

DMC Action Network e-News

Issue #6 | November 2009

In This Issue

[35 Years of the JJDP](#)

[Learn More about JJDP
Reauthorization](#)

[Keeping Reforms on
Track while Cutting Back:
The Kansas Story](#)

[OJJDP Recognizes
Baltimore City in DMC
Reduction Strategies](#)

[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.

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

Not a DMC e-News Subscriber?

Ensure that you receive the latest news and resources on DMC reduction. [Click here to sign up.](#)

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

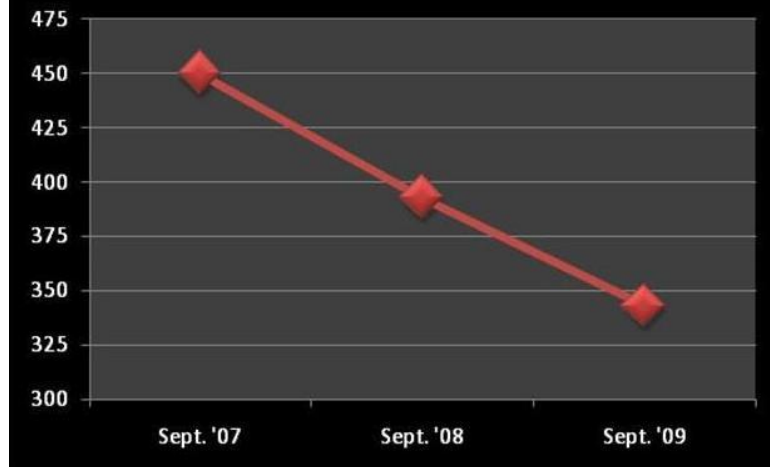
In the face of budget cuts, the Kansas Juvenile Justice Authority has managed to preserve its community-level services by reducing the number of secure correctional facilities throughout the state while also reducing the number of youth in correctional facilities system-wide.

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.”

Kansas Juvenile Correctional Facility Population



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 jszanyj@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.

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](#).