

DMC Action Network e-News

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

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

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

DMC / Juvenile Justice
ActionNetwork Models for Change

Models for Change Core States				Models for Change Partner States			
Pennsylvania	Illinois	Louisiana	Washington	Kansas	Maryland	Wisconsin	North Carolina
Berks County	Peoria	Jefferson Parish	Pierce County	Sedgwick County	Baltimore City	Rock County	Union County
Allegheny County		Rapides Parish	Benton-Franklin Counties	Seward County	Baltimore County	Outagamie County	Carrabus County
Philadelphia				Lyon-Chase County	Montgomery County	Kenosha County	
Lancaster County					Prince George's County		
CORE SITES: Receive \$ directly from the MacArthur Foundation for Network participation and DMC strategies in the MFC core states.				PARTNER SITES: Receive \$ directly from CCLP for Network participation and DMC strategies in the Partner States.		REPLICATION SITES: Receive \$ directly from CCLP for Network participation and replication of DMC strategies in either Core or Partner States.	
LEARNING SITES: Participate in Network group learning activities. Receive no direct funding from MacArthur Foundation or CCLP.							

[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-Negrone 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-Negrone. "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 jszanyi@cclp.org or 202-637-0377 x108. For a PDF version of this newsletter, [click here](#).