Chapter 6: Federal, State, and Local Partnerships To Reduce Disproportionate Minority Contact

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Lesson 6 in the introduction to this manual stresses that DMC reduction requires strong partnerships. This chapter describes ways to form and strengthen partnerships among federal, state, and local DMC reduction efforts.

OJJDP's Role

OJJDP, as the federal agency charged with implementing the Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention (JJDP) Act of 2002, has undertaken the activities described below to help states that participate in the Formula Grants Program meet the DMC core requirement in Section 223(a)(22) of the Act.

Determining States' Compliance With the DMC Core Requirement

All states and territories, except for Puerto Rico (which the U.S. Census Bureau has exempted from reporting racial statistics), shall submit DMC identification spreadsheets as part of the DMC compliance plan in their 3-year plans. When a state determines that DMC exists, it shall provide a DMC compliance plan in its 3-year plan and in plan updates. A state's annual DMC compliance plan must discuss the status of and progress made for each of the planned activities in the prior compliance plan. States with significant local DMC reduction efforts should complete this section by locality as well. The DMC compliance plan should also include a plan for the following 3 years (as in a 3-year plan) or year (as in a plan update). The plan should include specific activities in data collection, data system improvement, assessment, programmatic and systems improvement strategies, evaluation, and monitoring activities, as appropriate. The plan must also specify the timeline, funding amount, and funding source(s) designated to conduct each of the planned activities. Moreover, OJJDP requires states to submit updated DMC data in their 3-year plan for at least three jurisdictions with the highest minority concentrations or, preferably, the localities with focused DMC reduction efforts. The 3-year plan should also discuss the Relative Rates Indexes (RRIs) obtained, compare the updated data with data obtained in earlier years, and illustrate how the data inform/guide the state's 3-year DMC compliance plan.

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OJJDP's annual determination of states' compliance with the DMC core requirement is based on the completeness of their DMC compliance plans; the demonstration of actual, systematic, continuing, and good-faith implementation of their planned activities; and the progress reported each year. OJJDP has standardized the compliance determination process in recent years. In its review of the current plan, OJJDP compares the state's report of progress made with its prior year plan. OJJDP staff also determine whether the data obtained drive the plan and whether the state has designated adequate resources for the planned DMC reduction activities. Each determination letter, signed by the OJJDP Administrator, outlines the state's accomplishments in the prior year, the planned activities for the following year (or 3 years), and recommendations for enhancements in the area of DMC reduction. A DMC compliance determination letter, therefore, is not the end of OJJDP's work with the state regarding DMC for that year but is used as a technical assistance tool for the beginning of a continuous followup with the state regarding its DMC reduction efforts throughout the year.

Holding States Accountable for Noncompliance

The JJDP Act of 2002 stipulates that OJJDP will reduce a state's Formula Grant allocation by 20 percent for each core requirements for which the state was found to be not in compliance in the previous year. During the Formula Grant application review process, OJJDP works diligently with states whose DMC compliance plans the Office deems are inadequate, with the goal of improving their plans. If a state does not meet the required standards by September 30 of that year, OJJDP will make a final determination of noncompliance, specifying a reduction of 20 percent of that state's Formula Grant allocation in the subsequent year. OJJDP determined that two states in FY 2004 and one state in FY 2005 were noncompliant with the DMC core requirement and reduced their formula allocations in the following year as a consequence.

Providing Financial and Technical Assistance Support to Annual DMC Conferences

The Coalition for Juvenile Justice (CJJ), with cooperative agreement awards from OJJDP, has emphasized DMC in its training activities. In 1996, CJJ held the first National DMC Planning and Strategy Meeting and, with OJJDP financial support, has since made the DMC conference an annual event. Three of the 10 conferences so far have focused on a specific ethnicity: American Indian youth in 2000, Hispanic youth in 2001, and African American youth in 2002. With OJJDP support, CJJ published and broadly disseminated two conference reports to augment the 2000 and 2001 conferences: *Enlarging the Healing Circle: Juvenile Justice for American Indian Youth* and *Esperanza: Awakening to the Needs of Latino Youth.* In addition, these annual conferences have provided opportunities for State Advisory Group members and state juvenile justice staff to learn about the DMC reduction work of the Juvenile Detention Alternatives Initiative from the Annie E. Casey Foundation, the Burns Institute's approach to reducing disproportionality at detention, the Youth Law Center's Building Blocks for Youth, and the Graduated Sanctions Project of the National Council of Juvenile and Family Court Judges (also funded by OJJDP), among others. OJJDP's

leadership has consistently supported these conferences with opening remarks. In recent years, OJJDP staff have also participated in the conference planning committees and made presentations at the conferences.

Providing Training and Technical Assistance to State and Local DMC Reduction Efforts

OJJDP, through its training and technical assistance contract providers, offers onsite technical assistance at no cost to the states and localities. OJJDP responded to 30 onsite training and technical assistance requests in FY 2005, a significant increase from 17 in FY 2004. In addition, OJJDP provides phone and e-mail consultations in the DMC area as a cost-effective way to maximize access to technical assistance. DMC has also become an integral part of OJJDP-sponsored regional and national training conferences in recent years. The one-to-one consultation sessions on data collection, interpretation, and use offered during the training conferences have been welcome opportunities for conference participants to address their unique concerns.

Developing and Implementing Performance Measures To Assess DMC Reduction Activities, Providing Technical Assistance/Tools To Increase State/Local Evaluation Capacity

As part of its development of a performance measurement system for the Formula Grants program, OJJDP has created a DMC logic model outlining goals, objectives, activities, and output and outcome measures of these activities. Chapter 5 of this manual discusses and links to the logic model tool. Further, the Juvenile Justice Evaluation Center of the Justice Research and Statistics Association, under contract with OJJDP, produced a guidebook, *Seven Steps To Develop and Evaluate Strategies To Reduce Disproportionate Minority Contact*, in January 2005. This publication is available at www.jrsa.org/jjec/about/dmc_guidebook.html.

Establishing and Maintaining a DMC Coordinators' Listserv

OJJDP has long promoted focused DMC efforts at the state level through the establishment of state-level DMC coordinators to guide and support local efforts in their respective states. Based on the position descriptions from California, Colorado, Iowa, Kentucky, Missouri, Montana, and Pennsylvania, OJJDP compiled a sample state DMC coordinator position description in 2001 to facilitate establishment of the position in other states. More than 30 state-level DMC coordinator positions (the number changes with staff turnover) and a number of local-level DMC coordinator positions have been created around the country. OJJDP has established and maintains a DMC coordinators' listserv to facilitate communication with and among the DMC coordinators. When OJJDP communicates with state-level DMC coordinators, all state juvenile justice specialists are copied to ensure that they are informed even if their state has not designated a DMC coordinator.

Establishing and Maintaining a DMC Web Page

An important part of OJJDP's support to state and localities is its DMC Web page (www.ojjdp.ncjrs.gov/dmc/), a one-stop shop that brings together DMC-related information for the field. The site contains a DMC chronology, various tools, training videos and other resources, a library of significant state DMC reports, DMC-related publications, state and (if available) local DMC contacts, and links to other large-scale DMC activities, such as the Building Blocks for Youth, Annie E. Casey and Multnomah County Detention Reform Initiative, and the W. Haywood Burns Institute for Juvenile Justice Fairness and Equity. The DMC Web page was launched on July 27, 2001. The average number of visits per month to the page has nearly doubled from 1,491 in 2001 to 2,904 in 2005. The average number of unique visitors per month also has increased dramatically, from 544 in 2001 to 765 in 2005.[1]

Developing a DMC Web-Based Data Entry System To Be Used With the *DMC Technical Assistance Manual*

This Web-based data entry tool enables localities and states to enter raw data concerning the volume of activities by race and ethnicity at different juvenile justice decision points to calculate the existence and extent of DMC as expressed by the relative rate indexes. It provides a central repository of state and local data across the country and facilitates within the state or within localities comparisons of DMC changes over time. States and localities can access the data entry system at www.dsgonline.com/dmc.

Publishing the *DMC Technical Assistance Manual (3rd Edition)* Electronically

The manual incorporates lessons learned in the past years to provide up-to-date guidance for ongoing DMC reduction efforts nationwide. The manual content was featured in the all-day DMC preconference at the 2005 OJJDP National Conference. (Interested parties can access the DMC preconference slides and its video recording from OJJDP's DMC Web page at www.ojjdp.ncjrs.gov/dmc.) The manual, available through the DMC Web page, can reach a large readership and will be updated periodically.

Making Direct Awards To Promote Innovative Local DMC Reduction Projects

In FY 2004, OJJDP made a direct award to the Youth Law Center's Washington, DC, office to address two problems that have proven difficult for the states: collecting accurate data on Hispanic youth in the juvenile justice system and reducing DMC at critical decision points in the system for these youth. The Center chose two sites for this project over a 3-year period: Travis County, Texas, and Reno, Nevada. The first site focuses on DMC and Hispanic youth in the juvenile justice system; the second site focuses on DMC and Hispanic and African American youth. In both sites, the project gives particular attention to Hispanic youth and the accuracy of data on these youth. With the closing of its Washington office in February 2006, the Youth Law Center's headquarters (and only office) in San Francisco took over administration of this award.

Instituting Conference Calls Among DMC Coordinators

In response to requests from DMC coordinators, and modeled after the bimonthly juvenile justice specialists' and compliance monitors' conference calls, OJJDP instituted DMC coordinators' conference calls in March 2006 on a bimonthly and as-needed basis. These calls provide a regular forum for DMC coordinators to share information, strategies, and concerns and to problem-solve.

Planned Activities

OJJDP's planned activities that will soon be available include:

An Annual Summary of DMC Reduction Efforts by State

OJJDP's three publications, *Disproportionate Confinement of Minority Juveniles in Secure Facilities: 1996 National Report, Disproportionate Minority Confinement: 1997 Update, and Disproportionate Minority Confinement: 2002 Update*,[2] all summarized DMC reduction efforts nationally; the latter two publications provided case studies of two states' multiyear, systematic efforts to address DMC. In response to states' requests, OJJDP will make available an annual summary of DMC reduction activities by state in the summer of each year beginning with 2006—after OJJDP has reviewed the DMC compliance plans in the states' Formula Grants applications. States can reference this document throughout the year and consult their peers regarding strategies of interest.

Training of Trainers on a DMC Community Planning Curriculum

Increasingly, OJJDP recognizes the need to target DMC reduction efforts at the local level and will make available quality training to interested sites. State and local DMC coordinators are perfectly positioned to provide such training to sites within their states. Many of them have expressed a desire to receive the necessary training to become trainers for their states. In addition, OJJDP is looking at training consultants to assist sites in states that have not designated DMC coordinators (spring of 2007).

Training of Trainers on a DMC Curriculum for Juvenile Justice Professionals

This curriculum intends to sensitize juvenile justice professionals about the existence of DMC and what they, in their respective roles, can contribute to DMC reduction. OJJDP has developed this curriculum to facilitate state and local efforts in this regard. OJJDP expects that increasing state and local capacity to provide such training within their jurisdictions will produce a positive and broad impact in the juvenile justice field over time. OJJDP plans to field test this curriculum in the summer of 2007, with the first training targeted for the early spring of 2008.

The remainder of this chapter presents a case example describing how North Carolina used federal and state resources to support its local DMC reduction efforts (vertical partnerships). The case example also demonstrates important horizontal partnerships established at the state and local levels.

North Carolina's DMC Reduction Initiative

Partnerships at the State Level

In 2001, the Governor's Crime Commission (GCC) created a permanent DMC Committee that recently became a subcommittee of North Carolina's State Advisory Group, the Juvenile Justice Planning Committee (JJPC). The DMC Subcommittee, which is staffed by a full-time DMC coordinator, provides recommendations to the JJPC regarding efforts to reduce DMC. The subcommittee is composed of representatives from local law enforcement agencies; the state's Department of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention (DJJDP), Department of Corrections, Department of Public Instruction, Administrative Office of the Court, and Department of Health and Human Services; and citizen appointments. The group recently invited new members so that each minority group identified in the federal JJDP Act is represented.

Current subcommittee strategies to address DMC in North Carolina include the following:

Demonstration projects: working with demonstration projects in four counties to provide resources, technical assistance, and ongoing monitoring and evaluation of programs and activities designed to reduce DMC in these jurisdictions. This is described in more detail in the next section.

Collaboration: collaborating with the North Carolina DJJDP to develop a system to collect accurate data disaggregated by race. The state has identified incomplete and inconsistent data and the need for improved juvenile justice information systems as key challenges to addressing DMC. The GCC has worked in conjunction with the DJJDP to develop a statewide system (NC-JOIN) that allows the state to collect statistical data in a more uniform and consistent manner. Data collected from NC-JOIN enables the GCC to compute the relative rate index of minority youth representation at all juvenile justice system contact points, as OJJDP requires. The GCC's statistical analysis center is also determining how geographic information system (GIS) mapping can be used to target DMC efforts in specific jurisdictions.

DMC awareness: increasing the awareness of DMC in the juvenile justice system and educating the public, juvenile justice professionals, as well as the GCC. This is accomplished through conference presentations, development and dissemination of materials, and technical assistance resources provided by OJJDP.

State's Partnerships With Demonstration Counties

The DMC Subcommittee determined that to reduce DMC, the state must work with local representatives. As part of the state's FY 2003 plan to address DMC, the subcommittee was to partner with four counties to address the issue of minority overrepresentation in the juvenile justice system. The criteria the subcommittee used to choose the counties included minority arrest rates, minority youth detention admission rates, youth development center admission data, suspension and expulsion rates for minority youth,

and geographic distribution. The subcommittee also considered current resources in each jurisdiction and whether each county had existing prevention or intervention programs for youth.

The subcommittee selected New Hanover, Union, Guilford, and Forsyth counties to partner with the GCC in developing county-specific plans to address minority overrepresentation. Each county established a steering committee that serves as the primary point of contact with the GCC. Meetings are held in each jurisdiction to discuss how each would address issues specific to its jurisdiction. The DMC coordinator, with the assistance of the juvenile justice specialist, provides technical assistance to these demonstration sites on grant writing, strategic planning, and mission development.

During FY 2004, the state awarded the counties planning grants so they could mobilize stakeholders and begin the process of analyzing their specific DMC issues. Each county now has a working DMC steering committee, with membership drawn from the community, law enforcement, courts, the school system, and private citizens. Each steering committee met monthly and was charged with developing a comprehensive DMC reduction plan in a process that included gathering data and assessing the extent of minority overrepresentation in the county. The planning grants ended in June and November 2005, and each county established a comprehensive, research-based DMC reduction plan in 2005. The intent of the comprehensive plan is to provide the county with clear direction on how it will implement DMC reduction activities in the following year. With guidance from the GCC, the counties are now using current grant funds to implement the specific strategies outlined in their plans.

Partnerships and Activities in Demonstration Counties

Although activities in the four demonstration counties vary, they all share three important traits:

- Each has designated a local DMC coordinator who will build and maintain local partnerships and maximize their benefits.

- Each has signed and publicized a memorandum of understanding (MOU) of all partner agencies to demonstrate the strong commitment of the partner agencies and ensure the longevity of the local partnership.

- Each local partnerships includes a local university, for its research expertise and perceived objectivity in the eyes of data providers such as schools, law enforcement, and juvenile justice.

Brief descriptions of the four demonstration counties' DMC initiatives follow.

New Hanover County

New Hanover County is located in the coastal area. Among its 172,780 residents, 16,218 are between the ages of 10 and 17 years. The median annual household income is $40,170, with 13 percent of the population living in poverty.

New Hanover County's DMC steering committee currently consists of 24 representatives from community and state agencies, institutions, and the faith community. Once the committee represented all the key stakeholders needed to effectively address DMC, it drafted an MOU and held a public signing of the document to acknowledge that DMC is an issue in the county. Further, the MOU showed the commitment of the DMC steering committee to reduce minority overrepresentation. This public MOU signing was featured in one of the county's local newspapers.

New Hanover County has hired a DMC project coordinator to lead and coordinate the DMC demonstration project. In addition, the DMC steering committee has contracted with the University of North Carolina-Wilmington to identify the appropriate instruments needed to collect DMC-specific data at the various decision points in the county's juvenile justice system. The data collection team also evaluated existing instruments to determine their effectiveness in collecting the necessary statistics to measure minority overrepresentation. Using the data collected from the research team, the DMC steering committee developed a comprehensive county plan that includes specific strategies and activities the county will implement to reduce the number of minority youth involved in the system. This plan also includes an evaluation of existing programs within the county, with recommendations for enhancement, redirection, and the institutionalization of diversionary programs.

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Union County

Union County is located in the southwest area of the state. Among its 158,000 residents, 17,560 are between the ages of 10 and 17 years. The median annual household income is $50,640, with 8 percent of the population living in poverty.

Union County's objectives are similar to those of New Hanover County, where the primary focus of its planning process included mobilizing a steering committee and developing a data system that would provide baseline DMC-specific data. The county DMC reduction plan is a direct result of the information obtained from the county's data collection efforts.

Union County has developed a DMC steering committee that is a subcommittee of the county's Juvenile Crime Prevention Council.[3] The county has also hired a DMC project coordinator who oversees the county's efforts to reduce DMC. The county held a public signing of its MOU, at which representatives from the police department, juvenile probation department, public school system, district attorney's office, community-based organizations, and social services agencies gathered to show their commitment to addressing DMC in the county. The county has focused the majority of its efforts on educating itself about the issue of DMC and possible factors that may have led to minority youth being overrepresented in the juvenile justice system. The county has also focused on identifying existing resources and creating a local data mapping system that will help the steering committee target where new services are needed to reduce the number of minority youth entering the system. Union County has partnered with Wingate University to coordinate a data collection system that it will use as a baseline evaluation system for the county. The data associated with juvenile arrests, adjudication, and disposition have been used to determine where disparities in decisionmaking may exist. The county will change policies and procedures that may have put minority youth at a greater risk for entering the juvenile justice system.

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Guilford County

Guilford County, as part of the 11-county Piedmont Triad region of North Carolina (population: 1.27 million), is centered along the Piedmont Industrial Crescent stretching from Raleigh to Charlotte. Guilford County has the third largest population in North Carolina, with 438,520 residents in 658 square miles; 48,460 of its residents are age 10 to 17 years. The median annual household income is $42,620, and 10.6 percent of residents live in poverty.

Guilford County has two major cities—Greensboro and High Point. The racial breakdown of the county is: non-Hispanic white, 62.9 percent; black or African American, 29.3 percent; Hispanic/Latino, 3.8 percent; Asian, 2.4 percent; other, 1.8 percent. North Carolina, and Guilford County in particular, are undergoing major demographic shifts as increasing numbers of immigrants and refugees settle in the state. The Triad region was built on a manufacturing economy of tobacco, textiles, and furniture. Today, however, medicine, technology, banking, and higher education fuel the region's rapid growth. In the future, commercial biotechnology is poised to become a key driver in the region's economic transition.

Guilford County has created a DMC steering committee and has partnered with the Center for Youth, Family and Community Partnerships at the University of North Carolina at Greensboro (UNCG). The center has hired a part-time DMC project coordinator to oversee day-to-day operations of the steering committee. For the planning phase of this project, representatives from UNCG, the project coordinator, and the DMC steering committee collected and analyzed local DMC data to develop intervention and prevention activities. Guilford County developed a data mapping system to assess the extent of DMC and a county plan to address minority overrepresentation.

Guilford County also held a public signing of its DMC MOU, which received media coverage in one local newspaper. The Guilford County DMC steering committee hosted a training session, "Undoing Racism,™" for its members to facilitate common understanding of the institutional issues that impact minority overrepresentation in the system. The county's goals for its DMC project are similar to the other counties' in that they are focused on achieving a consensus on a locally meaningful definition and identification of the DMC issue in order to plan prevention and intervention activities for the upcoming year.

Guilford County's DMC planning process includes issue definition and awareness, assessment and data analysis, and prevention/intervention activities. The DMC steering committee held focus groups, interviews, and stakeholder visits to identify factors that contribute to DMC in the county. This process was important in identifying potential resistance to understanding and acceptance of the DMC issue by some. The county has also completed an inventory of youth-serving resources to identify possible gaps in prevention and intervention services.

The DMC steering committee has also completed a comprehensive suspension and expulsion report entitled *Suspensions in Guilford County Schools, 2003-2004: Using*

Rates to Examine Race and School Effects (www.news-record.com/legacy/news/indepth/susrate.pdf). This report measures the extent of disproportionate minority suspensions in county schools using the relative rate index. For each school, data included the total student body membership, total number of students of each race or ethnicity (American Indian, Asian, black, Hispanic, multiethnic, and white), total number of short- and long-term suspensions, and the total number for each racial category. The data in this report revealed that some schools had great disparity in the suspension rates for minority and nonminority students, whereas other schools had little disparity. The county plans to assess all of the data collected; share it with the university, DJJDP, county schools, and law enforcement partners; and develop a portfolio of intervention and prevention efforts for local implementation.

See this chapter's appendix for an indepth profile of the Guilford County DMC reduction initiative.

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Forsyth County

Forsyth County is located in the central Piedmont area. Among its 324,360 residents, 36,497 are between the ages of 10 and 17 years. The median annual household income is $42,100, with 11 percent of the population living in poverty.

Forsyth County began addressing overrepresentation of minority youth more than 10 years ago but was unable to put a strategic focus in place. Three years ago, the county's Juvenile Crime Prevention Council began a 3-year initiative to identify community systems and local data that would reduce DMC.

In an effort to use community input to address DMC, Forsyth County conducted a series of youth focus groups to identify how people at the local level view the issues surrounding minority overrepresentation. The focus groups discussed concerns related to the family and the community and how each has an integral role in the involvement of youth in the juvenile justice system. The county has incorporated information from these focus groups into its overall county plan, which shows the importance of conducting DMC reduction efforts at the local level.

Forsyth County has partnered with a researcher from Winston-Salem State University to analyze the youth who are currently confined in the state's youth development centers. The research identified variables that contributed to confinement and developed an

intervention/prevention plan based on these variables, with the goal of reducing the rate at which youth are entering the system.

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Future Plans for North Carolina's DMC Initiative

As each county moves forward with its individualized DMC reduction plan, it is important to this initiative that activities are measured, evaluated, and eventually replicated. OJJDP requires all states addressing DMC to report on specific performance measures to ensure that DMC reduction activities are data driven and outcome based. Each county is currently charged with measuring the performance of its activities and documenting how each implemented strategy has resulted in a reduction of minority youth who have contact with the juvenile justice system. As the demonstration counties move into the evaluation and monitoring stage of their DMC reduction plans, the DMC Subcommittee expects to replicate their strategies and activities, sharing them with other counties in the state.

Endnotes

1. Visits are defined as all the activities, from beginning to end, of one visitor to a Web site. Unique visitors are individuals who have visited a Web site at least once in a fixed time.

2. See H.M. Hsia, G.S. Bridges, and R. McHale, *Disproportionate Minority Confinement: 2002 Update*, Program Summary, Washington, DC: U.S. Department of Justice, Office of Justice Programs, Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention. This summary and other DMC-related publications are available online at www.ojjdp.ncjrs.gov/dmc/pubs/index.html.

3. Each county in North Carolina has an established Juvenile Crime Prevention Council that receives funds from the North Carolina Department of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention.

Appendix: Guilford County's DMC Reduction Initiative

A Community-Academic Collaboration To Drive the DMC Project

The Guilford County[1] DMC project began with the convening of a group of representatives from the local Juvenile Crime Prevention Council (JCPC) in November 2003. This group invited the University of North Carolina at Greensboro's Center for Youth, Family, and Community Partnerships (CYFCP), which has been involved with juvenile justice issues in Guilford County over the past several years (Forsbrey, Frabutt, and Smith, 2005; MacKinnon-Lewis and Frabutt 2001; Shelton, Frabutt, and Arbuckle, 2003), to write a DMC planning proposal to the North Carolina Governor's Crime Commission. Since the mission of the CYFCP is to build the capacity of families, service providers, researchers, teachers, and communities to ensure the health and well-being of children, the aims and scope of the project were a natural fit with the Center's experience and existing portfolio of initiatives.

Immediately, CYFCP recommended that the working group expand to become a larger committee for the DMC process. The group now includes representatives from county organizations that address concerns of children and youth (police departments from High Point and Greensboro, the Guilford County Sheriff's Office, Guilford County Schools, the county's Department of Social Services and Department of Mental Health and Public Health, district court judges, nonprofit organizations, and parents of youth involved with the juvenile justice system).

Since July 2004, a cohesive, representative, and action-oriented committee has executed the Guilford County DMC Planning Grant (see table 1 for a listing of participating agencies). A project management team (including a half-time project coordinator, a quarter-time project director, and a graduate research assistant) based at CYFCP has served as the central convening, organizing, and planning arm for the project. This team issues monthly reports to the Guilford County JCPC on DMC committee activities.

As one of its first project activities to raise awareness of the societal context of DMC issues, the committee participated in "Undoing Racism"™ training. The People's Institute for Survival and Beyond, based in New Orleans, Louisiana, provided the training, which uses dialog, reflection, role-playing, strategic planning, and presentations. The intensive process challenges participants to analyze the structures of power and privilege that hinder social equity and prepares them to be effective organizers for justice. More than 20 DMC Committee members attended this event in June 2004.

Another milestone event occurred in September 2004, when members of the DMC Committee joined with the county school superintendent, the police chiefs of High Point and Greensboro, the county sheriff, the chief juvenile court counselor for the Department

of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention, the chief district court judge, the public defender, the district attorney, and the director of the Department of Social Services in signing a memorandum of understanding (MOU). This document formally and publicly acknowledged their collective commitment to identifying and addressing DMC in Guilford County. Moreover, signatories agreed to give serious consideration to subsequent recommendations following an analysis of agency data.

Table 1: DMC Committee Members and Agency Affiliations

Alcohol and Drug Services
Black Child Development
Center for Youth, Family, and Community Partnerships
Department of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention
Department of Social Services
District Court Judges
Faithworks Ministries
Family Life Council
Family Services of the Piedmont
Governor's Crime Commission
Greensboro City Council
Greensboro Education and Development Council
Greensboro Housing Authority
Greensboro Lifeskills Center
Greensboro Parks and Recreation
Greensboro Police Department
Guilford Center
Guilford County Department of Juvenile Court Alternatives
Guilford County Manager's Office
Guilford County Schools
Guilford County Sheriff's Department
Guilford Education Alliance
Guilford Technical Community College
High Point Parks and Recreation
High Point Police Department
Juvenile Crime Prevention Council
NC A&T University
North Carolina Office of the Juvenile Defender
One Step Further
Parent Representatives
United Way
Win-Win Resolutions
Youth Focus
YWCA of Greensboro

A critical working group derived from the overall DMC Committee was the Resource and Needs Subcommittee, chaired by a parent advocate and representative. The Resource and Needs Subcommittee was tasked with identifying and cataloging a local continuum of services—both prevention and intervention—that could reduce DMC. Moreover, by identifying the array of existing services, the subcommittee would gain a better understanding of services that were needed but were currently unavailable in the county. The listing was intended as a resource for parents, service providers, school staff, law enforcement, and youth-serving organizations seeking appropriate referrals. Drawing from resources such as United Way's 211 listing of community-based and governmental services, existing program documentation, and committee members' suggestions, the subcommittee produced a 29-page list of supportive services for youth. The list of services and resources is organized according to major categories, such as afterschool programs, mentoring, counseling, and substance abuse. The document contains contact information for each program or service, a short description of program content, the intended audience, and active hyperlinks for programs or services that have Web pages. The document was posted to Web sites of agencies serving youth throughout the county (e.g., Guilford Education Alliance [http://guilfordeducationalliance.org/links.htm] and UNCG Center for Youth, Family, and Community Partnerships) and will be routinely distributed to parents, school administrators, law enforcement agencies, juvenile court counselors, and other youth service providers in both hard copy and electronic format.

The second major focus of the county's efforts during the planning grant year was to collect, analyze, and summarize relevant data that would inform the county's understanding of the dynamics surrounding juvenile justice decision points impacting DMC. Over the course of the planning grant, the Data Subcommittee worked in concert with the Focus Group Subcommittee to compile both quantitative and qualitative data that would provide insight into the community's understanding of the DMC issue. The following section reviews those data sources (i.e., schools, law enforcement, juvenile justice, and focus groups) in more detail.

A Data-Driven Process To Inform Action

School Data

Numerous investigations have documented the link between school suspensions and subsequent entry into the juvenile and criminal justice systems (e.g., Mendel 2003; Wald and Losen 2003). Therefore, one of the DMC Committee's key goals was to measure the extent of disproportionate black suspensions in Guilford County schools. One way to do that was to compare black student suspensions with white student suspensions.

Such comparisons can be done in various ways. The measure that OJJDP uses to assess disproportionate minority contact within the juvenile justice system is called a Relative Rate Index (RRI). The RRI is preferable to other measures that are affected by the relative size of minority youth populations and the number of different minority populations to be compared. The RRI method reduces statistical bias, allows accurate comparisons, and can be used to compare multiple racial and ethnic groups. For these reasons, the DMC Committee chose to use this method to analyze suspensions in the county's school system.

The Chief Student Services Officer for the county school system provided the DMC Management Team with suspension data that the Data Warehouse for Guilford County Schools had compiled during the 2003–2004 school year. Data were organized by school, race, and ethnicity. For each school, the team reviewed data that included total student body membership, total number of students of each race or ethnicity (categorized as American Indian, Asian, black, Hispanic, multiethnic, and white), total number of short- and long-term suspensions for the school, and total number for each racial or ethnic group within the school. Importantly, data were unduplicated, which means every count represented a different student rather than multiple suspensions for individual students. These data allowed the team to examine disparities in black and white suspension rates for each school.

The team calculated suspension rates and relative rate indexes for every school in the county, comparing the short- and long-term suspension rates of black students with those of white students. The team calculated suspension rates for each race by dividing the number of short- or long-term suspensions for each race by the total number of students of that race and multiplying by 100. Next, the team calculated the RRI for each school by dividing black short- and long-term suspension rates by white short- and long-term suspension rates. For instance, if school XYZ had a black short-term suspension rate of

15.1, the team would divide that suspension rate by the white short-term suspension rate of 5.8 and arrive at an RRI of approximately 2.6. This means black students were short-term suspended at 2.6 times the rate of white students; or, for every white student suspended, 2.6 black students were suspended.

The team presented the findings in several tables, arranged by school level, beginning with data for elementary schools, then middle schools, high schools, and other schools like middle colleges and multilevel schools (see table 2 for sample school data). School names and total student membership were listed on the left, and short- and long-term suspension rates were broken down for white and black students in the cells of the tables. RRIs for short- and long-term suspensions were provided for each school in the far right columns. To protect the privacy of individual students, the team reported only rates, rather than frequencies, for each school.

Table 2: Guilford County High School's Short- and Long-Term Suspension Rates, 2003–2004

	White Rates		Black Rates		Relative Rate Index	
Schools (student membership)	**Short Term**	**Long Term**	**Short Term**	**Long Term**	**Short Term**	**Long Term**
Andrews (1,166)	4.4	0.6	22.7	3.5	5.2	5.8
Eastern (891)	18.3	3.3	30.4	6.0	1.7	1.8
Grimsley (1,738)	1.1	0.1	20.0	4.4	18.2	44.0
Southeast (1,230)	12.7	0.8	19.7	2.5	1.6	3.1
Western (1,299)	9.3	0.4	27.0	2.7	2.9	6.8

A review of the tabular data indicates that although some schools have relatively high rates of black suspensions compared with white suspensions, other schools have very little (if any) problem with disproportionate black suspensions. Discrepancies between black and white suspensions were seen at all school levels, including elementary, middle, and high school. Although no students were long-term suspended from elementary schools, elementary schools reported some of the largest racial disparities in short-term suspension rates.

Observations such as these indicate that routinely calculating an RRI will enable schools to proactively monitor racial and ethnic disparities in suspension rates and take steps to address imbalances before they become larger problems. Moreover, schools that do not currently exhibit issues with disproportionate black suspensions will benefit from monitoring their RRI as much as schools that are actively working to reduce disparities.

Law Enforcement Data

Review of law enforcement decision points is a critical step in identifying those pathways into the juvenile justice system that most impact DMC (Cox and Bell 2001). As Hoyt and colleagues noted, "Racial disparities in juvenile detention begin at the arrest stage. In fact, it is these disparities that set the stage for disproportionality at all the other decision points in the court process" (Hoyt et al. 2002, 68). Other sites have discovered that variability in police practices (e.g., arrest and transport) resulted in differential treatment of minority youth (Pope, Lovell, and Hsia, 1996). Given these observations, throughout the planning phase, the county's DMC Committee collaborated with the Greensboro Police Department, the High Point Police Department, and the Guilford County Sheriff's Department to examine locally relevant decision point information. In particular, the DMC Committee requested that each law enforcement agency provide juvenile (ages 6 to 15) arrest information for calendar year 2004.

Table 3a indicates that the Greensboro Police Department recorded 1,853 juvenile arrests in 2004, with African American youth representing 81 percent of all youth arrested. Table 3b shows that nearly 59 percent of all juvenile arrests involved an African American male, and nearly 23 percent of all arrests involved an African American female. The most common charges reported in Greensboro were runaway, larceny, simple assault, and disorderly conduct.

Table 3a: Greensboro Police Department Juvenile Arrests, 2004 (*N* = 1,853)

Race (*n*)	Percentage of Total	Gender
Blacks (1,509)	81.44%	72.10% male 27.90% female
Whites (253)	13.65%	52.57% male 47.43% female
Other (72)	3.89%	73.61% male 26.39% female

Table 3b Greensboro Police Department Juvenile Arrests, 2004 (*N* = 1,853)

Race and Gender (*n*)	Percentage of Total
Black males (1,088)	58.72%
Black females (421)	22.72%
White males (133)	7.18%
White females (120)	6.48%
Other males (53)	2.86%
Other females (19)	1.03%

A nearly identical pattern emerged in the analysis of the High Point Police Department's juvenile arrest data for the same time period. Table 4a shows that African Americans accounted for 81 percent of the 742 juvenile arrests recorded. As indicated in table 4b, African American males (57 percent) and African American females (23 percent) were most represented among all arrested juveniles. The most common charges reported in High Point were affray/simple assault, disorderly conduct, larceny, and breaking and entering.

Table 4a: High Point Police Department Juvenile Arrests, 2004 (*N* = 742)

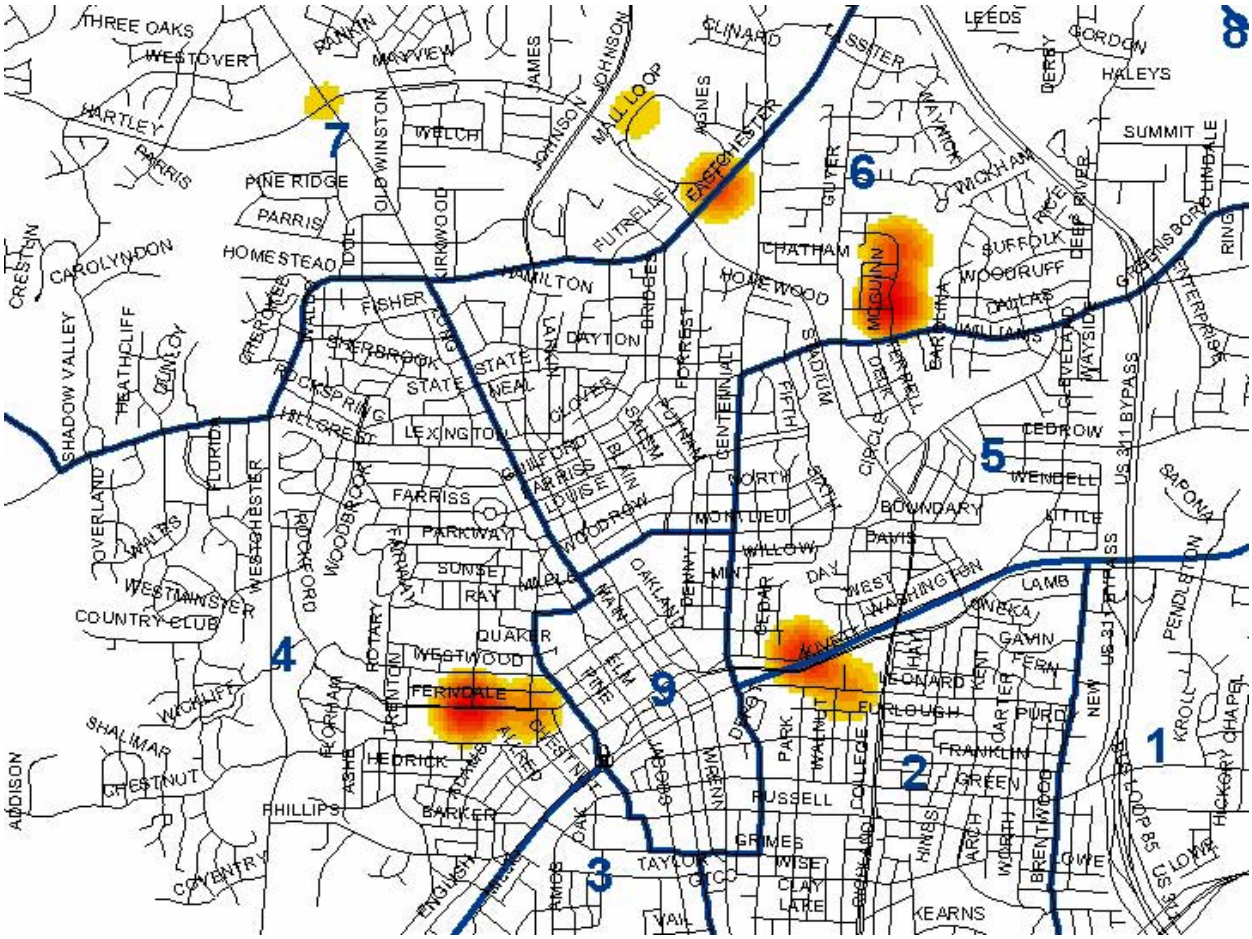
Race (*n*)	Percentage of Total	Gender
Blacks (596)	81.20%	70.97% male 29.03% female
Whites (138)	18.80%	61.59% male 38.41% female
Other (8)	1.08%	87.50% male 12.50% female

Table 4b: High Point Police Department Juvenile Arrests, 2004 (*N* = 742)

Race and Gender (*n*)	Percentage of Total
Black males (423)	57.01%
Black females (173)	23.32%
White males (85)	11.46%
White females (53)	7.14%
Other males (7)	.94%
Other females (1)	.13%

Figure 1 below is a map that uses color intensity to illustrate geographic patterns of juvenile offending that the High Point Police Department provided. The areas of deep red/orange on the map denote locations with a high density of juvenile arrests. As the DMC Committee reviewed this map, it became clear that the highest arrest densities were areas clustered around school addresses (e.g., High Point Central High School, Ferndale Middle School, Andrews High School).[2] Just as it has been documented at other sites (e.g., Wald and Losen, 2003), this local information has been critical to the DMC Committee's clearer understanding of the obvious link between behavioral issues at school and entry into the juvenile criminal justice system.[3]

Figure 1: Density Map of 2004 Juvenile Arrests in High Point



Juvenile Justice Data

The purpose of this component of the team's data-gathering efforts was to measure the extent of disproportionate minority contact in Guilford County's juvenile court system. One way to do that is to compare white youth's contacts in the system with African American youth's contacts. Such comparisons can be done in various ways. As noted earlier, the measure that OJJDP uses to assess disproportionate minority contact within the juvenile justice system is the RRI. To produce analyses consistent with those conducted at the state level, the team also used this method to analyze minority contacts in the county's juvenile court system.

Using NC-JOIN, an online data system maintained by North Carolina's Department of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention, the department's data analyst provided data by age, race, and gender for key decision points in the county's juvenile court system for calendar year 2004. Among the data reviewed were total complaints received, complaints approved, complaints not approved, complaints adjudicated, complaints disposed, and complaints dismissed. These data were organized by race and by offense severity. Likewise, the DMC Committee reviewed counts of county admissions to juvenile detention, Juvenile Crime Prevention Council (JCPC) programs, and youth development centers.

In 2004, most complaints against youth were not for serious or violent offenses. In fact, as table 5 shows, the five most common complaints were for misdemeanor offenses, which is not surprising considering the most common charges reported by law enforcement agencies. Table 6 provides an example (complaints received) of the type of descriptive information that the team reviewed for each juvenile justice decision point. For each race, the table reports simple frequencies for each category offense (grouped according to severity). For example, 47 complaints were received for Asian youth in 2004: 2 violent, 10 serious, 26 minor, and 9 status. Of note in table 6 is the observation that of 3,013 total complaints received in 2004, 2,196 (73 percent) involved black youth and 633 (21 percent) involved white youth. No other racial category exceeded 2 percent of the total.

Table 5: Most Common Complaints, Guilford County Juvenile Court System, 2004

Complaint	Frequency
Simple Assault	335
Larceny	250
Simple Affray	163
Breaking and Entering	133
Disorderly Conduct by Engaging in Fighting	126

Table 6: Complaints Received, by Offense Class, Guilford County Juvenile Court System, 2004

Race	A-E (Violent)	F-I, A1 (Serious)	1-3 (m) (Minor)	Infraction	Status	Totals
Asian	2	10	26		9	47
Black	46	507	1,507	6	130	2,196
Latino	1	9	32	1	6	49
Multiracial		10	17		5	32
Native American		4	3		2	9
Other		2	22		3	27
Unknown		10	9		1	20
White	8	110	460	8	47	633
Totals	57	662	2,076	15	203	3,013

The team calculated incidence rates and RRIs for each decision point in the county's juvenile court system, comparing rates of occurrence for black youth with those of white youth. First, the team calculated incidence rates for each race by dividing the number of incidents for each race by the total county youth population for that race and multiplying by 100. Next, the team divided black incident rates by white incident rates to calculate an RRI for each decision point.

Table 7 (next page) provides an example of incidence rates and relative rates at the point of complaints received. For example, in the minor complaint category, the incidence rate was 1.7 for white youth and 8.6 for black youth. Stated another way, out of all the white youth in Guilford County (27,593), 1.7 percent received a minor complaint in 2004. In contrast, of all the black youth in Guilford County (17,426), 8.6 percent received a minor complaint during the same time period. Also note that for each level of severity, the incidence rate is higher for black youth.

Continuing the above example, to calculate the RRI, divide the incidence rate of 8.6 for minor complaints received for black youth by the incidence rate of 1.7 for white youth to arrive at an RRI of 5.058 or approximately 5.1. This means minor complaints were reported against black youth at 5.1 times the rate of white youth; or, for every minor complaint involving a white youth, 5.1 minor complaints involved black youth.

Table 7: RRI Complaints Received, by Offense Class, Guilford County Juvenile Court System, 2004

	Number of White Youth	Rate of Occurrence (White Youth)	Number of Black Youth	Rate of Occurrence (Black Youth)	Relative Rate Index
Population at risk (ages 10–17)	27,593*	----------	17,426*	----------	
Complaints received (minor)	460	1.7	1507	8.6	5.1
Complaints received (serious)	110	.4	507	2.9	7.3
Complaints received (violent)	8	.03	46	.3	10.0

*Population numbers were derived from Puzzanchera, C., Finnegan, T. and Kang, W. (2005). "Easy Access to Juvenile Populations." Online: www.ojjdp.ncjrs.gov/ojstatbb/ezapop/.

Focus Groups

The DMC Committee was commited to seeking the voices and experiences of several groups directly involved with DMC issues. Therefore, in the spring of 2005, the committee conducted four focus group sessions with caregivers of court-involved youth, court-involved males, court-involved females, and juvenile court counselors.

The committee convened the focus groups to explore participants' personal experiences and seek their insights into ways the juvenile justice system could address the issues around DMC in the county. Each session was audiorecorded and transcribed. Findings and interpretations represent major themes and perspectives of the sessions as summarized by multiple observers and readers.

New Directions

As the DMC project moves beyond its first year, a set of four interrelated focus areas will guide its work. First, sites across the country concur that data review and decision-point mapping consistently emerge as critical initial steps in DMC reduction efforts because these processes often set the stage for fundamental change (Nellis 2005). "Data identify how DMC looks and how it operates in a system, without resorting to anecdotes or emotionally charged debates over individual bias" (Hoytt et al. 2002, 14). Given those observations, the project's first focus area is DMC data management and utilization. That is, each quarter, the team will track school, law enforcement, and juvenile justice DMC trends.

An emphasis on cultural competence used in DMC decisionmaking is the second focus area. Cultural competency training for key juvenile justice decisionmakers is a promising strategy across multiple sites (Nellis 2005). Misunderstandings about cultural differences and racial stereotyping frequently contribute to differential sentencing decisions for black

and white youth who have committed similar crimes. Some culturally based expectations of youth that influence judgments and tend to vary across racial and ethnic groups include a "proper" display of respect toward officials and an appropriate expression of remorse for delinquent behavior (Bridges and Steen 1998). Because "cultural competence is not a fixed characteristic of an agency; rather, it is an ongoing developmental process that agencies and individuals engage in to address diversity in the community-service area," institutionalized cultural competency training teaches agency officials to recognize and minimize the influence of cultural differences on their decisionmaking processes and to empower youth to more successfully negotiate the juvenile justice system (Cox and Bell 2001, 38).

When Devine, Coolbaugh, and Jenkins (1998) examined the strategies that five states used to successfully reduce DMC, they found that multiple-approach, rather than single-approach, strategies were most effective. Specifically, strategies that incorporate family and youth advocacy, coalition building among youth-serving agencies, and targeted resource development appear to lower DMC rates. Similarly, Cox and Bell (2001) maintain that DMC increases when communities lack sufficient and appropriate detention alternatives, fail to identify and address gaps in needed services, or exclude caregivers and family members from decisionmaking processes. Therefore, the third focus area is the promotion and utilization of targeted prevention services.

The fourth major focus area is to develop and implement agency policy, procedure, and practice modifications to impact DMC. Small, cost-free changes in policies, procedures, or practices have demonstrated powerful impacts on DMC. For instance, some agencies have reduced DMC by changing detention eligibility criteria so that they detain only the highest risk offenders (Orlando 1999), others developed race-neutral assessment instruments for law enforcement officers to use in the field to guide their decisions to detain or release youth (Rust 1999), and still others modified their operating hours to accommodate the schedules of working parents (Cox and Bell 2001).

Opportunities and Challenges

Guilford County embarked on this DMC work 15 years ago, during the early 1990s. What came of that effort was little more than a plan that was promptly shelved and received no further attention. This time, the county has committed itself to making its DMC efforts goal driven and action oriented. It is significant that the county invited the university to take a lead role in the first place. This is a result of several years of working with the community service providers and establishing relationships. In many communities, service providers and/or the system itself would be host for this kind of project, with university participation being ancillary. In this instance, the grant was awarded to the university, not to a community-based organization or collaborative. Unlike the last time the county undertook DMC activities, the CYFCP has served as a centralized, objective, convening organization that has taken a clear managerial lead (grant management, logistics, research, agency coordination) in the project. Having an engaged, university-based center involved in project management was useful for several other aspects of the project. For example, the project's commitment to impartially and objectively receiving and sharing data from schools, law enforcement, and juvenile

justice contributed greatly to project success. Likewise, the center's faculty and graduate student expertise was brought to bear on the collection and analysis of quantitative and qualitative data and immediate dissemination through reports, fact sheets, handouts, and presentations.

Appendix Endnotes

1. As part of the 11-county Piedmont Triad region (population: 1.27 million) of North Carolina, Guilford County is centered along the Piedmont Industrial Crescent stretching from Raleigh to Charlotte. Guilford County has the third-highest population in the state at 421,000.

2. Another area with a high arrest density was observed at the Oak Hollow Mall.

3. Although not reproduced here, the Greensboro Police Department provided a similar geographic map that showed patterns of juvenile offending clustered near schools.

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