



Department of Management

NASCIO

State IT Recognition Awards

Category: Data Management,
Analytics, & Visualization

Project:

EZA Dashboard Migration and Improvement Project

Project Dates: 6/1/25 – 12/31/25

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

To advance Governor Kim Reynolds' strategic goals of maximizing data availability and technology visibility, the Iowa Department of Management's Division of Data, Planning, and Improvement (DOM-DPI) executed a milestone modernization of the state's inter-branch justice data. Following the successful cloud migration of the multiagency Justice Data Warehouse (JDW) which integrates over twenty years of Judicial, Corrections, and Health and Human Services (HHS) data, DPI launched the **EZA Dashboard Migration and Improvement Project**.

This targeted initiative dismantled the aging, static infrastructure of Iowa's two legacy justice web applications, completely replacing them with a suite of dynamic, public-facing dashboards for [Adult Court](#) and [Juvenile Justice](#). Concluding in late 2025, the project successfully transitioned Iowa from a reactive data-sharing posture to a proactive, user-centered justice data analytics ecosystem.

By seamlessly embedding the JDW into the broader DOM Data Enterprise Warehouse, Iowa did not just move data to the cloud - it revolutionized the user experience. This self-service framework bridges the gap between manual retrospective reporting and modern analytics, equipping state stakeholders and the public with zero-reload filtering, dynamic cross-referencing, and instantaneous insight into millions of critical adult and juvenile justice records while drastically reducing cognitive load.

IDEA

The original Easy Access (EZA) applications, Easy Access to Juvenile Court Data and Easy Access to Adult Criminal Data, were implemented in late 2015 to handle a massive volume of manual data requests routed to the Department of Human Rights (DHR). While the decentralized, self-service model was revolutionary for its time, it delivered data exclusively in aggregated, static tabular formats.

As data literacy grew across state departments, serious functional limitations emerged:

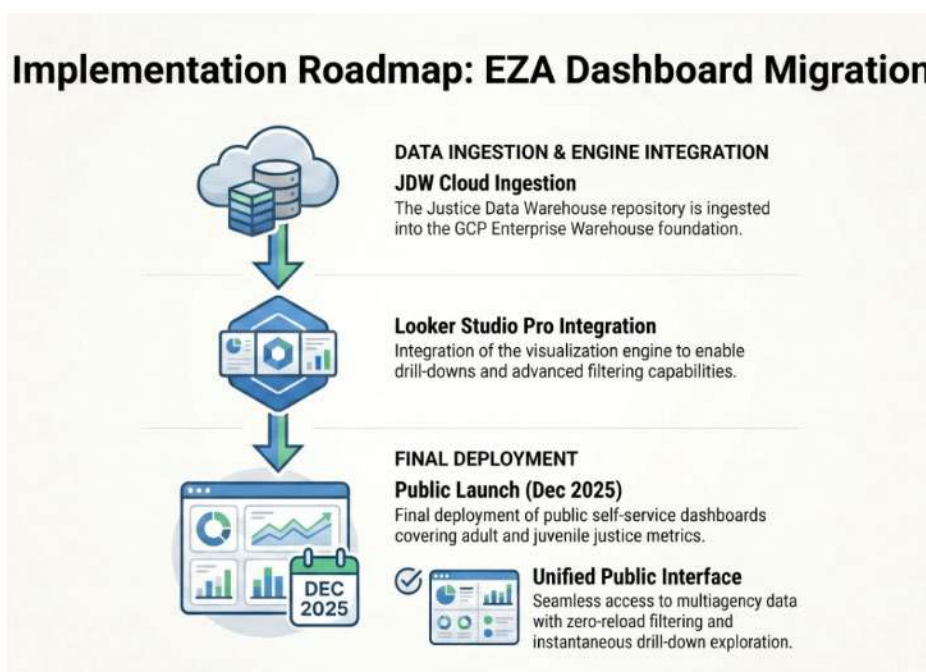
- **High Cognitive Load:** Interpreting the dense tables produced by the legacy EZA systems required a high level of specialized analytical expertise.
- **Rigid Interfaces:** The system relied on a cumbersome interface of multi-category checkboxes. Any modification to selection metrics forced a complete database query refresh, requiring users to repeatedly reselect criteria.
- **Lack of Granularity:** Aggregated tables offered only a partial view of the underlying information. The legacy systems were fundamentally incapable of supporting simultaneous cross-referencing or disaggregated views.

Justice data cannot exist in isolation. Relying on retrofitted, static reporting formats prevented policymakers and agency executives from exploring *why* systemic outcomes occurred, limiting them strictly to observing *what* had happened. Transitioning this architecture into an interactive ecosystem allows users to process information naturally, shifting Iowa from a reactive data-sharing posture to a proactive tool for immediate, evidence-based decision-making.

Unlike traditional, siloed reporting mechanisms, this initiative directly taps into the newly migrated GCP-hosted Justice Data Warehouse. By combining a unified multiagency backend (Judicial, Corrections, and HHS) with Google applications, Iowa has created a secure, low-cost business intelligence architecture. This environment supports zero-reload filtering, dynamic cross-referencing, and instantaneous drill-down analytical exploration across millions of records, all on a unified public interface.

IMPLEMENTATION

Initiated in the summer of 2025, the project was made possible in part through funding from the U.S. Department of Justice, Bureau of Justice Statistics, and adhered to a rigorous development cycle focused on user-centered data storytelling and consistent interface themes.



Infrastructure Alignment: Following the migration of the JDW to GCP, technical teams configured proper source tables, secure permissions, and real-time cloud data pipelines.

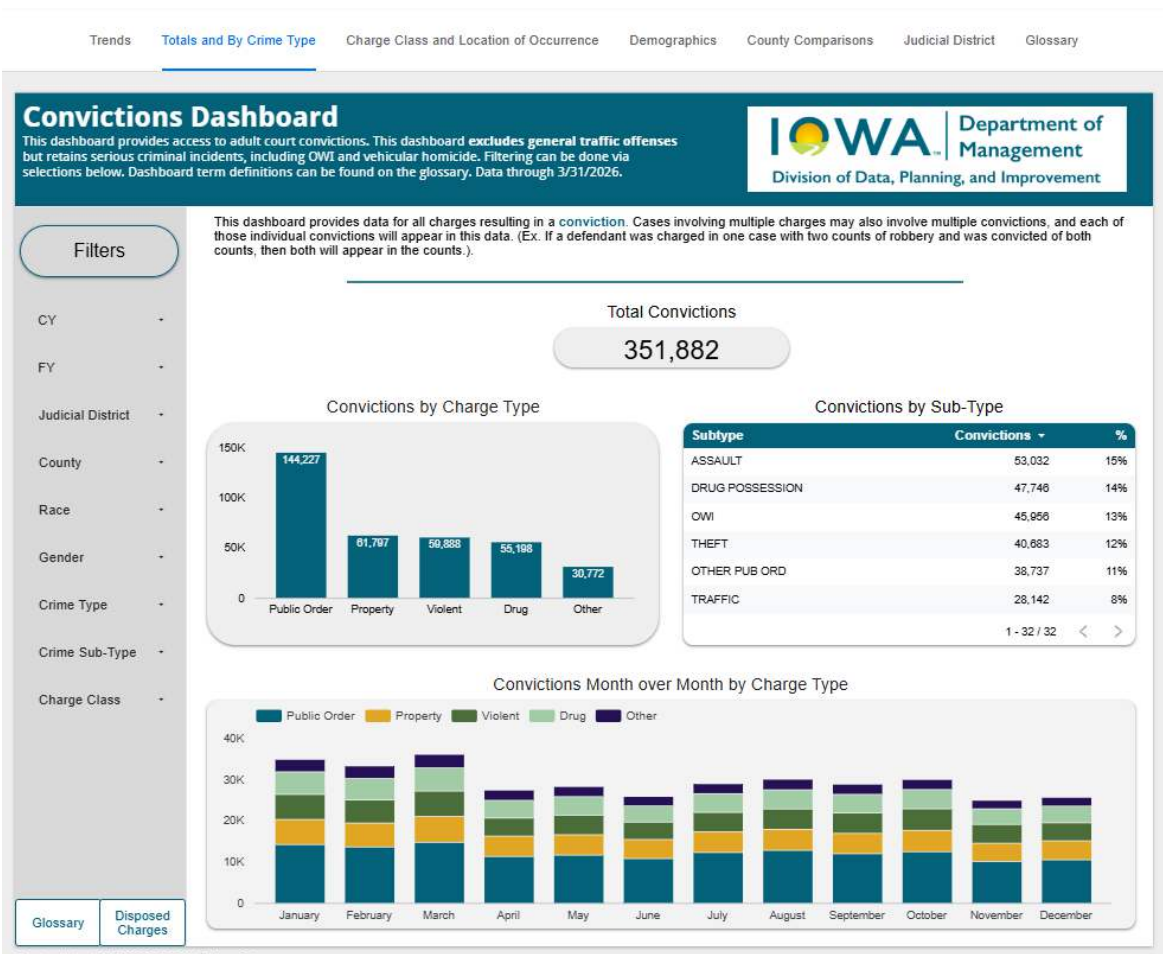
Template and Theme Standardization: To minimize user friction, a standard theme and user interface layout were established, ensuring a familiar look and feel as users moved between adult and juvenile data spaces.

Filter Optimization: Common foundational filters including Calendar/Fiscal Year, Judicial District, County, Age, Race, and Gender were standardized and embedded directly into the interactive dashboard panels.

Stakeholder Validation: Project staff held weekly meetings with multi-departmental stakeholders to refine visualizations, review data integrity, and implement user experience feedback.

By the conclusion of 2025, the project successfully deployed a robust suite of interconnected dashboards, eliminating the legacy checkbox system entirely:

- **Juvenile Justice Portfolio:** Modules covering unique operational checkpoints including Juvenile Complaints, Allegations, Delinquency Petitions Filed, Informal Adjustment Agreements, and Waivers to Adult Court. [Link](#)
- **Adult Criminal Justice Portfolio:** Advanced analytical views tracking Disposed Charges and Convictions with a high level of detail, including traffic offenses. [Link](#)



IMPACT

By connecting a modernized cloud infrastructure with an intuitive front-end business intelligence engine, Iowa has set a new standard for justice information transparency. The EZA Dashboard Migration Project has eliminated technical barriers to entry, enhanced statewide data literacy, and created a scalable analytics framework equipped to guide data-driven governance for years to come.

IMPROVED EFFICIENCIES

The EZA Dashboard Migration Project successfully democratized Iowa's justice data, replacing fragmented reporting structures with an interactive source of truth. By transitioning from a reactive approach, where state staff manually fulfilled individual, ad-hoc data requests, to a proactive, self-service architecture, the state has insulated its analytical team from unpredictable operational drag.

DPI historically managed a steady volume of approximately 100 public data requests per year. By offloading these routine queries to interactive, public-facing dashboards, the agency has eliminated the traditional analytical bottleneck and allowed stakeholders to independently pull data instantly.

- **Surviving the Legislative Crunch:** Shifting routine public requests to a self-service model directly preserved staff capacity during critical periods. This newfound bandwidth proved vital during the recent legislative session, allowing the lean analytical team to successfully review and respond to over 150 highly involved legislative requests without compromising daily operations.
- **Pivot to Advanced Analytics:** Rather than spending critical hours manually extracting data for static aggregate tables, DPI staff have successfully pivoted to high-value, forward-looking initiatives. Saved resource hours are now directly reinvested into specialized research projects, the expansion of the dashboard ecosystem, and pioneering work toward building predictive and prescriptive models within the newly integrated GCP Enterprise Warehouse.
- **Cognitive Load Reduction:** Complex judicial records are translated instantly into charts, maps, and trend lines, allowing agency leaders to focus on problem-solving rather than manual data translation.

DATA TRANSPARENCY AND PERFORMANCE METRICS

The system currently manages and tracks massive datasets across the state's judicial enterprise. Upon its deployment, the dashboards illuminated concrete trends and key historical baselines accessible to both state personnel and the public:

Dashboard Metric Area	Baseline Data Tracked and visualized	Operational Insights
Juvenile Court Services (JCS) Complaints	Over 78,000 historical complaints across Iowa's eight judicial districts.	Pinpoints localized shifts and regional workloads, high volume areas.
JCS Allegations	Over 108,000 precise charge allegations monitored seamlessly.	Maps specific law violations down to the county level to track micro-trends over a multi-year timeline.
Juvenile Delinquency Petitions	Over 16,800 formal petitions filed to initiate delinquency proceedings.	Provides a longitudinal baseline to measure the rate at which complaints escalate to formal court action.
Adult Court Disposed Charges	160,513 overall disposed charges for the comparative cycle.	Breaks down macro-level volumes instantly into Public Order, Drug, Property, and Violent offenses without database reloads.
Adult Convictions Trends	86,560 total convictions recorded through the end of the tracking cycle.	Instantly signals systemic shifts, identifying an overall 3.8% year-over-year increase and a specific 9.7% surge in violent crime convictions.

WHAT'S NEXT / FUTURE OPPORTUNITIES

The EZA Dashboard Migration Project is not a final destination, but a launchpad for the continuous growth of Iowa's justice data ecosystem. As data literacy and stakeholder demand across the state continue to increase, the Division of Data, Planning, and Improvement is actively executing a two-pronged long-term roadmap focused on localized reporting depth and advanced statistical modeling.

1. Dual-Tiered Reporting Ecosystem (Public & Power User)

While public-facing Looker Studio Pro dashboards will continue to expand to democratize critical justice indicators, DPI is simultaneously updating its internal reporting infrastructure.

- **SAP BusinessObjects Portal:** For internal agency power users and research analysts, DPI is developing highly customized, granular operational reports within the SAP Webi portal. This dual strategy ensures that while the public receives intuitive visual displays, state professionals retain access to the deep-dive, query-driven tabular tracking necessary for daily operations and statutory auditing.
- **Expanding the Dashboard Portfolio:** Immediate plans include transitioning remaining high-priority justice topics into the

visualization pipeline, including targeted modules for Youth in Placement, Diversions, and Recidivism analysis.

2. Transitioning from Retrospective to Predictive Modeling

With the critical inter-branch infrastructure now securely integrated into the Google Cloud Platform (GCP) Enterprise Data Warehouse, Iowa is uniquely positioned to shift from descriptive analytics (what happened) to advanced predictive analytics.

- **Enhanced Prison Population Forecasting:** Leveraging multiagency data lines (Judicial, Corrections, and HHS) intersecting within the JDW, DPI is enhancing its sophisticated prison population forecasting models. By applying predictive algorithms to current sentencing trends, historical lengths of stay, and demographic micro-shifts, the state can generate highly accurate longitudinal projections.
- **Prescriptive Policy Planning:** These advanced predictive tools will empower executive leadership, lawmakers, and corrections directors to proactively forecast facility capacity needs, simulate the impact of proposed statutory changes, and optimize resource allocation years in advance.

CONCLUSION

Iowa's EZA Dashboard Migration and Improvement Project represents the gold standard of NASCIO's vision for technology innovation and excellence in state government. By successfully migrating over twenty years of historical data and infrastructure into a modern cloud ecosystem, Iowa has fundamentally redefined how the state governs, visualizes, and acts upon complex inter-branch justice data.

The initiative delivers on the true promise of data use for decision making and insight by transforming dense, inaccessible databases into intuitive, actionable insights. By democratizing millions of rows of data from Judicial, Corrections, and HHS, Iowa has simultaneously eliminated operational administrative bottlenecks, insulated its staff during critical legislative sessions, and slashed user cognitive load. Moving forward, this unified cloud framework provides the vital springboard necessary to transition from retrospective reporting to advanced predictive modeling and prescriptive policy planning. Ultimately, the project stands as a scalable, low-cost blueprint for how state governments can use modern business intelligence to drive evidence-based decision making, optimize resource allocation, and provide unprecedented data transparency for constituents.