Adding Up Models for Change:
Initial Findings from the
Models for Change Database

ModelsforChange

Systems Reform in Juvenile Justice

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Models for Change is an effort to create successful and replicable models of juvenile justice reform through targeted investments in key states, with core support from the John D. and Catherine T. MacArthur Foundation. Models for Change seeks to accelerate progress toward a more effective, fair, and developmentally sound juvenile justice system that holds young people accountable for their actions, provides for their rehabilitation, protects them from harm, increases their life chances, and manages the risk they pose to themselves and to the public. The initiative is underway in Illinois, Pennsylvania, Louisiana, and Washington, and through action networks focusing on key issues, in California, Colorado, Connecticut, Florida, Kansas, Maryland, Massachusetts, New Jersey, North Carolina, Ohio, Texas, and Wisconsin.

Adding Up Models for Change:

Initial Findings from the Models for Change Database

Models for Change is an ambitious multi-state juvenile justice reform initiative intended to guide and accelerate the nation's progress toward more rational, fair, effective, and developmentally appropriate responses to young people in conflict with the law. Launched in 2004 by the John D. and Catherine T. MacArthur Foundation, Models for Change now supports comprehensive policy and practice reform activities in 4 core states—Pennsylvania, Illinois, Louisiana, and Washington—as well as 12 additional partner states and over 35 local jurisdictions. Its extensive and still-growing network of partners includes state officials and administrative agencies, local courts and probation departments, prosecutors, defenders, researchers, advocates and juvenile justice experts of all kinds. Their combined efforts have created a striking mosaic of change in jurisdictions across the country, from local practice improvements to major reforms in state policy, funding and organization.

To date, eight years into the initiative, more than $100 million has been invested in Models for Change, in the form of 204 grants to 92 separate agencies and organizations. Grantees have used Models for Change funds to engage in a variety of activities, directed at a range of issues and problems, in an effort to develop models of successful system change that can be studied and adapted in other jurisdictions. Among other things, they have worked to find better ways of preparing young people in custody for successful reintegration into their communities; of increasing collaboration and information-sharing among multiple agencies serving the same youth; of strengthening

the juvenile defense bar, and ensuring timely access to engaged and qualified juvenile defenders; of understanding and reducing racial and ethnic disparities in juvenile justice processing; of screening and assessing court-involved young people and meeting their identified mental health treatment needs; and of expanding the array of safe and effective alternatives to the harmful, wasteful, and unnecessary warehousing of youth.

How to account for and assess all this activity?

There is no simple method. Models for Change was deliberately designed to be wide-ranging—to support state and local reformers in a variety of settings, working in a variety of issue areas, and taking a variety of approaches. By funding reform efforts that acknowledged and reflected the complex variations in the nation's juvenile justice systems, Models for Change sought to generate a broad and flexible range of system reform models. But this strategy makes it challenging even to document the activities of the initiative's network of partners, let alone to track and quantify all that they have accomplished.

In 2009, the Foundation engaged a management consulting firm, Bennett Midland LLC, to design a new kind of management tool for Models for Change: a database that could serve as a comprehensive inventory of the initiative's investments and activities, a record of progress for grants initiative-wide, and a source for analytical data to inform ongoing management decisions as the initiative progresses. This management tool would combine and relate data on the characteristics of all Models for Change grants and grantees with detailed information on the varieties of reform work the grants supported and the concrete changes they helped produce. In effect, it would *classify, sort*, and *aggregate* Models for Change—the whole array of its investments, activities and accomplishments—so that the Foundation and its partners could better assess and understand the ways it has contributed to juvenile justice systems reform.
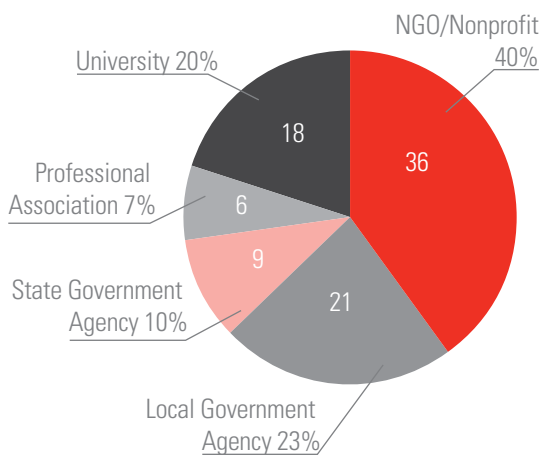
The Models for Change Database that resulted is an experimental prototype, with the usual bugs and inconsistencies. It is also a work in progress, with information from multiple sources continually being entered and edited, cleaned and analyzed. But it has now been in use long enough, and is sufficiently populated with data, to yield some useful preliminary insights into Models for Change.

A Taxonomy of Models for Change Grants

The Models for Change Database contains two basic types of information: *taxonomy* information and *progress* information, recorded as data and organized in a way that is "relational"—meaning all the bits of information can potentially be linked and correlated. Taxonomy information includes data on grant characteristics (such as grant size and duration) and grantees (such as type of organization and jurisdictional location), as well as grant aims and focus areas. Progress information consists of self-reported "progress events" associated with grants, selected from a standardized index of forty possible kinds of changes related to juvenile justice policy or practice. Data for the first six years of the Models for Change initiative were entered by Bennett Midland on the basis of the Foundation's grant files and grantees' annual and final reports. Subsequent data were entered retroactively by Models for Change grantees using an on-line reporting tool. All current Models for Change grantees are required to do progress index reporting on an annual basis.

The basic taxonomy information in the Models for Change Database provides a simplified picture of the initiative as a whole—a useful thing, given its size, scope and complexity. For example, a third of all Models for Change grantees have been state or local units of government. Another 40% have been nonprofit organizations and 20% have been universities.

Models for Change Grantees

University 20% — 18
NGO/Nonprofit 40% — 36
Professional Association 7% — 6
State Government Agency 10% — 9
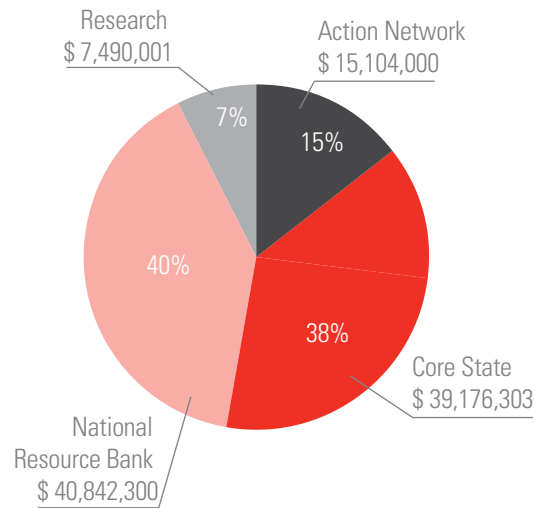Local Government Agency 23% — 21

The largest number of grants have provided support to state-level reform activity in one or the other of the four core Models for Change states. In all, 60% of grants have supported work at the state or local level in the four core states.

Models for Change Grant Types

Research 3% — 6
Action Network 3% — 7
National Resource Bank 32% — 65
Core State 62% — 126
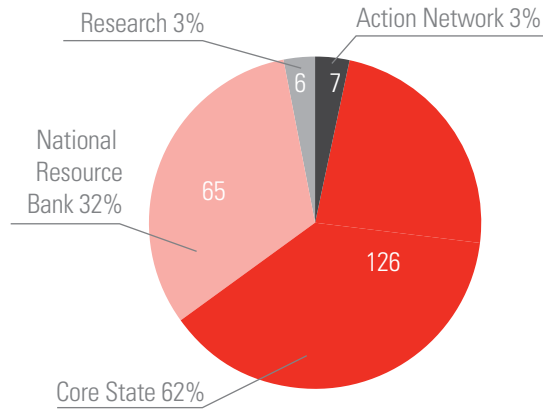
On the other hand, a very substantial portion of Models for Change *funding* has gone into the National Resource "Bank"—the network of Models for Change-supported national organizations that provide guidance, advice, training, and other expert assistance to state and local reform partners.

Models for Change Funding by Grant Type

Research $ 7,490,001 — 7%
Action Network $ 15,104,000 — 15%
National Resource Bank $ 40,842,300 — 40%
Core State $ 39,176,303 — 38%

Most Models for Change grants have been substantial: almost 90% have been for $100,000 or more, with over 60% falling into the $100,000 to $500,000 range—typically for two years. But as you would expect, given the governmental status of many of the grantees, grants have generally represented less than 5% of grantees' organization's budgets.

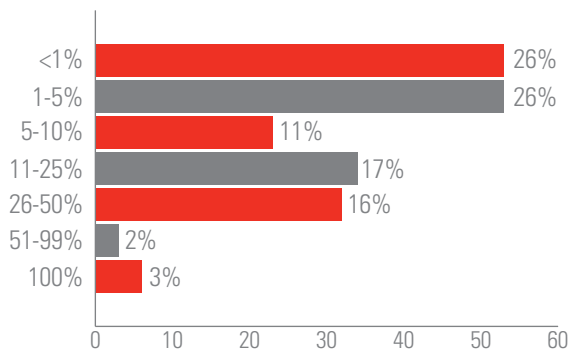## Models for Change Grant Sizes

Grant Size	Percentage
<100k	11%
101-300k	38%
301-500k	25%
500k-1m	13%
>1m	13%
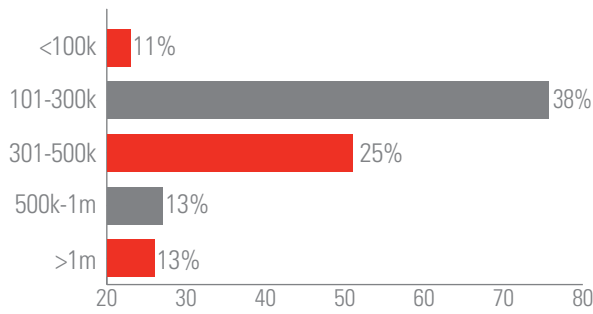
Grants as Percentage of Grantee Budgets

Percentage of Budget	Percentage
<1%	26%
1-5%	26%
5-10%	11%
11-25%	17%
26-50%	16%
51-99%	2%
100%	3%

Grant Goals and Activities

What broad problems have Models for Change grants been directed at solving? The initiative is structured in such a way that partners in each of the four "core" states are responsible for identifying primary target areas for reform work. Work on these issues is calculated not only to address significant state weaknesses, but to serve as leverage points for larger system reforms. As a result, Models for Change does not focus on any single issue, but on an array of important and
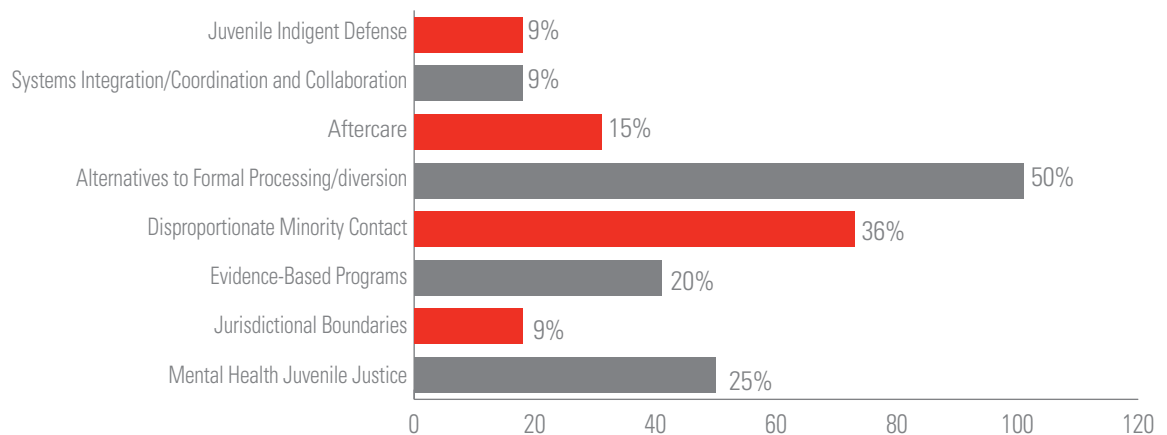
interconnected ones. Moreover, grants to many Models for Change participants have been directed at more than one substantive issue. For example, grants to local jurisdictions participating in Models for Change often support reform work addressing most or all of the targeted areas identified as priorities in state work plans.

Still, the taxonomy data show that the majority of Models for Change grants in the four core states have had, as at least one of their purposes, improving, expanding, or increasing access to alternative ways of responding to juvenile offending without court processing and incarceration. A substantial number of grants have also been directed at understanding and reducing racial and ethnic disparities in the handling of court-involved youth, and at more effectively meeting the mental health treatment needs of youth in the justice system.
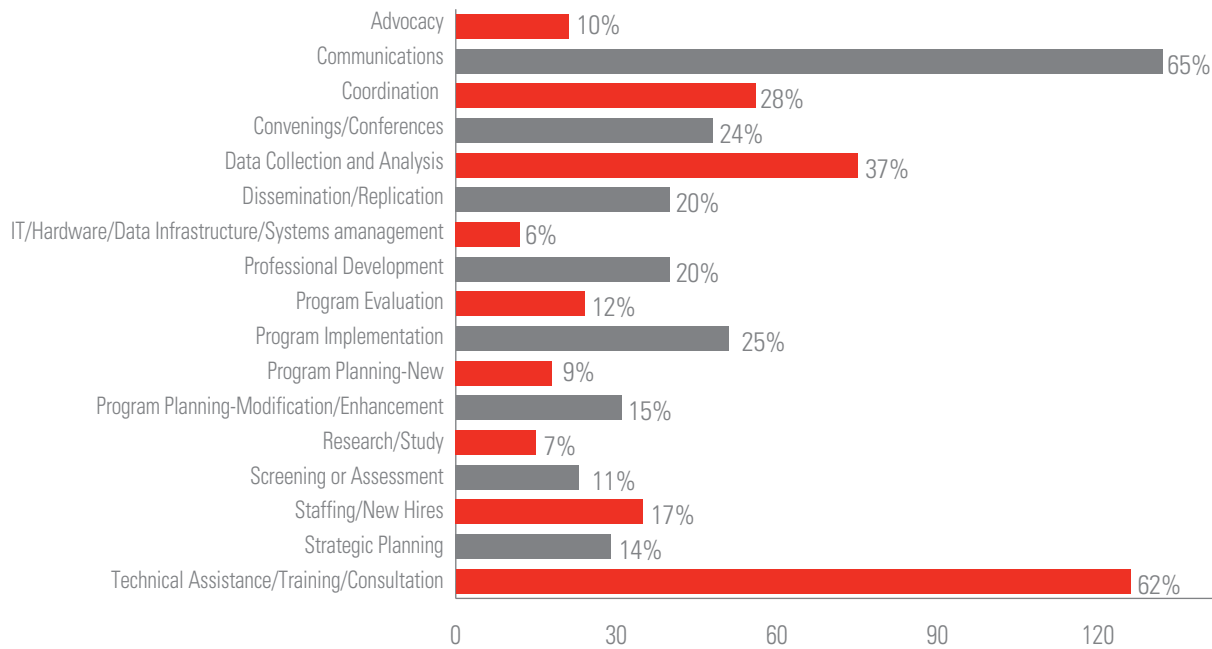
Models for Change grants can also be classified according to the *ways* they address identified problems—that is, by the broad kinds of strategic activities they support.

Again, many if not most grants supported more than one kind of strategic activity. But more Models for Change grants—and more Models for Change dollars—supported communications work (including reports, media outreach, toolkits, program brochures, media materials, etc.) than any other category of activity. In all, 65% of all grants included communications as a focus area, and 72% of all funding went to grants featuring communications as a focus area. The next most common focus of activity was the provision of technical assistance, training, and consultation to practitioners and policy-makers (62% of grants, 68% of grant funds), followed by data collection/analysis (37% of grants, 33% of grant funds). Other common clusters include

Models for Change Grant Goals

Goal	Percentage
Juvenile Indigent Defense	9%
Systems Integration/Coordination and Collaboration	9%
Aftercare	15%
Alternatives to Formal Processing/diversion	50%
Disproportionate Minority Contact	36%
Evidence-Based Programs	20%
Jurisdictional Boundaries	9%
Mental Health Juvenile Justice	25%

Models for Change Grant Focus Activities

Activity	Value
Advocacy	10%
Communications	65%
Coordination	28%
Convenings/Conferences	24%
Data Collection and Analysis	37%
Dissemination/Replication	20%
IT/Hardware/Data Infrastructure/Systems amanagement	6%
Professional Development	20%
Program Evaluation	12%
Program Implementation	25%
Program Planning-New	9%
Program Planning-Modification/Enhancement	15%
Research/Study	7%
Screening or Assessment	11%
Staffing/New Hires	17%
Strategic Planning	14%
Technical Assistance/Training/Consultation	62%

program planning, implementation, and replication, and evaluation and other research.

The mix of grant activities has varied depending on the target issues addressed. For example, grants addressing the rightsizing of jurisdictional boundaries were somewhat more likely to involve advocacy and communications work than other grants. Grants aimed at improving juvenile indigent defense more often involved convenings and professional development activities. Grants directed at understanding and reducing racial and ethnic disparities, promoting evidence-based practices, and expanding alternatives to formal processing and confinement were all more likely to support work involving data collection and analysis.

An Index of Models for Change Progress

As noted above, the Models for Change Database does not merely inventory grants and grant activities. It also attempts to systematically document and quantify the outcomes of grant-making across all sites—by collecting and cataloguing grant-related achievements in terms of standardized "progress events." To date, Models for Change grant recipients have collectively reported a total of 2309 of these progress events. Each represents a change of some kind, somewhere along an extraordinarily broad spectrum from the most modest to the most significant.

Local production of a Spanish-language brochure for families coming to juvenile court for the first time— that's a progress event. So is a new statewide mental health screening protocol, or a major public investment in evidence-based programming. Obviously, there is no sense in which all these progress events are equivalent or fungible. Even progress events that technically belong to the same category may differ enormously in their meaning and practical impact. But it may still be useful, at least for rough accounting purposes, to treat them all as units and to use them to get an idea of the overall volume of change flowing from the work of Models for Change grantees.

In reviewing the whole array of reported progress events, a few basic types stand out:

Publications and other communications. By far the most common single kind of progress event has been publications, including toolkits, policy briefs, training curricula and other kinds of documents produced by Models for Change partners and released to the field and the public. Some 326 such publications have been reported, which represents about 14% of the progress event total to date. These range from very substantial and widely disseminated works like the multi-part *Toward Developmentally Appropriate Practice: A Juvenile Court Training Curriculum*, to less formal and polished tools or reports that have nonetheless been shared outside the initiative as a way of spreading knowledge and encouraging

replication of reforms—a detention intake questionnaire developed by Jefferson Parish, or a script for a focus group meeting with African-American youth used in Berks County, PA. In addition, there have been more than 500 other kinds of communication-related progress events—such as media engagement resulting in newspaper or TV coverage of reform work, new or enhanced websites, new electronic newsletters and listservs, and professional conferences, including the annual Models for Change Working Conferences—which collectively make up another 24% of total reported progress events.

Publications and Communications	Progress Events
Media coverage	217
Publication/toolkit/policy brief/training curriculum	326
Documented cost savings/benefits	6
Website development or enhancement	74
Electronic communication/distribution systems	30
Professional conference	227

Programming. The next largest group of progress events generated by Models for Change grantees has been in the broad area of program implementation, expansion, documentation, evaluation, and replication. Collectively, 430 program-related progress events have been reported in these five categories, accounting for about 19% of the progress event total. Calcasieu Parish in Louisiana established one of the many new programs supported by Models for Change when it launched its Multi-Agency Resource Center. Cook County expanded an existing program when it arranged for youth accused of Adolescent Domestic Battery offenses to be diverted from secure detention and into an established crisis intervention respite home network. And in Spokane County, a "Community Truancy Board" developed to resolve truancy issues in one school district has been repeatedly replicated in neighboring ones.

Community-Based Programs	Progress Events
Implementation of new community-based program	142
Expansion/modification of existing community-based program	49
Program documentation/manual	109
Program evaluation/research study	86
Replication of projects based on an initial pilot or successful initiative (including local to local, local to state, and state to state replication)	44

Training. Grantees have reported 263 progress events related to the implementation of formal, curriculum-based training, education, and professional development, making up about 11% of all reported progress events. These include training for all kinds of groups—such as the teachers and administrators from 14 school districts who have attended Spokane County's "All Schools" trainings on truancy reduction and school reengagement.

Training	Progress Events
Implementation of training, education, professional development, on-line seminars	263

Data. A total of 236 progress events, or 10% of the total, involved reported improvements in data capacity, data collection, data use or data reporting, either on a local or statewide basis. Some data progress events are relatively simple and modest—like the weekly data coordination system devised by Dupage County, IL to identify youth on probation who are also involved with the child welfare system. Some aren't—like the Washington State Center for Court Research's Assessment Research Database, which houses assessment data collected on all youth entering the juvenile justice system statewide, and its Court Contact and Recidivism Database, which records all contacts with the Washington court system and can be used to track post-processing recidivism.

Data Infrastructure/Use/Sharing	Progress Events
New database	35
New enhanced data system/procedure to allow collection/tracking	72
Designating staff responsible for data collection or analysis	16
New data report templates/performance measures/ publicly available information	78
New process for regular review/analysis of data or data reports	35

Collaboration. Grantees reported 171 progress events involving improvements in collaborative infrastructure— including research partnerships, interagency agreements regarding sharing of information or common protocols, interdisciplinary groups formed to address policy objectives, and so on. This represents about 7% of the total reported. In Washington, for example, Models for Change partnered with the University of Washington's Department of Psychiatry & Behavioral Research to develop a research instrument to measure young people's understanding of

the conditions of probations imposed upon them. Louisiana established a partnership with the Louisiana State University Law Center to support the establishment of a new Juvenile Defense Clinic. In Pennsylvania, the leaders of seven state agencies came together to issue a Joint Policy Statement on Mental Health and Juvenile Justice.

Establishment of Collaborative Infrastructure	Progress Events
Newly charged commission or task force	88
University partnership	41
Memoranda of understanding	42

Screening and assessment. A total of 85 reported progress events, or 4% of the total, involved implementation of new standardized and structured screening or assessment procedures, or expansions or improvements in existing procedures. For instance, Models for Change has supported juvenile probation departments all over Pennsylvania in identifying youth with mental health treatment using the Massachusetts Youth Screening Instrument-2nd Version.

Screening and Assessment	Progress Events
Implementation of new screening/assessment tool	54
Expansion/modification of existing screening/assessment tool or usage	31

Fiscal commitment. Grantees reported 83 instances in which public authorities working with Models for Change made new or expanded fiscal commitments in support of the initiative's work. These included new state investments in programs, local funding for expanded services, new uses for federal funding streams, etc. In Pennsylvania, for example, the state's juvenile justice advisory group recently cited momentum created by Models for Change in announcing $2 million in new funding for local diversion pilots, $1.5 million for day/evening reporting centers to serve as alternatives to secure detention, and $800,000 for the development of Model Juvenile Defender Units.

Fiscal Commitment	Progress Events
New public investment	42
Increased funding for existing investment	11
Implemented new reinvestment strategies	17
RFP released	13

The kinds of progress generated depended to some extent on the grant goals and types of funded activity. For instance, Models for Change grants made with the goal of improving juvenile indigent defense were about 14 times more likely to result in training, education or professional development progress than grants directed at systems integration and coordination. Grants involving communications, technical assistance, and coordination activities generated more publications than other kinds. Because the Models for Change Database enables users to study a vast number of links like these—among grant intentions, activities, and on-the-ground results—it is likely to yield a wealth of information useful to funders seeking to devise effective grant-making strategies.

Progress by Site

States and local jurisdictions participating in Models for Change varied considerably in the overall volume of progress events reported. There are a number of possible explanations for this. Different sites had different starting points, in infrastructure and resources as well as readiness and ripeness for reform. Even if progress had nevertheless been uniform across sites, it could not have been reported with perfect consistency, given the large number of individuals contributing to the database. Since the database was not launched until 2009, and much of the progress reporting had to be retrospective, sites that began their Models for Change work earlier were at a disadvantage compared with newer sites, in which work was current and progress events were fresh in reporters' minds. And of course data cleaning and analysis, which are going on now, may eliminate many apparent differences over time.

In the broadest terms, however, 780 progress events, more than a third of the reported total, have been generated by grant-funded work in Illinois since 2005. By contrast, grantees working in Washington, where the initiative was not launched until 2007, have to date reported 266 progress events, about 12% of the total.

Local sites varied even more widely in terms of their reported progress. Cook County in Illinois (140 progress events), Jefferson Parish in Louisiana (63), Berks County in Pennsylvania (58), and Benton-Franklin Counties in Washington (74) all stand out as exceptionally productive sites in their respective states.

The mix of progress events generated by the more active sites varied as well. For example, Cook County reported 19 separate improvements in the collection, use, sharing or reporting of data, and neighboring DuPage reported 17—in both cases, far more than any other local site. Despite its small size and rural location, Ogle County in Illinois reported no less than 18 instances of media coverage for its reform work. Washington's Benton-Franklin Counties reported the most progress related to implementation of training, education, or professional development (11). Jefferson Parish in Louisiana reported the most new protocols or executive orders related to local practice (8).

Action Network Progress

A surprising proportion of reported progress events—almost 20%—came from non-core states. These were generated by work in sites that participated in Models for Change solely through one of its three "Action Networks." The Action Network component of Models for Change was launched several years into the initiative, and employed a strategy that was distinctly different from the one underlying the core state work. First, each Action Network mobilized sites to work on a single issue—with one network devoted to reducing disproportionate minority contact with the justice system, a second focused on finding better ways to identify, divert, and treat court-involved youth with mental health needs, and a third aimed at improving juvenile indigent defense policy and practice. Action Networks were relatively time-limited as well, each being supported for just a three-year period. And while participation in Action Networks offered many kinds of benefits—including access to national expertise and peer-to-peer sharing and learning opportunities—actual funding for sites was relatively modest, at least when compared with core state funding . Even when support for national coordination, convening, and technical assistance are added to direct support for sites, Action Network grants accounted for just 15% of total initiative spending.

Nevertheless, current data in the Models for Change Database suggest that dollars spent on the Action Networks tended to generate more progress than those invested in more comprehensive approaches in other Models for Change sites. If this suggestion is confirmed by subsequent analysis, it will have useful implications for the way the Foundation manages large-scale grant investments in the future.

Weighing Progress

While the concept of the unitary "progress event" has utility for purposes of roughly gauging the overall volume of progress associated with Models for Change investments, progress events are not interchangeable, and some are obviously more significant than others. Accordingly, progress event types in the Models for Change Database have been assigned differential weights to reflect their relative importance. This makes it possible to compare grantees, sites and strategies—again, at least roughly—not only in terms of the number of things they have managed to change, but also in terms of the size and quality of those changes, and the likelihood that they will contribute to the ultimate goal, which is fundamental, large-scale, and lasting reform.

Weighting is on a three-point scale, with events that are judged to be more difficult to achieve and more significant and lasting in their effects—such as new public investments, new local programs, new structured assessment protocols—receiving the highest scores. For example, Berks County in Pennsylvania has long been regarded as a Models for Change success story, having creatively and aggressively tackled racial and ethnic disparities in the processing of local youth—engaging the minority community in the search for solutions, expanding the role of data in decision-making, and ultimately rethinking its whole approach to secure detention. These things can be described qualitatively, and have been. But the Models for Change Database makes it possible to capture them quantitatively as well, and to score them on a weighted scale for comparison purposes. So Berks County's total of 58 reported progress events includes 6 of the kind judged to be most important, including the adoption of a new screening instrument to guide detention intake decision-making and the establishment of a new community-based detention alternatives program; 16 of intermediate importance, including program evaluations, the use of new performance measurement tools, and the establishment of new permanent task forces; and 36 others, including 21 instances of successful media engagement. The resulting weighted progress index score is 86, which is the highest of any local site in Pennsylvania.

Quantitative progress "report cards" of this kind can be generated for all sites and all grantees on the basis of data in the Models for Change Database. They are likely to be extraordinarily useful to the Foundation as tools for the tracking and ongoing management of Models for Change.

Summing Up Models for Change

While the Models for Change Database is proving to be a handy tool for getting a read on Models for Change, the results summarized here should be regarded as preliminary impressions, not facts. They are presented in the interests of transparency and accountability to the many Models for Change partners who have contributed information to the tracking effort, and in the belief that the airing of data is the best possible means of improving it.

Ultimately, it is hoped that the Models for Change Database can contribute to the field's understanding of the process of comprehensive system change, to the benefit of other funders and reform efforts. In the meantime, Models for Change grantees continue to submit traditional narrative reports in which they account for their own activities and the results they have achieved on a regular basis. The National Center for Juvenile Justice works with Models for Change sites in each state to connect the dots and measure progress toward common goals. A broad network of other researchers receives support to conduct studies and evaluations focusing on individual Models for Change projects and their outcomes. And at the conclusion of Models for Change, the Foundation will commission an independent summative evaluation designed to gauge the overall success of the initiative. The initiative will be judged in terms of the progress made by individual sites toward stated reform goals, the extent to which change in targeted areas transforms state juvenile justice systems, and the effects these changes have on juvenile justice reform activity nationally. Data in the Models for Change Database will be closely examined as part of this summative evaluation, along with quantitative and qualitative information from a variety of other sources.