

DMC eNews

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In This Issue

[New Collaboration Extends DMC Action Network's Impact](#)

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

[Pew Center on the States Seeks Applicants for Juvenile Justice Positions](#)

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

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.

New Collaboration Extends DMC Action Network's Impact

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



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

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

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

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

Core States

Pennsylvania

Berks County
Philadelphia
Lancaster County

Illinois

Peoria

Louisiana

Jefferson Parish
Rapides Parish

Washington

Benton/Franklin Counties

Partner States

Maryland

Baltimore City
Montgomery County
Prince George's County

Wisconsin

Rock County
Outagamie County
Kenosha County

Kansas

Sedgwick County
Lyon-Chase County

North Carolina

Union County
Cabarrus County

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

[Click here for more information](#), or contact Joe Coccozza at jcoccozza@pra-inc.com or John Morris at jmorris@tac-inc.org.

Pew Center on the States Seeks Applicants for Juvenile Justice Positions

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

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

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

The Newest DMC and Juvenile Justice Information

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

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

The *DMC eNews* reports on efforts to reduce disproportionate minority contact in juvenile justice systems in the [DMC Action Network](#). The Center for Children’s Law and Policy manages the DMC Action Network. For a PDF version of this newsletter, [click here](#). You can also contact us anytime with comments or suggestions at jszanyi@cclp.org or 202-637-0377 x108.