

DMC Action Network eNews

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In This Issue

[Farewell and Thank You to Lisa Garry, A Visionary Advocate for Change](#)

[Connecticut Replicates DMC Action Network Strategies at the State and Local Level](#)

[The Future of Federal Juvenile Justice Funding](#)

[The Newest DMC and Juvenile Justice Resources](#)

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.

The Center for Children's Law and Policy, manages the DMC Action Network. For more information on the DMC Action Network, [visit our website](#).

Farewell and Thank You to Lisa Garry, a Visionary Advocate for Change

When the MacArthur Foundation launched the DMC Action Network in 2007, it had a bold idea: create a network of jurisdictions focused on developing and sharing effective approaches to reducing racial and ethnic disparities in juvenile justice. The Foundation knew that it would take skilled leadership to translate that idea into reality, particularly given the limited progress that had been made on DMC reduction during the previous decades.



Fortunately, Lisa Garry was up to the challenge. Lisa joined the Center for Children's Law and Policy in 2007 with a rich background in juvenile justice, which ranged from direct care in secure facilities to state-level policy work. Those experiences helped ignite a passion for racial equity that Lisa brought to her work when launching the DMC Action Network and helping direct CCLP's advocacy on racial and ethnic fairness work.

In her role as DMC Policy Director, Lisa helped expand the DMC Action Network to include 17 jurisdictions in the MacArthur Foundation's Models for Change "core" states (PA, IL, LA,

WA) and the DMC Action Network "partner" states (KS, MD, NC, WI). Under Lisa's leadership, the sites demonstrated the value of a data-driven approach to DMC reduction by identifying policies and practices that had a disparate impact on children of color and taking decisive action. Through the use of innovations such as graduated responses for youth on probation and alternatives to school-based arrests, the Network has implemented strategies that have led to improved outcomes for children of color.

Lisa has now moved on to the next phase of her career, joining the State of Maryland's Department of Juvenile Services. There, she will serve as the agency's DMC and Juvenile Detention Alternatives Initiative (JDAI) Coordinator, continuing to advocate for a more equitable and effective juvenile justice system.

With Lisa's encouragement and support, DMC Action Network sites have pioneered some of the most successful and innovative approaches to reducing racial and ethnic disparities. Those reforms have touched the lives of countless youth who have benefited from fairer and more developmentally appropriate policies and practices. We know that in her

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
Union County
Cabarrus County

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new position, Lisa will continue to be a dedicated advocate for change not only in Maryland, but throughout the country. We thank her for her contributions to the field and look forward to sharing her successes as she moves forward in this new role.

Photo credit: DT Kindler Photography

Connecticut Replicates DMC Action Network Strategies at the State and Local Level

This month, we highlight new efforts to reduce racial and ethnic disparities in Connecticut's two largest cities, Hartford and Bridgeport, based on strategies developed and refined in DMC Action Network sites.

Officials throughout the DMC Action Network are working hard to improve outcomes for youth of color in their own communities. Each month, we've shared how those efforts have led to real and measurable change for youth of color. When those efforts start influencing the ways that agencies *outside* of the network do business, though, it's a different kind of story.

Connecticut, like other states, faces the over-representation of youth of color in the juvenile justice system. The state's Office of Policy and Management conducted studies of over-representation for the state in 1995, 2001, and 2009. Those studies demonstrated that racial and ethnic disparities existed at particular points in the state's juvenile justice system, notably at arrest, detention, and placement. For example, in 2009, African American youth comprised just 12% of Connecticut's youth population, but they represented 30% of detention admissions and 50% of admissions to the state's detention centers and its training school. The disparity also exists for Latino youth, who represent 15% of the youth population but almost 30% of admissions to the state's training school.

These studies helped spur state-level reforms. For example, the Office of Policy and Management supported the development of [a training curriculum designed to educate patrol officers on effective interactions with youth, incorporating research on adolescent development](#). Additionally, the state's Juvenile Justice Advisory Committee recommended legislation that would require police to obtain a court order before taking youth to secure detention. Advocates helped [secure the passage of that legislation this past spring](#).

To date, the state has not focused efforts on reducing DMC in specific jurisdictions. Advocates in Connecticut recognized the value of an approach that could look at specific decisions by particular decision makers and provide nuanced, data-driven recommendations for reform. The Center for Children's Advocacy (CCA), a non-profit law firm that advocates for Connecticut's at-risk youth, obtained funding from the Public Welfare Foundation to pursue DMC reduction efforts at the state and local level. The Center for Children's Law and Policy obtained funding from the Tow Foundation to work with CCA to replicate the DMC Action Network's model for racial and ethnic disparities reduction in Bridgeport and Hartford. These are the two cities with the highest numbers of children of color in Connecticut.

Since May 2011, stakeholder groups in Bridgeport and Hartford have taken several steps to improve outcomes for children of color. In both cities, existing collaboratives, known as Local Implementation Service Teams or

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LISTs, have taken responsibility for leading DMC reduction efforts. Both groups have convened smaller work groups focused on developing strategies to reduce racial and ethnic disparities.

As part of the new project, officials in both cities have conducted in-depth analyses of DMC at each point in the juvenile justice system. CCLP worked with state officials at the Court Support Services Division, which coordinates juvenile probation and detention, to develop an automated system for reporting detailed information on racial and ethnic disparities at each major decision point for any geographic region in the state, modeled after the DMC Action Network's data template. State officials can now generate detailed information to help guide interventions in individual communities throughout the state.

In Bridgeport, officials have begun looking at ways of diverting youth at the point of arrest to address the high percentage of total arrests for disorderly conduct and low-level assaults. After reviewing the data, the Bridgeport Chief of Police, Joe Gaudett, agreed to have local service providers train his officers on diversion options in the city. The group is also planning to undertake a detailed examination of arrest records to help guide future interventions.

In Hartford, stakeholders identified a substantial number of youth who returned to detention within three months and have decided to look more closely at that group and strategies that could help reduce re-admissions. One strategy is to work with the Court Support Services Division to implement graduated incentives as well as sanctions for youth on probation. Connecticut will draw upon the experiences of DMC Action Network sites and resources from those jurisdictions as it explores the use of graduated responses.

Thoughtful and intentional DMC reduction work takes time. But if the first six months are any indication, Bridgeport and Hartford are well on their way to taking concrete steps to improve the lives of children of color in their communities. Stay tuned.

Have you adopted innovations from the DMC Action Network in your jurisdiction? Email jszanyi@cclp.org.

The Future of Federal Juvenile Justice Funding

The federal government serves an important role in supporting juvenile justice programs across the country and preventing offending behavior. A range of different programs support states' efforts to create a fairer and more effective juvenile justice system, including:

- **The Title II State Formula Grants Program.** Authorized by the Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention Act (JJDP), Title II supports state efforts to adhere to the JJDP's core requirements and achieve other goals, such as reducing reliance on unnecessary incarceration.
- **The Title V Local Delinquency Prevention Program.** Authorized by the JJDP, Title V is the original federal program specifically designed to prevent delinquency at the local level by supporting evidence-based programming and other community-based services.

- **The Juvenile Accountability Block Grant Program.** Authorized by the Omnibus Crime Control and Safe Streets Act, the Juvenile Accountability Block Grant Program (JABG) supports a range of programs aimed at holding youth accountable using age- and developmentally-appropriate programs and services.

The Coalition for Juvenile Justice (CJJ) has published a fact sheet that outlines the federal role in juvenile justice programming in greater detail. [Click here to learn more.](#)

The Newest DMC and Juvenile Justice Resources

- Locking up juvenile offenders in correctional facilities, which costs states a yearly average of \$88,000 per youth, is not paying off from a public safety, rehabilitation or cost perspective, according to a new report from the Annie E. Casey Foundation. The report, *No Place for Kids: The Case for Reducing Juvenile Incarceration*, documents four decades of scandals and lawsuits over abusive conditions in juvenile institutions and reinforces a growing consensus among experts that the current incarceration model provides little public safety benefit. Its release, at a time when states are struggling with budget deficits and looking for ways to trim spending, also highlights an emerging trend in which at least 18 states have closed more than 50 juvenile corrections facilities over the past four years.
- James Bell, Executive Director of the W. Haywood Burns Institute, has authored a new report, *Non-Judicial Drivers into the Juvenile Justice System for Youth of Color*. Originally prepared for the California Endowment's Boys and Men of Color Initiative, the report discusses the negative impacts incarceration can have on a young person's psyche as well as their physical health. The report also discusses how a lack of access to proper medical care and a lack of knowledge in the justice field of trauma-informed alternatives disproportionately drive youth of color into the juvenile justice system.
- The Research and Evaluation Center at John Jay College of Criminal Justice released a report on the sustainability of juvenile justice reforms that have reduced the number of youth confined in secure facilities. The publication, *Resolution, Reinvestment, and Realignment: Three Strategies for Changing Juvenile Justice*, reviews the most prominent correctional reform models from the past 40 years. The authors, Jeffrey Butts and Douglas Evans, categorize these reform efforts and conclude that some models are more sustainable than others. To read the full report, [follow this link](#).
- The Campaign for Youth Justice released the results of a new national poll that shows strong public support for treatment and rehabilitation of youth over incarceration and automatic prosecution in adult criminal court. This survey, a sample of 1,000 American adults, was commissioned by the Campaign for Youth Justice (CFYJ) and conducted by GBA Strategies. [Click here to view the poll results.](#)

- The National Juvenile Justice Network's Fiscal Policy Center has just released a new toolkit to assist state and local officials make a public information act request. The Fiscal Policy Center includes resources that provide technical assistance to juvenile justice advocates in the areas of budget structure and analysis, as well as messaging and framing strategies. [Click here to learn more.](#)
- A new fact sheet from the Justice Policy Institute shows that violent and property crimes across the United States are falling this year, according to figures released by the Federal Bureau of Investigation. The FBI's annual Uniform Crime Report (UCR) shows all categories of violent crime and property crime fell from 2009 to 2010, even as states are incarcerating fewer individuals and spending less money on corrections. [Click here to read more.](#)
- The Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention (OJJDP) released the new online [Journal of Juvenile Justice](#) at its 2011 National Conference. The journal aims to be an accessible, practical tool for a diverse researcher and practitioner audience. The semi-annual, peer-reviewed journal is sponsored by OJJDP and will address a variety of issues in juvenile justice, such as juvenile victimization, delinquency prevention, intervention, and treatment.
- This month, OJJDP released a guide to help juvenile justice facilities ensure that they are prepared to ensure that youth receive the services and supports that they require during emergencies. The report is the first comprehensive planning guide to address the specific needs of children, youth, and families involved in the justice system during an emergency. [The document](#) provides step-by-step guidance to help ensure the efficient continuation of operations during an emergency, the reduction of risk to the physical plant, and the safety and well-being of the youth and staff who live and work in the nation's juvenile justice residential facilities.
- The Administration for Children and Families (ACF) [released a new report](#) that synthesizes the latest research on the risk factors that youth face, highlights their needs, and describes how ACF and community programs have helped serve them. It then discusses how programs can be better catered to meet at-risk youth's needs in the future.
- The Annie E. Casey Foundation has just published the 2011 update to its annual KIDS COUNT Data Book. The Data Book is a comprehensive resource on the status of U.S. children, featuring state-specific data on ten key indicators of child well-being. Visit the [Data Book home page](#) to download the report and create maps, graphs, and charts at the national, state, and local level.

The *DMC eNews* reports on efforts to reduce disproportionate minority contact in juvenile justice systems in the [DMC Action Network](#). 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 202-637-03 77 x108.