



LJJN: A Cultural Competent Model for Juvenile Justice Reform

*Angela Maria Arboleda
National Council of La Raza
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Why Is Juvenile Justice Reform Important for the Latino Community?

- Latino youth are disproportionately represented in the justice system and face disparate treatment at every stage of the justice system. This includes police stops, arrest, detention, waiver to adult criminal court, and sentencing.
- Growing research demonstrates that Latino youth are more harshly treated than White youth even when charged and convicted for the same types of offenses.
- Many Latino youth are unnecessarily confined when they may be effectively diverted into community-based programs.
- Data collection mechanisms do not desegregate ethnicity and race; leaving Latino youth overlooked, deprived of treatment, and severely undercounted.
- Most treatment and support programs such as mental health, substance abuse, education, alternatives to incarceration and reintegration services for youth returning to the community after confinement are NOT culturally competent or linguistically appropriate for Hispanic youth and their families.

Most juveniles tried as adults in criminal court were black male person offenders

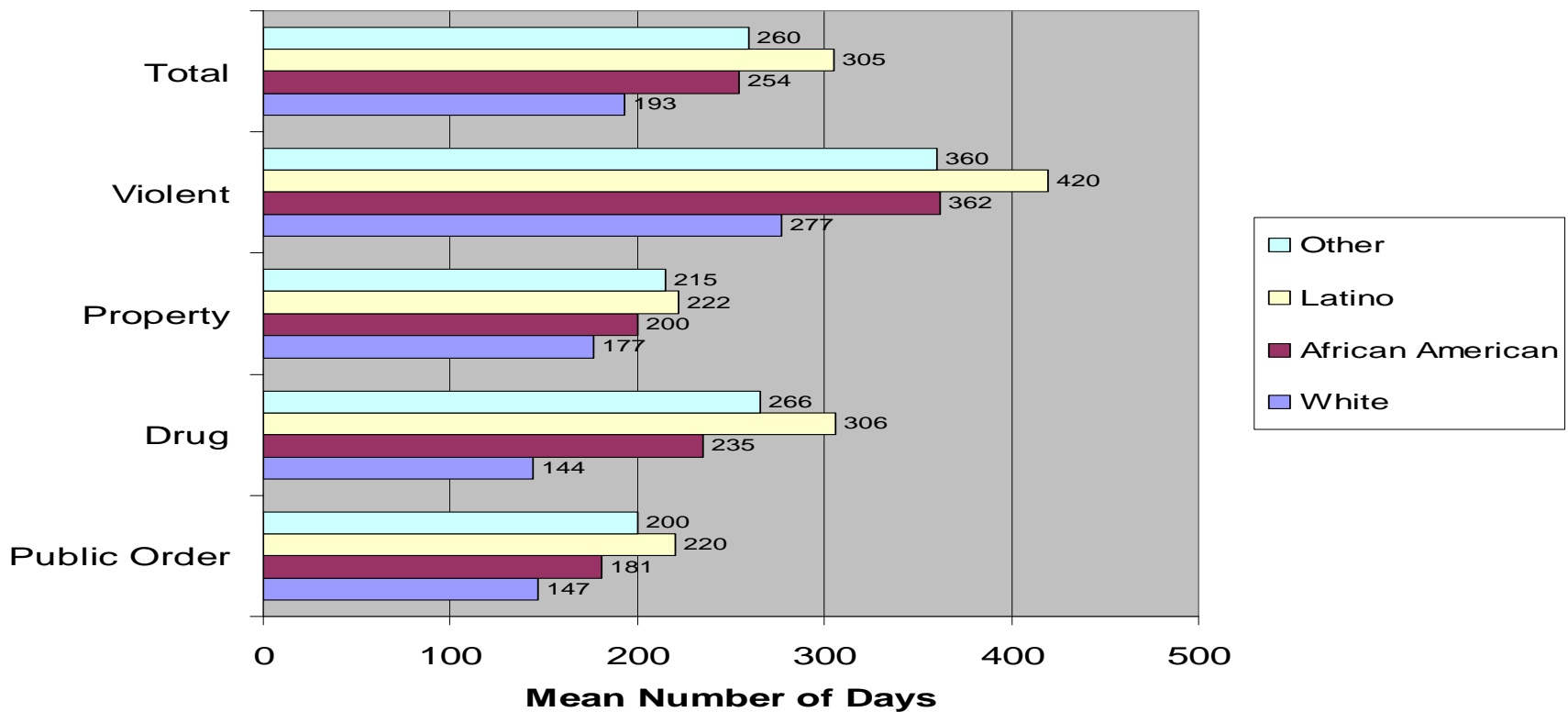
Offender characteristics	Percent of juvenile transfer felony defendants in criminal court
Age	100%
14 or younger	8
15	24
16	27
17	40
Sex	100%
Male	92
Female	8
Race	100%
White	31
Black	67
Other race	2
Offenses	100%
Person	66
Murder	11
Rape	3
Robbery	34
Assault	15
Property	17
Burglary	6
Theft	8
Drug	14
Public order	3

- About two-thirds of juveniles prosecuted in criminal courts in the Nation's 75 largest counties were charged with a felony person offense.

Note: General offense categories include offenses other than those displayed. Detail may not total 100% because of rounding.

Source: Authors' adaptation of Strom, Smith, and Snyder's State Court Processing Statistics, 1990–94: Juvenile felony defendants in criminal courts.

1993 Youth Mean Lengths of Stay in State Public Facilities



*Rates are calculated per 100,000 youth age 10 to the upper age of juvenile court jurisdiction in each state.

** States include AK, AZ, AR, CA, DE, GA, ID, IL, IN, IA, KY, LA, ME, MD, MA, MN, MS, MO, NE, NH, NJ, NY, ND, OH, OK, OR, SC, SD, TN, TX, UT, VT, VA, WV, WI.

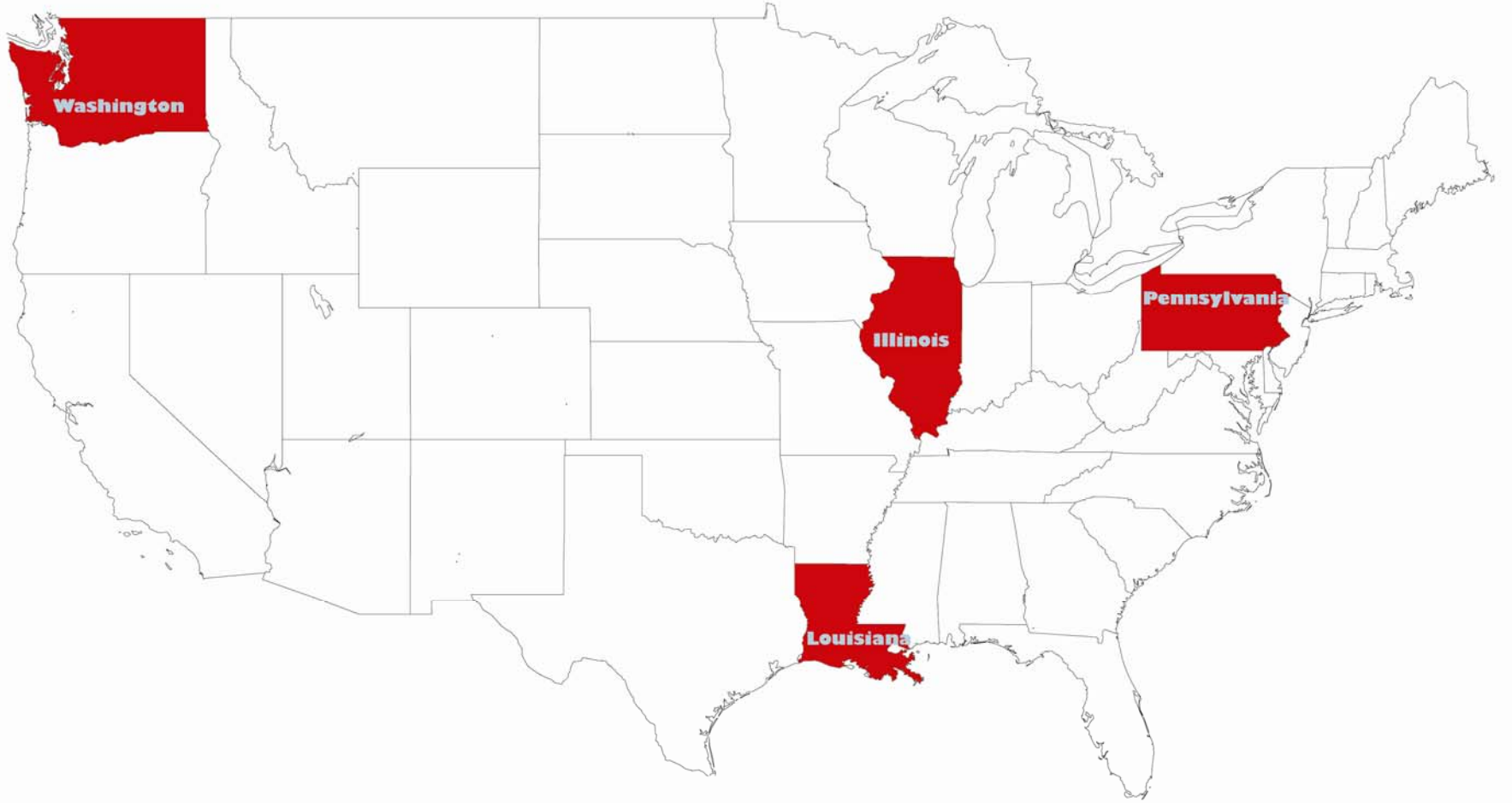
Note: Persons of Hispanic origin may be of any race. White and African American categories do not include youth of Hispanic origin.

Total contains offenses not shown.

Source: *The Juveniles Taken Into Custody Research Program: Estimating the Prevalence of Juvenile Custody Rates by Race and Gender*. National Council on Crime and Delinquency (1993).

What is the Latino Juvenile Justice Network (LJJN) ?

- The LJJN is the National Council of La Raza's (NCLR) advocacy initiative on juvenile justice reform in the states of Pennsylvania, Illinois, Louisiana and Washington state.
- The LJJN is a local and state based effort to bring together key community-based organizations and leaders to form a cadre of Latino advocates to achieve juvenile justice reform.
- The LJJN will accomplish its goal through policy, advocacy, research and organizing from a Latino perspective.



Washington

Illinois

Louisiana

Pennsylvania

The Goal of the LJJN

- ✓ **Participate in broader juvenile justice reform efforts providing insight, expertise, and advocacy from the Latino perspective.**
- ✓ **Reform the juvenile justice system which disproportionately affects the Latino youth and their families.**
- ✓ **Strengthen community-based advocacy on juvenile justice issues.**
- ✓ **Increase public education and capacity building on juvenile justice issues.**
- ✓ **Support constituency mobilization and community engagement on juvenile justice reform.**



Issues the LJJN will address:

- **Disproportionate Minority Contact (DMC)**
- **Truancy**
- **Education Reintegration**
- **Mental Health**
- **Anti-gang laws targeting Latino youth and their families**

The Role of NCLR

- ✓ **Support local leadership in each of the sites --LJJN Lead Convener.**
- ✓ **Co-develop education materials and information strategies.**
- ✓ **Provide policy analysis expertise on juvenile justice issues.**
- ✓ **Impart technical assistance and training in advocacy, media, and fundraising.**
- ✓ **Oversee national juvenile justice reform efforts and strategy with regards to Latino youth.**

The Role of the Lead Convener

- **Identify a group of organizations and leaders who can form the LJJN.**
- **Coordinate LJJN local activities, including planning, strategizing, and messaging around juvenile justice reform.**
- **Work closely with MfC's Lead Convener.**
- **Maintain relationships and communications among LJJN partners, other juvenile justice reform groups, and system's people.**

Who Should Participate?

Any agency or individual who serves at risk, and/or court involved youth.

- **Community-based organizations (CBOs)**
- **Community Leaders**
- **Parents**
- **Youth**
- **Churches**
- **Schools**

The Role of LJJN Partners

- ✓ **Implement community outreach, education, and mobilization strategies around juvenile justice reform issues.**
- ✓ **Conduct direct advocacy to policy-makers about the status and impact of the juvenile justice system on Latino youth.**
- ✓ **Represent the interest of Latino youth in the system in MfC's subcommittees and other relevant networks.**

LJJN Partner Responsibilities

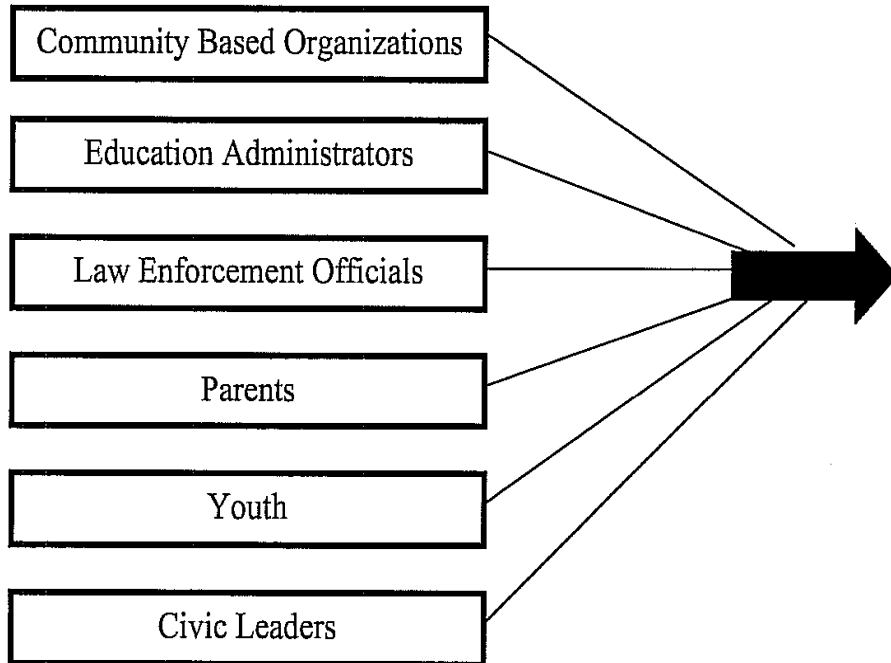
- ✓ Attend monthly meetings and participate in conference calls.
- ✓ Engage in LJJN strategy planning and community outreach.
- ✓ Participate in MfC's Subcommittee work.
- ✓ Attend and help organize community workshops.
- ✓ Engage Spanish and mainstream media on juvenile justice issues.
- ✓ Attend trainings on advocacy, media, and fundraising specific to LJJN partners.

Developing the Plan and Creating Reform

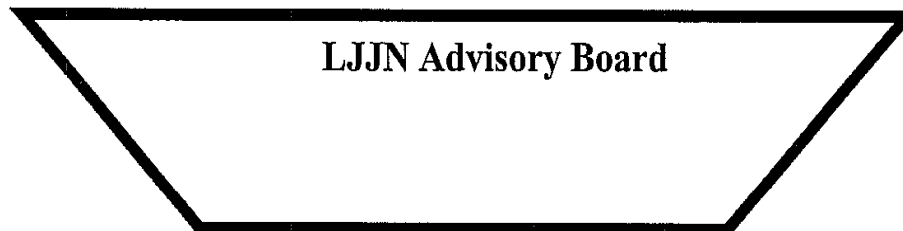
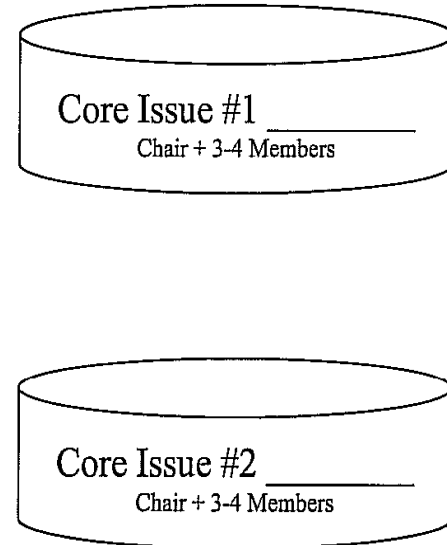
- **LJJN Long-Term Vision:** Develop an advocacy network that connects service providers and leaders for juvenile justice reform and serves as a strategy think tank and response network on behalf of the local Latino community.
 - Build the base of LJJN leaders and constituents.
 - Incorporate public education, media, leadership and advocacy trainings into our work.
- **Strategy:** LJJN Strategy Approach: launch two community-based campaigns for juvenile justice reform to address LJJN “core issue areas”.
- **Timeline:** January – December 2008

Latino Juvenile Justice Network (LJJN) Phase II Model Template

LJJN Constituency Groups



Sub-Committees



Campaign Model

January – June 2008

- **Campaign Issues**
- **Campaign Goals**
- **Allies**
 - Who we know
 - Who we want to know and incorporate
- **Opposition**
- **LJJN Capacity Development**
 - Strategy Meetings and Trainings (6)
- **Public Education Events/Activities (2)**
 - Forums/Trainings
- **Media Activities (2-3)**
 - Radio, Print, Television
- **Other related activities**
 - Site visit to juvenile justice facility (between January – June)
 - March, 2008 NCLR Advocacy Day and Lead Convener Training (Washington, DC)
 - July 2008, NCLR Annual Conference and Lead Convener Training

Examples of LJJN Activities

- ❑ **Community Forums/ Workshops**
- ❑ **Juvenile justice facility site visit**
- ❑ **Community assessment through surveys and mapping**
- ❑ **Media outreach: opinion editorials, television, radio, and print articles**
- ❑ **Advocacy at the state and local levels**
- ❑ **Participation in trainings and state-wide coalitions**

Contact Information

Cassandra Villanueva, National Council of La Raza

LJJN Coordinator

(202) 776-1810, cvillanueva@nclr.org

Noemi Ortega, WA Migrant Council

LJJN Benton-Franklin County Lead Convener

Adrian Moroles, Sea Mar

LJJN King County Lead Convener

Lisa Varon, Congreso de Latinos Unidos

LJJN Philadelphia Lead Convener

Janice Paulino

LJJN Berks County Lead Convener

Alicia Amador, Mujeres Latinas en Accion

LJJN Cook County Lead Convener