

*Innovations in Criminal Justice Summit III
Program Summaries
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Montgomery County Conviction Integrity Through Root Cause Analysis



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Program Start Date: 2012

Website: n/a

Description: The Montgomery County District Attorney's Office collaborated with the Quattrone Center for the Fair Administration of Justice, to create the Montgomery County District Attorney's Office Conviction Integrity Through Root Cause Analysis Program. "Root Cause Analysis" (RCA) was used to examine a high-profile case involving an unintentional yet significant investigative error by the office. RCA has been used in complex and fragmented industries (e.g., healthcare, aviation, nuclear power) to understand the various factors that lead to both individual and systemic-based errors, and to provide interventions that can effectively prevent future error. Conducting an open and honest, blame-free event review through RCA allows organizations to constantly improve their procedures and create a culture of learning and professional development.

In the case, an investigator misread the significance of a lab report finding, eventually necessitating the dismissal of the indictment. RCA served to supplement the District Attorney's response to this case, and led to the implementation of new best practices within the District Attorney's Office specifically designed to help prevent future errors and ensure appropriate case outcomes. The review resulted in several recommendations including the creation of two new prosecutorial positions - a Deputy District Attorney for Professional Standards and an Assistant Chief of Trials. The Deputy District Attorney serves as an office "Ombudsman" as well as leads independent case reviews for other members of the office. The review also resulted in a recommendation to restructure the County Detective Bureau by creating a new unit devoted to Violent Crime and Technology and to begin the process of seeking law enforcement accreditation of the Bureau.

Criminal Justice Partners: Montgomery County District Attorney's Office, Quattrone Center for the Fair Administration of Justice, University of Pennsylvania School of Law

Evaluation/Research: A process evaluation by the Quattrone Center is in progress and an impact evaluation is planned.

Implementation Guide: [Click Here](#)

