment Act
- NAMI Minnesota (National Alliance on Mental Illness)
- **MN Association of Resources for Recovery and Chemical Health (MARRCH)**

### Other professional associations

- MN State Bar Association (MSBA) - Criminal Law Section
- MN Coalition of Bar Associations of Color (MN-CBAC)
- MN Association of Black Lawyers (MABL)
- MN American Indian Bar Association (MAIBA)
- MN Hispanic Bar Associations (MHBA)

**Highlighted:** Known events/meetings

\*\* : Limited information

NOTE: Example organizations or events may not be interested in hosting a session with us, but we nonetheless recommend reaching out to them first before hosting our own events.

# Examples of organizations and events (2/2)

## People with lived experience interacting with the criminal justice system

- Families of victims, victim advocates
  - MN Coalition Against Sexual Assault (MNCASA)
  - Violence Free Minnesota
- Families of defendants, advocates for families of incarcerated people
- Currently and formerly incarcerated people
  - MN Justice Research Center
  - MN Freedom Fund

## People without direct interactions with the criminal justice system

- Geography-based community organizations
- Faith-based organizations
  - ISIAAH
- Youth advocacy groups
  - End Youth Prison MN
- Other community and advocacy organizations
  - Council for Minnesotans of African Heritage
  - Council on Asian Pacific Minnesotans
  - Minnesota Council on Latino Affairs (MCLA)
  - Center of the American Experiment
- Open public listening sessions (work with partner organizations to host and publicize)

Thinking about the groups of practitioners or members of the public with whom you have connections, what ideas do you have for organizations or events we should contact to co-host events?

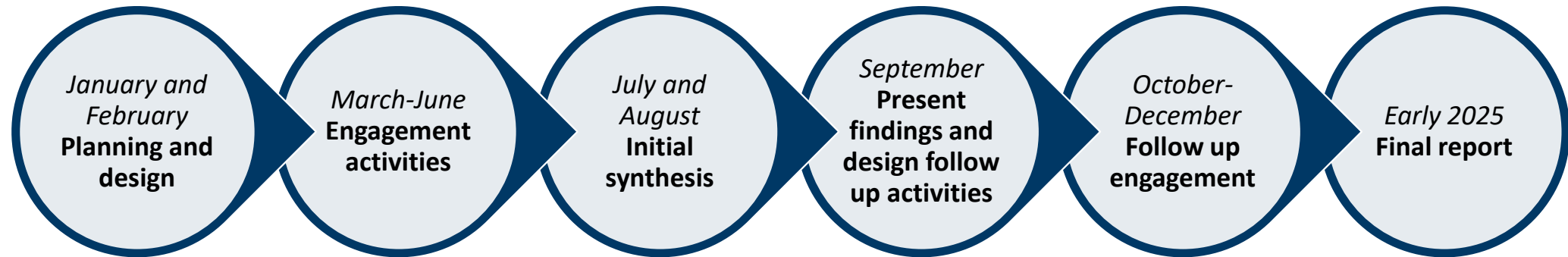
*As an example, if you are a judge, think about events or organizations that could help us get input from a range of judges.*

# Reaching Minnesotans across identities

- As an engagement strategy, broadly engage community and affinity organizations to aid in recruiting participants for events.
- In addition, within the lived experience category, ensure that there are events focused on both American Indian/Tribal communities and Black Minnesotan communities, because these communities have particularly large sentencing disparities.
- Work with Commission to develop processes for obtaining input from Tribal Nations, including involving the Tribal Court State Court Forum.

- **Before March meeting:** Begin outreach to organizations.
- **At March meeting:** Present plans and associated materials for engagement formats.
- **After March meeting, through end of June:** Host engagement sessions across state.

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