

DMC Action Network eNews

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DMC Action Network

The DMC Action Network is a project of the John D. and Catherine T. MacArthur Foundation's [Models for Change](#) initiative.

The Network aims to share knowledge and accelerate progress in the reduction of racial and ethnic disparities in the juvenile justice system.

[Lisa Garry](#), DMC Policy Director for the Center for Children's Law and Policy, manages the DMC Action Network. [Travis Long](#), Project Coordinator,

Hitting the Ground Running: Putting DMC Reduction on the Fast Track in Lancaster County, Pennsylvania

Smart, sustainable DMC reduction takes time. So what can a jurisdiction realistically hope to accomplish in just one year? As Lancaster County, PA, has demonstrated, you can accomplish a lot, including the creation of a diverse and active governing body, the implementation of a detention risk assessment instrument, and the opening of the County's first evening reporting center.



When Lancaster County, Pennsylvania, officially joined the DMC Action Network in August 2009 as a replication site, it was because individuals there demonstrated a strong motivation and commitment to DMC reduction in a jurisdiction that was facing some stark disparities. In Lancaster County, white youth make up 88% of the juvenile population, yet youth of color represent 60% of the youth in secure detention on any given day. Most of those youth live in the City of Lancaster, an urban area situated in what is an overwhelmingly rural county.

Those numbers drove Sherry Lupton, Supervisor of the Lancaster County Office of Juvenile Probation, to lead the County's effort to join the Network. In 2007, Lupton had created a DMC Group to try to tackle some of the issues surrounding racial and ethnic disparities in her jurisdiction. She began attending meetings of the Pennsylvania Commission on Crime and Delinquency's (PCCD) DMC Subcommittee of its Juvenile Justice Initiative, which connected her with others in Pennsylvania who were working on reducing racial and ethnic disparities. She hoped that, as a replication site, Lancaster could learn about some of the strategies that have been most effective at reducing DMC.

One year after joining the Action Network, Lancaster is not just learning: it's doing.

Immediately after joining the Network, Lancaster began gathering information on youth in the system using the Burns Institute Level One Data Collection tool - information that forms the basis of quarterly presentations to juvenile justice professionals and other stakeholders. Data from this past spring demonstrated that the top three offenses for which youth were being detained were failure to appear in court, delinquency order violations, and aggravated assault. Those data help illustrate where the County should target efforts to reduce DMC. However, Lupton also notes that the data are also valuable in empowering groups to take action: "When you're able to point to a specific zip code and time of day, you can help motivate the community to get involved in a different way."

provides administrative and technical support to the Network.

Core States

Pennsylvania
Berks County
Philadelphia
Lancaster County

Illinois
Peoria

Louisiana
Jefferson Parish
Rapides Parish

Washington
Benton/Franklin Counties

Partner States

Maryland
Baltimore City
Montgomery County
Prince George's County

Wisconsin
Rock County
Outagamie County
Kenosha County

Kansas
Sedgwick County
Lyon-Chase County

North Carolina
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This past spring, Lancaster used this information to help obtain funding for an evening reporting center (ERC) from PCCD. Lancaster officials believed that the ERC would help reduce the number of youth of color in detention. David Mueller, Director of the Office of Juvenile Probation, led the push to implement the program, which opened its doors in August. Known as Turning Point, the ERC serves up to ten male youth in the City of Lancaster between 3pm and 9pm, Monday through Friday. The ERC's director and staff are bilingual, which Lupton notes was a deliberate choice, given the number of Latino youth who come into contact with the system.

To complement the ERC, Lancaster County also developed a detention risk assessment instrument to ensure that officials are making objective decisions about which youth need to be securely detained and which youth can participate in community-based programs like the ERC, consistent with public safety. All county officials have received training on the instrument by Supervisor Leo Lutz, and the tool is now being used for all detention decisions.

When asked how Lancaster has made such rapid progress in just one year, Lupton notes that the County has a strong and consistent voice for reform: its DMC Governing Body. The Governing Body, which was created in large part through the leadership of the Honorable David R. Workman, has met regularly and built a strong membership base. Lupton also notes that its membership in the DMC Action Network as a replication site has been invaluable, particularly because neighboring Berks County has a similar population and is "aware of the concerns and challenges of this work."

Lancaster's stakeholders have a lot to celebrate, but Lupton notes that there is much more to look forward to in the coming months. Diana Rodriguez, Senior Probation Officer, has spearheaded a project to ensure that all forms are translated into Spanish. Additionally, given the high concentration of churches in the jurisdiction, stakeholders are working hard to build connections with the faith-based community, which she hopes "will help connect youth to a new network of resources and individuals." That push was sparked by a presentation by Reverend Romal Tune at the [DMC Action Network's Fourth Annual Meeting](#), and Lupton is now working to bring Reverend Tune to consult with her jurisdiction.

Capitalizing on the community's rich pool of resources and working closely with organizations like the Crispus Attucks Community Center, which provides a broad array of services for youth and families, are key to improving outcomes for youth, Lupton notes. "Networking with other stakeholders is based on a simple principle: We want our kids to do well. When you collaborate, you realize what a blessing it is to have those organizations and individuals in your community."

Tell us how you've been able to accomplish a lot in a short amount of time: email jszanyi@cclp.org.

DMC Action Network Launches Expanded DMC Data Template

The DMC Action Network has just launched a new tool to help ensure that jurisdictions adopt the most effective strategies for reducing racial and ethnic disparities: the Expanded DMC Data Template. This tool allows sites to dig deeper into data from their jurisdiction and more accurately target interventions aimed at reducing DMC. Seven DMC Action Network sites have agreed to pilot the instrument in their jurisdictions.

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You can also contact us anytime with comments or suggestions at jszanyi@cclp.org or 202-637-0377 x108.

The Expanded DMC Data Template builds upon the original data collection tool employed by Action Network sites, the Burns Institute (BI) Level One Data Template. The BI Level One Data Template was developed by the W. Haywood Burns Institute and piloted in Peoria, Illinois, an Action Network site. All sites agreed to work to collect and report this data on a quarterly basis as a condition of their participation in the Network.

Whereas the original BI Level One Tool focused primarily on the front end of the system, the Expanded DMC Data Template includes data on post-disposition decisions. Staff at the BI and the Center for Children's Law and Policy worked together to identify important data points to include in the expanded tool. By incorporating the BI Level One data elements and adding additional targeted questions, the Expanded Template will help jurisdictions identify racial and ethnic disparities in key areas, including diversion, cases petitioned, delinquency findings, and probation violations. The new tool not only provides this additional information, but it also calculates the Relative Rate Index data required by the federal Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention.

The seven DMC Action Network sites employing the Expanded DMC Data Template are Jefferson Parish, LA; Rapides Parish, LA; Benton-Franklin Counties, WA; Sedgwick County, KS; Union County, NC; Rock County, WI; and Kenosha County, WI.

For questions or additional information regarding the Expanded DMC Data Template, contact [Lisa Garry](#), DMC Policy Director for the Center for Children's Law and Policy.

TA Tips: Practical Advice for Successful DMC Reduction

This section of our newsletter focuses on sharing strategies and insights that can help jurisdictions effectively and sustainably eliminate DMC in their juvenile justice systems.



This month's tip is to **set clear timelines for DMC reduction efforts**. Developing intentional and effective strategies to reduce racial and ethnic disparities takes time. DMC Action Network sites have worked to build their data collection capacities and have spent time analyzing numbers from their jurisdictions before deciding on the best ways to reduce DMC.

Yet, while those jurisdictions have not rushed to implement cookie-cutter approaches to the problem, they have established goals and timelines for completing each aspect of the general approach to DMC reduction. For example, during the first six months, major milestones may be developing a governing committee, assessing available data, and beginning to collect more detailed data. The goal for the next six months could be to develop a detention screening instrument. Those intermediate steps would then ultimately lead to a bigger discussion, based on the data obtained during that period, of what alternative to detention were needed in that specific community.

In jurisdictions like Lancaster County, Pennsylvania, those goals and timelines have ensured that DMC reduction is more than just a conversation topic.

If you have a tip you would like to share, or if you would like to hear more about a particular topic, let us know: email jszanyi@cclp.org.

The Newest DMC and Juvenile Justice Resources

- A new report documents the overrepresentation of Native Hawaiians in Hawaii's juvenile and criminal justice systems. The publication, entitled [The Disparate Treatment of Native Hawaiians in the Criminal Justice System](#), reveals that Native Hawaiians are more likely to be incarcerated than any other racial or ethnic group in Hawaii, with Native Hawaiian youth being the most frequently arrested for all types of offenses in 2003. The report, issued by the Office of Hawaiian Affairs and compiled through research by the Justice Policy Institute and experts at the University of Hawai'i and Georgetown University, outlines the importance of data-driven solutions to these disparities as one of its leading recommendations.
- The Department of Justice's Review Panel on Prison Rape has released its [Report on Sexual Victimization in Juvenile Correction Facilities](#). The Review Panel conducted public hearings and gathered data from juvenile facilities with the highest reported rates of sexual victimization and the facilities with the lowest reported rates of sexual victimization, based on [data released by the Bureau of Justice Statistics this past January](#). The Review Panel's report provides observations and recommendations to assist practitioners and advocates in preventing sexual victimization in the nation's juvenile correctional facilities.
- A new report from the Just Kids Partnership in Maryland outlines the conclusions of a year's worth of research on youth in the state's adult system and its automatic transfer laws. The publication, [Just Kids: Baltimore's Youth in the Adult Criminal Justice System](#), found that nearly 70% of the Baltimore City youth who were charged as adults had their cases either sent to the juvenile court system or dismissed. However, those youth spent an average of five months in the Baltimore City jail before a hearing to consider transfer back to the juvenile system.
- The Annie E. Casey Foundation has published the first comprehensive examination of Missouri's juvenile correctional system. The report, entitled [The Missouri Model: Reinventing the Practice of Rehabilitating Youthful Offenders](#), highlights a number of achievements associated with the "Missouri model," including reduced recidivism, better educational progress, and improved transitions to the community, all of which have been achieved at a cost lower than or comparable to juvenile correctional systems in other states.
- Wyoming Kids Count has just released a new feature-length film on Wyoming's juvenile justice system. The movie, entitled [Your Neighbor's Child](#), was directed by Wyoming Kids Count Director Marc J. Homer. The film outlines the shortcomings in Wyoming's juvenile justice system through interviews and accounts of youth who have been in the system.

The DMC eNews reports on efforts to reduce disproportionate minority contact in juvenile justice systems in the [DMC Action Network](#). [Lisa Garry](#), DMC Policy Director for the Center for Children's Law and Policy, manages the DMC Action Network. For a PDF version of this newsletter, [click here](#). You can also contact us anytime with comments or suggestions at jszanyi@cclp.org or 202-637-0377 x108.