

DMC eNews

Issue #31 | July/August 2012

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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.

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

Taking DMC Reduction Strategies Statewide in North Carolina

During the past six months, juvenile justice in North Carolina has undergone some significant changes. For one, the state's juvenile justice agency, formerly known as the Department of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention, was relocated to the Department of Public Safety as the Division of Juvenile Justice (DJJ). Additionally, a bipartisan committee in the state legislature endorsed a proposal to raise the age of juvenile court jurisdiction from 16 to 18 for certain offenses - a first in the state's ongoing dialogue on the issue.

One thing has not changed, though: a commitment to spreading innovations from the Models for Change initiative throughout the state. North Carolina's involvement in Models for Change began in 2007, when Union County joined the DMC Action Network. Union County officials embraced a range of strategies to reduce racial and ethnic disparities, such as improved data collection, the implementation of a detention assessment instrument, and the development of a system of graduated responses to youth compliance and noncompliance with probation. These reforms contributed to a 67% decline in the number of youth admitted to detention for violations of probation in Union County over a nine month period, with a 50% drop in admissions of youth of color for that reason.

State officials took notice, and with the support of the MacArthur Foundation, they have been able to spread successful strategies throughout the state. According to DJJ's Assistant Director for Court Services, Michael Rieder, "We were so appreciative of the opportunities that the Models for Change initiative gave us, in part because one of the only things we were hearing during the past few years was 'cut, cut, cut.'"

DJJ began laying the groundwork for effective DMC reduction by educating juvenile justice professionals and other stakeholders on racial and ethnic disparities and data-driven decisionmaking. The agency hosted four regional conferences in August 2011, followed by smaller community forums in each of the state's 30 judicial districts this past spring. The meetings included approximately 3,600 attendees, exposing individuals to strategies and best practices from Union County and other places around the country.

Through the gatherings, the agency rolled out two new tools. The first, a district data report, generates information on how a jurisdiction compares to other areas of the state in terms of referrals, detention admissions, and other indicators. According to Rieder, the reports generated discussions about current policies and practices and alternatives to formal processing.

Core States

Pennsylvania
Berks County
Philadelphia
Lancaster County

Illinois
Peoria County

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

The second tool is a detention assessment instrument. As Rieder notes, the tool “minimizes the emotional content of decision making and puts the emphasis on identifying those youth who do require detention for public safety reasons.” DJJ piloted the tool in four districts from January through June of 2012. The result? A 22% reduction in detention admissions when compared with the same time period the previous year. This included a 24% reduction for African American youth and a 16% reduction for Latino youth, meaning that 125 fewer youth of color entered detention in those four counties over a six-month period. Although Rieder notes that detention admissions have generally been on the decline throughout the state, he emphasized the importance of formalizing objective decisionmaking.

DJJ is also incorporating objective decisionmaking in probation services in each district by building upon Union County’s work on graduated responses to probation violations. Graduated responses encourage fair, consistent, and appropriate responses to youth under supervision. Sanctions take into account the seriousness of a specific probation violation and its risk to public safety when determining how to hold youth accountable for misbehavior. The strategy also emphasizes the importance of rewarding youth as they work toward building the skills that will help them stay out of trouble in the future.

The push to implement graduated responses has sparked creative thinking about how to serve children throughout the state. For example, in North Carolina’s first judicial district, Coast Guard members are establishing a mentoring program that will link youth with supportive adults and give them the opportunity to learn about the Coast Guard’s work. In Wake County, which is home to the state’s capital, a partnership with the Caldwell Fellowship program at North Carolina State University aims to bring together service-oriented college students and youth involved in the court system to brainstorm new ways of supporting juvenile justice-involved youth in the community. “We always talk about identifying ‘consequences,’ but we should be talking about identifying learning experiences that will expose youth to things that they didn’t know existed,” says Rieder. With the help of the Center for Children’s Law and Policy, DJJ will begin training and working with officials this fall to help districts develop their own continuum of options to promote positive youth behaviors.

For Rieder, the goal is to link individual youth with the types of people and experiences that keep them out of the justice system. In his line of work, he has many examples of such success stories. However, he also recognizes the value of these reforms to the juvenile justice system as a whole. “Thanks to the opportunity to share these approaches throughout the state, we’re getting a big result from the MacArthur Foundation’s investment. When you’re making change on that level and getting results, it’s something to be very proud of.”

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Department of Justice Issues New Standards to Protect Youth From Sexual Victimization in Juvenile and Adult Facilities, Seeks Comment on Minimum Staffing Ratios

On June 20, 2012, the Department of Justice published national standards aimed at preventing, detecting, and responding to sexual misconduct in confinement facilities as part of the Prison Rape Elimination Act (PREA).

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We want to hear from you about how we can improve the DMC Action Network eNews.

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

Passed in 2003, PREA is the first federal civil statute focused specifically on addressing sexual violence in juvenile facilities, jails, prisons, lockups, and other facilities. In addition to supporting research, data collection, and technical assistance, PREA required the Justice Department to issue regulations for certain public and privately operated juvenile facilities. States must ensure that those facilities comply with the PREA standards or risk losing a portion of the state's federal prison funds.

The Center for Children's Law and Policy has developed a number of resources to help officials understand their obligations under PREA, including:

- [A quick reference guide](#) that provides a summary of the key requirements for youth in juvenile and adult facilities. It is intended for individuals who wish to understand the new standards but who do not have responsibility for implementing the details of the requirements.
- [A summary and checklist](#) designed to help agency officials and facility administrators understand the scope of the PREA standards for facilities and the individual requirements contained in the standards.
- [A list of best practices](#) that agencies can adopt to go above and beyond the minimum floor set by the PREA standards.

The Department of Justice is currently seeking comments on the standards' proposed minimum staffing ratios for secure juvenile facilities. For more information on the staffing ratio requirement and instructions on how to submit comments by the August 20, 2012 deadline, [follow this link](#).

New OJJDP Funding Opportunity for Local Juvenile Justice Reform

The Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention (OJJDP) has announced a funding opportunity designed to help juvenile justice agencies develop and implement a set of evidence-based and cost-measurement tools that will improve outcomes for justice-involved youth and help agencies save money.

Through the new Juvenile Justice Reform and Reinvestment Demonstration Program, OJJDP will provide up to \$750,000 in funding, training, and technical assistance to as many as three applicants. OJJDP will also provide separate funding for a comprehensive process and outcome evaluation of the program.

Applications for both funding opportunities are due by 11:59 p.m. EST on August 23, 2012. [Follow this link for a list of frequently asked questions](#) about the program, or [click here to read the full solicitation](#).

The Newest DMC and Juvenile Justice Information

- The National Juvenile Justice Network has published a new edition of *Advances in Juvenile Justice Reform*, a publication that captures a wide array of youth justice reforms that took place between 2009 and 2011. The report outlines new laws, administrative rule and practice changes, positive court decisions, and promising commissions and studies from across the country.
- On June 25, 2012, the Supreme Court issued its decision in *Jackson v. Hobbs* and *Miller v. Alabama*, two cases where 14-year-olds were automatically sentenced to life without parole for homicide. The Court held that mandatory sentences of life without parole for crimes committed under the age of 18 violate the Eighth Amendment's prohibition on cruel and unusual punishment. To learn more about the cases and the implications for justice systems around the country, [visit the Campaign for the Fair Sentencing of Youth's website](#).
- This month, the Coalition for Juvenile Justice released a new report entitled *Positive Power: Exercising Judicial Leadership to Prevent Court Involvement and Incarceration of Non-Delinquent Youth*. The publication highlights nine judges across the nation who are using their statutory and inherent judicial powers to divert youth away from incarceration and toward community and family-based supports that more effectively meet their needs.
- The Research and Evaluation Center at John Jay College of Criminal Justice recently released a comprehensive report that discusses state juvenile justice reforms. *Pioneers of Youth Justice Reform: Achieving System Change Using Resolution, Reinvestment and Realignment Strategies* explores various reform initiatives that have reduced states' reliance on confinement facilities for youth.
- The Office of Justice Programs (OJP), in collaboration with the Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention, the National Institute of Justice, and the Bureau of Justice Assistance, has released a new fact sheet on drug courts. The publication examines adult and juvenile drug court program models and OJP's support of those programs. It also provides facts, research findings, and additional resources. [Click here to download the fact sheet](#).
- The Human Rights Campaign (HRC) has released the results of its survey of more than 10,000 lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender youth in a new report, *Growing up LGBT in America*. HRC asked youth about their experiences at home, at school, and in their communities. A major finding from the survey is that LGBT youth are twice as likely as their non-LGBT peers to say they had been physically assaulted, kicked, or shoved at school. [Click here to view the full results](#).

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.

DMC eNews

Issue #30 | April/May 2012

In This Issue

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MacArthur Foundation, OJJDP Support Data-Driven DMC Reduction in Two New Jurisdictions

What do Alachua County, Florida, and Arapahoe County, Colorado, have in common? They're the next two jurisdictions to benefit from a new effort to reduce racial and ethnic disparities in the juvenile justice system.

With funding from the John D. and Catherine T. MacArthur Foundation and the federal Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention, both counties will participate in the newly launched Racial and Ethnic Disparities Reduction Project. Through the project, the Center for Children's Law and Policy (CCLP) will provide intensive site-based technical assistance to both counties. The jurisdictions can also receive up to \$25,000 per year for up to two years to support their work, plus \$5,000 per year for travel to other jurisdictions that have successfully reduced DMC.

According to DMC Policy Director Tiana Davis, the collaboration represents a unique opportunity to extend successful strategies from the DMC Action Network and other successful efforts to reduce racial and ethnic disparities. "Thanks to the jurisdictions that have pioneered reform, we now know more about how to reduce racial and ethnic disparities. Through the public and private investments in this new project, two counties now have an opportunity to translate that knowledge into measurable outcomes for youth of color."

Quick Facts: **Arapahoe County, CO**

Stakeholder Group
Minority Overrepresentation
Committee
Lead Agency
Department of Corrections
Youth Population
147,000 (45% youth of color)

CCLP selected Alachua County and Arapahoe County after a nationwide search and competitive application process. Both jurisdictions show the commitment and potential to reduce racial and ethnic disparities. Arapahoe County first convened its Minority Overrepresentation Committee in 2003. Officials there have been working to address DMC in the juvenile justice and child welfare systems since then. Like many places around the country, though, inconsistent access to data has limited the committee's efforts. Through the project, stakeholders are hoping to overcome those barriers and develop a set of focused strategies based on that information.

Core States

Pennsylvania

Berks County
Philadelphia
Lancaster County

Illinois

Peoria County

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

Kelly Abbott serves as the Alternatives to Incarceration Coordinator for Colorado's 18th Judicial District, which contains Arapahoe County. She sees promise in her jurisdiction's history of strong collaboration. "Having gone to other districts around the state, I know that we do a very good job of working together toward a common goal. I see this project as an opportunity to give us the direction to use data to really make a difference."

In Alachua County, the Gainesville Police Department has galvanized efforts to improve how the justice system responds to youth of color. Recent statistics show that African American youth are referred to the juvenile justice system at more than four times the rate of the county's white youth. As part of the DMC Reduction Project, officials plan to draw upon partnerships with an array of community-based organizations to identify ways of reducing that disproportionality and addressing other areas of concern.

For Gainesville Chief of Police Tony Jones, this means taking a close look at the front end of the juvenile justice system. "We're not just going to stick our heads in the sand and keep doing business as usual. By collaborating, we know that we can devise strategies to keep youth of color from entering the system while also preserving public safety."

Through the Models for Change initiative, DMC Action Network sites demonstrated that data-driven efforts can translate concerns about racial and ethnic disparities into results. The pressure is on, but we know that both Alachua County and Arapahoe County are up to the challenge of creating more equitable and effective juvenile justice systems.

To learn more about the Racial and Ethnic Disparities Reduction Project, contact CCLP's DMC Policy Director, Tiana Davis, at tdavis@cclp.org or 202-637-0377 x103.

Quick Facts: Alachua County, FL

Stakeholder Group

Alachua County Juvenile
Justice Council

Lead Agency

Gainesville Police Department

Youth Population

44,520 (28% youth of color)

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CCLP to Share Effective DMC Reduction Strategies with American Probation and Parole Association

Planning on attending the American Probation and Parole Association's (APPA) 37th Annual Training Institute in Indianapolis this summer? Be sure to join DMC Policy Director Tiana Davis and Staff Attorney Jason Szanyi for a session on effective approaches to reducing racial and ethnic disparities. The workshop will cover the DMC Action Network approach, successes and measurable results from the Network, and ways of overcoming common challenges to DMC reduction. CCLP staff will also share policies and practices from Bridgeport and Hartford, Connecticut, which are currently replicating the DMC Action Network approach with the support of the Tow Foundation.

[Click here for more information](#) about APPA's upcoming conference.

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National Juvenile Justice Network Seeks Fiscal Policy Center Director

The National Juvenile Justice Network is accepting applications for the next director of its Fiscal Policy Center. The Center provides technical assistance and training to juvenile justice reformers in the areas of state budget structure and analysis, review of federal money flows, examination of state-county fiscal relationships, compilations of no-cost legislation, cost-benefit research, and examples of and lessons learned from fiscal realignment strategies.

For more information about the position, [follow this link](#).

The Newest DMC and Juvenile Justice Information

- The Research and Evaluation Center at the John Jay College of Criminal Justice released two new research briefs on trends in juvenile justice. [The first publication](#) notes that that less serious offenses such as obstruction of justice, simple assault, drug law violations, vandalism, and disorderly conduct accounted for more than 90 percent of the growth in out-of-home placements between 1985 and 2008. [The second publication](#) analyzed juvenile crime trends in six states, determining that the number of youth transferred to criminal court is not correlated with reductions in violent crime rates in those states.
- New research from the Department of Psychology at Stanford University found that race can have an impact on individuals' willingness to support harsher punishments for youth. Study participants read a fact pattern involving a youth charged with a serious offense. The fact patterns were identical, except that half of participants were told that the youth was white and the other half were told that the youth was African American. Participants who read the fact pattern involving an African American youth were significantly more likely than other participants to support sentences of life without parole for non-homicide crimes, and significantly less likely to believe that youth are less culpable than adults who commit similar crimes. You can read the study, [Race and the Fragility of the Legal Distinction between Juveniles and Adults](#), by clicking this link.
- A new report by the Justice Policy Institute describes the positive role that employment plays in reducing offending and increasing lifelong earnings for youth. The publication, [Working for a Better Future](#), finds that investments in youth employment, which research characterizes as a "protective factor" against crime, would improve public safety.
- A new toolkit from the National Juvenile Justice Network (NJJN) outlines how jurisdictions can identify federal funding to support programs that benefit youth. The NJJN toolkit, [How to Find and Use Byrne Justice Assistance Grant \(JAG\) Information for Juvenile Justice Reform](#), explains the purpose of the funding and outlines strategies to redirect resources to local prevention and intervention programs.

- The Annie E. Casey Foundation's Juvenile Detention Alternatives Initiative (JDAI) recently hosted its 2012 inter-site conference in Houston, Texas. The gathering of approximately 700 professionals featured a range of presentations on best practices and promising approaches to juvenile justice reform. [You can view materials from the conference by clicking this link.](#)
- On May 17, 2012, The U.S. Department of Justice released its final rule for the implementation of the Prison Rape Elimination Act (PREA). The rule sets national standards for prevention, detection, and response to sexual misconduct in four categories of facilities: juvenile facilities, adult prisons and jails, lockups, and community confinement facilities. [To view the rule and the Justice Department commentary, follow this link.](#) The National Juvenile Justice Network and the National Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention Coalition will host a joint webinar on the PREA standards and their impact on juvenile justice systems on Tuesday, June 19th at 2pm EST. RSVP to info@njjn.org for call-in information.
- Juvenile facility administrators have a fundamental responsibility to keep youth and staff safe. Most fulfill that responsibility without using pepper spray and tear gas. However, some continue to rely on painful and dangerous chemical agents as a substitute for more effective and humane ways of managing youth behavior. [A new fact sheet from the Center for Children's Law and Policy](#) highlights concerns associated with chemical agents and offers strategies to reduce and eliminate reliance on them.
- This month, the American Academy of Child and Adolescent Psychiatry's Juvenile Justice Reform Committee released [a new policy statement on the dangers of isolating youth in secure facilities](#). The Policy statement "opposes the use of solitary confinement in correctional facilities for juveniles," noting that youth are "at a particular risk of ... adverse reactions" to solitary confinement, including depression, anxiety, psychosis, and suicide.
- The Center for Juvenile Justice Reform at Georgetown University's Public Policy Institute, in partnership with Juvenile Law Center, announced its inaugural Information Sharing Certificate Program. Supported by the MacArthur Foundation's Models for Change initiative, the program enables leaders in juvenile justice, child welfare, education, behavioral health and other child serving fields to overcome information sharing challenges. For additional information and application instructions, [follow this link.](#)

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DMC eNews

Issue #29 | March 2012

In This Issue

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[SAMHSA, MacArthur Collaborate to Improve How Juvenile System Responds to Youth with Behavioral Health Needs](#)

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New Collaboration Extends DMC Action Network's Impact

This month, Rock County, Wisconsin, a DMC Action Network site, describes a new partnership that is spreading effective strategies to reduce racial and ethnic disparities to Wisconsin's largest county.



A youth- and staff-created mural in the Rock County Youth Services Center.
Photo courtesy of the Janesville Gazette.

When you get results, people tend to take notice. So it's not all that surprising that a 35% reduction in youth of color detained for probation violations and an 88% drop in youth placed in state juvenile correctional facilities would turn heads.

These results and others from Rock County have sparked a partnership to share effective DMC reduction strategies with Wisconsin's largest county, Milwaukee County. Milwaukee County is home to approximately 250,000 youth under the age of 18, approximately 60% of whom are youth of color.

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Illinois

Peoria

Louisiana

Jefferson Parish
Rapides Parish

Washington

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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

Rock County's Juvenile Justice Services Division Manager, Lance Horozewski, is no stranger to collaboration. He has worked closely with the two other DMC Action Network sites in Wisconsin, Outagamie County and Kenosha County, since the network began in 2007. However, it was one year ago that Lance and his counterpart in the Milwaukee County Department of Health and Human Services began conversations about officially replicating successful strategies outside of the DMC Action Network.

One of those strategies was Rock County's adoption of an objective assessment tool for youth under the agency's supervision. The tool, known as the Youth Assessment and Screening Instrument (YASI), identifies a youth's strengths and weaknesses, guiding probation officers to focus on specific factors underlying risky behavior. The YASI benefits youth of color by ensuring that all youth receive an objective assessment of the appropriate level of supervision. According to Lance, before the YASI's implementation, "all youth would receive substance abuse services regardless of whether they had demonstrated any need. Now, we're looking at each youth and developing plans that put resources where they are needed most, mitigating the factors most associated with underlying offending behavior."

Six months ago, Lance traveled to Milwaukee to explain Rock County's experience with the YASI. He shared how the YASI helped Rock County move away from a supervision model based on the principles of adult probation, and toward a case management approach that focuses on individualized strengths and needs. That presentation and open dialogue provided Milwaukee County officials with the justification to transition from dated risk and needs tools adopted in the mid-90s to the YASI. The first round of training for Milwaukee County officials took place earlier this month. As an added benefit of the collaboration, Rock County was also able to send its recent hires to this training for no added cost. In addition to adopting the YASI, Milwaukee County engaged Mark Carey, an expert in evidence-based supervision techniques who worked with the three Wisconsin DMC Action Network sites, to train staff on effective probation practices.

These reforms mean that Milwaukee County's juvenile justice system will provide more appropriate and targeted services going forward. However, Lance and his counterparts in other jurisdictions also see longer-term benefits from this collaboration for youth throughout the state. "This is a significant opportunity to share our data and leverage it for systems reform throughout Wisconsin. We're going to have a robust number of clients among our four counties, and we'll be able to show positive outcomes that can move other jurisdictions to do things differently."

The new partnership is also giving Rock County the opportunity to learn from innovations in Milwaukee County, which Lance describes as a leader in the implementation of effective wraparound and mental health services for youth. For example, Rock County is discovering how to leverage federal funds in new ways to increase available community-based mental health services. Rock County is also adopting Milwaukee County's detention assessment instrument (DAI). Beginning July 1st, Rock County will begin using the DAI at intake to better align decisions to detain youth with the factors that put them at risk of their reoffending or failing to appear in court.

These collaborations have already brought big changes in Wisconsin. In the coming months, Lance plans to coordinate more formal discussions among Rock, Milwaukee, Outagamie, and Kenosha counties on a range of topics. These include possibilities for cost sharing and strategies for implementation of evidence-based practices.

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This past month, Rock County's local newspaper, the *Janesville Gazette*, [featured the county's progress in creating a more equitable and effective juvenile justice system](#). With this new collaboration in the works, we know that this won't be the last time we're reading about new ways to improve services for youth.

SAMHSA, MacArthur Collaborate to Improve How Juvenile System Responds to Youth with Behavioral Health Needs

The Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA) and the John D. and Catherine T. MacArthur Foundation are collaborating on a \$1 million effort targeting the behavioral health needs of youth in contact with the juvenile justice system. The project is aimed at diverting youth with behavioral health conditions from the juvenile justice system to community-based programs and services.

Under this initiative, up to eight states will be competitively selected to participate based on their commitment to improving policies and programs for these youth. This innovative collaborative effort integrates SAMHSA's Policy Academy, which brings together state leadership teams to learn about effective interventions and the latest research, and the MacArthur Foundation's Models for Change Action Network strategy, which supports and links teams working on similar innovations in policy and practice. These combined resources will support state efforts to develop and implement policies and programs that divert youth away from the juvenile justice system early on.

The initiative will emphasize reducing the over-representation of youth of color in the juvenile justice system; incorporating screening and assessment practices throughout the juvenile justice system; and recognizing the important roles of evidence-based practice, treatment, and trauma-informed services.

[Click here for more information](#), or contact Joe Cocozza at jcocozza@prainc.com or John Morris at jmorris@tacinc.org.

Pew Center on the States Seeks Applicants for Juvenile Justice Positions

The Pew Center on the States (PCS) is seeking applicants with expertise in juvenile justice to join its organization. PCS, an internal operating division of The Pew Charitable Trusts, identifies and advances effective policy approaches to critical issues facing states. It researches emerging topics, develops 50-state comparisons, and highlights innovative approaches to complex problems. PCS has recently expanded its work into the juvenile justice field.

PCS seeks applicants to join its Public Safety Performance Project, which helps states advance fiscally sound, data-driven policies and practices in sentencing, corrections, and now juvenile justice that protect public safety, hold offenders accountable, and control costs.

For more information about available positions, [follow this link](#).

The Newest DMC and Juvenile Justice Information

- This month, the U.S Department of Education released new local data on school discipline practices. The figures revealed that during the 2009-2010 school year, over 70 percent of the students involved in school-related arrests or referred to law enforcement were Hispanic or African American. The data, which provide school- and district-level summaries across a range of variables, [is available at the Department of Education's website](#).
- The National Juvenile Justice Network is accepting applications for the second year of its Youth Justice Leadership Institute. The Institute is a robust, year-long program that includes leadership development, training in juvenile justice system policies and practices, theories of change, and advocacy skills development. The mission is to create the foundation for a more effective juvenile justice reform movement by developing a strong base of advocates and organizers who reflect the communities most affected by juvenile justice system practices and policies. If you are a professional of color and want to apply for the Institute, you can [learn more by clicking this link](#). Applications are due April 23, 2012.
- The Coalition for Juvenile Justice seeks presentation proposals for its 2012 Annual Conference, "Improving Justice Outcomes for Youth and Families: Uniting Science, Policy and Practice." The conference, which will take place from June 21-24, 2012, will focus on innovations and improvements that prevent and reduce court contact and involvement for children, youth, and families. [Click here to read a detailed Call for Presentations, with content areas, criteria and submission guidelines](#).
- The Just and Fair Schools Fund has released a new report that highlights successes from jurisdictions engaged in work to reform school discipline practices. The publication, [Communities Turning the Tide on School Discipline](#), features grassroots efforts in 12 different states aimed at building interest in school discipline reform, eliminating zero-tolerance discipline policies, and reducing suspensions, expulsions, school-based arrests, push-outs and drop-outs.

- The Center for Juvenile Justice Reform at Georgetown University and the Robert F. Kennedy Children's Action Corps have released [Addressing the Needs of Multi-System Youth: Strengthening the Connection between Child Welfare and Juvenile Justice](#). The paper provides communities with a framework for serving youth involved in both the juvenile justice and child welfare systems. This framework incorporates the most up-to-date research, lessons from ongoing reform efforts, and an innovative collaborative management structure. The authors focus on how to prevent youth from crossing over between the child welfare and juvenile justice systems, and how to ensure that youth who are served by both systems are treated in a manner that respects their safety, well being, and permanence, while ensuring public safety.
- The Department of Justice announced a new resource—the [National Girls Institute website](#)—to better meet the needs of at-risk and delinquent girls, their families, and the agencies and organizations that serve them. The Institute is supported by the National Council on Crime and Delinquency (NCCD) through a grant from the Department's Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention (OJJDP). OJJDP established the National Girls Institute in 2010 to develop and provide a range of training, technical assistance, and other resources to organizations serving girls in, or at risk of entering, the juvenile justice system. Through this website, professionals can submit requests for training and technical assistance, as well as find current information about best practices, gender-responsive tools, research, and related events.

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Issue #28 | January/February 2012

In This Issue

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[Center for Children's Law and Policy Launches New Project to Eliminate Racial and Ethnic Disparities in Juvenile Justice](#)

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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.

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

By the Numbers: Signs of Progress from Rapides Parish, Louisiana

The DMC Action Network illustrated the value of employing data-driven strategies to tackle racial and ethnic disparities. One big benefit of the approach is being able to ensure that reforms actually create a more equitable and effective juvenile justice system. This month, Rapides Parish, Louisiana, shares outcomes from its work to eliminate racial and ethnic disparities from arrest through adjudication.

When Rapides Parish joined the DMC Action Network in 2007, one word dominated early conversations: data. Officials spent a significant amount of time building the capacity to collect accurate information on youth in the juvenile justice system. Among other reforms, the parish installed a new data system in its detention center and standardized data collection among six local law enforcement agencies.

It wasn't easy. Some might ask, "Was it worth the effort to make all of those changes just to obtain better information?" The answer is a definite "yes" according to Larry Spottsville, Director of Juvenile Services for the Ninth Judicial District in Rapides Parish. As Spottsville notes, data empowered officials to make changes "based on information and not just impressions."

These data improvements also mean that officials can point to progress as they implement a broad range of strategies. In Rapides Parish, a primarily rural jurisdiction of about 130,000 residents, youth of color represent approximately one-third of the population between the ages of 10 and 16. As in most jurisdictions throughout the country, youth of color are overrepresented at key stages of the juvenile justice system, representing 63% of arrests and 86% of detention admissions during the last quarter of 2010.

Fortunately parish officials are working to reduce disparities at each of those stages. A key initiative focuses on reducing referrals to juvenile court because, as Spottsville notes, "our ultimate goal is to greatly reduce the number of children of color who enter the local juvenile justice system."

In Rapides Parish, data revealed a large number of youth entering the system from schools due to truancy and other disruptive behavior. In Louisiana, separate juvenile court proceedings, known as Families in Need of Services (FINS) proceedings, handle many of these referrals. "We were

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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finding that court was becoming a dumping ground for youth and families who might just need a little extra help," says Spottsville.

The solution? The parish developed a new protocol that requires school officials to show that they have exhausted options to address a particular behavior. Before they can refer a youth to court, schools must document their efforts to work with the youth on an "exhaustion form," meet with caregivers about areas of concern, and refer the youth to a behavioral strategist or school counselor.

Since making this change, Rapides Parish has seen a 24% drop in FINS cases filed because of a youth's disruptive behavior. Spottsville notes that while it's good to have fewer youth entering the system, reductions haven't been uniform across race and gender. Fortunately, he and the Parish's DMC Coordinator, Sylvia Singleton, meet regularly with local law enforcement agencies, school personnel, and probation officials. With improved access to data, a clear policy, and a strong collaboration, parish officials are better able to analyze disparate impact and develop targeted interventions to close the gap.

Data also helped officials identify improvements to probation practices that would keep more youth of color in the community. One initiative focused on reducing probation revocations. Parish officials developed a service referral matrix, which outlined all of the options available to address a youth's needs in various domains, including mental health, family relationships, and peers. Probation officers use the matrix to ensure that they connect youth with every available resource in their community. Additionally, the parish now requires that a supervisor and two additional probation officers review and approve revocation requests before they move forward. As a result, probation revocations dropped 61% from 2010 to 2011. This included a 60% decrease for African American males and a 50% decrease for African American females.

Other changes have also led to improved outcomes for youth of color in Rapides Parish. For example, better coordination between juvenile probation and the district attorney has helped cut the average length of stay in detention for African American males by 24% from 2010 to 2011. Officials now work together to expedite court dates and place youth in alternatives to detention, when appropriate.

These promising figures don't represent the end of the story in Rapides. As Spottsville notes, "the fire is still burning even though the DMC Action Network has ended. The MacArthur Foundation has given us a lasting collaboration that's helping us do what is best for our kids and for public safety."

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Center for Children's Law and Policy Launches New Project to Eliminate Racial and Ethnic Disparities in Juvenile Justice

The Center for Children's Law and Policy (CCLP) has begun a nationwide search for jurisdictions to engage in a new effort to create fairer and more effective juvenile justice systems.

Through the **Racial and Ethnic Disparities Reduction Project**, CCLP will select two local jurisdictions to engage in a strategic, data-driven effort to reduce disproportionate minority contact (DMC). Each jurisdiction will receive intensive site-based technical support and up to \$25,000 per year for up to two years to supplement resources dedicated to racial and ethnic disparities reduction.

The Racial and Ethnic Disparities Reduction Project, sponsored jointly by the federal [Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention \(OJJDP\)](#) and the [John D. and Catherine T. MacArthur Foundation](#), represents an innovative public-private partnership aimed at improving the lives of children of color. Both OJJDP and the MacArthur Foundation have promoted efforts to develop and implement strategies that reduce racial and ethnic disparities in the juvenile justice system.

CCLP is one of the leading national organizations working to reduce racial and ethnic disparities in juvenile justice. Selected jurisdictions will draw upon CCLP's experience with effective approaches to DMC reduction. This includes CCLP's coordination of the DMC Action Network, a project of the MacArthur Foundation's Models for Change juvenile justice reform initiative. The DMC Action Network brought together seventeen jurisdictions in eight states to adopt sustainable and measurable strategies to reduce disparities.

According to CCLP DMC Policy Director Tiana Davis, "We know that a data-driven and collaborative approach can reduce racial and ethnic disparities in the juvenile justice system. We are grateful that OJJDP and the MacArthur Foundation have formed this unique partnership that will allow local juvenile justice systems to tackle this difficult issue and improve outcomes for system-involved youth."

This project is part of a broader collaboration between OJJDP and the MacArthur Foundation. The collaboration includes three additional initiatives:

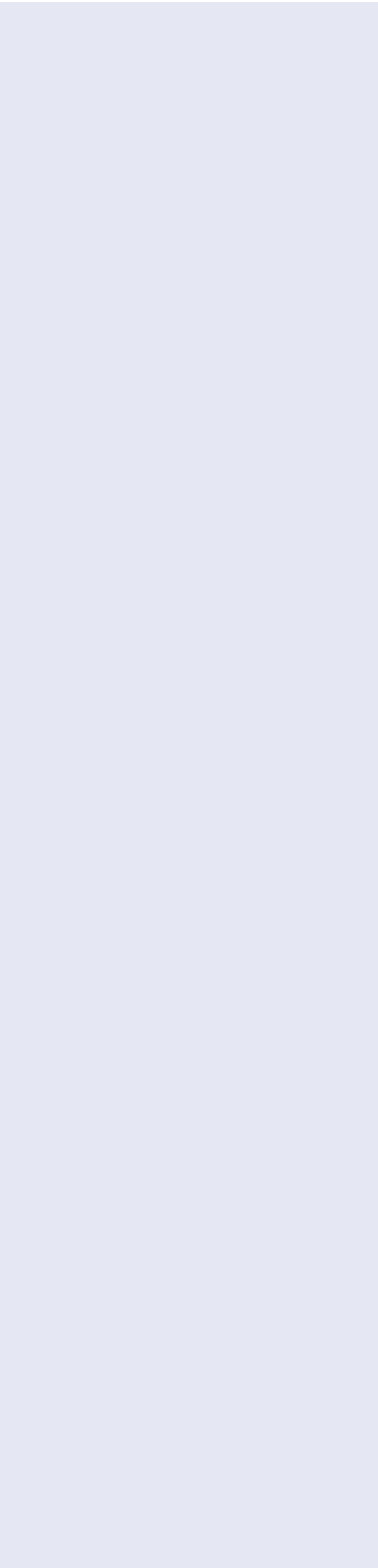
- **Juvenile Justice and Child Welfare System Integration:** Implementing effective multi-system early intervention practices for maltreated youth involved in the juvenile justice system to reduce recidivism, placement and correctional alternatives. Technical assistance and project oversight will be provided by the Robert F. Kennedy Children's Action Corps. Contact RFK Children's Action Corps at jtuell@rfkchildren.org or jwiig@rfkchildren.org.

- **Mental Health Screening and Risk/Needs Assessment:** Using evidence-based tools for effective case planning to achieve reductions in out-of-home placements and recidivism. The National Youth Screening and Assessment Project (NYSAP) at the University of Massachusetts Medical School will provide technical assistance and project oversight. Contact NYSAP at Laura.Guy@umassmed.edu.
- **Mental Health Training for Juvenile Justice:** Providing comprehensive adolescent development and mental health training to juvenile correctional and detention staff to improve staff knowledge, understanding and ability to respond to youth with mental health needs. The National Center for Mental Health and Juvenile Justice at Policy Research, Inc., will provide technical assistance and project oversight. Contact NCMHJJ at kskowya@prainc.com.

For more information on the **Racial and Ethnic Disparities Reduction Project**, including eligibility criteria and application instructions, please visit www.cclp.org/apply.php.

The Newest DMC and Juvenile Justice Information

- Youth transferred to the adult criminal justice system recidivate at a higher rate than those kept in the juvenile justice system, according to a December 2011 report from the National Institute of Corrections (NIC). [You're An Adult Now: Youth In Adult Criminal Justice Systems](#), presents the findings of three dozen juvenile and criminal justice experts on the topic of transferred children. Jason Zeidenberg, who authored the report, also outlines innovative ways that some jurisdictions manage youth when they have been charged, convicted, and committed to the adult system.
- "Recent research on the juvenile justice system indicates that in nearly all instances, the best public safety outcomes coincide with the least restrictive interventions for youth, rather than more traditional processing and incarceration," according to a new fact sheet from the National Juvenile Justice Network (NJJN). You can download NJJN's publication, *The Truth About Consequences*, by [following this link](#).
- The Center for Civil Rights Remedies, a part of the Civil Rights Project at the University of California in Los Angeles, seeks research papers that will inform policymakers about race and gender disparities in school discipline. The Center will select approximately 15 papers for presentation at a national conference late this year in Washington, DC. For a complete description of the call for papers, including submission requirements, [follow this link](#).
- The University of Chicago's Chapin Hall will host a webcast on racial and ethnic disparities in the child welfare system on February 9, 2012. The event's panelists will review drivers of disparities and suggest the best ways of promoting equity in the system. To register for the webcast, [click here](#).

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- The National Juvenile Justice Network is seeking a full-time Program Associate to support its Fiscal Policy Center. The Associate will conduct research and policy analysis, assist with on-site regional trainings, provide technical assistance, develop resources, and engage in other relevant Fiscal Policy Center activities. The position, based in Washington, DC, requires excellent analytical, writing, communication, and relationship-building abilities. Flexibility, initiative, and excellent follow through are essential. [Click here to download the full posting.](#)
 - The Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention (OJJDP) has updated the Statistical Briefing Book's (SBB's) data analysis tools. The SBB offers easy access to a wealth of information about juvenile crime, victimization, youth involved in the juvenile justice system. Developed for OJJDP by the National Center for Juvenile Justice, the SBB provides answers to the questions that OJJDP most frequently receives from media, policymakers, and the general public. [Click here to explore these resources.](#)

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DMC Action Network eNews

Issue #27 | November/December 2011

In This Issue

[Mark Masterson of Sedgwick County, Kansas, Named DMC Action Network Champion for Change](#)

[Models for Change Sixth Annual Working Conference Highlights Effective Juvenile Justice Reforms](#)

[Bob Williams, Berks County Probation Chief, Named Chief Probation Officer of the Year in Pennsylvania](#)

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Mark Masterson of Sedgwick County, Kansas, Named DMC Action Network Champion for Change

Sedgwick County Department of Corrections Director Mark Masterson is no stranger to work to reduce racial and ethnic disparities. Before joining the DMC Action Network in 2007, officials in his jurisdiction were already hard at work on improving data capacity and developing community based-alternatives to detention.



However, Mark wanted Sedgwick County to do more. As a DMC Action Network site, Sedgwick County seized the opportunities available through the Network to reduce school-based arrests and arrests for low-level offenses, create alternatives to detention for youth of color, and leverage funding to explore the needs of youth involved in both the juvenile justice and child welfare systems.

It may come as no surprise, then, that the MacArthur Foundation named Mark as its 2011 DMC Action Network Champion for Change. Mark received the award at the Sixth Annual Models for Change Working Conference in Washington, DC on December 6, 2011.

"Sedgwick County is doing remarkable work with a very impressive team," said Bob Lamkey, Director of the Sedgwick County Division of Public Safety. "Strong local partnerships focused on solving problems using sound data and evidence based practices have laid a foundation for effective collaboration. Mark's leadership in forming and cultivating trusting partnerships among a diverse group of stakeholders has been key to Sedgwick County's success in effectively addressing juvenile justice issues ranging from shoplifting to disproportionate minority contact with law enforcement in schools and the community."

The results speak for themselves. After Sedgwick County hired a juvenile justice education liaison to address referrals to the juvenile justice system from schools, school-based arrests for disorderly conduct fell by 37 percent from 2009 to 2010, and arrests at Wichita public schools dropped by more than 50 percent over the same period. After implementing creative

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Pennsylvania

Berks County
Philadelphia
Lancaster County

Illinois

Peoria

Louisiana

Jefferson Parish
Rapides Parish

Washington

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strategies to address shoplifting using existing in-school programming and outreach at shopping malls where many arrests occurred, the arrest rate for property offenses dropped almost 20 percent for African American youth and 26 percent for Latino youth between 2009 and 2010. ([Click here to read more about Sedgwick's strategies to reduce arrests](#)).

Further data analysis showed a need for a weekend alternative to detention for low-risk youth who had violated the terms of their probation. Sedgwick County found an alternative to detention in Tacoma, Washington that could meet the county's needs, then identified freed-up state, county, and federal funding to pay for it. The county opened the program's doors within six months. The alternative to detention served 123 youth in its first two quarters, 33 percent of whom were African American and 25 percent of whom were Latino. ([Click here to read more about Sedgwick's weekend alternative to detention program.](#))

"Mark has also been a catalyst for replication of Sedgwick's successes in other counties in Kansas," said Mark Soler, Executive Director of the Center for Children's Law and Policy. "Sedgwick has been a team effort, but Mark's leadership has guided the creation of a more equitable juvenile justice system for all children. His dedication to racial and ethnic fairness has made Sedgwick County a model for smart and sustainable juvenile justice reform."

You can read more about Sedgwick's work in previous issues of the DMC eNews, available at <http://cclp.org/DMC.php#Publications>. Congratulations to Mark Masterson and his team in Sedgwick County!



Kansas State Representative Melody McCray-Miller, who has led efforts to create a more effective juvenile justice system in the state, celebrates with Mark Masterson after the award ceremony.

Photo credits: DT Kindler Photography

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Models for Change Sixth Annual Working Conference Highlights Effective Juvenile Justice Reforms

Hundreds of leaders and experts in the field of juvenile justice gathered in Washington, DC for the Sixth Annual Models for Change National Working Conference on December 5th and 6th, 2011. The conference brought together judges, prosecutors, defenders, policy makers and juvenile justice officials from sixteen states. They have been working through the Models for Change initiative to develop and institutionalize reforms that improve outcomes for youth who come in contact with the juvenile justice system.



According to Laurie Garduque (photo left), Director of the MacArthur Foundation's Justice Reform Program, "We are excited to share data and outcomes on models that hold young people accountable for their actions, provide for their rehabilitation, protect them from harm, increase their life chances and manage the risk they pose to themselves and the public." In addition to bringing together top juvenile justice experts in the country, the conference provided a platform for peers to exchange ideas on best practices in juvenile justice reform.

Several DMC Action Network sites shared innovations developed through their work with the Network. Philadelphia officials presented the DMC Youth/Law Enforcement Curriculum, which is a one-day training for law enforcement officials designed to promote positive interactions with youth. YouthToday, reporting on the conference, [featured Outagamie County, Wisconsin's "great session" on building collaborations with officials to reduce arrests for low-level offenses](#). Additionally, officials from Sedgwick County, Kansas, Lancaster County, Pennsylvania, and Rock County, Wisconsin, shared highlights from the DMC Action Network during a panel facilitated by former CCLP DMC Policy Director Lisa Garry.

CCLP staff members Mark Soler and Dana Shoenberg, along with co-presenters Dane Bolin and Dana Kaplan, discussed their work with Louisiana officials to help create Louisiana's first set of juvenile detention facility standards.

To learn more about the conference and download resources from the meeting, [follow this link](#).

Bob Williams, Berks County Probation Chief, Named Chief Probation Officer of the Year in Pennsylvania

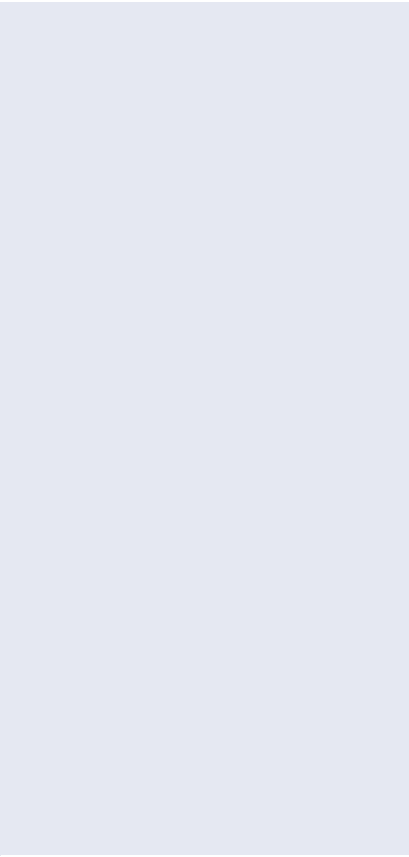
On November 3rd, 2011, the Pennsylvania Juvenile Court Judges' Commission (JCJC) recognized Berks County's leadership in promoting fair and effective probation programs and policies throughout the Commonwealth. JCJC named Bob Williams, Berks County Chief Juvenile Probation Officer, as its 2011 Chief Probation Officer of the Year.

Berks County, a DMC Action Network site, was the first Pennsylvania county to adopt a pre-adjudication evening reporting center (ERC) and a structured detention assessment instrument (DAI) to help ensure that youth are sent to detention only when necessary for public safety reasons. Because of the ERC's and DAI's success, five counties throughout Pennsylvania have now adopted ERCs and DAIs of their own. Berks County officials have also worked to reduce out of home placements of youth, increase use of evidence-based practices in their communities, improve cultural and linguistic competence of services for youth and families who come into contact with the juvenile justice system, and engaged in several other reforms as part of their work with the DMC Action Network and Models for Change.

[Click here to learn more](#) about the JCJC award.

The Newest DMC and Juvenile Justice Resources

- This month, the National Council of La Raza released a report on the importance of accurate data collection for Latino youth. The publication, [Counting Latino Youth in the Illinois Juvenile Justice System](#), details the inadequacy of information on Hispanic youth, one of the fastest-growing segments of the population. It highlights this lack of data as a major barrier to developing strategies and policies that can effectively prevent young Latinos from entering the justice system.
- In November, the Justice Policy Institute released a new report on trends in school-based arrests in the United States. The publication, *Education Under Arrest: The Case Against Police in Schools*, reviews research on school resource officers, presents data on school-based arrests, and identifies recommendations for policy and practice. [Click here to read the report](#).
- The federal Interagency Working Group on Youth Programs has created an online tool that allows users to search for federal grant opportunities by topic or federal agency on [Grants.gov](#). The tool uses a filter to search for grants that are likely to fund youth programs. To use the resource, [click here](#).
- The Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention (OJJDP) released four fact sheets on delinquency cases in juvenile and criminal court. [Juvenile Delinquency Probation Caseload, 2008](#) presents statistics on delinquency cases resulting in probation between 1985 and 2008. [Delinquency Cases in Juvenile Court, 2008](#) presents statistics on delinquency cases processed between 1985 and 2008 by U.S. courts with juvenile jurisdiction for public order, person, and property offenses and drug law violations. [Person Offense Cases in Juvenile Court, 2008](#) presents statistics on person offenses (including assault, robbery, rape, homicide, and other crimes involving force or threat of force against persons) handled by juvenile courts between 1985 and 2008. Finally, [Delinquency Cases Waived to Criminal Court, 2008](#) presents statistics on petitioned delinquency cases waived to criminal court between 1985 and 2009.
- This month, Bernalillo County, New Mexico, a Juvenile Detention Alternatives Initiative (JDAI) Model Site, released a new report highlighting juvenile justice reforms in its county over the past



decade. The publication, [Smaller, Smarter and More Strategic: Juvenile Justice Reform in Bernalillo County](#), shares strategies underlying a number of improved outcomes, including a 30% decrease in misdemeanor offenses referred to juvenile probation, a 45% reduction in daily detention populations, and a 48% decrease in bench warrants.

- The International Association of Chiefs of Police (IACP) and the Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention have launched the [Youth Focused Policing Resource Center](#). The website provides a directory of law enforcement programs and services for youth, training and technical assistance in juvenile justice, information on IACP resources, searchable resource library, secure discussion forum for law enforcement officials, and comprehensive information and resources relating to youth crime, delinquency, and victimization. To learn more, visit www.iacpyouth.org.
- Through a partnership with the John D. and Catherine T. MacArthur Foundation, the National Conference of State Legislators has published a juvenile justice guidebook addressing a range of policy issues relevant to legislators. The primer highlights research, programs, and sample state legislation in eight areas. To view the guidebook, [follow this link](#).

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DMC Action Network eNews

Issue #26 | September/October 2011

In This Issue

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

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

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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

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Berks County
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Lancaster County

Illinois
Peoria

Louisiana
Jefferson Parish
Rapides Parish

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Baltimore City
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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 202-637-0377 x108.

DMC Action Network eNews

Issue #25 | August 2011

In This Issue

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[Center for American Progress Announces Leadership Institute Fellowship Program](#)

[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.

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

Having Faith: Partnering with Religious Organizations to Help Combat DMC

In October 2010, we described how Lancaster County, Pennsylvania, hit the ground running with its DMC reduction work, implementing a detention risk assessment instrument and opening the County's first evening reporting center in just one year's time. This month, we highlight how Lancaster's DMC Workgroup forged new partnerships with its faith-based community to better serve youth and families.

During the spring of 2011, Lancaster County Juvenile Probation Supervisor Sherry Lupton attended a meeting that would change DMC reduction in her community.



At the [DMC Action Network's Fourth Annual Meeting](#), Lupton participated in a workshop on partnering with the faith-based community to reduce racial and ethnic disparities. The session, led by Reverend Romal Tune of Clergy Strategic Alliances, outlined strategies to engage religious leaders in DMC reduction. Moved by the presentation, Lupton walked away with a clear goal: getting Reverend Tune to work with her County's faith-based organizations.

"Reverend Tune's presentation was different than anything I had ever seen before," says Lupton. "He had a plan for engaging leaders in the faith community that was targeted at actually changing outcomes for kids."

Given that Lancaster County boasts over 700 houses of worship, Lupton saw an opportunity to have a significant impact on at-risk youth. "I wanted to raise awareness of DMC among this community, and I wanted to figure out how we could work together by identifying what services were out there, how best to connect youth with those programs, and where there might be gaps," said Lupton. Many faith-based organizations offer services that can help keep kids out of the system, such as mentoring, but they may not widely publicize them.

On May 14th, Lupton and the DMC Workgroup achieved her goal, hosting the County's first ever forum for faith-based leaders aimed at reducing the disparate treatment of children of color in the juvenile justice system. Sponsored by the Intra-City Progressive Pastors' Association, the Juvenile Probation Office, the Crispus Attucks Community Center, and the Lancaster County Council of Churches, the event brought together over 50 community leaders and clergy from various faiths.

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With funding from the MacArthur Foundation and the DMC Action Network, Reverend Tune traveled to Lancaster to lead a day of discussion and strategic planning. Lupton noted that he kept the group focused on DMC reduction: "At each stage, Reverend Tune would ask for practical suggestions and would ask whether that strategy would help reduce the number of kids of color entering and moving through the system. If the answer was 'no,' he would move the discussion along."

When facilitating the event, Reverend Tune not only shared his expertise in creating partnerships with faith-based communities, but also observed a level of engagement in Lancaster that he had not previously seen. "I'm often invited to facilitate meetings and develop outreach strategies that seek to have an impact on the lives of young people," said Tune. "The strategic planning meeting organized by Sherry was the most encouraging I've had the honor of facilitating, not simply because of the impressive turnout representing service provider and diverse communities of faith, but because of the seriousness with which all participants approached the issue."

A number of religious leaders chipped in to help make the event possible through donations of food, materials, and space to hold the event. The meeting also resulted in tangible commitments that would help improve the lives of children of color moving forward. For example, the First Presbyterian Church volunteered space in downtown Lancaster where the city's [Youth Aid Panel](#) could operate. The Youth Aid Panel is a community board that diverts low-level offenses from formal involvement in the juvenile justice system. Additionally, one of the city's most prominent pastors wrote a column in the Sunday edition of the local paper raising the importance of tackling racial and ethnic disparities in education.

Lupton, who is a minister herself, cultivated relationships with religious leaders in the months preceding the event. She scheduled individual meetings to explain how partnerships with the faith-based community could benefit Lancaster's children by diverting youth from system involvement or increasing the range of services available to those youth. "It was the data that really spoke to them and created a sense of urgency," shared Lupton.

In Lancaster, officials have used those data to drive systems reform. Youth of color represent 13% of the population, but 62% of the youth in detention in the county. Since joining the DMC Action Network, Lancaster has worked to reduce disparities through changes to policies and practices. These include development of a detention screening tool and the creation of an evening reporting center that keeps an average of 10 children of color in the community every day who would otherwise be locked up.

The DMC Workgroup has always focused on engaging community members, including youth, with the goal of reducing the overrepresentation of children of color in the juvenile justice system. On May 13th, the Juvenile Probation Office hosted its fifth annual DMC Youth and Law Enforcement Forum. Over 130 youth from eight of the county's middle schools attended the day-long event, along with police officers, probation staff, judicial officials, and school administrators. According to Lupton, "the goal was to change inaccurate perceptions of youth toward law enforcement and vice-versa" through interactive panels, small discussion groups, and a mock trial.

Lupton is now looking ahead to the next steps in its work with the faith-based community. Lancaster's DMC Workgroup developed an initial action plan in June, and Reverend Tune is crafting a broader strategic plan for involving the faith-based community in DMC reduction efforts moving forward.

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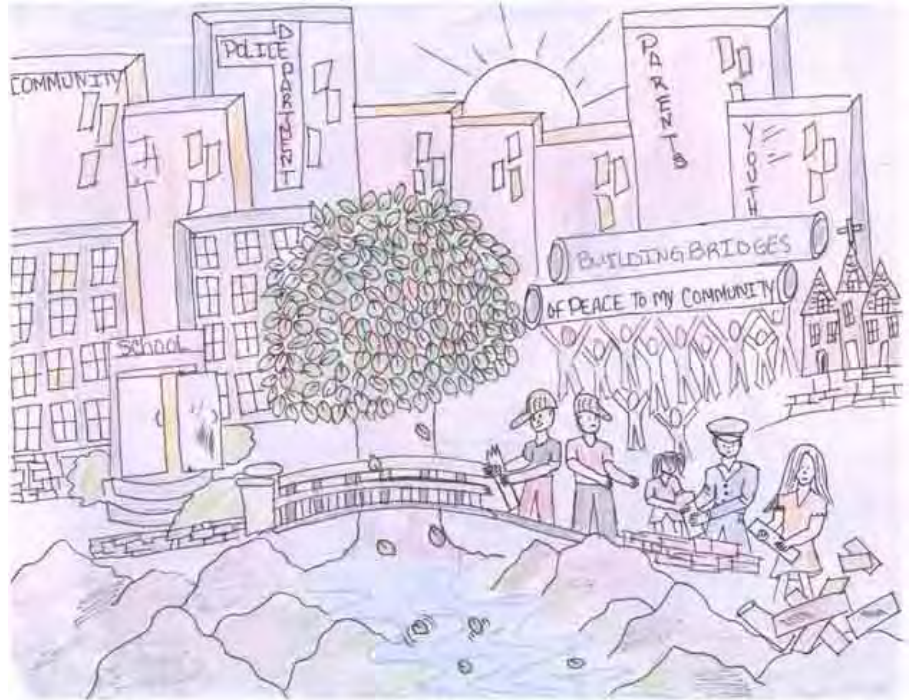
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Although convening the first faith-based meeting on DMC took a substantial amount of planning and effort, Lupton has no doubts about the potential benefits: "To build relationships, sometimes you just need to get out of your office, put your sneakers on, and walk around knocking on doors. You never know where you will find another partner to help better serve kids in your community."

Tell us about how you've partnered with faith-based organizations to reduce DMC: email jszanyi@cclp.org.



The logo for Lancaster County's Fifth Annual DMC and Youth Law Enforcement Forum, designed by a seventh grade student.

Center for American Progress Announces Leadership Institute Fellowship Program

This month, the Center for American Progress (CAP) announced the launch of its Leadership Institute, a new competitive program to identify and assist the next generation of progressive public policy experts who have an interest in issues related to communities of color. The CAP Leadership Institute's goal is to challenge an emerging class of young leaders and encourage their commitment to working for and in communities of color.

CAP will select nine Leadership Institute Fellows annually to participate in a series of seminars, events, policy case studies, and field trips to network with Washington, DC's public policy community. Leadership Institute Fellows will undergo an intensive, nine-month program that will provide a platform for the greater inclusion of people of color in public policy at every level of government, within nonprofit organizations, and throughout the media.

The Leadership Institute will assist in developing links and networks between the Fellows and policy organizations, including grassroots organizations, media, and government. It will also expose participants to methods to introduce policy ideas to diverse groups and translate ideas into actual policy and practice changes.

Applications are being accepted until September 9, 2011. For more information about the Leadership Institute, or to apply to the fellowship, [click here](#).

The Newest DMC and Juvenile Justice Resources

- Reclaiming Futures, a project of the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation and Portland State University, has released a video on serving youth at risk of entering the juvenile justice system without engaging in "net-widening" - a phenomenon that occurs when an agency establishes a policy or program aimed at diverting youth, but that actually increases the number of youth who have contact with the system. Yolanda Perez-Logan of the Santa Cruz County Department of Probation describes how her office works to strike the right balance. You can view the blog post by [clicking this link](#).
- The Just and Fairs School Fund, an organization that supports grassroots organizing initiatives that work to eliminate harsh school discipline policies and practices, released its summer newsletter, which outlines legislative and policy victories in various states around the country. [Click here to learn more](#).
- The Campaign for Youth Justice has published a new report addressing the impact of Oregon's transfer law on youth and public safety. In 1994, Oregon voters passed Measure 11, which imposed long mandatory sentences and required automatic transfer to adult court for certain crimes. [*Misguided Measures: The Outcomes and Impacts of Measure 11 on Oregon's Youth*](#) includes data suggesting that the law has not made the state any safer and has created numerous barriers to reentry for children.
- A new study released by the Council of State Governments Justice Center outlines a link between repeated school suspensions and later involvement in the juvenile justice system. The report, [*Breaking Schools' Rules: A Statewide Study of How School Discipline Relates to Students' Success and Juvenile Justice Involvement*](#), found that nearly 60 percent of public school students in Texas secondary schools were suspended or expelled, with African Americans and children with disabilities overrepresented among those students.
- This month, the Justice Policy Institute launched a new blog that will highlight the latest news and updates on criminal and juvenile justice reform. [Click here](#) to view the latest entries in the Just Policy Blog.
- The Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention recently updated its Statistical Briefing Book, which offers easy access to a wealth of information about juvenile crime and youth involved in the juvenile justice system. Developed by the National Center for Juvenile Justice, the Statistical Briefing Book contains data on juvenile court statistics, the Census of Juveniles in Residential Placement, the National Disproportionate Minority Contact Databook, child maltreatment, state and county juvenile court case counts, and more. [Click here to access this resource](#).

DMC Action Network eNews

Issue #24 | June/July 2011

In This Issue

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DMC Action Network

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[Lisa Garry](#), DMC Policy Director for the Center for

Committing to Change, Getting Results

What can you do about DMC with relatively little funding but a big commitment to racial and ethnic fairness? Outagamie County, Wisconsin, answers that question by sharing how it engaged community members to reduce arrests, divert youth from entering the juvenile justice system, and improve services.

In some respects, Outagamie County, Wisconsin, resembles many counties throughout the United States. A community of around 175,000 residents, Outagamie includes a range of small communities surrounding a mid-sized city. The county's juvenile justice agency serves an increasingly diverse group, with Latino youth the fastest growing segment of its youth population.

So what makes Outagamie County special in terms of DMC reduction? A serious commitment to improve outcomes for children of color and a willingness to take action.

Outagamie joined the DMC Action Network as a replication site in the fall of 2009. At that time, officials had already been working to reduce racial and ethnic disparities. However, the county continued to struggle with disparities in certain areas. "We've had historically high and disproportionate arrest rates for certain offenses, such as disorderly conduct," notes Mark Mertens, Manager of the Youth and Family Services Division of the Outagamie County Health and Human Services Department.

As part of the Action Network, Outagamie officials focused on reducing the number of disorderly conduct arrests as a way of keeping children of color from entering the juvenile justice system altogether. In just a year's time, disorderly conduct arrests dropped almost 20%. Although youth of color are still disproportionately represented at the point of arrest, Outagamie is continuing to work on strategies to reduce disparities.

According to Mertens, community engagement plays a key role in explaining the county's progress in reducing the number of kids of color who enter the system. "DMC reduction isn't about finding a magic program that will eliminate disparities," says Mertens. "It's about building relationships with partners in the community that will help improve policies and practices."

The county has a strong, diverse DMC governing body which is co-chaired by the county's deputy district attorney. Mertens emphasizes the importance of having a group of stakeholders identify and monitor reforms. But DMC reduction has meant more than just meetings. "We're making a real effort to work with individual police officers, juvenile justice professionals, and other decisionmakers to show them that DMC reduction isn't about giving a break to

Children's Law and Policy,
manages the DMC Action
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kids of color. It's about good juvenile justice practice."

Officials have introduced two reforms aimed at reducing disorderly conduct arrests in the county's public schools. The first, Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports, or PBIS, equips school officials with a broader range of techniques to manage conflict situations on school grounds. The second, the Police-School Resource Program, aims to prevent kids from entering the juvenile justice system by linking them with services and supports that address disruptive behavior. "We saw that many kids were getting arrested just to obtain services that wouldn't otherwise be available to them," says Mertens. The county now contracts for a full-time counselor who connects youth with those services, such as social skills training, anger management, family counseling, on-site behavior support and intervention, and other wraparound services, without formal involvement in the system.

These programs, along with other changes, helped Outagamie raise its diversion rate at arrest from 33% in 2004 to more than 50% today. The county has also changed practices to better serve kids who do enter the system.

"Thanks to the Action Network, we're now using a risk assessment instrument, the YASI, that helps us objectively identify the strengths and needs of particular youth," explains Mertens. At the county's evening reporting center, staff use the YASI to tailor programming. Mertens sees the value in having a community-based alternative to detention that is not simply "one-size-fits-all," but that is flexible enough to respond to the needs of individual youth. As a result, he is planning to expand services at the reporting center by allocating additional funding in next year's budget.

In the next couple of years, Mertens hopes to build on the county's early accomplishments as a DMC Action Network site. Thanks to funding from the MacArthur Foundation, Outagamie was able to hire a consultant who is helping officials develop a system of graduated responses for youth compliance and noncompliance with probation. The county is also using that additional capacity to examine recidivism data and better understand how to reduce disparities at the deep end of the system.

Mertens highlights the Action Network's value in bringing new ideas to his jurisdiction. He is working with Wisconsin's other DMC Action Network sites, Rock County and Kenosha County, to sustain and expand that partnership after the end of the Models for Change initiative: "I'm really proud of what we've done, and we're all eager to show others throughout the state that we have a process that works."

Tell us about how you've partnered with others to reduce DMC: email jszanyi@cclp.org.

Berks County, PA Selected as Demonstration Site for Georgetown University Program

Georgetown University Public Policy Institute's Center for Juvenile Justice Reform (CJRR) has selected Pennsylvania as one of four states to implement its Juvenile Justice System Improvement Project, or JJSIP. Moreover, CJRR will use Berks County as Pennsylvania's local demonstration site for the project. Berks County is one of the DMC Action Network's core sites and a leader in work to reduce racial and ethnic disparities.

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The JJSIP is designed to help states reduce recidivism and improve other outcomes for juvenile justice-involved youth by better translating knowledge on "what works" into everyday practice and policy. Through a competitive application process, CJRR selected Pennsylvania, Connecticut, Florida, and Arizona to participate in the program.

Shay Bilchik, the Director of CJJR and former administrator of the federal Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention, said "We hope that implementing the JJSIP provides the field with more information on how to take research we have about effectively serving juvenile justice-involved youth and apply it to improve outcomes for all youth who touch the system. This has been a key challenge facing our work—a challenge we believe the JJSIP will help address."

[Click here to download the full press release.](#)

American Bar Association Proposes New Standards for Courts Serving Limited English Proficient Individuals

This month, the American Bar Association's Standing Committee on Legal Aid and Indigent Defendants proposed ten new standards for language access in courts. The proposed standards incorporate federal guidance from the Justice Department, [discussed in the April eNews](#), regarding the need for recipients of federal funding to take reasonable steps to accommodate speakers with limited English proficiency (LEP).

Thirty ABA members from various segments of the juvenile and criminal justice system formed an advisory committee to create the draft standards. The standards seek to improve the structural and day-to-day interactions between LEP speakers and the courts. Among other things, the standards urge courts to:

- Promulgate rules to aid LEP individuals in understanding their rights and the services available to them;
- Improve data collection, allow individuals to self-identify as LEP, and work to identify potential LEP individuals;
- Provide interpreters throughout the entirety of court proceedings to a broad spectrum of individuals, including witnesses, guardians and parents of youth, and others who may have a special interest in the proceedings;
- Provide interpretation services free of charge;
- Offer legible translations of court documents that are reviewed for accuracy;
- Make efforts to provide interpreters during other court-mandated services; and
- Screen prospective interpreters and translators and provide them with ongoing education.

The Committee will submit the draft standards for final approval at the annual ABA meeting in August. [Click here to review the standards and to learn more about the project.](#)

The Newest DMC and Juvenile Justice Resources

- New research published in the journal *Science* shows that children who lack access to early childhood education programs face poorer educational opportunities and a higher likelihood of involvement in the criminal justice system than youth who do have access to those programs. The study, conducted by the University of Minnesota, tracked the development of 1,400 low-income youth of color from Chicago over a 25 year period. [Click here to find out more about the study and its findings.](#)
- This month OJJDP released its findings from the 2009 National Youth Gang Survey. [The fact sheet](#) tracks nationwide data from 2002 to 2009. The publication also includes information on the factors that influence local gang violence and compares statistics from rural, suburban, and larger cities.
- In a landmark decision, the United States Supreme Court ruled that police must consider a child's age when determining whether he or she is "in custody" for the purpose of administering a *Miranda* warning. In *J.D.B. v. North Carolina*, the Court ruled in the case of a 13 year old who confessed when questioned in school by police officers. [Click here to read Juvenile Law Center's summary of the case.](#)
- The Coalition for Juvenile Justice has published a new fact sheet, *Deinstitutionalizing Status Offenders (DSO)*. The publication includes data on the number of juveniles in residential placement for status offenses, as well state-level policy changes aimed at avoiding the incarceration of status offenders. [Click here to learn more.](#)

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.

DMC Action Network eNews

Issue #23 | May 2011

In This Issue

[Changing Cultures to Improve Outcomes for Youth of Color](#)

[Trends and Challenges in Juvenile Justice Reform: Experiences of Three States](#)

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

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[Lisa Garry](#), DMC Policy

Changing Cultures to Improve Outcomes for Youth of Color

Culture change. For many juvenile justice administrators, these two words represent an important goal, but one that often seems impossible to reach. This month, Rock County, Wisconsin, explains how it overhauled its juvenile justice agency's mission, vision, and values to create a fairer system for all youth - and how those reforms benefit youth of color in its community.

Ten years ago, Rock County looked very different than it does today. According to Lance Horozewski, Juvenile Justice Division Administrator for the County's Human Services Department, the juvenile justice system was highly punitive. Back then, data analysis, risk management, and racial and ethnic fairness did not play a significant role in work with at-risk youth. The County's detention center operated at or near its capacity, and youth of color represented a disproportionate share of detained youth.

Today, Rock County leads Wisconsin's local DMC reduction efforts. A mixed urban and rural county of 160,000 residents, Rock County locks up 35% fewer youth of color for probation violations than it did in 2002. More youth remain in the community while under agency supervision, thanks to a broader range of community-based alternatives to detention. And Rock County now serves as a model for other jurisdictions throughout the state.

So what makes Rock County such a different place today? Horozewski can point to many adjustments to individual policies and practices. But, he says, all of those reforms serve a broader goal: changing the way his agency views and works with children. "We're using what we know about adolescent development to establish more effective and appropriate ways of supervising youth in the system."

By the Numbers

- **6** new community-based supervision programs
- **35%** reduction in the number of youth of color locked up for probation violations
- **30%** reduction in the average daily population of African-American youth in secure detention

*Figures represent changes from 2002 to 2010

Director for the Center for Children's Law and Policy, manages the DMC Action Network.

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Rock County's first step toward that goal was reworking the agency's mission, vision, and values to reflect this new approach, as well as its day-to-day operations. The agency now prioritizes strength-based assessments of youth and regular data collection and analysis. Administrators even changed how they describe their work: the agency uses the term "supervision" instead of "probation." And instead of hiring "probation officers," the County employs "juvenile justice specialists." These are more than just cosmetic changes, notes Horozewski; they are necessary to break with past practices when introducing new approaches to juvenile justice-involved youth.

As part of its work as a DMC Action Network site, Rock County introduced an objective assessment tool for youth under the agency's supervision in 2008. The tool, known as the YASI, identifies a youth's strengths and weaknesses, allowing probation officers to focus on specific factors underlying risky behavior. Horozewski gives the following example of how the YASI transformed case planning: "Previously, all youth would receive substance abuse services regardless of whether they had demonstrated any need for them. Now, we're looking at each youth and developing plans that put resources where they are needed most. Staff target the underlying factors driving delinquent behavior, such as antisocial thinking or anger management problems, instead of just trying to correct the delinquent behavior itself."

The YASI benefits youth of color by ensuring that kids receive the appropriate level of supervision at the beginning of their involvement with the juvenile justice system. However, Rock County also adopted graduated responses to youth compliance and noncompliance with probation to help youth succeed *throughout* their time under agency supervision.

Under the new system of graduated responses, case managers cannot sanction youth to secure detention without securing the approval of a sanctions committee. However, they can draw upon a broader range of new community-based services and programs, including aggression replacement therapy, substance abuse services, and a weekend and evening reporting center that has an 84% successful completion rate. "By restricting the kind of sanctions that can be used for low- and medium-risk youth, you stop driving those kids deeper into the system unnecessarily," says Horozewski. To reward positive behavior, case managers employ a range of incentives, such as credits for snacks at the Boys and Girls Club and extended curfews.

These reforms benefit youth in Rock County every day. In addition, county officials have also taken critical steps to improve services for children throughout Wisconsin. Back in 2008, Rock County faced a significant hurdle when attempting to introduce a detention screening instrument. Because of juvenile confidentiality laws, county officials could not access data on previous adjudications from the state's Department of Children and Families. That information is an important component of detention screening. Determined to overcome the challenge, Rock County pressed the issue with executive and legislative officials. That advocacy helped lead to the passage last year of Act 338, which allows intake workers access to prior adjudication histories in order to make appropriate detention decisions.

Officials such as Horozewski and Jason Witt, the former director of the Rock County Human Services Department, continue to see the impact of these reforms. And while agency officials may use charts and statistics to illustrate the benefits of these changes to other stakeholders and juvenile justice professionals, they know that the most important benefit is the positive impact on the lives of individual children of color.

Tell us how you've changed the culture of your agency: email jszanyi@cclp.org.

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Trends and Challenges in Juvenile Justice Reform: Experiences of Three States

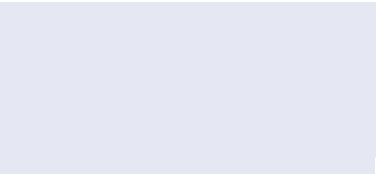
During the past decade, Connecticut, Texas, and California engaged in major juvenile justice reforms. These reforms helped to reduce the number of youth held in long-term juvenile and adult facilities, implement broad community-based reforms, and mobilize the public around the need for change. On Friday, June 3rd from 12:30 to 2pm EST, the Children's Law Center of Kentucky will host a free webcast exploring the conditions and factors that contributed to reforms in these states.

Presenters include Abby Anderson, Executive Director of the Connecticut Juvenile Justice Alliance; Sue Burrell, Staff Attorney at the Youth Law Center; and Ana Yáñez-Correa, Executive Director of the Texas Criminal Justice Coalition. The panel will share lessons learned and the strategies used to facilitate reforms, such as the use of community and legislative advocacy, impact litigation, public education, and engagement of, and collaboration among, juvenile system professionals. Dana Shoenberg, Deputy Director of the Center for Children's Law and Policy, will moderate a discussion of the successes, challenges, and unintended consequences of the reforms.

Space is limited and registration is required. [Click here to register and to find out more](#).

The Newest DMC News and Resources

- This month, the MacArthur Foundation released a new video featuring work to reduce school-based arrests as part of the Models for Change initiative. A peer jury at Manual High School in Peoria, Illinois, has helped dramatically reduce the number of teens entering the juvenile justice system for alleged misconduct at school. [Click here to view the video](#).
- The NAACP recently released a report that examines escalating levels of prison spending and its impact on state budgets and the nation's children. [Misplaced Priorities: Under Educate, Over Incarcerate](#) describes the connection between high incarceration rates and poorly performing schools. It also tracks the shift of state funds away from education and toward the criminal justice system.
- The National Center for Juvenile Justice, the research division of the National Council of Juvenile and Family Court judges, recently launched the Quality Improvement Initiative (Qii) website, designed to support juvenile justice providers embarking on quality improvement efforts with their intervention programs for youth. This site contains information about the Qii framework, training and implementation curricula, assessment tools and support materials. [Click here to learn more](#).
- Today, the United States incarcerates nearly 2.4 million people. According to the Justice Policy Institute (JPI), U.S. policymakers should look outside our borders for examples of criminal justice policies that can save money while improving the well-being of both individuals and communities. [Finding Direction: Expanding Criminal Justice Options by](#)



[*Considering Policies of Other Nations*](#), a newly released report from JPI, examines the criminal justice policies of five nations – Australia, Canada, England, and Wales, Finland, and Germany – to inform policy decisions in the United States.

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.

DMC Action Network eNews

Issue #22 | April 2011

In This Issue

[Getting Results: How Sedgwick County, Kansas, Slashed Arrest Rates for Youth of Color](#)

[Federal Government Issues
New Guidance for State
Courts Serving Limited
English Proficient Youth
and Family Members](#)

[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.

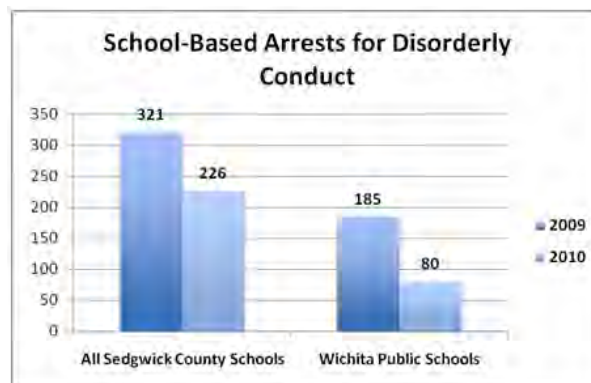
[Lisa Garry](#), DMC Policy Director for the Center for Children's Law and Policy, manages the DMC Action Network.

Core States

Getting Results: How Sedgwick County, Kansas, Slashed Arrest Rates for Youth of Color

Throughout the country, jurisdictions working on DMC reduction face a common problem: how do you move from simply studying DMC to taking action? This month, Sedgwick County, Kansas, shares how it dramatically reduced arrest rates for youth of color for two of the County's leading offenses.

When Sedgwick County joined the DMC Action Network in 2007, it was no stranger to DMC reduction. Officials had already taken steps in many areas, such as improving data capacity and developing community-based alternatives to detention. However, the County continued to struggle with one particular area. According to Mark Masterson, Director of Sedgwick County's Department of Corrections (DOC), "We made a lot of progress with DMC over the years, but never at the point of arrest."



That is, until now. From 2009 to 2010, Sedgwick has seen a 19% reduction in overall arrests, including an 18% reduction in arrest rates for African American youth and an 11% reduction in arrest rates for Latino youth. Those drops stem from careful data analysis and targeted interventions over the past two years.

In Sedgwick County, officials regularly analyze information to uncover disparities, dig deeper to pinpoint the causes of those disparities, and use what they have learned to take action. An active stakeholder group of sixteen juvenile justice professionals and community representatives meets monthly to plan, coordinate, oversee, and advocate for local juvenile justice services and needs. Known as "Team Justice," the group analyzes data on DMC as part of each meeting's agenda. The meetings, which have taken place for the past 10 years, regularly draw an audience of at least 35 individuals.

Team Justice helped develop the strategies that led to Sedgwick County's recent decline in arrest rates. Back in 2009, stakeholders reviewed yearly arrest data compiled by the W. Haywood Burns Institute (BI). The data indicated that juvenile arrests in the County jumped 10% between 2008 and 2009. The BI's analysis also revealed that arrests for two minor crimes, disorderly conduct and theft of property under \$1000, were the leading factors driving the increase.

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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Knowing that these two offenses offered the best opportunity for targeted intervention to reduce DMC at the point of arrest, officials were determined to develop strategies to reduce DMC for each offense.

When examining arrests for disorderly conduct, the data revealed that youth were most frequently arrested at school, leading officials to zero in on school-based interventions. The County's African American Coalition organized a conference that included presentations from some of Sedgwick County's stakeholders, including Masterson, the presiding juvenile judge, the deputy chief of police, and the school superintendent. Judge Steven Teske of the Clayton County, Georgia, Juvenile Court also presented, outlining his county's School Referral Reduction Protocol. Masterson emphasizes Judge Teske's role in galvanizing broad-based support for reforms in Sedgwick County: "He clearly and convincingly explained why zero-tolerance policies worked against school safety. Judge Teske also had data to show that his approach not only reduced arrests, but also improved overall school performance, including high school graduation rates."

Shortly after that conference, Masterson pulled together a planning group to pilot interventions in the County's alternative schools. The group drew upon Judge Teske's model, developing a memorandum of understanding for handling disruptive behavior without automatically arresting youth. With funding from the MacArthur Foundation, the County hired a juvenile justice education liaison to assist with individual school-based cases and help develop agreements with other County schools to reduce referrals. That position, says Masterson, has helped focus the County's work and will remain in place after the conclusion of Models for Change funding in September.

There's evidence that these efforts are already paying off. School-based arrests for disorderly conduct have dropped by 37 percent from 2009 to 2010, and arrests at Wichita public schools have dropped by more than 50% over the same time period. Masterson attributes the reductions to many factors, including the strong partnership with school officials. "Our school superintendent is clearly dedicated to and personally involved in this work, and that has a big impact," says Masterson. Sedgwick County is now looking to introduce the approach in all 100 of the County's public schools.

In addition to its work on disorderly conduct, Team Justice also examined arrests for theft of property under \$1000, commonly referred to as the County's "shoplifting statute." Team Justice authorized a study, conducted jointly by the Sedgwick County DOC and Wichita State University, which explored the characteristics of youth arrested for the offense, the reasons for any disparities in arrest rate by race and ethnicity, and suggestions for actions the County could take to reduce disparities at that decision point. The study revealed, among other things, that theft of property under \$1000 was the most common reason for arrests of African-American youth by a significant margin. It was also the top offense for female youth, who comprised 58% of the referrals in 2007 and 2008. The study examined the location of the largest share of arrests for theft of property under \$1000 which was where the largest concentration of stores are located, the County's two shopping malls. This helped identify stakeholders and guide interventions.

[survey](#).

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Officials used those findings to develop several strategies. One approach involved tapping into existing delinquency prevention programming. "One of our providers, the Mental Health Association, was already using evidence-based prevention practices in our middle schools," says Masterson. "The provider researched effective shoplifting interventions and incorporated them into their existing program, the Girl

Empowerment Program, which helped us reach hundreds of kids almost immediately." The program is based on the Girls Circle curriculum, an intervention that the federal Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention has identified as a promising program. The curriculum challenges inaccurate thought processes and perceptions. Finally, the program initiated an anti-shoplifting campaign and enlisted the help of youth from the Girls Circles to pass out materials aimed at deterring theft at the County's shopping malls. According to Masterson, the interventions "didn't cost a dime to implement, but have already had a significant impact." From 2009 to 2010, the arrest rate for property offenses dropped almost 20% for African American youth and 26% for Latino youth

Masterson has shared these results with his staff, eager to highlight the positive impact of Sedgwick County's latest interventions. However, he notes that the work's impact extends beyond the County's juvenile justice officials. "We're looking at these issues through a DMC lens and putting research into practice. In doing so, we're showing everyone that this is not only the right thing to do, but also that it's keeping our communities safe."

Share your results: email jszanyi@cclp.org.

Federal Government Issues New Guidance for State Courts Serving Limited English Proficient Youth and Family Members

Navigating the juvenile justice system is often difficult for youth and their families. For those from different linguistic backgrounds, understanding the process can be particularly challenging, and misunderstanding or confusion can contribute to their overrepresentation and harsher treatment in the system.

Under Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, recipients of federal funding, including state courts, must take reasonable steps to accommodate individuals with limited English proficiency (LEP). The failure to do so constitutes national origin discrimination under Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 and puts federal funding in jeopardy.

The Department of Justice's Civil Rights Division recently issued new guidance to help state courts understand their obligations to LEP youth and family members. That guidance highlighted four areas where the Justice Department felt that state courts were not meeting their mandate under federal law.

(1) Courts must provide meaningful language access in all court and court-related proceedings, whether civil, criminal, or administrative. Courts must ensure interpretation for LEP parties or witnesses during all hearings, trials, and motions. Additionally, courts must provide language assistance to necessary non-party individuals, including the parents and guardians of juvenile justice-involved youth.

(2) Courts must provide interpreters free of cost to parties. Title VI prohibits practices, including requiring payment for interpretation, which have the effect of charging individuals for government services based on national origin.

(3) Courts must make reasonable accommodations for services conducted outside the courtroom. Language services may not be restricted solely to courtroom proceedings, but must extend to other court functions, including offices, operations, and programs that are managed by the court.

(4) Failing to ensure that LEP parties and witnesses can communicate with court-appointed or supervised personnel. Whenever court-appointed or court-supervised personnel communicate with LEP individuals, courts must enlist the support of professional interpreters if the personnel are not themselves bilingual. This includes defense counsel, court psychologists, probation officers, doctors, and other staff.

To help jurisdictions understand these obligations, the Center for Children's Law and Policy has published two fact sheets summarizing federal language access requirements. The first is [a short, one-page document summarizing the four areas of concern recently identified by the Justice Department](#). The second is [a longer document explaining federal language access requirements, including these four areas, in greater detail](#).

The Newest DMC News and Resources

- This month, Chicago Public Radio featured an interview with Randell Strickland, DMC Coordinator for the MacArthur Foundation's Models for Change Project in Illinois. In that interview, Strickland emphasized the importance of comprehensive data collection to a fair juvenile justice system. You can read Strickland's comments and the fully story by [following this link](#).
- A recently published research brief by Child Trends, [Multiple Responses, Promising Results: Evidence-Based, Nonpunitive Alternatives To Zero Tolerance](#), suggests that zero tolerance school discipline policies are not effective and are associated with negative outcomes, such as higher drop-out rates. The brief outlines alternative approaches to managing school behavior, including behavior interventions, social skills classes, and character education.
- The Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention has published [Highlights From Pathways to Desistance: A Longitudinal Study of Serious Adolescent Offenders](#). This fact sheet presents findings from a project, co-sponsored by the MacArthur foundation, that followed 1,354 serious juvenile offenders for 7 years after they had been adjudicated or convicted and examined the factors that caused these youth to continue, reduce, or stop offending. The publication also describes how longer

juvenile sentences, community-based supervision and aftercare, and substance abuse treatment may affect reoffending.

- On May 23rd, representatives from two DMC Action Network sites will present at the Coalition for Juvenile Justice's Annual Spring Conference in Washington, DC. Lance Horozewski of Rock County, WI, and Karen Tucker of Union County, NC, will explain how to develop and utilize graduated responses for youth compliance and non-compliance with probation. You can find additional conference details and registration information by [following this link](#).
- The Council of State Governments Justice Center recently released a frequently asked questions document, [The Implications of Federal Health Legislation on Justice-Involved Populations](#). This publication examines how the health reform legislation expands eligibility for Medicaid, as well as the services that are available to justice-involved populations, the requirements and exemptions specified by the legislation, and the Medicaid enrollment process.
- The Interstate Commission for Juveniles—an organization responsible for the transfer, supervision, and return of juveniles who have absconded, escaped, or run away from one state to another—recently published a [Bench Book for Judges & Court Personnel](#). This publication provides an overview of legal procedures for the interstate agreement to transfer or return juveniles who cross state lines. It also describes sentencing considerations, establishes a process for returning juveniles, explains liability and immunity considerations, and summarizes other relevant information.

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.

DMC Action Network eNews

Issue #21 | February/March 2011

In This Issue

[Championing DMC at the State Level](#)

[TA Tips: Practical Advice for Successful DMC Reduction](#)

[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.

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

Core States

Pennsylvania
Berks County
Philadelphia
Lancaster County

Championing DMC at the State Level

Since its launch in 2007, the DMC Action Network has demonstrated the benefits of tackling racial and ethnic disparities at the local level. Union County, NC is no exception. Officials there have slashed detention admissions for youth of color. Now, the State's juvenile justice agency is showing how its leadership and support can propel DMC reduction to a whole new level.

Officials in Union County, North Carolina, joined the DMC Action Network because they were committed to developing a more equitable juvenile justice system for the 30,000 youth in their jurisdiction. They didn't anticipate that just a few short years later, their reforms would end up reaching 2 million youth across the state.

How? It helps to have friends in high places, according to Union County DMC Coordinator Karen Tucker.

"We've received strong support from our state juvenile justice agency that has not only moved our work forward, but also spread the successful DMC reduction strategies throughout the state," says Tucker. Key allies in the North Carolina Department of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention (DJJDP), including Secretary Linda Hayes and Chief Operating Officer Dr. Robin Jenkins, have assumed a leadership role and are showing how state agencies can have a big impact on work to reduce racial and ethnic disparities.

My vision for the future is for North Carolina to be so successful at putting [racial and ethnic fairness] into the conscience of everyone who practices decisionmaking involving kids that it becomes second nature.

- Dr. Robin Jenkins

North Carolina is one of twelve states with a centralized juvenile justice agency. That arrangement can help send a clear and unified message about DMC. But, as Dr. Jenkins notes, centralized agencies have to do much more than just direct local jurisdictions to do things differently. "A big part of the challenge is communicating the benefits of this work to a local jurisdiction without making it sound like a bureaucratic directive or an unfunded mandate. You need to spend time making it relevant so that people on the ground care about the issue and see the value of this work."

Although DJJDP coordinates and oversees most delinquency services in North Carolina, counties still have the flexibility to innovate and adapt to local needs.

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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For example, each county operates a Juvenile Crime Prevention Council, which is responsible for identifying and developing local services and supports. Union has taken advantage of flexibility at the local level to develop its own DMC reduction strategies – an experience that has been “invaluable,” says Jenkins. Two recent examples illustrate how state-level leadership has brought important changes to all 100 of North Carolina’s counties by building on Union’s pioneering work.

The first involves implementing a system of graduated responses to youth compliance and noncompliance with probation. Consequences take into account the seriousness of a specific probation violation and its risk to public safety when holding youth accountable for misbehavior. The strategy also emphasizes the importance of rewarding youth for meeting goals and expectations as a way of helping them succeed.

Since Union County developed its graduated responses grid in 2008, officials have seen a 67% drop in the number of youth admitted to secure detention for probation violations and a 50% drop in the number of youth of color detained for that reason. Because of Union’s success, DJJDP is implementing the strategy throughout North Carolina, training all of the state’s court counselors on DMC and the value of graduated responses. The agency is also going one step further, developing a method for including graduated sanctions templates or examples in the statewide juvenile case management system, known as NC-JOIN. The system will track the grid’s use, permitting officials to assess and improve the strategy’s effectiveness over time.

DJJDP has also used Union County’s example to build data collection capacity across the state. In 2008, Union adopted the MacArthur Foundation’s [guidance on accurate collection of race and ethnicity information](#). Officials also added intake questions about youth’s language preference. According to Tucker, Union prioritized this data collection because “you can’t fix the system without knowing who is in it.” Together, those reforms allowed the County to accurately count the number of Latino youth in its juvenile justice system and to direct its limited resources accordingly. Nine months later, DJJDP modified its computer system to permit all counties to gather this information, setting the stage for DMC reform in other jurisdictions.

Successfully partnering with state officials on issues such as these depends on a number of factors, including identifying leaders to champion the issue and establishing a consistent channel of communication. It also means recognizing the most useful role of state leadership in what is ultimately a local issue. Tucker says that “Secretary Hayes and Dr. Jenkins understand that while you need to address DMC at the state level, it is at the local level where you see the most results.” Jenkins agrees, stating that “if you’re going to be serious about DMC as a social policy issue, you need executive leadership to move beyond studying and talking about it to thinking strategically about solutions and the best way to deploy resources to have the broadest impact.”

North Carolina has already shown itself to be a leader in DMC reform, but Union and DJJDP continue to explore new strategies to combat racial and ethnic disparities. On April 15th, Union will host a community forum to review newly created juvenile crime maps. The meeting will include juvenile justice professionals, school and agency officials, parents, and others. Participants will work in small teams to analyze individual neighborhood data and identify needed resources. The hope, says Tucker, is “to break down misconceptions and bring community members together to think about how to improve the system.”

At the state level, Jenkins expresses “a deep appreciation for what MacArthur and CCLP have helped us accomplish thus far.” When asked about what lies ahead, he doesn’t hide his optimism: “My vision for the future is for North Carolina to be so successful at putting this issue into the conscience of everyone

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who practices decisionmaking involving kids that it becomes second nature. If we do this right, these concerns will be integrated so pervasively that they will be the norm, instead of something that only a handful of jurisdictions consider."

Tell us how you've partnered with state officials in your work: email jszanyi@cclp.org.

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 **think about how state-level support could support your local DMC reform efforts**. As described above, state juvenile justice agencies can play an important role in racial and ethnic disparities reduction. Union County DMC Coordinator Karen Tucker shares the following pieces of advice when reaching out to state officials:

- **Identify a champion.** Having a specific contact at the state level who understands and cares about DMC is critical to ensuring that racial and ethnic fairness receives attention. Get to know agency officials and their interests before making your contact. Additionally, consider contacting state legislators who may have an interest in your work.
- **Frame your message to fit your audience.** When meeting with state officials, identify what about your work will speak to particular individuals. For example, the cost savings from lowered detention numbers for youth of color may be particularly persuasive for leaders at an agency that is facing deep budget cuts.
- **Communicate regularly.** Setting up a regular time to speak with your contacts ensures that DMC reduction stays visible among state-level officials.

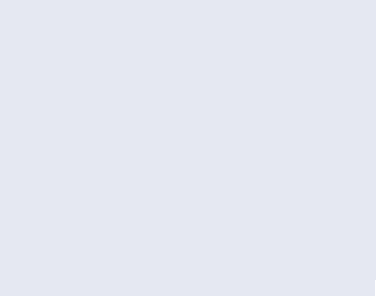
If you have a tip you would like to share, or if you would like to hear more about a particular topic, let us know: email jszanyi@cclp.org.

The Newest DMC News and Resources

- In February, the National Council of La Raza, the largest national Hispanic civil rights and advocacy organization in the United States, [published a white paper on the impact of the federal Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention Act \(JJDP\) on Latino youth](#). The paper outlines how Latino youth could benefit from changes to the law in a number of key issue areas, including disproportionate minority contact, youth in adult jails, community-based delinquency prevention and alternative to detention services, and evidence-based practices.
- This month, the Task Force on Race and the Criminal Justice System at the University of Washington School of Law released a new report on DMC in Washington State. The publication, [Preliminary Report on Race and](#)

[Washington's Criminal Justice System](#), examines racial and ethnic disparities in the juvenile justice and criminal justice systems. The report concludes that much of the overrepresentation of people of color stems from facially neutral policies that have racially disparate effects.

- The Obama Administration has released its proposed budget for fiscal year 2012. The President proposes reducing and restructuring federal funding for compliance with the Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention Act (JJDP). The Coalition for Juvenile Justice has published an analysis of the proposed changes, which you can download by [clicking this link](#).
- Registration is now open for the Coalition for Juvenile Justice's (CJJ) annual spring conference, which will take place from May 20 to 24 in Washington, DC. This year's theme is "Fair & Equal Justice: Alternative Sentences and Sanctions for Youth." You can find additional details and registration information by [following this link](#).
- The Center for Juvenile Justice Reform at Georgetown University has announced the launch of the Juvenile Justice System Improvement Project (JJSIP). The program is designed to reduce crime and delinquency and improve positive outcomes for youth in the juvenile justice system through the implementation of more efficient and effective juvenile justice administration. Three states will be selected to participate in an intensive training and receive 18 months of technical assistance. Letters of interest are due by April 14th. [Click here to find out more](#).
- The Society for Research in Child Development (SRCD) has just released a new report on effective interventions for juvenile justice-involved youth. The article, [Evidence-Based Interventions for Juvenile Offenders and Juvenile Justice Policies that Support Them](#), presents examples of government initiatives that have successfully promoted the adoption, implementation, and sustainability of evidence-based interventions for juvenile offenders.
- The National Center for Education Statistics has [published a report that provides high school dropout and completion rates in the United States between 1972 and 2008](#) race/ethnicity, and the rates of on-time graduation from high school. In 2008, African-American youth dropped out at twice the rate of white youth; Hispanic youth dropped out at almost four times the rate of white youth.
- Fewer kids are being sent to adult court because of states changing laws to keep youth out of adult jails and prisons, according to a new report from the Campaign for Youth Justice. The report, [State Trends: Legislative Changes from 2005 to 2010 Removing Youth from the Adult Criminal Justice System](#), provides state policymakers, the media, the public, and advocates with the latest information about youth in the adult justice system. The report also examines recent legislative achievements, as well as active reform efforts.
- In February, the Public Broadcasting Service aired a special about lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender youth in juvenile courts and detention. The program, [Juvenile Injustice](#), features youth who share their experiences with their families, schools, and the events that ultimately led them into detention. It also includes discussions with juvenile justice officials working to improve outcomes for LGBTQ youth.
- The Robert F. Kennedy Children's Action Corps and Georgetown



University's Center for Juvenile Justice Reform have announced the launch of a new electronic periodical, *The Connector: Working Together for Multi-System Youth*. The Connector will provide information to assist multi-system youth—those who have a wide range of needs in many different systems, such as child welfare, juvenile justice, mental health, and education. Quarterly issues will provide the latest information on initiatives, research, model programs, and policy. [Click here to read the first issue.](#)

DMC Action Network eNews

Issue #20 | January 2011

In This Issue

[Confronting the Challenges of DMC Reduction: Staying Focused on Reform in Rapides Parish, LA](#)

[W. Haywood Burns Institute Receives MacArthur Award for Creative and Effective Institutions](#)

[TA Tips: Practical Advice for Successful DMC Reduction](#)

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

DMC Action Network

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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,

Confronting the Challenges of DMC Reduction: Staying Focused on Reform in Rapides Parish, LA

Working to reduce racial and ethnic disparities in systems that serve at-risk youth is challenging, but knowing about strategies and tools to promote DMC reform can help jurisdictions that are committed to change anticipate and overcome obstacles. With that in mind, officials in a DMC Action Network core site share how they have improved their data collection capacity and built relationships with law enforcement as part of their work to improve outcomes for youth of color.

When Rapides Parish joined the DMC Action Network, officials there knew that tackling racial and ethnic disparities in their jurisdiction wouldn't be easy, but they were committed to making it work. As a small community where it often seems like everyone knows everyone else, it was not difficult to sell community members on DMC reduction from the standpoint of ensuring fairness and equality for youth and families. However, those same individuals did not anticipate that the most effective approach to DMC reduction would be so data-driven.

Three years later, Rapides has shown its willingness to press forward, instituting new data collection methods and structured decision making tools. And, according to Larry Spottsville, Director of Juvenile Services for the Ninth Judicial District Court in Rapides Parish, the work in Rapides has helped to "change the conversation" on racial and ethnic disparities in his jurisdiction.

In Rapides Parish, a primarily rural jurisdiction in central Louisiana of about 130,000 residents, youth of color represent approximately one-third of the population between the ages of 10 and 16. As Spottsville notes, "part of the initial logistical difficulty was gathering true data on DMC so that we could have a conversation with the key stakeholders based on information and not just impressions."



With financial assistance from the Models for Change initiative, Rapides purchased software that allowed it to gather data on youth entering the Parish's secure detention facility, the Renaissance Home for Youth (photo left, courtesy of Renaissance Home for Youth). Officials there also implemented the [MacArthur Foundation's](#)

manages the DMC Action 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
Union County
Cabarrus County

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[guidance on accurate collection of race and ethnicity information through the use of a 2-question approach](#) to enhance the accuracy of information on youth in the system. Shauna Epps of the Center for Children's Law and Policy also helped Rapides develop a "Juvenile Contact" form to standardize the data that different law enforcement agencies collected on youth.

These data helped spark a dialogue among the Parish's juvenile justice officials. For example, in 2007, African-American and Latino youth represented approximately 83 percent of detention admissions in Rapides. According to Spottsville, his strong working relationships with judges and representatives of the Parish's three largest law enforcement agencies were instrumental in obtaining buy-in for discussions on reducing that overrepresentation.

As a result of these discussions, officials formed two committees. One focused specifically on the development of a detention screening instrument (DSI). The other focused on other DMC reduction strategies, such as identifying strategies to help youth on probation succeed and avoid secure detention for probation violations. Rapides chose the development of a DSI as one of its strategic innovations when it joined the DMC Action Network. The instrument aims to ensure that law enforcement officials make objective decisions about which youth should be detained.

The first committee's work led to the implementation of a DSI in February 2008, with a final version agreed upon in July of that year. According to Sylvia Singleton, the Parish's DMC Coordinator, one challenge in developing the DSI was convincing stakeholders that completing a standardized screening instrument was worthwhile in a rural jurisdiction where officers felt they knew many youth well enough to make appropriate detention decisions. "In a community where law enforcement officers were frustrated with seeing the same youth come through the system, it was a challenge to change their mindset and get them to look at the situation differently," said Singleton.

Rapides partnered with the University of New Orleans to conduct a validation study of the DSI this past fall. The study concluded that when law enforcement officers used the instrument, it resulted in a significant reduction in the proportion of African-American youth who were detained, without a reduction in the number of youth detained for violent offenses. Spottsville says that the DSI is a work in progress, as "stakeholders are still critiquing the instrument." Rapides officials have continued to train and re-train law enforcement officers on consistent use of the DSI, as some officers remain skeptical of the instrument's value. Singleton notes that although keeping stakeholders engaged in the process is not always easy, it's critical to ensuring that reforms stick.

Singleton has been "instrumental" in keeping work on track, according to Spottsville. That includes efforts to implement a graduated responses grid for probation violations. Singleton also assists Latino youth and families who come into contact with the system, having experience as a translator for the Ninth Judicial District Court.

Spottsville is excited about the progress that Rapides has made in the past few years, particularly the Parish's achievements in building its data collection capacity and relationships with law enforcement. He looks forward to sharing the fruits of the important procedural and cultural changes that have been made so far.

Share the challenges that you've encountered and overcome in your jurisdiction: email jszanyi@cclp.org.

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Help us ensure that the eNews is a valuable resource for your work by [clicking here and completing a short online survey](#).

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

W. Haywood Burns Institute Receives MacArthur Award for Creative and Effective Institutions

This month, the John D. and Catherine T. MacArthur Foundation recognized the W. Haywood Burns Institute (BI) for its work to protect and improve the lives of youth of color and poor youth and the well-being of their communities. The BI has partnered with the Center for Children's Law and Policy in developing data collection tools and strategies to work to reduce DMC in juvenile justice systems in the DMC Action Network and throughout the country.

As a recipient of a 2011 MacArthur Award for Creative and Effective Institutions, the Burns Institute received \$750,000. The award will go toward augmenting its operating reserve and creating an online technical assistance training center to help jurisdictions better utilize the BI's tools and methods. [You can read more about the award and the BI's work by following this link](#).

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 **think about how graduated responses for youth on probation could help reduce racial and ethnic disparities in your jurisdiction**. As one of the DMC Action Network's strategic innovations, the approach involves developing an array of responses to both youth compliance and noncompliance with probation. Consequences for noncompliance take into account seriousness of a specific probation violation and its risk to public safety when holding youth accountable for misbehavior. The strategy also emphasizes the importance of rewarding youth for meeting goals and expectations as a way of helping them succeed.

On January 20th, the DMC Action Network hosted a teleconference designed to help Network sites implement and hone graduated responses. James McCarron, Director of Probation Services for the Fairfax County, VA Juvenile and Domestic Relations District Court shared his jurisdiction's experience developing and implementing that strategy for juvenile justice-involved youth.

While sharing practical pointers with Network members, McCarron stressed that the implementation of graduated responses is an ongoing and multi-year process. Jurisdictions should expect push back, particularly from more experienced probation staff. In overcoming that challenge, it is important to incorporate staff into the early development stages to prevent graduated responses from being perceived as something imposed solely from the top down. Involving line staff also ensures that they take ownership of the program and understand its underlying philosophy, not just the mechanics.

McCarron also noted that, at the outset, probation officers did not employ rewards as continuously as they did sanctions. To increase the use of incentives, administrators found it helpful to highlight some of the rewards that line staff already used, such as extending curfews or permitting sleepovers, as part of the rewards continuum. In Fairfax County, probation officers utilize early termination of probation most frequently as an incentive. Administrators are also working to obtain funding for more incentives, such as gift cards, in addition to exploring

new options to add to their sanctions continuum.

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 News and Resources

- This month, the television network A&E began broadcasting a new multi-episode show, [Beyond Scared Straight](#), which follows youth involved in several different "scared straight" programs throughout the country. In a public statement to A&E, the Coalition for Juvenile Justice (CJJ) highlighted research suggesting that "Scared Straight" interventions are ineffective for delinquency prevention and have been linked with higher rates of re-offending. Click here to read [CJJ's public statement](#), and [follow this link](#) for a fact sheet on existing studies of "Scared Straight" programs.
- The Connecticut Juvenile Justice Alliance has released a new report outlining how reforms in the state have benefitted youth and taxpayers, all while juvenile crime and recidivism rates have dropped. The publication, [Safe and Sound: A New Approach to Juvenile Justice and Its Effect on Public Safety and Spending in Connecticut](#), analyzes data on arrests, recidivism, status offenses, and diversion programs, in addition to outlining achievements and remaining challenges.
- The Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention (OJJDP) has published its Proposed Plan for Fiscal Year 2011, describing the discretionary program activities that OJJDP proposes to carry out during the year. The agency is soliciting comments on its proposed plan, which OJJDP will take into consideration in developing its Final Plan. [Click here to view OJJDP's Proposed Plan and detailed guidance on submitting comments, which are due by February 28th.](#)
- OJJDP has released a new bulletin, [Substance Use and Delinquent Behavior Among Serious Adolescent Offenders](#). The report presents results from the Pathways to Desistance study, which interviewed more than 1,300 juvenile offenders for the 7 years after their conviction to determine what leads them to persist in or desist from serious offending. The bulletin focuses on understanding the connection between substance use and serious offending. The research explores how these behaviors affect one another in adolescence and how they change in early adulthood.
- The Justice Department released a proposed rule on the Prison Rape Elimination Act (PREA), which calls for the adoption of national standards aimed at combating sexual abuse in juvenile facilities, adult prisons and jails, lockups, and community confinement facilities. [Click here to view the proposed rule and learn how to submit comments on the proposed standards.](#)
- This month, the Juvenile Law Center introduced a new podcast series focused on the Luzerne County "kids for cash scandal," which JLC helped uncover two years ago. The series, [Reform in the Wake of Luzerne](#), discusses the practices and policies that allowed the abuses in Luzerne County to persist and the efforts underway to reform the juvenile justice system statewide.

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 jzanyl@cclp.org or 202-637-0377 x108.

DMC Action Network eNews

Issue #19 | December 2010

In This Issue

[Jason Witt of Rock County, Wisconsin, Wins 2010 Champion for Change Award for Work to Reduce DMC](#)

[Thank You and Farewell to A Key DMC Action Network Supporter](#)

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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

Jason Witt of Rock County, WI Wins 2010 Champion for Change Award for Work to Reduce DMC

Nine months ago, we described how Jason Witt, Deputy Director of the Rock County, Wisconsin, Human Services Department, was navigating a vigorous debate surrounding reforms that had improved outcomes for youth of color. This month, the MacArthur Foundation recognized Jason's persistence and dedication at its third annual Champions for Change awards ceremony.



When the MacArthur Foundation awarded its first Champion for Change award for the DMC Action Network, it sent a clear message: DMC reduction is tough work, but determined advocacy based on the Action Network's guiding principles can yield real benefits for youth of color. That's why the Foundation recognized Jason Witt, former director of the Rock County, Wisconsin, Human Services Department, with the award at the Fifth Annual Models for Change Working Conference on December 7 in Washington, DC.

When presenting the award, CCLP's Executive Director, Mark Soler, likened Jason's devotion to data as a "religion." Rock County implemented a monthly review of trends, known as RockStat, that focuses on using data and continual follow up to inform strategies for improving youth outcomes. That fits with one of Jason's key mantras: "If you can't measure it, you can't manage it."

This data-driven approach has helped Rock County achieve impressive results. By expanding the number and quality of detention alternatives, the county saw a 27% drop in the number of youth of color admitted to secure detention for probation violations. Under Jason's leadership, the county has also reallocated resources from detention to community-based programming, adopted a strength-based assessment instrument for youth under agency supervision, and helped create a training program for school resource officers focused on alternatives to arrest.

The school resource officer training, developed in collaboration with the state's two DMC Action Network replication sites, Outagamie County and Kenosha County, reflects the impact that Rock County's work is having across the state. Wisconsin's DMC Coordinator, Lindsey Draper, noted that "Jason's leadership and commitment played a major role in developing the credibility and 'buy-in' that led local stakeholders to support the reform efforts and helped spread the idea that such projects could be replicated."

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

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We Want Your

To be sure, other Network sites are working hard on data-driven approaches to DMC reduction and serving as state-wide models. Yet, Lisa Garry, DMC Policy Director at CCLP and manager of the DMC Action Network, noted that Jason had also demonstrated his willingness to stay true to the Network's vision, even in the face of resistance and hesitancy from some individuals in the county. That determination reflected a true commitment to reducing racial and ethnic disparities.

Jason is now Director of the La Crosse County Human Services Department in Wisconsin, where he is continuing to work on behalf of youth in the state. In accepting the award, he stated that the honor "demonstrated that there is no excuse for inaction."

Given Jason's relentless focus on improving outcomes for youth of color during his time in Rock County, we have no doubt that he will keep racial and ethnic fairness at the forefront of his efforts.

Tell us if you're recognized for your work to reduce racial and ethnic disparities: email jzanyj@cclp.org.



Jason Witt (center) and other supporters from Wisconsin celebrate the MacArthur Foundation's first Disproportionate Minority Contact Action Network Champion for Change award.

Feedback!

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



Thank You and Farewell to a Key CCLP Staff Member

This month, we bid a fond farewell to Travis Long, who expertly provided administrative and technical support to the DMC Action Network as CCLP's Project Coordinator.

CCLP staff and those throughout the Network are grateful to Travis for his hard work in making the DMC Action Network a success. We have no doubt that the next organization lucky enough to work with Travis will benefit tremendously from his coordination and planning skills, and we wish him all the best in his future endeavors.

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 **identify and recognize the champions for change in your communities**. Individuals working in DMC Action Network sites know that strong and dedicated leadership has many benefits: it ensures that DMC stays a priority, it helps keep reforms on track even in tough financial or political times, and it creates a sense of ownership and responsibility around efforts to reduce racial and ethnic disparities in systems that serve youth. Jurisdictions with strong judicial, agency, or community leaders have demonstrated the benefit of having active individuals who are dedicated to DMC reduction. Rock County, Wisconsin, is one such example.

The MacArthur Foundation's Champions for Change awards ceremony only takes place once a year, but individual jurisdictions don't have to wait to shine the spotlight on those who are ready to advocate for better outcomes for youth of color.

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

- The Chicago Urban League's Department of Policy and Research has released a new edition of its newsletter, which is focused on the issue of DMC in Chicago's south suburbs. The [Strategies newsletter](#) features data, interviews, and analysis related to the growing issue of racial and ethnic disparities in the greater Chicagoland area.
- The Children's Defense Fund - Ohio, in collaboration with a number of other organizations, has released an [issue brief](#) and [fact sheet](#) outlining key arguments for detention reform in Ohio. Both documents summarize the advantages of alternatives that will keep youth out of pretrial detention, in addition to referencing the impact of those alternatives on reducing DMC.

- A new study by the Vera Institute of Justice, commissioned by the New York State Office of Children and Family Services, finds that punishing parents in family court for children's chronic school absenteeism, does not help improve attendance rates. The study, entitled [Getting Teenagers Back to School: Rethinking New York State's Response to Chronic Absence](#), recommends that the state extend flexibility and incentives to localities to address the root causes of truancy in their communities.
- The Federal Advisory Committee on Juvenile Justice has issued its [2010 annual report](#) with recommendations to the President on juvenile justice policy. The report urges "strengthen[ing] disproportionate minority contact (DMC) efforts, initiatives, and programs to reduce and eliminate racial and ethnic disparities that adversely impact youth of color," in addition to making other specific recommendations.
- The Office of Justice Programs' Bureau of Justice Statistics, in collaboration with the National Center for Education Statistics, has published a new report, entitled [Indicators of School Crime and Safety: 2010](#). The publication draws on federally funded studies to present detailed statistical information about the crime that occurs in school and on the way to and from school, addressing bullying, victimization, fights, weapons, drug and alcohol use by students, school conditions, and student perceptions of personal safety.
- This month, the Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention released a new bulletin based on the agency's Survey of Youth in Residential Placement. The report [describes the characteristics, family and educational backgrounds, offense histories, and expectations of youth in residential placement](#).
- The journal *Pediatrics* has published a new study on the criminalization of lesbian, gay, and bisexual youth, entitled [Criminal Justice and School Sanctions against Nonheterosexual Youth: A National Longitudinal Study](#). The research, the first of its kind documenting excessive punishment of these children nationwide, found that lesbian, gay, and bisexual youth are about 40 percent more likely than other teens to receive punishment at the hands of school authorities, police, and the courts. The study describes an "urgent need for all child-serving professionals to reflect on strategies to reduce the criminalization of non-heterosexual youth as they navigate adolescence in an often hostile environment."

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.

DMC Action Network eNews

Issue #18 | November 2010

In This Issue

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[The Center for Children's Law and Policy Is Now on Facebook!](#)

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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

Berks County, Pennsylvania, Wins Community-Based Program of the Year for Evening Reporting Center

Generally, juvenile justice practitioners don't enter the field expecting the glitz and glamor that accompany some other professions -- it's the desire to help youth in trouble that provides the necessary motivation. So when others acknowledge those on the ground who are working hard to improve the lives of kids in their community, it's cause for celebration.



What does it feel like to have developed the best community-based program in your state for juvenile justice-involved youth? Just ask stakeholders in Berks County, Pennsylvania, a DMC Action Network core site. On November 4th, the Pennsylvania Juvenile Court Judges' Commission (JCJC) and the Pennsylvania Council of Chief Juvenile Probation Officers honored Berks County's Evening Reporting Center and its provider, the Children's Home of Reading, at its 30th annual awards program in Harrisburg.

When presenting the award for community-based program of the year, JCJC Awards Committee Chairperson David Mueller highlighted the fact that the Berks pre-adjudication evening reporting center (ERC), which was the first of its kind in Pennsylvania, rapidly became a model for other counties throughout the Commonwealth, with five jurisdictions now operating or developing similar programs. Why? The ERC, along with other changes such as increased frontloading of services like multisystemic therapy, helped Berks save over \$2 million in its budget for out-of-home placements in 2009. Not only that, the program has helped to combat DMC by keeping many youth of color out of detention while preserving public safety. In 2009, the Berks ERC served 68 youth, over 90% of whom were youth of color, and 96% of whom did not commit a new offense while participating in the program.

The MacArthur Foundation provided start-up funding that allowed Berks to open the pre-adjudication ERC in December 2008, until it became a part of the County's and Commonwealth's budget in July 2009. Operated by the Children's Home of Reading, the program serves between 8 and 13 youth for an average of 30 days. Staff pick up youth every weekday at 3 p.m. and return them to their homes at 9:30 p.m., using those hours to provide a mix of life skills development, educational assistance, group counseling, recreational activities, and meals. In addition, ERC staff have forged partnerships with surrounding organizations,

Children's Law and Policy, manages the DMC Action Network. [Travis Long](#), Project Coordinator, 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
Union County
Carrabus County

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including a local college, which bring community members to the ERC and provide youth with opportunities to reach out to the surrounding neighborhood. You can [view a short video about the ERC by clicking this link.](#)



Rob Askew (photo left), who accepted the award on behalf of the program, attributed the ERC's success to the way that stakeholders came together to develop the program. Askew, who serves as the Director of Business Development at the Children's Home of Reading, described the ERC as "the most collaborative and transparent project" that he had been a part of during his career working with children and families in crisis. Given the popularity of the program with youth and its success rates, Berks is working to expand the ERC to serve post-adjudication youth through similar programming and an added treatment component.

The JCJC awards ceremony capped off the Commonwealth's annual conference on juvenile justice. Over the course of three days, practitioners and public officials from across Pennsylvania discussed promising practices and achievements at the state and local level. Berks County Juvenile Probation Chief Bob Williams described one such innovation from his jurisdiction: a detention risk assessment instrument. As with the ERC, Berks was the first jurisdiction to adopt the instrument, which has now spread to other jurisdictions throughout Pennsylvania. Williams noted that the instrument "not only allowed us to make decisions more fairly, consistently, and objectively, it helped guide us in developing alternatives to secure detention."

Williams, along with other juvenile justice professionals, also laid out Pennsylvania's achievements over the previous five years, which benefitted from the support of the MacArthur Foundation and the Pennsylvania Commission on Crime and Delinquency. However, the presentation focused primarily on outlining the Commonwealth's ambitious juvenile justice reform agenda for the coming years, which the panel described as "Pennsylvania's Juvenile Justice Enhancement Strategy."

The MacArthur Foundation's Model for Change Initiative is officially drawing to a close in Pennsylvania, but jurisdictions are gearing up for additional system improvements. In Berks, officials recently completed a file review of youth alleged to have violated the terms of their probation. The county's DMC Steering Committee requested the review to help identify ways of helping youth avoid out-of-home placement for probation violations. The analysis will help support the county's work to develop and implement standardized graduated responses to youth compliance and noncompliance with probation in the coming weeks.

Berks County is a jurisdiction that could rest on its laurels, given its many accomplishments over the past few years. It's clear, though, that officials there and throughout Pennsylvania have exciting plans to carry their reform work even further in the years ahead.

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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 **pursue new opportunities to educate practitioners about DMC**. In Pennsylvania, individuals working on DMC reform have shared their work throughout the Commonwealth using active organizations, including the Pennsylvania Juvenile Court Judges' Commission, the Pennsylvania Council of Chief Juvenile Probation Officers, and the DMC Subcommittee of the Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention Committee of the Pennsylvania Council on Crime and Delinquency,

Pennsylvania's state advisory group on juvenile justice. By spreading the word about successful reform efforts at these organizations' meetings, counties such as Berks, Lancaster, and Philadelphia have inspired individuals to adapt those strategies to reduce racial and ethnic disparities in neighboring jurisdictions.

In states that do not have such active bodies, officials should think creatively about other presentation and networking opportunities that could help build interest in DMC reduction. Consider sending out a short write-up that outlines what DMC is and what your jurisdiction is doing about it to other agencies or organizations that work with youth, along with a request to include that information in their next newsletter or publication. Additionally, offer to do a presentation at their next meeting or conference on your DMC reduction efforts and how the organizations can help move those efforts forward.

Small outreach efforts such as this can yield big results in building new partnerships and educating others about the importance of work to reduce racial and ethnic disparities.

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

- In a new article from the Louisiana Law Review, CCLP Executive Director Mark Soler examines the research on waiver of youth to adult court and racial disparities in the juvenile justice system. The article, entitled [*Missed Opportunity: Waiver, Race, Data, and Policy Reform*](#), argues that the failure to gather and analyze waiver data by race and ethnicity is a missed opportunity, and it proposes new collection and analysis techniques that would enable jurisdictions to change waiver policies and practices to reduce DMC.
- A new blog post from the Reclaiming Futures Initiative helps outline the financial savings associated with evidence-based practices in juvenile justice. The post, entitled [*How Much Are Evidence-Based Practices Worth?*](#), concisely presents several arguments supporting the development and implementation of these programs as a way of improving outcomes for youth and cutting costs in the delinquency system.
- The National Center for Family and Community Connections with Schools has released a new guide on the effectiveness of family engagement in schools. The guide, [*A New Wave of Evidence: The Impact of School, Family, and Community Connections on Student Achievement*](#), reviews 51 research studies published between 1995 and 2002 that focus on the influence of family and community involvement on student academic achievement and other outcomes. The report provides practical guidance for individuals and organizations attempting to connect families from diverse backgrounds with their schools.
- The Pretrial Justice Institute, in partnership with the Casey Foundation's Juvenile Detention Alternatives Initiative, has published a [*special edition of its Pretrial Reporter*](#) that spotlights reform efforts in the juvenile justice system. The issue covers recent legislation, policy, and court rulings, as well as information on girls in the juvenile justice system.
- The Pennsylvania Juvenile Defense Indigent Action Network has published a new guide on the collateral consequences of delinquency adjudications. The publication, entitled [*The Pennsylvania Juvenile Collateral Consequences Checklist*](#), provides attorneys, judges, and other juvenile justice professionals with the most up-to-date information available on the short- and long-term consequences of delinquency adjudications, ranging from public housing to immigration status.

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.

DMC Action Network eNews

Issue #17 | October 2010

In This Issue

[Hitting the Ground Running: Putting DMC Reduction on the Fast Track in Lancaster County, Pennsylvania](#)

[DMC Action Network Launches Expanded DMC Data Template](#)

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DMC Action Network

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[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
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Rock County
Outagamie County
Kenosha County

Kansas
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Lyon-Chase County

North Carolina
Union County
Carrabus County

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We Want Your Feedback!

We want to hear from you about how we can improve the DMC Action Network eNews.

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.

Help us ensure that the eNews is a valuable resource for your work by [clicking here and completing a short online survey](#).

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.

DMC Action Network eNews

Issue #16 | September 2010

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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

A Formula That Works: Community Engagement and Data-Driven Strategies for DMC Reduction in Benton-Franklin Counties

In Washington State's Benton-Franklin Counties, financial shortfalls have forced the counties to limit the population at their 80-bed detention center to 35 youth. That cap can help keep detention numbers down and encourage officials to think twice about which youth should spend time in detention. However, officials there are also hard at work engaging the community and identifying innovations aimed at reducing racial and ethnic disparities in their jurisdiction.

When Benton-Franklin Counties, Washington, joined the DMC Action Network as a core site in 2007, officials knew that their community was somewhat unique. For one, Benton-Franklin is a bi-county jurisdiction: it joins two historically rural counties that have recently experienced substantial growth, with a total population of about 230,000 residents. Additionally, Franklin is the first "majority-minority" county in the state, where 83% of youth aged 10 to 17 are Latino and 1% of youth are African-American.

Benton-Franklin may be different from other Action Network sites in some respects, but the jurisdiction's approach to DMC reduction is the same: identifying data-driven innovations to reduce racial and ethnic disparities. For Jacqueline van Wormer, the Counties' DMC Coordinator, that effort started with results of a survey of 530 community members and children, which indicated the need for better information on the intricacies of the juvenile justice system.

"We have many large families who live in the counties, which is a great protective factor for youth, but those families also have to be able to successfully navigate the system," said van Wormer, who was recognized as a "Champion for Change" by the MacArthur Foundation in 2008. In order to develop that guidance, Benton-Franklin convened a youth council to develop a brochure about the juvenile justice system that was specific to the local community. Additionally, youth council members helped write and act in a DVD illustrating the juvenile court process, which plays continuously in the Juvenile Justice Center's lobby. That DVD includes unscripted testimonials, offering tips and other advice, from youth and parents who have had experiences with the system.

Van Wormer and her colleagues have also focused their energies on ensuring that the system described in those materials treats all youth fairly. As part of its work with the DMC Action Network, Benton-Franklin has worked on lowering truancy rates and exploring graduated responses for youth accused of violating the terms of their probation. Most recently, stakeholders have turned to reducing the number of youth detained on bench warrants issued after failing to appear for scheduled court hearings. Van Wormer noted that "although our counties don't struggle with this issue as much as some other jurisdictions, we still wanted to do whatever we could to reduce the number of youth who ended up detained for that reason."

Children's Law and Policy, manages the DMC Action Network. [Travis Long](#), Project Coordinator, provides administrative and technical support to the Network.

Core States

Pennsylvania
Berk County
Philadelphia
Lancaster County

Illinois
Peoria

Louisiana
Jefferson Parish
Rapides Parish

Washington
Benton/Franklin Counties
Pierce County

Partner States

Maryland
Baltimore City
Baltimore County
Montgomery County
Prince George's County

Wisconsin
Rock County
Outagamie County
Kenosha County

Kansas
Sedgwick County
Seward County
Lyon-Chase County

North Carolina
Union County
Carrabus County

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We Want Your

As part of its response, Benton-Franklin implemented a calling system to remind youth and family members of upcoming court hearings. Initially staffed by one volunteer, the program now has work-study funding for a part-time caller. Benton-Franklin is currently gathering data to determine the program's impact on detention admissions and DMC. At the same time, stakeholders are working to better understand the causes of failures to appear by surveying youth who are detained for that reason, as well as family members - data that will help the case for other improvements to reduce unnecessary detention admissions.

Engaging the community has always been an integral part of identifying and implementing causes of and solutions to DMC, according to van Wormer. In the past year, the Counties have convened a sixteen-member Latino community leaders group, which includes the head of the Latino chamber of commerce and the local community college's director of diversity and outreach. That group has started thinking about reaching out to the Latino community through talk radio on topics such as truancy laws and resources for youth. Similarly, the Counties



helped facilitate numerous meetings of African-American community leaders, a group that has taken on truancy prevention and disparate treatment in the jurisdiction's public schools.

Close community ties have also sparked direct outreach to youth. This past July, Dr. Novella Bridges, a scientist at Pacific Northwest National Laboratories (photo left), adapted a skills-building program promoted by her sorority, Delta Sigma Theta, for securely detained youth in Benton-Franklin. The program, known as Empowering Males to Build Opportunities for Developing Independence (EMBODI), aims to provide mentorship, service learning opportunities, and skill-building to African-American teenage males. Dr. Bridges noted that

although she lives in an area with a relatively small number of African-American youth, "DMC is still alive and well in the community." For her, the idea of adapting the program for African-American and Latino youth in detention made perfect sense, as "these were the youth who many individuals in the community had not been able to reach."

EMBODI was so well received by youth and staff that there are plans to repeat it in the coming months. According to van Wormer, Dr. Bridges' leadership in spearheading the program and her desire to help vulnerable youth represents the type of community involvement that makes a real difference in Benton-Franklin: "Engaging passionate people is absolutely critical to this work."

Tell us how you're engaging your community in DMC reduction: email jszanyi@cclp.org.

2010 Champions for Change Awards: Call for Nominations

Models for Change is now accepting nominations for the annual Champions for Change awards. The Champions for Change awards recognize excellence in Models for Change leaders and partners. In 2008 and 2009, the John D. and Catherine T. MacArthur Foundation and the Coalition for Juvenile Justice were pleased to recognize one leader from each of the four core Models for Change states (Pennsylvania, Illinois, Louisiana, Washington) for outstanding work that exemplifies practice in improved and model systems.

New this year, the nomination process has been expanded to include nominations from the Models for Change Action Network partner states, one Champion for each of the Models for Change Action Networks focused on 1) Mental Health and Juvenile Justice, 2) Juvenile Indigent Defense, and 3) Disproportionate Minority Contact (DMC).

Feedback!

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Help us ensure that the eNews is a valuable resource for your work by [clicking here and completing a short online survey](#).

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

Nominations will be submitted to the Coalition for Juvenile Justice, and the Models for Change Executive Committee will select one Champion from each core state and one Champion from each of the three Action Networks. [Click here for additional details on the nomination process](#). **The deadline for submissions is tomorrow, September 30, 2010.**

Models for Change Quarterly Newsletter Features DMC Action Network

The most recent edition of the MacArthur Foundation's Models for Change quarterly newsletter highlights efforts in the DMC Action Network to make reforms last. The feature story focuses on a several strategies in individual DMC Action Network Sites that are helping to sustain reforms that benefit youth of color in those jurisdictions. [Click here to view the current issue](#), or visit the Models for Change website to [view past issues of the quarterly newsletter](#).

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 **use data to spark a discussion among a new group of community members**. Facts and figures are necessary to gauge the impact of a particular innovation on racial and ethnic disparities. However, numbers can also play an important role in galvanizing community interest in DMC. In Benton-Franklin Counties, stakeholders employed data to do just that, convening groups of Latino and African-American community leaders and providing numbers on the juvenile justice system in their jurisdiction.

Those data became the foundation for a discussion about what to do to improve the situation of system-involved youth. In Benton-Franklin, letting community members work through the data with guidance from stakeholders ensured that community members felt a sense of ownership of reforms in their jurisdiction. That sense of ownership is critical to ensuring ongoing involvement with and support for work to reduce DMC.

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 study published this month by the Southern Poverty Law Center reveals significant racial gaps in suspension rates among middle school students. Education researchers Daniel J. Rosen and Russell Skiba conducted the study, which found that 28% of African-American males were suspended at least once during a school year in a national sample of over 9,000 middle schools - nearly three times the 10% rate for white males. That disparity was even more significant in a subsample of eighteen urban school districts. You can download the full report, entitled *Suspended Education: Urban Middle Schools in Crisis*, by [clicking this link](#).

- A lack of data collection on disparities in education, housing, and employment opportunities hampers the ability to address racial, ethnic, and gender disparities in the criminal justice system, according to a new report by the W. Haywood Burns Institute and the American Civil Liberties Union of Northern California. The report, [Balancing the Scales of Justice](#), gathers data from three California counties, presents findings from those jurisdictions, and outlines recommendations for future research.
- A new paper aims at helping advocates build effective coalitions to support juvenile justice reform. Robert M. Francis, Executive Director of RYSAP Catalyst for Community Change and Co-Chair of the Connecticut Juvenile Justice Alliance, drafted the piece, [which includes two case studies of coalition building in Connecticut, as well as a description of strategies for success](#).
- The Justice Policy Institute (JPI) has released an analysis of the FBI's 2009 Uniform Crime Report, which indicates that crime has dropped in all regions of the country as prison growth has slowed in the wake of the recession. [The fact sheet](#) reports a 5.3% drop in violent crime and a 4.6% drop in property crimes. Building on that data, JPI also released a report entitled [Money Well Spent](#), which outlines the case for focusing spending on positive social services that improve public safety rather than expanding corrections and law enforcement.
- This month, *Time* [released a video feature on YouthBuild](#), a youth and community development program aimed at helping low-income youth ages 16 to 24 work toward their GEDs or high school diplomas, learn job skills, and serve their communities. The feature focuses on one of 273 YouthBuild sites around the country, describing the stories of two youth participating in the program in Newark, NJ.

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.

DMC Action Network eNews

Issue #15 | August 2010

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Thinking Outside the Box: Baltimore City, Maryland's Approach to DMC Reduction

In November 2009, we highlighted Baltimore City's Pre-Adjudication Coordination and Transition Center, which was recognized by the Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention as a national best practice for DMC reduction. Nine months later, advocates are armed with new data that demonstrate the program's value for keeping youth in the community while preserving public safety. Samantha Mellerson, director of education and social justice initiatives at the Family League of Baltimore, shares how the PACT Center and other programs are helping to combat DMC in her jurisdiction.

When Baltimore City, a DMC Action Network partner site, [won an award for its evening reporting center from the federal Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention](#), it earned bragging rights in the juvenile justice community. The award recognized that the city's Pre-Adjudication Coordination and Transition Center (PACT Center) was an innovation worth replicating in other parts of the country as an effective strategy to reduce racial and ethnic disparities.



The PACT Center (photo left) emerged from the recommendations of the city's DMC Advisory Board, which highlighted the need for community-based alternatives to secure detention. The program focuses on those youth who would otherwise be detained because of a lack of success in less intensive alternatives to detention. Located in West Baltimore, the program

provides support services to youth to ensure that they attend scheduled court hearings, avoid re-arrest, and appear in court with a comprehensive needs assessment and individualized plan that is designed to identify community resources that will help the youth avoid future delinquency.

Earning a national award from the federal government is no small thing, but it may not be enough to sell some stakeholders and community members on the benefits of programs such as the PACT Center. That's why the Family League of Baltimore, which coordinates the city's DMC reduction efforts, lined up an independent analysis of the PACT Center's effectiveness. Advocates believed that the independent evaluation would generate evidence that this strategy for reducing racial and ethnic disparities made sense from a public safety perspective.

DMC Action Network

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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, 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
Pierce County

Partner States

Maryland
Baltimore City
Baltimore County
Montgomery County
Prince George's County

Wisconsin
Rock County
Outagamie County
Kenosha County

They were right. [The evaluation](#) indicated that of the more than 400 youth served by the program since July of 2007, 98% appeared for their scheduled court hearings and 92% did not reoffend while participating in the program. Almost all (99%) of the youth that have been served at the PACT Center have been African American.

Samantha Mellerson, director of education and social justice initiatives at the Family League of Baltimore, noted that these numbers "will help justify continued funding for the PACT Center in the face of budget cuts." However, Mellerson noted that the evaluation was also important because "it demonstrated that we were getting better results than other community detention alternatives, even though we were taking in higher-risk youth who would otherwise be held in secure detention."

Baltimore City opened the PACT Center in 2007 to meet an unmet need in community-based alternatives to secure detention. Recently, stakeholders such as Mellerson have turned to identifying other unmet needs that impact DMC. For example, Mellerson helped bridge a partnership between the Maryland Department of Juvenile Services and the Baltimore City Public Schools to ensure that youth released from detention find appropriate school placements within five days of their release. The program has helped place 129 youth in school since April 2009, and Mellerson is poised to analyze data on engagement and truancy rates for those youth in the near future.

Mellerson and others at the Family League have also begun thinking about reducing DMC through youth workforce development. In Baltimore City, that meant looking at what job opportunities were available for youth in their own communities. After securing \$1 million in support from the Open Society Institute, which was matched by the Baltimore City Department of Social Services, the Family League was able to fund 310 year-long positions with local businesses that were committed to hiring youth from neighborhoods with the highest arrest rates and out-of-home placements. The goal is to generate positive experiences for youth that help them build their skills and their resumes.

"We wanted to think broadly about how to generate interest in DMC and how to impact delinquency. This was an opportunity to grow our DMC work and expand it into a new segment of the community by engaging employers committed to and experienced in working with underserved youth," said Mellerson. The Family League is working on building capacity to collect data on outcomes associated with the program, as well as ensuring that youth have resources and supports to stay engaged with their positions over the course of the year.

According to Mellerson, the ability to share new ideas and successful strategies for reducing racial and ethnic disparities is what makes the DMC Action Network a unique and valuable tool. For example, Berks County, Pennsylvania, whose evening reporting center is now a model for others throughout the Commonwealth, sent a team to learn about Baltimore City's PACT Center before deciding to design a similar program to meet the needs of its community. In Baltimore City, the PACT Center was one good idea that was worth sharing. It's certainly not the last.

For those interested in learning more about the Baltimore City PACT Center and the Berks County ERC, representatives from both jurisdictions will be conducting a joint workshop at the Coalition for Juvenile Justice's 2010 National DMC Conference. The event will take place from October 23rd to 35th in Jersey City, New Jersey. [Click here to obtain additional details about the event and to register online.](#)

Tell us how you're measuring success in DMC reduction in your jurisdiction: email jszanyi@cclp.org.

Kansas
Sedgwick County
Seward County
Lyon-Chase County

North Carolina
Union County
Carrabus County

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Youth engage in activities at the Baltimore City Pre-Adjudication Coordination and Transition Center (PACT Center).

Once a DMC Action Network Member, Always a DMC Action Network Member

Since joining the DMC Action Network in 2007, Rock County, Wisconsin, has shown that data-driven approaches to DMC reduction work. After working in 2008 to expand the number and quality of detention alternatives, officials saw a 27% drop in the number of youth of color admitted to secure detention for probation violations. The increased use of detention alternatives, along with other DMC-focused initiatives, helped lower the number of youth who are locked up from an average of 20 youth per day in 2002 to an average of 14 per day in 2009.

A big part of Rock County's success stems from its commitment to building its data capacity and using data to take action. Ariel Barak, who served as Rock's DMC Data Analyst, was integral in making the case for change and keeping reforms on track by analyzing and distilling information from the County's system. In fact, Barak shared tips on how to let data speak for itself at the DMC Action Network's [Technical Assistance Seminar for DMC Coordinators this past December](#).

Barak has just moved on to neighboring Dane County, where he now serves as a program analyst for the Department of Human Services. He notes, though, that he is "still invested in the DMC reduction efforts underway in Rock County." The Network wishes him the best, knowing that he will be a strong advocate for equity and fairness wherever he directs his talents.

MacArthur Foundation Releases Video Capturing Reforms in Berks County, PA

On August 3, the MacArthur foundation released a brief video that highlights the reforms that have occurred in Berks County, Pennsylvania, as a result of the jurisdiction's involvement in the Models for Change Initiative. The film, entitled *Reforming Juvenile Justice in Pennsylvania*, describes how stakeholders are helping to improve community safety while reducing the number of young people in secure detention. You can view the video by [clicking this link](#).

Wichita Eagle Features Programs Aimed at System-Involved Youth in Sedgwick County, Kansas

On August 13, the Wichita Eagle ran a front-page story on new initiatives serving system-involved youth in Sedgwick County, Kansas, a DMC Action Network partner site. The article reviews two programs aimed at connecting youth with paid work opportunities in the community, funded in part by the County's Crime Prevention Fund and modeled after a similar program operating in Los Angeles. You can read the full story by [clicking this link](#).

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 **summarize and share the successes in your jurisdiction**. Knowing that a new program or change in practices is working is certainly good news for those involved in reforms: promising results let individuals know that they are on the right track in terms of their analysis and approach to DMC reduction.

Stakeholders should also make the effort to translate results into materials that they can share with a broader community, be it legislators, community groups, or local foundations. For example, the Family League of Baltimore has developed [a summary of the evaluation of Baltimore City's evening reporting center](#) in order to help educate other individuals on the program's value. By highlighting key results, such as near-perfect court attendance, and illustrating the services that youth receive, the document helps any individual grasp the value of such a program - even someone who is not a juvenile justice professional.

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

- Boston Magazine has published a piece on sentencing youth with mental illness to life without parole for crimes committed as juveniles. The article, entitled *Teenage Wasteland*, [cites evidence of a stark racial disparity in Massachusetts](#), where African American youth "make up 6.5 percent of children in Massachusetts under age 18, but 47 percent of those sentenced to life without parole."
- The National Juvenile Justice Network has released a new policy platform on [youth reentry and aftercare](#). The publication outlines recommendations for best practices in data collection, programming, family and service integration, case planning, and other services.
- Child Advocacy 360 has published the results of an investigation into effective messaging strategies for advocates. The project, entitled [Solutions Storytelling: Messaging to Mobilize Support for Children's Issues](#), draws upon interviews, focus groups, surveys, and "talkback testing" - which involved showing several versions of stories to a group and monitoring how the various story angles influenced the conversation. You can review a video summary of the research, along with specific tips for advocates, through the link above.
- The Annie E. Casey Foundation has released the latest edition of its [KIDS COUNT Data Book](#), which captures national data and state-by-state data and rankings on 10 key indicators of child well-being. The report finds that overall improvements in child well-being that began in the late 1990s stalled in the years just before the current economic downturn.

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.

DMC Action Network eNews

Issue #14 | July 2010

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

DMC Action Network

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

Dollars and Sense: How Sedgwick County, Kansas, Leverages Resources to Advance Reforms in Tough Economic Times

In November 2009, we described how the Kansas Juvenile Justice Authority weathered severe budget cuts at the state level by closing correctional facilities and continuing to fund its community programs. This month, we look at how officials at the county level are stretching local dollars and identifying new sources of support for reforms targeted at reducing DMC.

Making juvenile justice a priority in the face of a budget deficit is no easy task. When dollars dry up, sustaining existing reforms - including those aimed at reducing racial and ethnic disparities - can pose significant challenges. And, for many state and local agencies, talk of implementing any new programs or initiatives grinds to a halt.

That may be the general rule, but Sedgwick County, Kansas, is the exception.



Budget cuts haven't stopped Sedgwick, a DMC Action Network partner site, from pursuing plans to better meet the needs of youth and the community. Mark Masterson, director of the County's Department of Corrections, notes that creative thinking has helped his jurisdiction identify and devote funds to a number of new initiatives - initiatives that otherwise might have been put on hold given the current fiscal climate.

For example, Sedgwick has leveraged local, state, and federal funds to reverse an increase in the use of secure detention for youth who violate the terms of their probation. In May 2009, Masterson noted a new trend: a spike in admissions to detention, and a significant reduction in the average number of days youth spent locked up. "After digging deeper, I noticed that the change corresponded with a change in sentencing practices after two new juvenile judges came to the bench." Additional digging revealed that judges were sanctioning probation violators with multiple weekends in secure detention, feeling that there needed to be a sanction for poor school behavior without causing the youth to miss more school.

Fortunately, stakeholders in Sedgwick found just the solution after visiting Pierce County Juvenile Court in Tacoma, Washington, the following month. "With funding from the MacArthur Foundation, we were able to take a team of four, including a juvenile court judge, to Tacoma and spent two days learning about all aspects of the way that they do business," said Masterson. There, the group learned about a weekend alternative to detention for low-risk youth, which the group thought could meet the need in its jurisdiction. When the team returned to present the program to stakeholders during the County's monthly collaborative meeting on detention utilization, the judges indicated that they would use a program like the one in Tacoma if it existed in Sedgwick.

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

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With support from the stakeholders, Masterson turned to identifying funding for the program. "The timing was perfect. It gave the County the opportunity to leverage state, county, and federal dollars that came through the state at that time." Specifically, the County drew upon freed-up state prevention funds, county funding, and federal block grant funding to foot the bill for the program. By making use of an existing facility's gym and redirecting county employees to support the program, Sedgwick was able to open the doors to the alternative in January 2010 - just six months after seeing Tacoma's program in action. The program served 123 youth in its first six months, 33% of whom were African American and 25% of whom were Latino.

Sedgwick hasn't stopped there, though. Not only has the County found funds for new programming, it has also identified resources to support an ongoing collaboration to address the needs of children involved in both the juvenile justice and child welfare systems. The County's presiding juvenile judge had established a multi-system team to investigate the complex needs of "crossover youth," whose cases come at a high cost to state and county agencies, as well as the region's private foster care contractor: approximately \$1.2 million annually for the 12 crossover youth studied by the team.

Masterson identified a program aimed at taking the team's thinking about service provision to the next level: [the Multi-System Integration Certificate Program for Public Sector Leaders at Georgetown University's Center for Juvenile Justice Reform](#). Knowing that improved service delivery would benefit youth of color in the County, he proposed devoting DMC Action Network funds, so long as a judge would attend and commit to implementing workable strategies that the group learned to improve care of these youth.

By pulling together additional money from the county, the district court, the foster care agency, a local business (Spirit Aerosystems), and scholarships from the federal Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration and the MacArthur Foundation, Sedgwick was able to send a multidisciplinary team of seven to the intensive, week-long institute in mid-July. The team included a state legislator and leader of the African-American Coalition, the director of children's mental health services, the presiding juvenile court judge, the representative of state social services, the permanency council and cross-systems team coordinator, the County's corrections and DMC project director, and a representative from the private foster care agency.

Masterson notes that bringing this group of policy-level representatives to the program was the "logical next step" in this area of the County's work: "The program gave us an opportunity to really focus on this issue and obtain great information from excellent presenters - information that will help us develop our system in Sedgwick."

According to Shay Bilchik, Director of the Georgetown University Center for Juvenile Justice Reform and former administrator of the Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention, Sedgwick's team understood and embraced the program's philosophy. "This is an intensive experience. We use what the research tells us about cross-system youth to understand how to do a better job for these kids," said Bilchik. He described Sedgwick as a jurisdiction that is doing "remarkable work" with a "very impressive team that used its time to really dig into the instruction and probe the faculty."

The team is currently working on a capstone project, which will translate their experience at the program into action. School may be out for the summer, but officials in Sedgwick are hard at work finding innovative ways to fund improvements in their county.

Tell us how you're leveraging funds to support reform in your jurisdiction: email jszanyi@cclp.org.

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Jefferson Parish Children and Youth Planning Board Honored at National Juvenile Justice Network Annual Forum

On July 14, 2010, the National Juvenile Justice Network (NJJN) honored the Jefferson Parish Children and Youth Planning Board with its Award for Leadership in Juvenile Justice Reform. Jefferson Parish is a DMC Action Network core site.

Roy Juncker, Director of the Jefferson Parish Department of Juvenile Services, accepted the award. In describing the Board's work, NJJN recognized the following accomplishments:

- Helping to implement a new risk assessment instrument, which has decreased detention rates;
- Revamping the Department's contracting process to include only evidence-based programs; and
- Spearheading efforts to gather more data on system-involved youth.

"The National Juvenile Justice Network is thrilled to be able to honor some of the change agents in Louisiana and Mississippi that have been instrumental in establishing policies that treat youth in conflict with the law in a fair and appropriate manner. Through this award, we hope to elevate their work so that others across the country can emulate their commitment and success," said Sarah Bryer, NJJN's Director.

You can download the full press release [by clicking this link](#).

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 **find creative ways to fund new and existing programs aimed at reducing racial and ethnic disparities**. By leveraging existing funding streams and identifying nontraditional sources of money, jurisdictions can continue to tackle DMC in difficult financial times. That may mean taking the lead from Sedgwick County, Kansas, and reaching out to local businesses. The National Juvenile Justice Network has also published a new guide entitled [The Real Costs and Benefits of Change: Finding Opportunities for Reform During Difficult Fiscal Times](#), which offers guidance

on realigning and reducing spending without sacrificing effective programs, as well as using the current budget crisis as a means to leverage deinstitutionalization.

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

- The Sentencing Project, a national organization working for a fair and effective criminal justice system by promoting reforms in sentencing law and alternatives to incarceration, has [launched a new juvenile justice resource page](#). The resource contains information and analysis on a broad range of issues, including the overrepresentation of youth of color.
- The newest issue of the *New York Law School Law Review* features a symposium on issues related to the school-to-prison pipeline. The [journal issue](#) addresses a number of individual topics, including [the disparate treatment of youth of color by school disciplinary systems](#), [the needs of status offenders with education-related disabilities](#), and [the role of law enforcement in an academic setting](#).
- The latest issue of *Juvenile and Family Justice TODAY* magazine features a new article on status offenders, entitled [Improving Outcomes for Status Offenders in the JJDP Reauthorization](#). The publication, written by Nancy Gannon Hornberger, Executive Director of the Coalition for Juvenile Justice, focuses on the history and current status of the JJDP, the valid court order exception and ongoing efforts to reduce institutionalization of status offenders, and examples of best practices to meet the needs of status offenders.
- The National Juvenile Justice Network (NJJN) issued a new report that offers guidance for juvenile justice advocates whose states are facing budget shortfalls. The paper, entitled [The Real Costs and Benefits of Change: Finding Opportunities for Reform During Difficult Fiscal Times](#), details two core recommendations to encourage wise and effective juvenile justice spending: realigning and reducing spending without sacrificing effective programs, and using the current budget crisis as a means to leverage deinstitutionalization.
- The National Center for Juvenile Justice has released a summary of the delinquency cases handled by juvenile courts each year throughout the country. The report, entitled [Juvenile Court Statistics 2006-07](#), outlines trends in delinquency cases processed by juvenile courts between 1985 and 2007 and status offense cases handled between 1995 and 2007. The federal Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention (OJJDP) has published brief fact sheets summarizing data on individual topics, including [cases waived to adult court](#), [probation caseloads](#), and [offenses against persons](#).

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.

DMC Action Network eNews

Issue #13 | June 2010

In This Issue

[The MIMIC Model: Turning Around the Lives of North Philadelphia Youth](#)

[DMC Announcements: Employment and Presentation Opportunities](#)

[TA Tips: Practical Advice for Successful DMC Reduction](#)

[The Newest DMC & 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.

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

The MIMIC Model: Turning Around the Lives of North Philadelphia Youth

At the age of sixteen, Edwin Desamour was convicted as an adult for third-degree murder. He spent eight years in an adult penitentiary and eleven and a half years on parole. Now, twenty years later, the North Philadelphia native is working with other concerned adults as part of an organization called Men in Motion in the Community (MIMIC) to build relationships with at-risk youth and break the cycle of violence and poverty that contributes to DMC. Through the Latino Juvenile Justice Network, a component of the MacArthur Foundation's Models for Change initiative, Edwin is also raising awareness of racial and ethnic disparities in the city's juvenile justice system.

For Edwin Desamour, working with youth in North Philadelphia is intensely personal. Having grown up in the neighborhood, he has experienced firsthand many of the challenges that kids currently face, including neighborhood violence, inadequate schools, and poverty. Edwin relies on that common ground to help youth avoid sharing another experience with him: being incarcerated as an adult at the age of sixteen.



After serving time in prison, Edwin returned to North Philadelphia to transition back into the neighborhood and lead a productive life. Yet, when Edwin began listening closely to the conversations in his community, he did not like what he heard. "I would be out in the community and would stop by the barbershop and stay for about an hour to get a sense of who's who and what was going on. I heard young guys talking about gangsters and drug dealers as if they were legends, and I realized that we had really messed up if our kids were looking to follow in their footsteps. Something had to give."

That night, something did give. Edwin (fourth from left) started calling other men in the community, including those who had turned their lives around after being incarcerated, stressing that they needed to take action. That group co-founded the organization known as MIMIC. The program, [which has been mentioned by CNN](#) and a number of other news outlets, provides mentorship, crisis intervention, and educational enrichment to the most at-risk youth in the community, who are primarily African American and Latino. Currently, a core group of seven mentors volunteer their time and energy to serve as resources to youth in the program. Many more volunteers lend other forms of support to the organization, such as fundraising or cooking meals for youth. Edwin, MIMIC's president, oversees the entire operation.

A MIMIC mentor's role in the program is diverse. It can mean anything from being on-call 24 hours a day to speak with kids, connecting youth to community- and

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faith-based organizations, or helping youth develop employment and social skills by identifying promising opportunities in the community.

Since the program's inception in 2007, MIMIC mentors have recruited youth by approaching local schools and requesting that administrators "give them their worst." As Edwin notes, MIMIC works with youth who individuals describe as "likely to end up in prison" or "not going to make it." The process is wholly voluntary, yet almost all youth who are referred engage with the program. According to Edwin, youth get involved because MIMIC "doesn't promise youth a program, it promises them a relationship with a successful male role model" - something that almost all of them lack before their involvement with MIMIC.



When asked how he knows that MIMIC is making a difference in the lives of youth, Edwin notes that a number of children involved with the program, who were in danger of dropping out, have successfully completed eighth grade. Additionally, many of these students continue to volunteer with

the program as "Junior MIMIC" mentors for younger children. "The goal is to get youth to mimic us in how we live our lives now, not how we did before." In addition to altering the trajectory of at-risk youth, MIMIC also helps its adult mentors with their own reentry into the community as successful, productive individuals following incarceration.

Edwin also serves as the Latino Juvenile Justice Coordinator for [Congreso de Latinos Unidos in Philadelphia](#), where he engages in outreach to youth, service providers, and community members, on DMC, cultural and linguistic competence, and language access. As a result of his involvement with the Models for Change initiative, Edwin now integrates statistics on DMC in his conversations with community members. Those numbers "wake folks up" and get them involved with helping children in the community. Edwin is also thinking of the best ways to reach out to the faith-based community in order to raise awareness among a broader group of people.

As a result of his role with Congreso, Edwin is now thinking of ways to refine the program by serving more youth while also staying true to the program's roots. Edwin notes that at Congreso, he has surrounded himself "with people who are supporting MIMIC in better serving kids in the community." For example, by working with other individuals in the office, he is learning how to better document outcomes associated with his program and refine his recruitment process.

For those who read about MIMIC for the first time, they may see a one-of-a-kind program built around a one-of-a-kind life story. Yet, Edwin insists that his individual experience is not what makes his program successful. "If you can find that one individual who is out there who has been down that road and has turned it around, you're on the right track. Beyond that, it's about meeting people, listening, and becoming a familiar face, even in rough areas. Sometimes, we get caught up with so much behind a desk that we forget how to walk across the street."

You can read more about MIMIC by [clicking here](#), [following it on Twitter](#), or [visiting its Facebook page](#).

Let us know how you're reaching out to youth in your community: email jszanyi@cclp.org.

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MIMIC mentors and youth at a weekend "MIMIC Challenge" event.

DMC Announcements: Employment and Presentation Opportunities

Rock County, WI seeks Juvenile Justice Services Division Manager

The Human Services Department of Rock County, Wisconsin, is seeking its next Juvenile Justice Services (JJS) Division Manager. Rock County, a DMC Action Network partner site, is a leader in systems reform and DMC reduction. The County has made great strides in improving services for youth by capitalizing on its strong data capacity, and it is looking forward to additional reforms in the coming years. [Click here to view the full job posting for additional details](#). If you have any questions regarding the position or have a candidate to recommend, contact Jason Witt, Deputy Director of the Rock County Human Services Department (608-757-5204; witt@co.rock.wi.us).

National Council of La Raza seeks new Juvenile Justice Fellow

The National Council of La Raza (NCLR) - the largest national Latino civil rights and advocacy organization in the United States - [is seeking a new Juvenile Justice Fellow for its Washington, DC office](#). The Fellow will develop and implement strategies to advance policy and legislative reforms in juvenile justice at state and federal levels, including policies aimed at reducing DMC.

Coalition for Juvenile Justice seeks proposals for national DMC conference

The Coalition for Juvenile Justice (CJJ) is now accepting presentation proposals for its national DMC conference, [Fundamental Fairness: Eliminating Racial and Ethnic Disparities in Juvenile Justice](#). The conference, which will take place October 23-25 just outside of New York City, will highlight practical and proven solutions for reducing and eliminating racial and ethnic disparities in juvenile justice. The deadline for submissions is July 22.

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 **explore new ways to get the word out about racial and ethnic disparities in juvenile justice**. By opening non-traditional channels of communication, jurisdictions can raise the profile of DMC and other important issues related to youth in the system. That may mean [reaching out to the local media](#) or, like MIMIC, using social networking sites such as Twitter and Facebook. New forms of outreach can help bring non-traditional stakeholders to the table and build greater support for reform.

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 & Juvenile Justice Resources

- A new book, entitled [Homeroom Security: School Discipline in an Age of Fear](#), argues that harsh discipline policies in America's schools are not only counterproductive, but also have a disproportionately negative impact on at-risk youth. Author Aaron Kupchik, an associate professor of sociology and criminal justice at the University of Delaware, conducted years of field research to illustrate how current trends in school discipline fail to make schools safer. The book also offers suggestions on how to bring policies in line with best practices.
- Crime fell in 2009 as prison growth rates decreased in the United States, [according to a Justice Policy Institute \(JPI\) analysis of the FBI's Preliminary Annual Uniform Crime Report](#). JPI indicated that reported violent crime fell by 5.5 percent and property crime by 4.9 percent in 2009, supporting the argument that states can save money, promote alternatives to incarceration, and maintain public safety. JPI also released a new fact sheet entitled [How to Safely Reduce Prison Populations and Support People Returning to Their Communities](#), which outlines methods for reducing incarceration rates.
- In June 2010, the Georgetown Public Policy Institute's Center for Juvenile Justice Reform released a new report that reviews the educational barriers encountered by youth involved in the juvenile justice and child welfare systems. The publication, entitled [Addressing the Unmet Educational Needs of Children and Youth in the Juvenile Justice and Child Welfare Systems](#), describes legislation, policy initiatives, and evidence-based practices that can guide the development of more effective services for these youth.

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.

DMC Action Network eNews

Issue #12 | May 2010

In This Issue

[Sustaining Success: The DMC Action Network's Fourth Annual Meeting](#)

[Local Leadership: How Baltimore County and Montgomery County, MD Are Reducing Racial and Ethnic Disparities through Diversion and Alternatives to Detention](#)

[TA Tips: Practical Advice for Successful DMC Reduction](#)

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

DMC Action Network

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Sustaining Success: The DMC Action Network's Fourth Annual Meeting

This month, representatives from DMC Action Network sites gathered in Alexandria, Virginia, for the final annual meeting of the full Network. The three-day conference focused on equipping jurisdictions with tools to sustain the reforms that have made them models for DMC reduction throughout the country.

When the MacArthur Foundation launched the DMC Action Network in 2007, it aimed to build a network of state and local leaders, exposing them to the latest tools and ideas to reduce the disparate treatment of youth of color within the juvenile justice system. Three years later, there is much to celebrate: Network sites have expanded their capacity to collect and analyze data, reduced racial and ethnic disparities in detention admissions and out-of-home placements, and worked to create and strengthen community-based services.

At this stage, some are now asking an important question: what will happen to the youth who benefit from the Network's innovations when the Foundation shifts resources away from the Network and toward other initiatives? If this year's DMC Action Network Annual Meeting achieved its goal, the answer to that question is simple: youth will continue to benefit from current and future efforts to eliminate DMC in each jurisdiction.



Approximately 100 representatives from Network sites and other juvenile justice professionals gathered in Alexandria, Virginia, from May 12-14 to discuss how to sustain the groundbreaking work that has helped reduced DMC in their communities. Speakers included Candice Jones, Program Officer for the MacArthur Foundation (photo left), Melodee Hanes, Acting Deputy Administrator for the Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention (photo lower left), and Professor Paul Butler of the George Washington University School of Law (photo lower right).



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

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Presenters focused on a number of topics, including gaining the support of faith-based communities, generating community-level interest in DMC, and building relationships with local media outlets. Other sessions challenged conference participants to think critically about how they engage law enforcement and line staff in reform efforts, and Professor Butler encouraged attendees to look to hip-hop music and culture for a critique of America's criminal justice system. [Click here to see the conference agenda, download presentations, and view photos from the event.](#)



At the close of the three-day meeting, Lisa Garry, manager of the DMC Action Network and DMC Policy Director for the Center for Children's Law and Policy (photo left), recognized individual sites for their accomplishments, describing how they have improved the lives of children in their jurisdictions. Ms. Garry noted that while those achievements are worth celebrating, they also underscore the need to think carefully about how to sustain and build upon current efforts in order to secure a more just and equitable future for youth of color.

Photo credit: Shannon Finney, [Shannon Finney Photography](#).

Local Leadership: How Baltimore County and Montgomery County, MD Are Reducing Racial and Ethnic Disparities through Diversion and Alternatives to Detention

In Maryland, a state-level agency bears the primary responsibility for administering most juvenile justice services, including intake, probation, detention, corrections, and aftercare programming. That doesn't mean that DMC reform can only occur at the state level, though. This month, two DMC Action Network replication sites show how counties can have a big impact on racial and ethnic disparities in states with centralized juvenile justice systems.

Each of the DMC Action Network's sites has committed to a data-driven approach to eliminate racial and ethnic disparities. That means taking a hard look at what happens to youth of color in their individual jurisdictions, and developing targeted interventions to address DMC based on those data. Two of the Network's replication sites - Baltimore County and Montgomery County - are no exception to that rule. However, those counties are working in Maryland, where a state-level agency, the Department of Juvenile Services (DJS), administers almost all programs for youth in the juvenile justice system.

This significant state-level involvement could mean that counties take a backseat to the state on DMC reform. Or, it could mean that counties think creatively about how to tackle racial and ethnic disparities. As Jeff Williams, DMC Reduction Coordinator at the Montgomery County Collaboration Council notes, local jurisdictions have a big role to play in educating and engaging stakeholders, building support for reform, and implementing targeted interventions in a centralized system.

For both counties, those interventions have included measures to reduce the number of youth in secure detention. According to Lisa Wyckoff, Baltimore County's DMC Coordinator, detention data from her jurisdiction highlighted the need to work with youth who were detained on writs for failing to appear in court - a group that comprised nearly 40% of the detention population. "After looking at the numbers, we came to realize that youth might just be forgetting about their scheduled court appearances," says Ms. Wyckoff.

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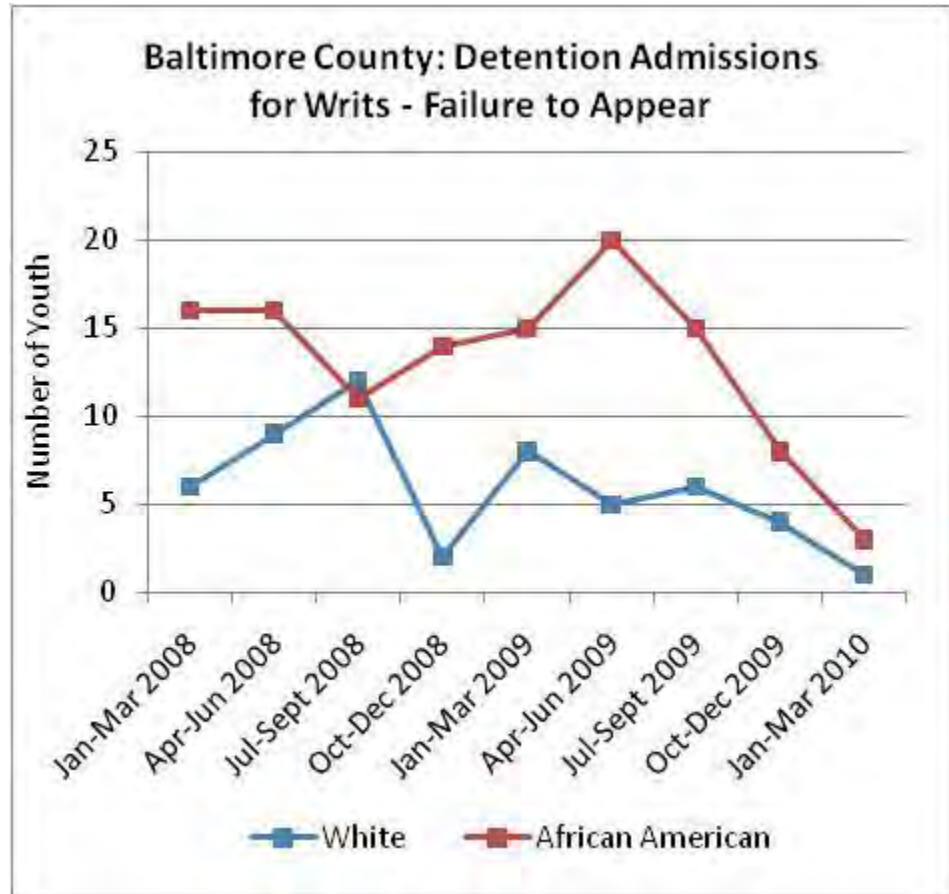
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Baltimore County responded in two ways. First, officials implemented a Respondent Notification Caller Program, designating a staff member to make phone contact with a youth two or three days before his or her scheduled court date. Second, Baltimore County adopted a new protocol for the issuance of the writs themselves. Courts now have an option to issue a "Writ with Authorization to Release," which allows law enforcement to take youth into temporary custody to reschedule his or her hearing, but does not require secure detention pending that court appearance. The result? Only 5% of youth were detained for failure to appear in the most recent quarter. Ms. Wyckoff notes that "the costs of these interventions were minimal, but the costs avoided when a youth appears in court at his or her scheduled day and time are substantial."



In Montgomery County, officials also focused on keeping youth out of secure detention, starting an Alternative to Detention Wraparound Program for pre-adjudicated youth in March 2007. The initiative aims to ensure that youth attend scheduled court hearings and do not commit another offense while in the program by providing mentoring, recreational activities, anger management and conflict resolution sessions, and other support services to youth and their families. Since its inception, nearly 80% of youth have successfully completed the program. That success has led to its expansion to adjudicated youth who are awaiting placement or who require short-term interventions. Mr. Williams emphasizes that "if the program wasn't an option for these youth, they would be in secure detention."

Montgomery County also looked to strengthen its diversion protocols as a way of reducing racial and ethnic disparities. The county analyzed its notification procedures and discovered that letters notifying youth that they were eligible for diversion were only sent out in English - a problem in a county with a substantial number of Latino youth. By employing an outside vendor to make contact with youth and families directly, the county prevented many youth from being referred to DJS for formal processing. Additionally, the county has worked to re-engage youth who were struggling with diversion and were at risk of a formal referral.

Mr. Williams and Ms. Wyckoff are quick to note that these programs did not emerge overnight. Both counties had to lay the groundwork for reform in their individual jurisdictions. Ms. Wyckoff explains that her predecessor had to dispel myths that youth from the City of Baltimore were driving disparities in Baltimore County before there could be a genuine dialogue on how to respond to DMC. Mr. Williams notes that consistently engaging law enforcement in the process has been instrumental in Montgomery County's success, particularly given that police hold important data on juvenile arrests. Engaging all of the relevant stakeholders, he states, is critical.

These programs, while successful, do not represent the only ways to tackle DMC in a state-run juvenile justice system. Ms. Wyckoff is looking ahead to the implementation of graduated responses to violations of community detention, which is a "home arrest" alternative to secure detention. Data collection has proven difficult, requiring manual inspection of files to determine the reason for violations. However, the county will have a full year of data by the summer, which will guide future efforts. School resource officers have also agreed to send data to Ms. Wyckoff, which will help the county get an accurate picture of school referrals.

In Montgomery County, Mr. Williams recognizes that one of the greatest challenges on the horizon is making existing reforms stick in light of funding cuts that threaten the programs that have helped make the biggest difference in his community. However, he notes that the Action Network provides support during good times, as well as challenging ones: "It's helpful to be able to share thoughts and ideas with other jurisdictions, particularly the struggles and strategies to address the barriers to doing this type of work."

Let us know how you're developing local solutions to DMC: email jszanyi@cclp.org.

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 **keep current on the latest juvenile justice news and research**. By staying on top of the latest research studies and reports, you can help strengthen the case for reform in your jurisdiction. That could mean showing that alternatives to detention [can save money and promote public safety](#), or [correcting public perceptions about youth who commit serious offenses](#). Not only that, news events such as the [Supreme Court's recent ruling](#) banning life without parole for juveniles who commit non-homicide crimes can provide a hook for outreach to local media outlets and legislative officials.

If you have a tip that 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 & Juvenile Justice Resources

- This month, the United States Supreme Court issued its decision in *Graham v. Florida*, [deciding that sentencing juveniles to life without parole for non-homicide offenses violates the Eighth Amendment of the U.S. Constitution](#). In doing so, the Court cited the limited culpability of youthful offenders and the fact that no other country in the world permits such sentences for that class of offenses.

- The National Juvenile Justice Network (NJJN) has [released its policy platform on disproportionate minority contact](#). NJJN's platform outlines concrete steps that jurisdictions must take to ensure that they are committed to reducing racial and ethnic disparities, engaging necessary stakeholders, and generating data-driven responses to DMC.
- The Center for Children's Law and Policy has made presentations from the [DMC Action Network's Fourth Annual Meeting available online](#). CCLP has also made all of its DMC resources, including publications, presentations, and technical assistance materials, searchable by keyword on its [new DMC resources page](#).
- The Charles Hamilton Houston Institute for Race and Justice at Harvard Law School has released a new policy brief on the impact of school resource officers on public schools and youth. The publication, entitled *First, Do No Harm: How Educators and Police Can Work Together More Effectively to Preserve School Safety and Protect Vulnerable Students*, offers recommendations for how police can work more effectively with schools based on research and interviews with school resource officers.
- The Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention (OJJDP) [announced a set of new funding opportunities](#) related to juvenile indigent defense, youth exposure to violence, and interventions for juveniles with sexual behavior problems. OJJDP also released [a new bulletin on conditions of confinement in juvenile facilities nationwide](#), based on its Survey of Youth in Residential Placement. The bulletin describes the security in facilities where juveniles are housed, the disciplinary measures used in the facilities, and youth's access to legal representation and emotional support, among other topics.
- The U.S. Department of Justice issued proposed supplemental guidelines for the implementation of the Adam Walsh Act. Those guidelines indicate that [states do not need to place youth on their public sex offender websites in order to comply with the federal law](#).

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.

DMC Action Network eNews

Issue #11 | April 2010

In This Issue

[Three's Company: How Kenosha, Outagamie, and Rock County, WI Are Working Together on DMC Reform](#)

[TA Tips: Practical Advice for Successful DMC Reduction](#)

[The Newest DMC & 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.

Three's Company: How Kenosha, Outagamie, and Rock County, WI Are Working Together on DMC Reform

In December 2009, [we introduced nine new sites to the DMC Action Network](#). Those sites are working closely with the Network's eleven original sites to build their data collection capacity, implement the Network's strategies for DMC reduction, and share successes and challenges. This month, two Wisconsin counties show how their relationship with Rock County, WI is improving outcomes for youth of color and changing the way that they do business in their juvenile justice systems.

In Wisconsin, counties bear almost total responsibility for serving youth in the juvenile justice system. Given that the state has 72 unique county-based systems, meaningful reform could look very different from one jurisdiction to another. When Outagamie and Kenosha County signed on to work with Rock County as DMC Action Network replication sites, they weren't looking for a quick, one-size-fits-all solution to racial and ethnic disparities. They wanted an approach to DMC reduction that would lead to meaningful and lasting change.

Mark Mertens, Manager of the Youth and Family Services Division of the Outagamie County Health and Human Services Department, notes that his county's participation in the DMC Action Network has led to a "real transformation" in its approach to reducing racial and ethnic disparities. For Mr. Mertens, that means "using data, not individual incidents, to guide systemic change."

Outagamie and Kenosha County are engaged in foundational work to help them do just that. Both jurisdictions are currently integrating the Youth Assessment and Screening Instrument (YASI) into their case planning process. Nancy Ramsey, Supervisor of Juvenile Court Services for the Kenosha County Division of Children & Family Services, notes that the MacArthur Foundation's support allowed her jurisdiction to adapt the instrument when budget cuts prevented the state from being able to do so. Incorporating the YASI is particularly important in a jurisdiction like Kenosha, where case managers have the authority to securely detain a youth for 72 hours. According to Ms. Ramsey, "it helps guarantee equity in the system by ensuring that we're making decisions that are race-, culture-, and gender-neutral."

Both counties are actively responding to the increasing diversity of their communities. In Outagamie County, Latinos are the fastest growing segment of the youth population in the county of about 175,000. Outagamie is also home to part of a reservation for the Oneida Nation, and officials have worked closely

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

Partner States

Maryland
Baltimore City
Baltimore County
Montgomery County
Prince George's County

Wisconsin
Rock County
Outagamie County
Kenosha County

Kansas
Sedgwick County
Seward County
Lyon-Chase County

North Carolina
Union County
Carrabus County

with tribal representatives to share information and evidence-based practices, such as [Aggression Replacement Training](#). In Kenosha County, officials also expect increasing diversity in their youth population in the coming years, where African-American youth currently represent about 17% of that population, Latino youth represent about 20%, and White youth represent about 61%. The county's total population is about 140,000 residents.

Mr. Mertens and Ms. Ramsey know that stating a clear commitment to reducing racial and ethnic disparities is important, but that building the partnerships that are necessary to implement and sustain reform is critical. That's why both counties have ensured they have broad and ongoing support for their DMC reduction efforts. In Kenosha, that stakeholder group includes the school district, the public defender, and a chief judge who actively promotes the county's work. In Outagamie, juvenile justice officials have formed strong relationships with tribal officials, law enforcement, and the county's deputy district attorney, who serves as the co-chair of the county's DMC committee.

Participation in the DMC Action Network has brought new ideas to jurisdictions that had been receiving state support for DMC reduction since 2002. "In the short time that we've been a part of the Network, we've had a chance to work with sites that are doing absolutely eye-opening work, which has been invaluable," said Mr. Mertens. In Kenosha, Ms. Ramsey is now incorporating principles of positive youth development into her grant applications, after hearing Dr. Jeffrey Butts present at the [February 2010 seminar on DMC reduction strategies for post-disposition youth](#). Bringing new ideas back to her staff is helping her to "elevate the level of professionalism" of her colleagues and "give them confidence in doing the right thing for youth in the county."

Those ideas are also helping to spark partnerships that may benefit youth throughout the state. Officials in Rock, Kenosha, and Outagamie have partnered with the Fox Valley Technical College, which trains most of Wisconsin's school resource officers, to develop a two-day training on alternative strategies for handling incidents at school and reducing the number of referrals to juvenile court. That would mean more time in the classroom and fewer suspensions, expulsions, and arrests.

Although Outagamie and Kenosha County can already point to a number of successes since joining the Network, they are looking ahead to next steps that will improve outcomes for youth of color. Outagamie County plans to build on [Rock County's success in reducing the number of youth in secure detention with its Detention Assessment Instrument, adapting and validating that tool for use in its own community](#). In Kenosha, Ms. Ramsey is introducing her staff to the concept of graduated responses to probation violations, which she hopes her county will implement in the near future.

These individual programs and initiatives reflect a clear commitment to reform. Yet Ms. Ramsey notes that the commitment doesn't necessarily carry a big price tag: "People think that the only way to attack DMC is to throw money at programs. We're showing that you can do many things that cost little or nothing, but that still have a significant impact. That's because DMC reform is not just a program - it's a totally different way of thinking and doing business."

Let us know how you're working with other jurisdictions to reduce racial and ethnic disparities: email jszanyi@cclp.org.

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TA Tips: Practical Advice for Successful DMC Reduction

This month, we introduce a new section of our newsletter devoted to sharing strategies and insights that can help jurisdictions effectively and sustainably eliminate DMC in their juvenile justice systems.



Successful reform means more than just implementing a particular program that officials think might have an impact on DMC. It also means more than believing in a one-size-fits-all approach to reducing racial and ethnic disparities. Instead, jurisdictions that are committed to reducing and eliminating DMC must embrace [a data-driven process aimed at developing solutions that meet the needs of their individual communities.](#)

Although meaningful DMC reform can look different from one jurisdiction to another, there are a number of common strategies and techniques that can help all communities ensure that they are on the right track. This new section of the newsletter is aimed at highlighting those tips and explaining how they can benefit work to reduce racial and ethnic disparities.

This month's tip is to **consider having meetings early in the morning or in the evening to give all relevant stakeholders the chance to participate in the DMC dialogue.** Ensuring broad initial support for and ongoing engagement in reform is the first step to reducing racial and ethnic disparities. That means including relevant stakeholders, such as parents, community members, and other agency officials, in discussions about DMC. However, those individuals may not have time to participate if critical discussions occur during normal business hours. Flexibility in scheduling ensures that a broader group of individuals can participate in and offer their support for DMC reforms.

If you have a tip that 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 & Juvenile Justice Resources

- The Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention (OJJDP) has released a number of new resources. The first is a [new website on Tribal Justice and Safety](#), designed to serve as a "one-stop shop for tribal communities, developed to provide a user-friendly, updated, and comprehensive resource for American Indian and Alaska Native tribal communities." OJJDP also released a new report on youth in custody, entitled [Youth's Needs and Services: Findings From the Survey of Youth in Residential Placement](#), which reviews services provided in facilities throughout the country and makes recommendations to improve mental and physical health, substance abuse, and educational services. Finally, OJJDP released a bulletin on the [Causes and Correlates of Girls' Delinquency](#), which summarizes social science literature on factors impacting girls' delinquency and outlines the implications for juvenile justice policy and practice.

- The Opportunity Agenda, a project of the Tides Center aimed at ensuring that all Americans have the equal access to advancement in contemporary society, has released a set of talking points on facilitating productive communications on racial justice problems and solutions. The publication, [*Ten Lessons for Talking About Racial Equity in the Age of Obama*](#), outlines strategies for building support for reforms to overcome racial bias and other barriers to advancement.
- The Coalition for Juvenile Justice (CJJ) has released a new report on the potential of helping court-involved youth develop their pro-social strengths and attributes and increasing their abilities to contribute to healthy, safe family and community life. The publication, entitled [*Positive Youth Justice: Framing Justice Interventions Using the Concepts of Positive Youth Development*](#), argues that adapting principles of positive youth development (PYD) to services can improve the future for youth involved in the juvenile justice system.
- The U.S. Department of Justice's Office of Justice Programs (OJP) has launched a [*Grants 101 web resource*](#) to assist applicants in navigating the challenges of the grant application and award process. The new website offers a host of resources for new applicants, including information on different types of funding, tips on writing proposals, and a host of other information.
- The Center for Children's Law and Policy has published a new fact sheet on the January 2010 Bureau of Justice Statistics study on sexual victimization in juvenile facilities. The resource, [*Understanding the BJS Study of Sexual Victimization in Juvenile Facilities*](#), distills key findings from the survey and provides a concise and accessible summary of the study's methodology.
- The National Juvenile Justice Network (NJJN) has released a new fact sheet that discusses how international law supports juvenile justice reform. The fact sheet, entitled [*Convention on the Rights of the Child: Implications for Juvenile Justice Reform*](#), discusses the Convention's specific guidance on youth in conflict with the law. To date, the United States and Somalia are the only UN member nations that have not yet ratified the Convention.

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DMC Action Network eNews

Issue #10 | March 2010

In This Issue

[Leading the Way:
How Berks County, PA Is
Pioneering an Alternative
to Detention as a Model
for Statewide Reform](#)

[When the Going Gets
Tough: Framing the
Dialogue on Reform](#)

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

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Leading the Way: How Berks County, PA Is Pioneering an Alternative to Detention as a Model for Statewide Reform

The DMC Action Network promotes the data-driven development and expansion of community-based alternatives to secure detention as a way of reducing unnecessary incarceration of youth of color while maintaining public safety. Berks County, PA, a DMC Action Network core site, embraced that strategy and opened the doors to Pennsylvania's first pre-adjudication evening reporting center in late 2008. A little more than one year later, over 90 percent of the youth served by that program have been youth of color, and Berks is supporting expansion of the model to counties throughout the Commonwealth.

When juvenile justice stakeholders in Berks County, Pennsylvania, opened an evening reporting center (ERC) that kept probation violators and pre-adjudicated youth in the community and maintained public safety at the same time, they considered it a success story for their jurisdiction. But when those same stakeholders started to see youth voluntarily coming back to visit long after they had finished their formal involvement with the program, they knew that they had something that others in Pennsylvania would want to hear about.

As a DMC Action Network site, Berks committed to establishing alternatives to secure detention that would serve youth of color. After researching options, stakeholders settled on a plan for an ERC located in Reading, the county's largest city and the area with the greatest concentration of Latino and African-American youth. The program focuses on serving chronic probation violators and youth awaiting hearings on charges that would have landed them in detention before this program existed.

According to Jeff Gregro, Deputy Chief Probation Officer, that decision came after visiting ERCs in Baltimore and Chicago and thinking carefully about how the program would fit into the County's continuum of services. "What really helped was visiting other ERCs and talking to providers about how to adapt the model to meet our needs," says Mr. Gregro. "The DMC Action Network was a great resource and allowed us to seek advice and guidance from people throughout the country."

The [Berks ERC, operated by the Children's Home of Reading](#), serves between 8 and 13 youth for an average of 30 days. Staff pick up youth every weekday at 3 p.m. and return them to their homes at 9 p.m., using those six hours to provide a mix of life skills development, educational assistance, group counseling, recreational activities, and meals. In addition, ERC staff have forged partnerships with surrounding organizations, including a local college, which bring community members to the ERC and provide youth with opportunities to reach out to the community. "This isn't babysitting," says Joe Guillama, the County's DMC Site Coordinator and an attorney who represents youth in juvenile court. "This is about developing relationships and trying to make youth feel good about themselves."

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DMC Action Network

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Core States

Pennsylvania
Berks County
Allegheny County
Philadelphia
Lancaster County

Illinois
Peoria

Louisiana
Jefferson Parish
Rapides Parish

Washington
Benton/Franklin Counties
Pierce County

Partner States

Maryland
Baltimore City
Baltimore County
Montgomery County
Prince George's County



Photo credit: Berks County Juvenile Probation Office

Since its inception, the ERC has earned some impressive achievements. The program has served 85 youth, 91% of whom were youth of color. Not a single one of those 85 youth missed a scheduled court hearing and only three picked up new charges while in the program. Mr. Guillama, who recently received the Violence Prevention Roundtable of Berks County Distinguished Leadership Award for his work with youth of color in the juvenile justice system, attributes those results to the skill of the professionals at the ERC. "As staff showed juvenile probation officers and the court their true colors, they quickly gained an enormous amount of credibility. Now all stakeholders - the defense attorneys, the prosecutors, the probation officers, and the court - are recommending the ERC for youth who would otherwise be looking at secure detention."

Startup funding from the MacArthur Foundation allowed the County to open the ERC in December 2008, until it became a part of the County's and Commonwealth's budget in July 2009. Pennsylvania encourages jurisdictions to adopt community alternatives such as the ERC, reimbursing counties for the costs of those programs at a rate of 90%. By contrast, Pennsylvania only reimburses 50% of the cost of a secure detention bed, which is more than three times as expensive as a day at the ERC. The new ERC, along with other changes such as increased frontloading of services like multisystemic therapy, helped the County save over \$2 million in its budget for out-of-home placements in 2009.

After seeing these results, counties throughout Pennsylvania are visiting Berks to learn about the ERC. According to Mr. Gregro, it is particularly valuable to have the word spread by local officials, such as Senior Judge Arthur Grim, who serves as the chairman of the Pennsylvania Juvenile Court Judges' Commission, and Chief Juvenile Probation Officer Robert Williams, who serves on the Executive Committee of the Pennsylvania Council of Chief Juvenile Probation Officers. As a result, the Pennsylvania Commission on Crime and Delinquency decided to use some federal stimulus funding to allow other counties to develop their own ERCs. In fact, Mr. Gregro served as a reviewer for the first round of proposals from jurisdictions looking to introduce ERCs.

That enthusiasm is encouraging, but Mr. Gregro and Mr. Guillama both note the importance of pursuing alternatives to detention in a data-driven way, taking care not to widen the net beyond those kids a program was meant to serve. For Mr. Guillama, that means "not having more kids there than necessary, despite a hunch that the program could help them." Mr. Gregro also notes that the choice of provider must reflect the needs of the community and youth. Stakeholders in Berks continue to monitor data from the ERC to improve services for juveniles, including contracting with the Children's Home of Reading to provide in-home counseling after youth leave the program.

As youth continue to drop by the ERC after their formal involvement with the

Wisconsin
Rock County
Outagamie County
Kenosha County

Kansas
Sedgwick County
Seward County
Lyon-Chase County

North Carolina
Union County
Carrabus County

program ends, staff receive constant reminders that their work is having a real impact on the community. And, as Mr. Gregro highlights, “the fact that the ERC program is tentacling out throughout the state means not just good things for kids in our county, but also kids throughout the state.”

For Mr. Guillama, though, seeing youth return is also bittersweet. “When kids come by and ring the doorbell at the ERC, it shows you that they are looking for what any other human being wants: to be loved and accepted. What is heartbreaking is when a kid buys in to the rehabilitative aspect of the juvenile justice system and we don’t have the resources to provide that service for longer than we do.” Berks County is beginning to explore developing a post-adjudication ERC with a treatment component as another alternative to long-term placement. Stay tuned.

Tell us how your jurisdiction has spread the word about effective alternatives to detention: email jszanyi@cclp.org.

When the Going Gets Tough: Framing the Dialogue on Reform

Tough economic times mean tough choices for agencies that work with children. When officials in Rock County, WI, a DMC Action Network partner site, explored the possibility of reorganizing secure detention as one way of streamlining services, they sparked a debate that underscored the delicate nature of juvenile justice reform. Jason Witt, Deputy Director of the Rock County Human Services Department and Acting Manager of the Juvenile Justice Division, shares what officials learned from that experience - and how they are using that knowledge to continue improving services for the County’s youth.



Rock County, Wisconsin, is no stranger to DMC reduction. The County joined the DMC Action Network in 2007 with a grant to build data capacity to help officials develop targeted, data-driven interventions to reduce the overrepresentation of youth of color. However, stakeholders there had committed to tackling racial and ethnic disparities in their juvenile justice system as early as 2002, receiving support from the State’s Office of Justice Assistance for diversion programs and other reforms.

That long-running commitment to DMC reduction is paying off. After working in 2008 to expand the number and quality of detention alternatives, officials saw a 27% drop in the number of youth of color admitted to secure detention for probation violations. The increased use of detention alternatives, along with other DMC-focused initiatives, has helped lower the number of youth who are locked up from an average of 20 youth a day in 2002 to an average of 14 per day in 2009.

When it came time to prepare the 2010 budget, the County’s Human Services Department considered all possible options to make ends meet in the face of a \$2.5 million shortfall. Given the low detention numbers and the high cost of maintaining the facility, the County explored the idea of switching to a regional detention system - a plan that would have involved closing the County’s 35-bed facility and contracting with other local detention centers to house youth who were deemed to be a danger to themselves or the community.

The idea represented nothing more than the County’s attempt to work through possible alternatives in an economic worst-case scenario. However, according to Jason Witt, Deputy Director of the Rock County Human Services Department, “simply having the option out there generated an incredibly strong backlash.”

Some individuals accused the Department's management of plotting to close the detention facility and putting the community at risk. Others alleged that managers had directed probation officers to manipulate information in court in order to keep detention numbers down.

The Department's Board recognized the need to clear the air and ordered an independent evaluation of the system, conducted by the Wisconsin Council on Children and Families (WCCF). That evaluation, released in December 2009, found no written evidence to support the allegations that managers were jeopardizing public safety in order to drive down the number of detained youth. By contrast, the report highlighted that some aspects of the system, such as an overreliance on secure detention as a sanction for probation violations and the lack of a standardized detention screening instrument, had the potential to generate unfair outcomes for kids.

The evaluation also indicated that some youth charged with low-level offenses were being held in detention, even though they did not meet the necessary criteria for detention under the relevant statute. Mr. Witt noted that the evaluation "reinforced the need for the tools that the DMC Action Network was helping the County to implement, and confirmed the existence of the system issues they were intended to address."

The report was also critical of management's approach to organizational change, highlighting the need for a better dialogue between management and line staff. For Mr. Witt, part of that recommendation means working harder to explain the rationale behind changes to the system. "We have a core group of experienced and committed staff who want what's best for kids. We've got to do better getting their input and buy in on these important changes." When asked about the advice he would give to other jurisdictions engaged in reform efforts, he emphasized the need to adequately prepare for and understand the process of organizational culture change, the value in keeping the community informed, and the importance of keeping stakeholders at the table. For example, Mr. Witt described how Rock County had a broad collaboration in 2002 when DMC reduction efforts began; however, as some of those original stakeholders changed over time, the Department did not do as much as it could have to keep people at the table.

Elected officials and County managers have taken the report's recommendations to heart. Just this month, the Department's Board approved an ongoing consultation contract with WCCF, part of which involves looking at implementing a more strength-based program for youth in the County's detention facility. Mr. Witt, as Acting Manager of the Juvenile Justice Services Division, is working to build channels for communication through workgroups and other venues.

According to Mr. Witt, the report's findings, as well as the connections to the DMC Action Network and a credible state-based organization like WCCF, are helping officials keep reforms on track: "Right now, we're in the best place we have ever been in terms of system reform - and making that reform last."

Tell us how you're framing the dialogue on DMC in your jurisdiction: email jszanyi@cclp.org.

The Newest DMC & Juvenile Justice Resources

- The W. Haywood Burns Institute (BI) has just released [an interactive map](#) that captures racial and ethnic disparities in juvenile justice by state and by county. The new resource includes one-day count incarceration data, annual data by decision-making point in the juvenile justice system, and

a host of other information.

- The National Council of La Raza, the largest Latino civil rights and advocacy organization in the United States, released [a new fact sheet](#) on the overrepresentation of Latino youth in the juvenile justice system. The publication captures a number of statistics on DMC, including disproportionate detention and incarceration rates.
- The Sentencing Project has launched a [Race and Justice Clearinghouse](#), a database of annotated citations for more than 450 research articles, studies, reports, and books that explore the intersection of race and ethnicity with the criminal justice and juvenile justice systems. The clearinghouse, which is updated monthly, contains information and tools for policymakers, practitioners, and advocates to understand racial and ethnic disparities, to aid in policy reform, and to make the criminal justice and juvenile justice systems more fair and effective.
- A recent study by the Campbell Corporation finds that youth who are subject to formal processing in the juvenile justice system are significantly more likely to engage in delinquent behavior than peers who are diverted from the system. The research report, [Formal System Processing of Juveniles: Effects on Delinquency](#), draws that conclusion based on an analysis of 29 randomized, controlled experiments over a 35-year period.
- CNN is running a multi-part series on youth who are tried and convicted as adults in the United States. The report, entitled [Growing Up Behind Bars](#), captures the debate surrounding the Supreme Court's consideration of the constitutionality of sentencing youth who commit crimes that are not homicides to life without parole.
- According to a new Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention (OJJDP) report, the number of juvenile offenders in residential placement in publicly and privately operated juvenile facilities is continuing a decline from 2000. The fact sheet, entitled [Juveniles in Residential Placement, 1997-2008](#), bases that finding on 1-day counts from the Census of Juveniles in Residential Placement and the Juvenile Residential Facility Census. OJJDP also [released a list of funding opportunities for FY 2010 related to family drug court programs and mentoring](#).
- The American Bar Association's Center on Children and the Law has released a new report that focuses on status offenders. The guide, entitled [Representing Juvenile Status Offenders](#), includes chapters from several juvenile justice experts, as well as practical and legal advice for attorneys.

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 network and publishes this newsletter. Contact us at jszanyi@cclp.org or 202-637-0377 x108. For a PDF version of this newsletter, [click here](#).

DMC Action Network e-News

Issue #9 | February 2010

In This Issue

Tackling DMC at the Deep
End of the System

Zero Tolerance for
Inequality: How Jefferson
Parish, Louisiana Is
Rethinking School
Discipline

The Newest DMC &
Juvenile Justice Resources

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Tackling DMC at the Deep End of the System

Keeping youth of color from entering the juvenile justice system is a big part of eliminating racial and ethnic disparities - but it isn't the only way to reduce DMC. This month, representatives from eleven DMC Action Network sites met to discuss strategies to prevent post-disposition youth of color from unnecessarily progressing deeper into the system.



A comprehensive approach to DMC reduction involves looking at racial and ethnic disparities at *all* points in the juvenile justice system. Given that in some jurisdictions the worst rates of overrepresentation occur as youth of color move deeper into the system, this means taking a hard look at what happens to youth after they are adjudicated delinquent.

For example, determining whether youth of color end up in secure detention for violations of probation more frequently than white youth is an important first step in tackling DMC. But jurisdictions also need effective tools to reduce overrepresentation at that stage of the process.

On February 2, individuals from DMC Action Network core and partner sites traveled to Washington, DC to sharpen their ability to address that challenge as part of the DMC Action Network's Technical Assistance Series. Dana Shoenberg and Shauna Epps of the Center for Children's Law and Policy facilitated the seminar on post-disposition youth, which provided strategies for developing graduated rewards for youth on probation, promoting seamless re-entry in a DMC reduction context, and creating culture change in a juvenile justice agency.

The meeting was part of the DMC Action Network's series of Technical Assistance Seminars, which are designed to further develop the expertise and leadership skills of local staff responsible for day-to-day operations of DMC reduction initiatives in Network sites. These intensive seminars provide practical guidance through information- and idea-sharing among peers, practice applications, and presentation opportunities. [Click here to download an agenda and materials from the seminar on post-disposition strategies.](#)

For more information on the Technical Assistance Series or to learn more about the DMC Action Network, contact [Lisa Garry, DMC Policy Director](#).

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Pennsylvania
Berks County
Allegheny County
Philadelphia
Lancaster County

Illinois
Peoria

Louisiana
Jefferson Parish
Rapides Parish

Washington
Benton/Franklin Counties
Pierce County



Dr. Jeffrey Butts works with seminar participants on using graduated rewards to help youth on probation develop important skills for healthy and successful development.



Seminar participants discuss successful post-disposition strategies and ongoing challenges in their jurisdictions with Lisa Garry and Dana Shoenberg of the Center for Children's Law and Policy.

Zero Tolerance for Inequality: How Jefferson Parish, Louisiana, Is Rethinking School Discipline

When school officials turn to zero-tolerance discipline policies, the approach can become a leading contributor to DMC if youth of color are disproportionately arrested and detained for disciplinary issues. In addition, youth who are suspended or expelled in districts without in-school suspension options often end up unsupervised during school hours and get into more trouble. Roy Juncker, Director of the Jefferson Parish, LA Department of Juvenile Services, explains that although the school to prison pipeline is currently "alive and well" in his jurisdiction, stakeholders are attacking DMC through peer learning opportunities and a data-driven approach to the problem.

Jurisdictions throughout the country grapple with how to keep kids who get in trouble on campus in school and out of the juvenile justice system. Jefferson Parish, Louisiana, a DMC Action Network core site, is no exception. But for Jefferson Parish, the answer to that question means looking closely at what happens to youth of color when school rules are broken.

Partner States

Maryland

Baltimore City
Baltimore County
Montgomery County
Prince George's County

Wisconsin

Rock County
Outagamie County
Kenosha County

Kansas

Sedgwick County
Seward County
Lyon-Chase County

North Carolina

Union County
Carrabbus County

"We have a big DMC issue here," notes Roy Juncker, Director of the Parish's Department of Juvenile Services. "A big part of the reason is that one-third of our referrals are coming from our public school system." African-American youth represent about 50% of the youth population in the public school system, yet they account for 80% of school arrests. In Jefferson Parish public schools, the majority of those arrests - approximately 60% - are for non-violent offenses that deal with public order. Only 4% of the arrests made in Jefferson Parish public schools are for violent felonies.

Those statistics are striking, particularly when other schools in the district are managing disciplinary issues without resorting to referrals to the juvenile justice system, according to Mr. Juncker. "When you look at data from private schools, you see hardly any arrests on school grounds. You have to ask: Are those kids any different than the kids in public school? The answer is 'no' - it's that private schools are handling things differently."

Mr. Juncker, who was honored a year ago by the Bureau of Governmental Research (BGR) and the Jefferson Parish Council for his work in reforming the jurisdiction's juvenile justice system, notes that concerns about DMC are helping to drive reforms there. But, he also emphasizes the need to move to a "smarter approach" for handling school referrals from a public safety standpoint. "Right now, you're exposing kids to the delinquent aspect of the juvenile justice system as a result of being arrested for non-violent offenses at schools. The research tells us that approach just doesn't make sense."

Part of Jefferson Parish's approach to reducing school referrals involved sending a 14-person delegation of community stakeholders to Clayton County, Georgia, in mid-January. Officials there have implemented a program that cut in half the number of youth detained because of school arrests. Judge Steven Teske of the Clayton County Juvenile Court had outlined the approach, known as the School Referral Reduction Protocol, during the [DMC Action Network's third annual meeting](#) - a presentation that resonated with Mr. Juncker.

"I closed my eyes and listened to Judge Teske, and he could have been talking about Jefferson Parish," said Juncker. "The data from Clayton County on school referrals mirrored the data from and challenges in our jurisdiction." For Mr. Juncker, the program had an instant appeal.

The School Referral Reduction Protocol, which is based on graduated responses to delinquent behavior in school, aims to reduce misdemeanor referrals to juvenile court and increase safety in the school and the community by allowing police and probation officers to concentrate on high-risk offenders. Jefferson Parish officials used the two-day visit to learn more about Clayton County's system and begin thinking about how elements of the program could work in their own jurisdiction.

The recent site visit is not the Parish's first step in tackling school referrals. In addition to analyzing detailed data on arrests at individual schools, the jurisdiction has piloted a mediation program at two middle schools. However, recent changes in district boundaries and school administrators have made analyzing the program's impact difficult. Officials in Jefferson Parish are also using funds to train officers and school officials on alternative ways of managing disciplinary incidents, and Mr. Juncker is currently exploring with community stakeholders the idea of returning to school-based probation.

In Jefferson Parish, officials are working to reduce DMC through a combination of different strategies. According to Mr. Juncker, that multifaceted approach reflects the jurisdiction's commitment to "really attack the DMC issue in our schools." The hope is that the data will soon give the Parish something to celebrate -- that is, something aside from the New Orleans Saints first Superbowl win.

Tell us how you're working to reduce DMC by cutting down on school referrals: email jszanyi@cclp.org.

The Newest DMC & Juvenile Justice Resources

- Advocates from the Advancement Project released a new report on how high-stakes testing and strict disciplinary policies work together to set youth up for academic failure. The publication, [Test, Punish, and Push Out: How 'Zero Tolerance' and High-Stakes Testing Funnel Youth into the School to Prison Pipeline](#), includes detailed recommendations for local, state, and federal officials on replacing zero-tolerance and high-stakes testing policies with those that permit all youth to achieve a quality K-12 education.
- The Bureau of Justice Statistics (BJS) published a new report entitled [Sexual Victimization in Juvenile Facilities Reported by Youth, 2008-2009](#). The report's findings, which are based on the National Survey of Youth in Custody, indicate that more than 1 in 10 youth in state juvenile facilities and large local facilities reported experiencing at least one incident of sexual victimization by staff or youth in the previous 12 months.
- The National Reentry Resource Center, a product of the Council of State Governments Justice Center, provides education, training, and technical assistance to states, tribes, territories, local governments, service providers, non-profit organizations, and institutions working on reentry issues. The Center hosts a webpage [devoted exclusively to re-entry issues for youth involved in the juvenile justice system](#).
- The National Juvenile Justice Network (NJJN) has released resources that build upon the MacArthur Foundation's recent research report entitled [Pathways to Desistance](#). That report concluded that community-based alternatives were just as effective as institutional placements in preventing recidivism of youth who have committed serious offenses. NJJN's website now includes [a list of talking points based on that research, in addition to an audio and Powerpoint presentation by Professor Edward P. Mulvey that describes the research behind the report and its findings](#).
- The National Disability Rights Network (NDRN) published an update to its 2009 investigation into the use of seclusion and restraints on America's schools. The report, [School Is Not Supposed to Hurt](#), examines state and federal efforts to address the issue since NDRN published its initial report and argues for federal minimum standards to protect youth from abusive practices.
- Chicago Public Radio's WBEZ is currently running a series on the Illinois juvenile justice system entitled [Inside and Out: Young People and Juvenile Justice in Illinois](#). The report examines Illinois' progress in reforming its secure juvenile facilities and includes personal stories, interviews, investigative reports, and photo essays. The radio station will continue its coverage over the next six months in order to track the experiences of youth within the system.
- [A recent issue of Time Magazine explored the issue of race and ethnicity in American society in the context of the U.S. Census](#). The article tracks the historical approach to collecting race and ethnicity data in America through the Census and reviews the debate surrounding possible changes to the paper-and-pencil questionnaire.

DMC Action Network e-News

Issue #8 | January 2010

In This Issue

[A New Decade of DMC Reduction](#)

[Making the Best Case for Reform](#)

[Small Community, Big Improvements: DMC in Union County, North Carolina](#)

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

We Want Your Feedback!

We want to hear from you about how we can improve the DMC Action Network e-News.

Help us ensure that the e-News is a valuable resource for your work by [clicking here and completing a short online survey](#).

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

A New Decade of DMC Reduction

As we look forward to a new year and new successes in DMC reduction, we also look back to remind ourselves of the strategies that generate results.

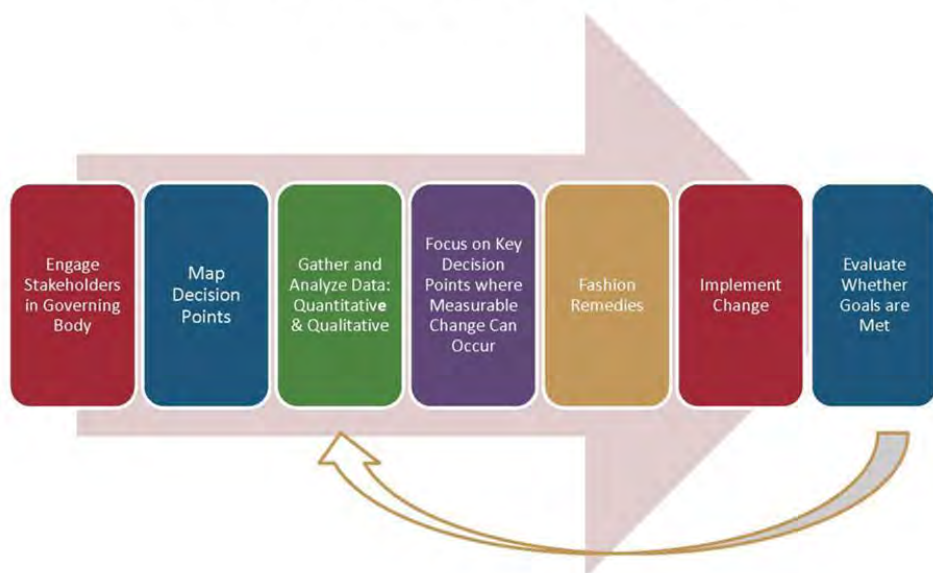
The DMC Action Network had much to celebrate at the end of 2009. Last month, the MacArthur Foundation's Fourth Annual National Working Conference in Washington, DC highlighted successes in DMC reduction in sites throughout the country. In the past year, jurisdictions have expanded their capacity for data collection, reduced their use of secure detention and out-of-home placement, and improved the cultural competence of services in the juvenile justice system.

2010 is also looking bright. Sites are already moving forward to build on these improvements, and the addition of nine new replication and learning sites to the Network has increased the potential for collaboration on strategies to eliminate racial and ethnic disparities.

At the turn of the new year, we take the opportunity to remind sites of the data-driven strategies that will ensure the DMC Action Network continues to make strides in DMC reduction. We also restate the common goal toward which all sites are working: ending the disproportionate representation of youth of color at each stage of the juvenile justice system.

[Click here to download the full-size, printable versions of the charts below.](#)

DMC Action Network Model for DMC Reduction



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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.

Core States

Pennsylvania
Berks County
Allegheny County
Philadelphia
Lancaster County

Illinois
Peoria

Louisiana
Jefferson Parish
Rapides Parish

Washington
Benton/Franklin Counties
Pierce County



Making the Best Case for Reform

What are the keys to winning over reluctant stakeholders and using data to drive a dialogue on racial and ethnic disparities? DMC coordinators and other staff from Network sites found out at the first DMC Coordinators Technical Assistance Seminar.

Engaging a broad base of stakeholders is critical to achieving measurable and sustainable DMC reduction. Yet numbers alone may not be enough to sell some individuals on the importance of working to reduce racial and ethnic disparities. On December 7, 2009, over a dozen individuals from DMC Action Network sites traveled to Washington, DC to sharpen their skills in winning the support of juvenile justice officials and community members. They did so as part of the first in a series of three Technical Assistance Seminars for DMC Coordinators from the DMC Action Network.

Lisa Garry of the Center for Children's Law and Policy (CCLP) and Mike Finley of the Burns Institute (BI) designed the Technical Assistance Seminars to develop the expertise and leadership skills of local DMC Coordinators and other staff responsible for day-to-day operations of DMC reduction initiatives. These small seminars provide practical guidance through information- and idea-sharing among peers, practice applications, and presentation opportunities.

Partner States

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Seward County
Lyon-Chase County

North Carolina

Union County
Carrabus County

The December seminar focused on facilitating a dialogue about DMC and engaging key players in DMC reduction initiatives. The intensive daylong session covered the role of DMC coordinators, individualized strategies for gaining buy-in and participation of various stakeholder groups, methods to win over reluctant DMC stakeholders, and guidance from Action Network member sites on using data to drive a dialogue about DMC. [An agenda and materials from the first seminar are available on the CCLP website by clicking here.](#)

Future seminars will assist DMC coordinators in developing expertise in planning, executing, and monitoring DMC reduction strategies, as well as in sustaining reforms. For more information on the Technical Assistance Seminars or to learn more about the DMC Action Network, contact [Lisa Garry, DMC Policy Director](#).



Participants from the first Technical Assistance Seminar for DMC Coordinators.



Ariel Barak, DMC Data Analyst from Rock County, Wisconsin, discusses effective data presentation during the first DMC Coordinator Technical Assistance Seminar.

Small Community, Big Improvements: DMC in Union County, North Carolina

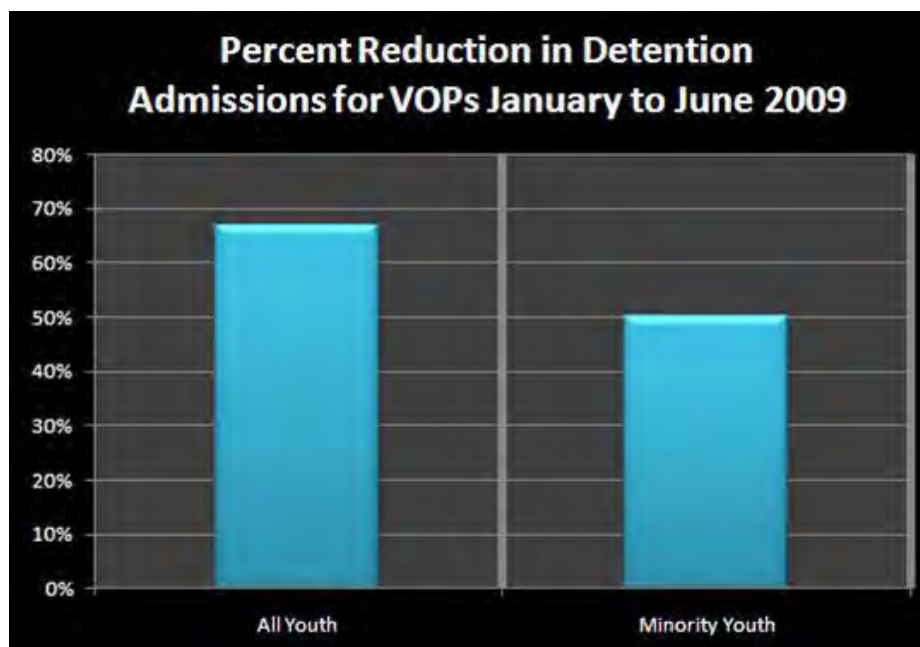
Karen Tucker, DMC Project Coordinator for Union County, North Carolina, shares successes with, and challenges for, reducing racial and ethnic disparities in a rural community. Union County, a Models for Change partner site, is now serving as a model for other counties in the state.

Union County, North Carolina, is one of the smallest sites within the DMC Action Network in terms of its total population. However, Union is the 13th fastest growing county in the nation and the fastest growing county in the state, with around 31,000 juveniles aged 6 to 16. And this relatively small county is getting some big results from its efforts to reduce DMC as part of the Models for Change initiative.

Union County joined the DMC Action Network in 2007 to improve race and ethnicity data collection methods, implement and monitor strategies to reduce the use of secure detention for probation violators, and develop detention screening tools to reduce unnecessary and inappropriate admissions to secure detention. At that time, officials there had already begun examining racial and ethnic disparities in the juvenile justice system with a grant from the Governor's Crime Commission in 2004.

Since joining the DMC Action Network, Union County has implemented the MacArthur Foundation's [guidance on accurate collection of race and ethnicity information through the use of a 2-question approach](#). The County also added questions at intake about youth's language preference. Those reforms allowed the county to accurately count the number of Hispanic youth in its juvenile justice system for the first time and to use those data to direct its limited resources accordingly.

Union County also saw a 67% reduction in the total number of youth admitted to secure detention for violations of probation (VOP) from October 2008 to June 2009 after introducing a graduated responses grid for VOPs. That drop contributed to a 50% overall reduction in total detention admissions over the same period. The County's success with the grid has sparked a broader movement to rethink VOPs: as of June 1, 2009 four counties throughout the state are using a pilot version of the grid. By June 30, 2010, the Union County DMC Advisory Board hopes to expand the usage of the grid throughout the state.



Admissions to secure detention for violations of probation have been cut by more than half. Yet, minority youth continue to represent 60% of youth referred to detention for VOPs in spite of representing only about 30% of the county's juvenile population. Advocates in Union are moving to make its system for recording VOPs fully electronic, which will permit analyses that will help the county continue to reduce racial and ethnic disparities at that decision point.

Karen Tucker, Union County DMC Project Coordinator, notes that having a strong ally in the North Carolina Department of Juvenile Justice and regularly scheduled time with that agency each month has helped in implementing certain reforms. However, the ability to engage line staff when introducing reforms is also key. Becky Smith, DMC Project Director, works as a court counselor in the County's system and was able to anticipate and answer questions successfully when the graduated responses grid was introduced. And while taking these reforms to scale in a large state with many rural areas is a challenge, it is a challenge that Union County and the state will meet through the use of web-based training modules.

As the number of youth in secure detention has fallen, DMC advocates in Union County know where to look next. Approximately 70% of referrals to the juvenile justice system come from Union County schools. And although Ms. Tucker emphasizes that the school officials are strong allies in reform efforts, she also recognizes that reducing disparities in this context presents a different challenge. "Many of the charges coming out of the schools are no longer frivolous charges," according to Ms. Tucker. "The question now is how to get inside the schools and teach youth other ways to handle problems." Initial efforts have included collaborating with the school's Parent Involvement Coordinators to hold parent academies, which are evening trainings for parents on various topics.

In addition to engaging state-level officials and line staff in DMC reforms, Union County advocates have also made a concerted effort to reach out to community members to build support for reform. Those efforts include a website, www.uniondmc.webs.com, which provides accessible descriptions of DMC and up-to-date information on the County's efforts. According to Ms. Tucker, that website aids "individuals who are initially overwhelmed by initial presentations on DMC by giving them a place to follow up on the issue." Not only that, Union County now issues its own [newsletter on recent DMC activities](#).

As Union County refines its existing reforms and implements new strategies for reducing racial and ethnic disparities, Ms. Tucker and others are also thinking about the sustainability of this work for youth in the long run: "You can't do it in two years, and you can't do it in five years. Engaging people who are really passionate about this work is what will help sustain these reforms." As Ms. Tucker notes, "that means more than engaging the community - it means empowering it."

Tell us how you're getting the word out about DMC in your community: email jszanyj@cclp.org.

The Newest DMC & Juvenile Justice Resources

- The National Juvenile Defender Center has released the second edition of the John D. and Catherine T. MacArthur Foundation's Juvenile Court Training Curriculum. The curriculum includes modules that cover five different areas of juvenile justice practice. Each module provides in-depth training materials based on the most up-to-date adolescent development research and its application to juvenile court practice. [Click here to request a copy of the curriculum through NJDC.](#)

- Stakeholders in Pennsylvania have released a new monograph on family involvement in juvenile justice systems as part of the Models for Change initiative. The publication, entitled [Family Involvement in Pennsylvania's Juvenile Justice System](#), identifies and develops strategies and models that support family involvement in the juvenile justice system.
- A recent report released at the MacArthur Foundation's Fourth Annual Models for Change National Working Conference indicates that youth who commit serious offenses may benefit more from community-based placements than incarceration. The publication, entitled [Research on Pathways to Desistance](#), relies on data from 1,354 juvenile offenders, family members, and friends. The report concludes that secure placements do not demonstrate any advantage over probation in reducing recidivism rates or self-reported offenses.
- The Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention (OJJDP) is accepting comments on its proposed plan for fiscal year 2010, which outlines the discretionary activities that the office will engage in during that period. OJJDP considers those comments, along with its finalized funding arrangement, when developing a final plan for FY 2010. Individuals may [read the plan here](#) and can [submit comments online by following this link](#).
- The Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA) is accepting proposals from entities interested in expanding substance abuse treatment capacity for juvenile treatment drug courts. SAMSHA is seeking to address gaps in substance abuse and mental health prevention and treatment services. Current juvenile drug treatment courts are eligible to apply. SAMHSA plans to award up to \$8.8 million in grants through the program. The deadline for applications is February 23, 2010. [You can learn more about the program by clicking here and reading the initial announcement](#).
- The Campaign for Youth Justice has published a policy brief examining the experience of Native American youth with transfer laws. The publication, entitled [A Tangled Web of Justice: American Indian and Alaska Native Youth in Federal, State, and Tribal Justice Systems](#), examines how Native American youth are disproportionately affected by transfer laws. The report concludes that many Native American youth commit low-level offenses and receive either no court intervention or disproportionately severe sanctions.

The DMC e-News 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 network and publishes this newsletter. Contact us at jszanyi@cclp.org or 202-637-0377 x108. For a PDF version of this newsletter, [click here](#).

DMC Action Network e-News

Issue #7 | December 2009

In This Issue

[Expanding the DMC Action Network](#)

[Defining "Cultural Competence": How Pierce County Is Engaging African-American Youth in Evidence-based Practices](#)

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

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Expanding the DMC Action Network

This month we welcome the nine newest additions to the DMC Action Network. Twenty-one sites in eight states are now working to identify and reduce racial and ethnic disparities as part of the Models for Change initiative.

Take a look around and you will see some new faces in the DMC Action Network. That's because nine new sites have joined the effort to reduce disproportionate minority contact in the juvenile justice system. Stakeholders in these jurisdictions have committed to efforts that include building the capacity for data collection, employing graduated responses for probation violations, and reducing the reliance on secure detention for pre-adjudication youth.

These jurisdictions join the Network as either replication sites or learning sites. Staff at the Center for Children's Law and Policy collaborated with key state and local leaders in the Action Network sites to identify additional jurisdictions in the states where system leaders demonstrate readiness and capacity to replicate DMC reduction strategies. Replication sites receive funding directly from CCLP for Network participation, implementation of the Network's data-driven approach to DMC reduction, and adoption of one or more additional DMC reduction strategies. Learning sites do not receive direct funding, but participate in Network group learning activities and will collect data using the BI Level One Tool.

The addition of these new sites increases the potential to share meaningful DMC reduction strategies and techniques to overcome barriers to reform. To facilitate that collaboration, we identify each new site, its strategic innovation, and a key contact person.

Lancaster County, Pennsylvania - Replication Site

Strategic Innovation: Detention Screening Instrument

Contact: Sherry Lupton, (717) 299-8161, luptons@co.lancaster.pa.us

Seward County, Kansas - Replication Site

Strategic Innovations: Detention Screening Instrument; Alternatives to Secure Detention; Language and Ethnicity Data Collection

Contact: Gena Burnett, (620) 626-3340 x20, genaburnett.26jcaps@swko.net

Lyon-Chase County, Kansas - Learning Site

Contact: Robert Sullivan, (620) 341-3294, rsullivan@lyoncounty.org

Baltimore County, Maryland - Replication Site

Strategic Innovations: Alternatives to Secure Detention; Arrest Diversion

Contact: Lisa Wyckoff, (410) 887-3246, lwycckoff@baltimorecountymd.gov

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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.

Core States

Pennsylvania
Berks County
Allegheny County
Philadelphia
Lancaster County

Illinois
Peoria

Louisiana
Jefferson Parish
Rapides Parish

Washington
Benton/Franklin Counties
Pierce County

Partner States

Maryland
Baltimore City
Baltimore County
Montgomery County
Prince George's County

Montgomery County, Maryland - Replication Site

Strategic Innovations: Alternatives to Secure Detention; Arrest Diversion; Language and Ethnicity Data Collection

Contact: Jeff Williams, (301) 354-4917, jeff.williams@collaborationcouncil.org

Prince George's County, Maryland - Learning Site

Contact: Naquasha Moreland, (301) 265-8437, ntmoreland@co.pg.md.us

Outagamie County, Wisconsin - Replication Site

Strategic Innovations: Detention Screening Instrument; Graduated Sanctions

Contact: Mark Mertens, (920) 832-4915, mertenmm@co.outagamie.wi.us

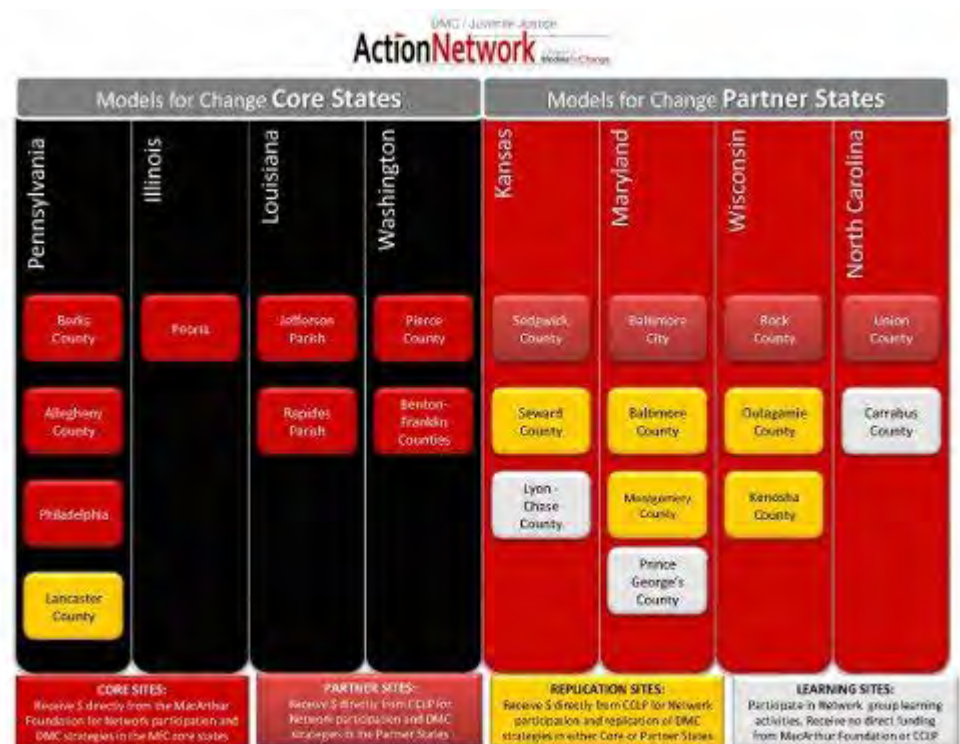
Kenosha County, Wisconsin - Replication Site

Strategic Innovations: Detention Screening Instrument; Graduated Sanctions

Contact: Nancy Ramsey, (262) 605-6563, NRamsey@co.kenosha.wi.us

Carrabus County, North Carolina - Learning Site

Contact: Scott Stoker, (704) 786-5611, p.scott.stoker@djjdp.nc.gov



[Click to download a printable matrix of all network sites \(pdf\).](#)

Wisconsin
Rock County
Outagamie County
Kenosha County

Kansas
Sedgwick County
Seward County
Lyon-Chase County

North Carolina
Union County
Carrabus County

Defining "Cultural Competence": How Pierce County Is Engaging African-American Youth in Evidence-based Practices

Functional family therapy gets results, but only if youth and their families are actively engaged with a therapist they trust. Stakeholders from Washington State's Pierce County, a DMC Action Network core site, share how they implemented a specialized caseload for African-American youth that almost doubled engagement rates and led to a 100% completion rate in its most recent quarter.

Studies show that Functional Family Therapy (FFT) keeps youth out of the juvenile justice system by reducing recidivism. But when stakeholders in Pierce County, Washington, took a hard look at FFT as part of their DMC Action Network activities, they noticed that one group in their jurisdiction was not receiving the full benefit of this evidence-based program: African-American youth. Data indicated that less than half of African-American youth assigned to FFT engaged with the service. That realization served as the springboard for a specialized caseload that is getting results - and the attention of others in the state.

The idea to reduce DMC through a specialized FFT caseload for African-American youth on probation originated at one of the first Models for Change conferences, according to Judge Frank E. Cuthbertson of the Pierce County Superior Court. "We attended a workshop where we started talking about the efficacy of evidence-based practices and how some of them were piloted in jurisdictions with limited numbers of minority youth. We continued the conversation and came up with the idea for the specialized FFT caseload that would engage minority families." According to Judge Cuthbertson, ongoing support for that initial insight was key: "I don't think we would have the program had it not been for the support and encouragement of the MacArthur Foundation and the Center for Children's Law and Policy."

A large part of Pierce's strategy hinged on finding a provider who could make FFT culturally competent by effectively relating to African-American youth and their families. That's when Judge Cuthbertson looked to Ed Wea, an individual he had worked with when he presided over dependency cases for the Superior Court. "I had always been impressed with [Mr. Wea's] ability to relate to families," said Judge Cuthbertson. "He could be very effective with parents of various backgrounds because he was sensitive to cultural differences and would listen in order to learn about the family's needs."

Mr. Wea, a masters-level psychotherapist with a broad base of professional experience, works with approximately twelve youth and their families from one of the most economically depressed areas of Pierce County. Judges and probation officers identify candidates for the specialized caseload based on the state's risk assessment tool and other background factors. Mr. Wea then works with those families using a strategy that builds upon their strengths. According to Mr. Wea, the approach works because "many of them have been told by experts that they need to do this or that, which they get tired of. You have to start by acknowledging their strengths, even if it is just coming to therapy."

When asked what helps him succeed in working with this population, Mr. Wea highlighted a range of factors. Those include his training as a psychotherapist and an officer of the court, which permits him to work with the family and probation officer as a team to focus on the best interests of the client. Mr. Wea emphasized that he has matured enough in his professional and personal life "to be flexible and to understand and work with individual strengths and weaknesses of families" - something that he readily admits he would not have been equipped to do at the

start of his career. Mr. Wea also makes an effort to model himself after positive role models in the African-American community, which is yet another way he connects with his clients.

All of these factors help to ensure that Mr. Wea is able to "feel the rhythm of the family." But he is quick to note that making FFT culturally competent does not involve sacrificing the integrity of the model. As a child mental health specialist with three years of education at the doctoral level, Mr. Wea indicates that he is "creative with FFT and uses the model to its fullest, but ensures that it remains clinically sound by knowing what can and cannot be done." Mr. Wea's most recent evaluation confirmed that he is indeed staying true to the model, with increases in positive behavior change in each passing rating period.

Pierce initially reported that engagement rates for African-American youth had jumped from 45% to 83% since the introduction of the specialized caseload. That was back in March, when it was too early to determine if the intervention had any effect on completion rates. Pierce County DMC Coordinator Josephine Quiles-Negroni answered that question with results from the most recent quarterly evaluation: a 100% completion rate for cases opened from May to August.

These numbers mean good news for youth in Pierce County and for the DMC Committee, which has been "energized" by the results, according to Ms. Quiles-Negroni. "Seeing the court take recommendations seriously, following through, and seeing results help to make the initiative more sustainable in the long run. When the funds are gone, people will feel empowered, having developed working relationships and overcome barriers while working together."

Judge Cuthbertson has also noted a "real change" in probation officers working with Mr. Wea, who "have begun to have a deeper understanding of how FFT works." Because Mr. Wea works in the same building as the county's probation officers, he serves as both an in-house resource for ongoing feedback and cultural competence training, as well as a motivating force. According to Judge Cuthbertson, "probation officers and therapists are speaking with one voice in dealing with the family and offender, which really makes a difference."

Pierce's successes have caught the attention of juvenile justice officials in neighboring King County, who are hoping to tap into Mr. Wea's expertise through training and technical assistance for practitioners in the city of Federal Way. However, Mr. Wea and others in Pierce County emphasize that all jurisdictions have a standing invitation to visit and learn more about the program. That squares with Mr. Wea's hope for the specialized caseload in the long run: "It is something that is very dear to me. I am honored that I was the first to do this, and I hope that as years pass I will be able to look back and say that it was very successful."

Tell us how you're making evidence-based practices work for your community: email jszanyi@cclp.org.

The Newest DMC & Juvenile Justice Resources

- The W. Haywood Burns Institute (BI) highlighted the overreliance on detention for youth of color in its most recent report, [The Keeper and the Kept](#). The publication is the second in a series that addresses racial and ethnic disparities in the juvenile justice system. The BI's report includes figures on the high cost of detaining non-violent offenders and presents strategies for using a data-driven approach to DMC reduction.
- The National Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention Coalition's Youth

Reentry Task Force released a research brief on youth transitioning from secure placements back to the community. Ashley Nellis of the Sentencing Project and Richard Hooks Wayman of the National Alliance to End Homelessness co-authored the report, entitled [Back on Track: Supporting Youth Reentry from Out-of-Home Placement to the Community](#). The publication includes principles and promising practices for effective youth reentry programs and national policy recommendations to support youth who are making this transition.

- The Equity Project, a collaboration between Legal Services for Children, the National Center for Lesbian Rights, and the National Juvenile Defender Center, announced the release of [Hidden Injustice: Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, and Transgender Youth in Juvenile Courts](#). The report draws on first-hand accounts of youth and other juvenile justice stakeholders, and it includes practice and policy recommendations for helping jurisdictions meet the needs of this population.
- The Council of State Governments released a new report, [Children of Incarcerated Parents: An Action Plan for Federal Policymakers](#), which addresses unique challenges facing the more than seven million children with parents who are either in prison or jail, or who are under court supervision. The report makes a number of policy recommendations for federal, state, and local governments on how to meet the needs of these youth.
- The Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA) is accepting proposals from entities interested in expanding or enhancing substance abuse treatment and related recovery and reentry services to sentenced juvenile and adult offenders. Domestic public and private nonprofit entities are eligible to apply, including state and local governments and community- and faith-based organizations. SAMSHA is seeking stakeholder partnerships that will help those who have been incarcerated make a stable transition back to the community, provide treatment for drug and alcohol abuse, and reduce future offending. SAMHSA plans to award \$13 million in grants for fiscal year 2010. The deadline for applications is January 19, 2010. [You can learn more about the program by clicking here and reading the initial announcement.](#)
- The Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention (OJJDP) launched a [Training and Technical Assistance Needs Assessment](#) in order to better serve state and local jurisdictions. The online survey asks juvenile justice professionals to describe their training and technical assistance needs, which OJJDP hopes will guide the agency's future efforts.

The DMC e-News 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 network and publishes this newsletter. Contact us at jzany@ccclp.org or 202-637-0377 x108. For a PDF version of this newsletter, [click here](#).

DMC Action Network e-News

Issue #6 | November 2009

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We Want Your Feedback!

We want to hear from you about how we can improve the DMC Action Network e-News.

Help us ensure that the e-News is a valuable resource for your work by [clicking here and completing a short online survey](#).

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

35 Years of the JJDP

For over three decades, the Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention Act has supported juvenile justice system improvements and has significantly contributed to the reduction of juvenile crime and delinquency. Advocates are now looking to strengthen the law, which is two years overdue for reauthorization.

The most important federal law governing juvenile justice just turned 35.

The Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention Act (JJDP) is the primary vehicle through which the federal government sets standards for state and local juvenile justice systems. Since President Gerald Ford signed the JJDP into law in 1974, the act has helped states make great strides toward ensuring the health and well-being of youth in the juvenile justice system while also addressing public safety concerns.

The JJDP provides grants to states to assist with juvenile crime prevention and intervention programs. In order to be eligible for these grants, states must comply with four “core protections” in the current law.

1. The **Deinstitutionalization of Status Offenders (DSO)** provision requires states to keep status offenders out of secure facilities;
2. The **Jail Removal** provision prevents youth charged in the juvenile justice system from being placed in adult jails and lock-ups (with limited exceptions);
3. The **“Sight and Sound Separation”** requirement provides that, in the limited circumstances when youth charged in the juvenile system are held with adults, they be separated by both sight and sound from adult offenders;
4. The **Disproportionate Minority Contact (DMC)** provision requires that states “address” the disproportionate contact of youth of color at key points in the juvenile justice system - from arrest to detention to confinement.

The Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention, based within the Department of Justice, coordinates and administers federal juvenile justice efforts, disseminates research, and provides training and technical assistance to state and local jurisdictions. The President appoints the head of OJJDP with the advice and consent of the Senate. President Obama has yet to name his pick for that position, but *Youth Today* reported this past week that he may be close to finalizing his choice.

In 2002, Congress voted to reauthorize the JJDP, and the law enjoyed bipartisan support. That reauthorization expired in 2007, and advocacy groups such as the Act 4 Juvenile Justice Campaign are pushing for the law’s reauthorization in the current congressional session. Among other key changes, advocates are hoping to

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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.

Core States

Pennsylvania
Berks County
Allegheny County
Philadelphia

Illinois
Peoria

Louisiana
Jefferson Parish
Rapides Parish

Washington
Benton/Franklin Counties
Pierce County

Partner States

Maryland
Baltimore City

Wisconsin
Rock County

Kansas
Sedgwick County

North Carolina
Union County

strengthen the DMC requirement by providing specific guidance to states as to how to achieve measurable change in racial and ethnic disparities in their juvenile justice systems. While no bill has been introduced in the House, Senate Bill S.678, which is pending in the Judiciary Committee, includes more detailed guidance on reducing racial and ethnic disparities.

Learn More About the JJDP and Reauthorization

The resources below include more information on the JJDP, its impact on juvenile justice, and the reauthorization effort.

- The Act 4 Juvenile Justice Campaign is a coalition of national, state, and local organizations that focuses on JJDP reauthorization. Their website includes a page that provides additional background information on the JJDP: <http://www.act4jj.org/about.html>.
 - The American Psychological Association marked the JJDP's 35th Anniversary with [a website highlighting the ways that psychological research can inform the law](#). The website addresses several topics, including how research from developmental psychology and neuroscience should inform juvenile justice practices, in addition to best practices for handling substance abuse and mental health issues.
 - The Coalition for Juvenile Justice published the results of a first-of-its-kind investigation into the impact of the JJDP in 53 states and territories nationwide. The study, [A Pivotal Moment: Sustaining the Success and Enhancing the Future of the Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention Act](#), endorses strengthening the JJDP in key areas, including DMC reduction.
-

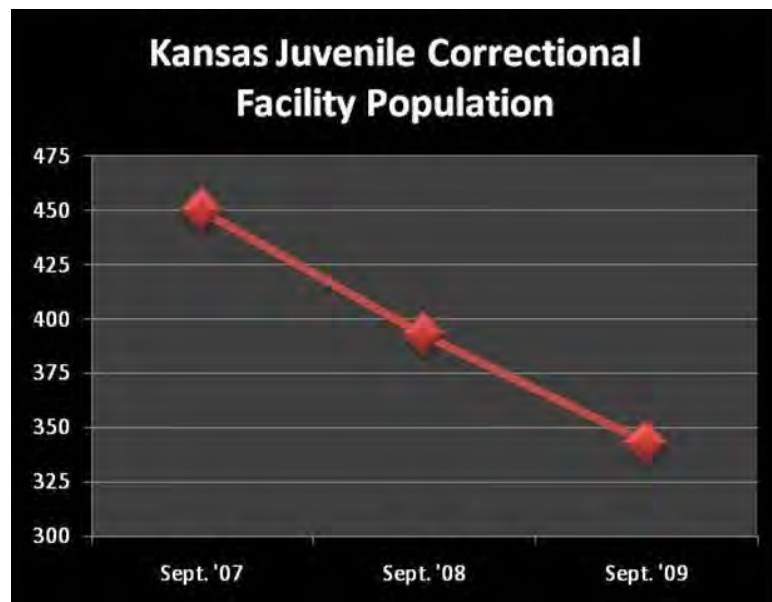
Keeping Reforms on Track While Cutting Back: The Kansas Story

In the face of budget cuts, the Kansas Juvenile Justice Authority has managed to preserve its community-level services by reducing the number of secure correctional facilities throughout the state while also reducing the number of youth in correctional facilities system-wide.

Some recent signs point to economic recovery, but state and local governments are still feeling the pinch of the recession. This past July, the *New York Times* reported that juvenile justice reform efforts were suffering, as "[a]cross the country, depleted coffers . . . prompted state and local officials to pare programs intended as alternatives to the mere incarceration of juvenile lawbreakers."

Across Kansas, the state's Juvenile Justice Authority (JJA) has an entirely different story to tell. Faced with budget cuts, the JJA has not sacrificed its community-level programs, but has instead closed two secure correctional facilities to make ends meet.

Earlier projections estimated that approximately 700 youth would be in the state's correctional facilities at this time. Today, the number is less than half that, and new estimates predict that the population will continue to fall below 300. According to Commissioner Jennings, "the reduced number is an indication of how we've strengthened community-level services and how community corrections partners have implemented evidence- and research-based practices. We're demonstrating that believing, following, and selling research to key decision makers works."



Reforms in Sedgwick County, the largest county in Kansas, have helped drive these results. In 2008, the county's use of objective detention screening, alternatives to detention and other strategies led to a 45% reduction in secure detention days. According to Mark Masterson, director of the county's Department of Corrections, the gains stem from "state and local partnerships, sustained leadership, commitment to the use of research-based practices, and making continuous improvements. Sustained commitment by the Legislature to fund prevention, intervention and graduated sanctions programming and shared decision-making and funding by local governing bodies has resulted in effective early assessment and intervention to reduce delinquency."

The budget crunch has also prompted officials to think creatively about uses for the two closed correctional facilities. After closing the Atchison Juvenile Correctional Facility, the JJA quickly contracted to convert the facility into a Youth Residential Center II, which provides treatment and programming to youth in a highly structured setting. Within seven months, the agency opened the doors to a non-secure 54-bed facility. Additionally, the JJA plans to introduce legislation in January to convey the land on which the Beloit Juvenile Correctional Facility is situated, which had been a gift from the city, back to the community. The JJA is also working with local officials on potential uses of the vacated facility.

In Kansas, JJA officials have responded to the financial crisis by reducing reliance on secure correctional facilities and prioritizing community-level programs. According to Commissioner Jennings, "This was a balancing that needed to occur. The positive side of the economic downturn is that it created the political will to do what should have been done before."

Tell us how you've sustained DMC reduction efforts in light of budgetary challenges: email jszanyi@cclp.org.

OJJDP Recognizes Baltimore City as Leader in DMC Reduction Programs

The Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention recognized Baltimore City's Pre-Adjudication Coordination & Transition Center (PACT Center) as one of its best practices for DMC reduction in 2009. Baltimore City is a DMC Action Network Partner Site.

Officials and advocates in Baltimore City have something to celebrate: the Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention (OJJDP) recognized the city's Pre-

Adjudication Coordination and Transition Center (PACT Center) with its 2009 Best Practices Award for DMC reduction. The program was one of three to receive the honor from OJJDP this year.

The PACT Center emerged from the recommendations of the city's DMC Advisory Board, which highlighted the need for additional community-based alternatives to secure detention. The program focuses on those youth who would otherwise be detained because of a lack of success in less intensive alternatives to detention.

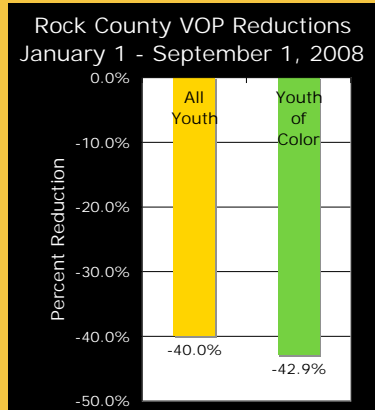
Located in West Baltimore, the program provides support services to youth to ensure that they attend scheduled court hearings, avoid re-arrest, and appear in court with a comprehensive needs assessment and individualized plan that is designed to identify community resources that will help the youth avoid future delinquency. The PACT Center has successfully diverted over 300 African-American males from secure detention in the past two years.

The Newest DMC & Juvenile Justice Resources

- CCLP Senior Staff Attorney Dana Shoenberg co-authored a chapter in the latest edition of the Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention's Disproportionate Minority Contact Technical Assistance Manual. The chapter, entitled [Strategies for Serving Hispanic Youth](#), describes lessons learned from a two-year project in Washoe County, Nevada, and Travis County, Texas, that was designed to develop new and accurate data collection methods for Hispanic youth and to reduce DMC for Hispanic and other youth at key decision points.
- The Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention released a new bulletin on local DMC reductions strategies, co-authored by Mark Soler and Lisa Garry at the Center for Children's Law and Policy. The bulletin, [Reducing Disproportionate Minority Contact: Preparation at the Local Level](#), is the first in a series by OJJDP to address DMC. It provides valuable information on the context in which local preparation takes place, as well as specific strategies to successfully engage communities in DMC reduction efforts.
- The MacArthur Foundation has partnered with the National Conference of State Legislatures to provide a [Juvenile Justice Bill Tracking Database](#). You can now track the current progress of legislative reform in all 50 states and the District of Columbia from a single site.
- The Annie E. Casey Foundation has released [Two Decades of JDAI: From Demonstration Project to National Standard](#). The report captures JDAI's successes in jurisdictions across the U.S., including a 23% reduction in commitment to correctional facilities and other residential placements in its sites since the program's inception in 1992.

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DMC Reduction: Signs of Progress



DMC Action Network sites have begun using strategic innovations to reduce racial and ethnic disparities in their jurisdictions. After only nine months of implementation, the innovations are starting to show reductions in disparities at specific decision points in some juvenile justice systems.

Above all, **most sites have dramatically improved their capacity to collect and report system data**, using the data template developed by the [W. Haywood Burns Institute](#) (as discussed in [DMC](#)

[eNews Issue #3](#)). The BI data enables system stakeholders to track the effectiveness of strategic innovations.

Rock County, Wisconsin, has reached 100% in reporting BI data. County officials also implemented a **graduated sanctions and rewards grid** for youth on probation and truant youth. The grid includes incentives for good behavior, developed by identifying community resources. Rewards include professional basketball tickets and food coupons at local restaurants. A supervisor's approval is now required before detention can be used as a sanction. This process supports the use of alternatives. From January 1 to September 1, 2008, violations of probation (VOPs) in Rock County dropped 40 percent for all youth, and 42.9% for youth of color.

Berks County, Pennsylvania, is using two innovations designed to reduce disparities in detention. The County is implementing a **detention assessment instrument**, which is designed to ensure that decisions to detain youth are made as objectively as possible. Berks County is also using **alternatives to detention and residential placement**, including a new **evening reporting center**. Between the first quarter of 2007 and the first quarter of 2009, Berks County has seen a 45% drop in the average daily population in its detention center.

Resources

[The National Council on Crime and Delinquency](#) has released a new study, [Youth Violence Myths and Realities: A Tale of Three Cities](#), which assesses "the intersection of media coverage of youth crime, public perception, public policy, and true trends and issues in youth crime in three US cities: Dallas, Texas, Washington, DC, and San Mateo, California." The study includes interviews with system practitioners and youth, and presents recommendations for improved public awareness and better juvenile justice policy.

[The National Conference of State Legislatures](#) short report, [Minority Youth in the Juvenile Justice System: Disproportionate Minority Contact](#), serves as a brief introduction to DMC and highlights strategies that are being used to reduce it. The report is designed to inform state legislative efforts in juvenile justice.

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DMC Story Bank

Tackling School Referrals

In Jefferson Parish, Louisiana, minority youth are 1/3 of the population, but were 2/3 of the youth arrested. Digging deeper, we found that 1/3 of arrests came from the schools, most for minor offenses. To address this, we brought school system officials into our committees.

After seeing high arrest numbers from their schools, some administrators began working to solve student conflicts themselves instead of having the student arrested. Schools also began instituting Positive Behavior Support (PBS).

Arrest referrals dropped in two schools, but have not decreased overall yet. Ongoing challenges include changes in administration and police officers on campuses where there were none before. We expect training for officers and school staff and continued use of PBS to address these issues.

Tell us (in 120 words or fewer) how you've engaged your community in DMC reduction. Email DMCeNews@cclp.org

Transformation is the Theme of the Third DMC Action Network Meeting



Acting OJJDP Administrator
Jeff Slowikowski

Members of the **DMC Action Network** gathered in Washington, DC, in May for practical discussions of strategies and tactics for reducing racial and ethnic disparities by transforming how juvenile justice systems operate.

In the opening plenary, **Judy Cox** told the story of how the juvenile justice system in Santa Cruz — where she was chief of probation — transformed how they worked with families. Cox explained that “better and more sustainable outcomes are achieved when youth and families are involved” in planning and decision-making.

Two panelists offered additional **family engagement strategies**. **Lisa Procks** discussed how the Baltimore City Community Family Resource Center works with families to reduce the number of youth in detention and to strengthen the capacity of families to advocate for their child. **Trina Osher**, a leader in the family movement in mental health, stressed

the importance of sharing information with families, and including them in policy and program decisions.

Dr. David Altshuler of Johns Hopkins University, talked about the elements of an effective aftercare plan, and how it is key to reducing recidivism.

DMC Action Network members met in **Strategic Innovation Groups** and shared information on **Detention Screening Tools, Graduated Sanctions, and Programs, Culture and Community**. This peer-learning model is a key component of the DMC Action Network’s activities.

DMC reduction efforts are data driven, so it was especially appropriate that **Michael Finley** of the W. Haywood Burns Institute led a special session on data collection and reporting issues that network sites have identified. Data collection and analysis were key elements of **Faith Augustine’s** presentation on how Louisville reduced the number of African American youth detained on bench warrants due to failure to appear in court.

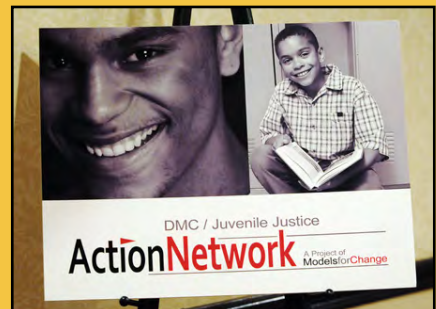
On the final morning of the meeting, **Jeff Slowikowski**, Acting Administrator of the Justice Department’s Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention (OJJDP), embraced the work of the DMC Action Network. Noting that DMC reduction is a core requirement of the law that created OJJDP, Slowikowski encouraged attendees and urged them to share their successful strategies.

Two speakers focused on school issues. **Barry McCurdy**, director of the Devereux Center for Effective Schools, gave examples of how schools using School-Wide Positive Behavior Support have transformed their disciplinary systems, reducing office referrals and suspensions. **Judge Steve Teske**, of Clayton County, Georgia, described his work with schools, police and other stakeholders to drastically reduce the number of youth referred to court for certain offenses in schools.

Conference presentations are available at http://www.cclp.org/simple.php/DMC_Action_Network_May_09

Resource

The National Council of La Raza and the Campaign for Youth Justice have released a report, [*America's Invisible Children: Latino Youth and the Failure of Justice*](#), examining the experiences of Latino youth in the justice system, with a particular focus on youth tried as adults. The report concludes that Latino youth are overrepresented in the U.S. justice system and receive harsher treatment than white youth for similar offenses.



DMC eNews

Issue #3 February 2009

Using Burns Institute Data Methods

"If you can't measure it, you can't manage it!" That's especially true for the tough work of reducing Disproportionate Minority Contact (DMC) in juvenile justice systems. To succeed, localities must **regularly and accurately collect, report, and analyze their data**. It is a challenging process, and sites often must improve their data systems before they can make progress in DMC reduction.

Timely, accurate and relevant data sets **drive the creation of strategic reforms and initiatives and measure the effectiveness of the resulting strategic changes**.

DMC Action Network sites are using an adaptation of the [W. Haywood Burns Institute \(BI\)](#) method for collecting and analyzing data. The BI has created a [data template](#) to help jurisdictions identify **whether and to what extent racial and ethnic disparities exist** at critical decision making points: arrests, referrals to detention, detention admissions decisions — including overrides — detention utilization, and detention alternative successes and failures. The BI method includes [annual and quarterly measures](#) of disparities by **race, ethnicity, gender, geography and offense**.

Using the BI approach to collecting and analyzing data enables stakeholders to **identify disparities and the decision points** where they occur. Teams then **dig deeper** into the factors contributing to the disparities and **create data-driven, strategic changes in policy, practice and/or programming** to address those factors.

Once a jurisdiction has adopted specific strategies to reduce disparities, **ongoing data collection, reporting, and analysis** enables the site to **track the effectiveness** of their strategies. In addition to data collection recommended by BI, DMC Action Network sites and the [Center for Children's Law and Policy](#) are piloting a new set of [DMC performance measures](#) to monitor and report their progress.

Resources

The [Fall 2008 issue of *The Future of Children*](#) focuses on Juvenile Justice, and includes a [chapter on Disproportionate Minority Contact \[pdf\]](#).

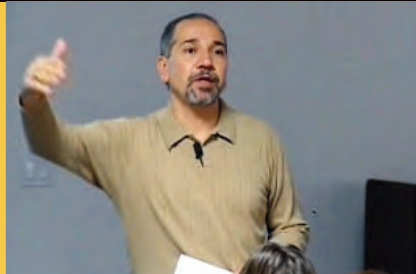
[Adoration of the Question: Reflections on the Failure to Reduce Racial & Ethnic Disparities in the Juvenile Justice System \[pdf\]](#) is the first in a series of reports from the [W. Haywood Burns Institute \(BI\)](#) on the tools, insights and strategies that the BI uses to help sites reduce racial and ethnic disparities in their juvenile justice systems.

Profile: Sedgwick County, Kansas

Sedgwick County (Wichita), Kansas, has conducted DMC reduction activities for more than 10 years, led by system practitioners. They have successfully reduced juvenile detention admissions, length of stay, and population. Sedgwick is focusing on overrepresentation at the point of arrest and increasing community voice in their juvenile justice system. Their community engagement efforts include collaborating with the African American Coalition, which provides advocacy on DMC reduction. This work is expanding with the help of the [Burns Institute](#) and the [Center for Children's Law and Policy](#).

At the state level, in November 2008, Kansas Governor Kathleen Sebelius announced **a new state initiative to address disproportionality in the child welfare and juvenile justice systems**. The initiative will include agency officials, community leaders, experts and advocates. Mark Soler, CCLP's Executive Director, will discuss the DMC Action Network at the statewide juvenile justice conference in June, 2009.

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Prof. Francisco Villarruel makes a point.

DMC Story Bank

Cultural Competency Training

The DMC committee in Benton-Franklin Counties in Washington state has committed to community engagement as one of our strategies to reduce DMC. Franklin County's population is 70% Latino, and system stakeholders recognize that we need increased cultural competence in order to engage the community effectively.

We brought in Professor Francisco Villarruel from Michigan State University to conduct cultural competence training. About 200 people attended the session, including judges, law enforcement, school counselors, Boys and Girls Clubs staff, and all probation officers. Local newspapers covered the event, and we videotaped it so that it can be distributed on DVD.

What advice (110 words or fewer) would you give about starting DMC reduction work? Send it to DMCeNews@cclp.org

What DMC Reduction Is — and Is Not

In [Models for Change](#), efforts to reduce Disproportionate Minority Contact (DMC) have **three goals**: to **reduce over-representation of youth of color** in the justice system, to **reduce racial and ethnic disparities**, and to **prevent youth of color from entering and moving deeper into the juvenile justice system**.

Reducing DMC **does not** require solving racism, poverty and all of the systemic inequities in society. DMC reduction is not an exercise in finger-pointing and blame, either toward public officials or parents of troubled youth. It is not simply a research project, focused on endlessly gathering data to demonstrate the problem. DMC reduction efforts do not excuse delinquent behaviors or give kids of color just a slap on the wrist. **DMC reduction is about changing policies and practices to ensure racial fairness in the justice system.**

How can DMC be reduced? Successful sites adopt specific strategies to reduce DMC over time, including the following:

1. **Convening a governing body** comprised of key system decision makers and community members to drive strategy and monitor outcomes.
2. **Conducting a thorough analysis of how decisions are made and who makes them** at key decision points in the juvenile justice system ("system mapping").
3. **Collecting and analyzing data** at key decision points to determine where and how DMC occurs in the system, which populations of youth are most at risk for DMC, and what policy and practice reforms could be effective to reduce the risk.
4. **Identifying specific decision points** to target reform efforts where over-representation or disparities exist or youth are inappropriately and unnecessarily incarcerated (e.g., for misdemeanors or technical violations of probation).
5. **Creating interventions, policies, and programs** that reduce DMC at those decision points, such as arrest diversion policies and community-based alternatives to incarceration.
6. **Monitoring implementation and reporting results** to the governing body and the public.

Resource

[The Sentencing Project](#) has published a new edition of [Reducing Racial Disparity in the Criminal Justice System](#), a manual for practitioners, policymakers, and community organizers. Although it focuses on the adult system, the manual's workable solutions and best practices also apply to juvenile justice systems.

Profile: Rapides Parish, Louisiana

Note: An earlier version of this story contained incorrect data. We regret the error.

In Rapides Parish (Alexandria, LA), representatives from Juvenile Court, the Assistant District Attorney, Indigent Defense Counsel, all law enforcement agencies, and juvenile probation services met over a 5-month period to develop their **Detention Screening Instrument (DSI)**. They discussed the purpose of detention, the alleged offense(s), prior offenses, prior or current probation supervision, prior failure to appear in court and runaway behavior. The group assigned numerical points to each of those factors in order to create a uniform and unbiased tool.

Since July 1, 2008, the DSI has guided decisions about whether a juvenile is placed in a secure facility, a detention alternative, or released to a parent or guardian. The parish holds monthly DSI meetings to go over the data, analyze it, and discuss any problems or concerns.

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Computer lab in Baltimore's PACT Center.
Photo: Joe Smith

DMC Story Bank

Detention Alternative Succeeds

In Baltimore City, 60% of youth in detention scored low- and medium-risk on the detention screening tool, but were detained due to concerns about flight risk and prior failures in a community detention program.

In response, our DMC Advisory Board worked with the city's Office of Employment Development to create the Pre-Adjudication Coordination and Training (PACT) Center, a community-based evening reporting center where youth receive intensive supervision, comprehensive needs assessments, and resource planning.

In the PACT Center's first year, **95% of the youth appeared for their court hearings, and 93% remained free of additional charges** while in the program. Youth response was overwhelmingly positive.

Share a story (110 words or fewer) about a surprise you found in your data. Email it to DMCeNews@cclp.org

Introducing the DMC Action Network

Disproportionate Minority Contact, or DMC, is an ongoing problem in juvenile justice systems across the nation. In many places, **youth of color receive harsher treatment** than white youth, even when charged with the same category of offense. But there is good news: **some jurisdictions are reducing DMC**. The twelve sites in the [DMC Action Network](#) are among the leaders in this effort. The Network serves as a national learning bank, promoting strategies that other states and local jurisdictions can replicate.

DMC reduction work is data-driven. DMC Action Network sites collect and analyze comprehensive data and regularly report performance measures for their work. **Network sites each adopt strategies that reduce racial and ethnic disparities at key system decision points**, and they share their experiences with each other. For example, some sites reduce the number of youth in detention by using detention screening instruments and creating detention alternatives, such as Evening Reporting Centers.

Other sites have focused on **providing culturally competent services and programs** and **reducing the language barriers** that can significantly contribute to the incarceration of low and moderate risk youth. Network sites are also exploring post-disposition DMC reduction strategies. These enable sites to reduce the number of youth who are incarcerated for probation violations and address placement and community adjustment issues for youth of color.

The DMC Action Network is a project of the John D. and Catherine T. MacArthur Foundation's [Models for Change](#) juvenile justice reform initiative. The [Center for Children's Law and Policy](#) organizes and supports the Network.

Resource

[Critical Condition: African American Youth in the Justice System \[pdf\]](#)

This excellent new [Campaign for Youth Justice](#) report details continued racial disparities and overrepresentation of African American youth at most stages in the juvenile justice system. Find it at <http://www.campaign4youthjustice.org/documents/AfricanAmericanBrief.pdf>

Action Network Sites



Peer jury members in Peoria. Photo: Lori Brown

DMC Action Network Sites

Pennsylvania: Allegheny County, Berks County, Philadelphia

Illinois: Peoria County

Louisiana: Jefferson Parish and Rapides Parish

Washington: Pierce County and Benton-Franklin Counties

Kansas: Sedgwick County

Maryland: Baltimore City

North Carolina: Union County

Wisconsin: Rock County



Peer jurors in Peoria. Photo: Lori Brown

DMC Story Bank

Restorative Justice in Schools

In Peoria, we've introduced restorative justice practices in the schools to reduce referrals to secure detention. It was hard to implement peer juries at first, so we turned to peacemaking circles, another restorative justice practice. **We had a 35% drop in referrals to detention from the schools, and a 43% drop in referrals of African American students.**

We hired a Restorative Justice Coordinator to help the schools, and one high school now has trained peer jurors.

As one of our judges pointed out, "The schools should be in charge of [school] discipline," not the courts!

Your turn: share a story (100 words or fewer) about changing a DMC skeptic into a supporter. Email stories to DMCeNews@cclp.org