

DMC eNews

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ModelsforChange
Systems Reform in Juvenile Justice
NETWORK PARTNER 2013

DMC Action Network

The DMC Action Network is a project of the John D. and Catherine T. MacArthur Foundation's [Models for Change](#) initiative.

New Program to Support Local Efforts to Reduce Racial and Ethnic Disparities in Juvenile Justice

Officials who want to tackle the disparate treatment of youth of color in their juvenile justice systems have a new opportunity to help them achieve their goals. From September 23rd-27th, 2013, the Georgetown University Center for Juvenile Justice Reform (CJJR) and the Center for Children's Law and Policy (CCLP) will offer the Reducing Racial and Ethnic Disparities in Juvenile Justice Certificate Program in Washington, DC.

The Certificate Program is a three-and-a-half day intensive training designed to help local jurisdictions that have identified problems with racial and ethnic disparities but require assistance to develop and implement strategies that will lead to measurable results. This includes jurisdictions working to comply with the Disproportionate Minority Contact core requirement of the Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention Act.

The curriculum, developed with the support of the John D. and Catherine T. MacArthur Foundation, will focus on helping officials identify the most promising areas for reform at key decision points in the juvenile justice system:

- Arrest, referral, and charging;
- Detention;
- Disposition;
- Post-disposition placement; and
- Re-entry.

Certificate Program faculty will use a combination of lectures, interactive hypothetical situations, guided group discussions, and presentation of examples of effective interventions from jurisdictions across the country. Participants will build knowledge and skills in a range of areas, including effective use of data, objective decision-making, cultural responsiveness, and cross-systems collaboration. While the curriculum will primarily focus on disparities in the juvenile justice system, it will also include a focus on the relationship between disproportionality in the juvenile justice system and disparate treatment in other child-serving systems, including child welfare and education.

Participants will develop and implement Capstone Projects during the twelve-month period following the completion of the Certificate Program session. The Capstone Project is a set of actions each participating team will design and undertake within their community or jurisdiction to reduce racial and ethnic disparities and help generate momentum that can spark further reforms. Participants will receive technical assistance from CCLP and CJJR

The Network aims to share knowledge and accelerate progress in the reduction of racial and ethnic disparities in the juvenile justice system.

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

Want to know what's going on in the other Action Networks? Read the latest newsletters on [Indigent Defense](#) and [Mental Health](#).

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to design and implement their projects. Those who complete their Capstone Projects and have them approved will receive an Executive Certificate from Georgetown University.

Applications for the Certificate Program are now available. To learn more, [follow this link](#).

President Obama Taps Robert Listenbee, Jr., to Head Federal Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention

On February 1st, 2013, President Barack Obama announced his appointment of Robert Listenbee, Jr., to serve as Administrator of the Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention at the U.S. Department of Justice.

Listenbee, who has been Chief of the Juvenile Unit of the Defender Association of Philadelphia, [was honored in 2011 as a Models for Change Champion for Change for his contributions to reform initiatives in Pennsylvania](#). Listenbee was active in both the Indigent Defense Action Network and the DMC Action Network, as well as many other committees and efforts. He recently co-chaired Attorney General Eric Holder's National Task Force on Children Exposed to Violence.

Listenbee will be the first permanent administrator at OJJDP since 2008. To read Youth Today's February 11th interview with the new agency chief, [follow this link](#).

New Publications on Work to Reduce Racial and Ethnic Disparities in Models for Change States

Through Models for Change, jurisdictions across the country have created more equitable and effective systems for children who get in trouble with the law. Three new innovation briefs capture reforms in Pennsylvania and Illinois that have led to measurable outcomes for youth of color.

[Reforming Automatic Transfer Laws: A Success Story](#) outlines how Illinois advocates and public officials reformed statutes that resulted in significant racial and ethnic disparities in youth transferred to adult court for drug offenses. After the reforms, automatic transfers in Cook County, which includes Chicago, fell by two-thirds, without compromising public safety.

[Partnering with Schools to Reduce Juvenile Justice Referrals](#) reports how officials in Peoria, Illinois, collaborated with the W. Haywood Burns Institute and launched a project to address fights and other incidents on campus using principles of Balanced and Restorative Justice (BARJ). Once implemented, the low-cost interventions resulted in a 35 percent reduction in school-based referrals to detention for all youth, and



a 43 percent reduction for African American youth. The pilot project served as a springboard for broader implementation of BARJ programming as an alternative to formal processing at other schools and in the community.

Reducing Racial and Ethnic Disparities in Pennsylvania describes how several counties implemented effective, data-driven reforms to reduce disparities. These changes included improved data gathering and analysis, increased cultural competence, implementation of objective screening instruments, development of alternatives to detention and out-of-home placement, improved probation practices, work with the faith-based community, and training and collaboration with law enforcement.

For the latest publications on work from Models for Change, visit modelsforchange.net/publications.

The Newest DMC and Juvenile Justice Information

- The Justice Policy Institute has released two new reports on juvenile justice reform efforts across the country. [Common Ground: Lessons Learned from Five States that Reduced Juvenile Confinement by More than Half](#) explores the drivers of youth incarceration reductions in Connecticut, Louisiana, Tennessee, Arizona and Minnesota. The publication provides insights for other states working to improve their juvenile justice systems. [Juvenile Justice Reform in Connecticut: How Collaboration and Commitment Have Improved Public Safety and Outcomes for Youth](#) highlights Connecticut's successful efforts to improve responses to youth in the juvenile justice system over the past two decades. Specifically, Connecticut reduced residential commitments by nearly 70 percent, closed one of its three state-operated juvenile detention centers, and reduced the under-18 population in adult prison by over 60%.
- A new KIDS COUNT Data Snapshot from the Annie E. Casey Foundation finds that the rate of confinement of children in the United States declined in the past 10 years, reaching a 35-year low in 2010. The report notes that almost every state incarcerates a smaller percentage of its youth population than it did a decade earlier, with the downward trend accelerating in recent years. [Download the publication to read more and to see state-by-state analyses.](#)
- The National Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention Coalition has released a new online resource to help officials as they consider responses to the tragedy in Newtown, Connecticut. The website, www.promotesafecommunities.org, contains resources on school safety, mental and behavioral health, violence prevention, intervention, and healing; articles, op-eds, and press statements; and contact information for experts and organizations. Visitors can also view a list of recommendations for federal lawmakers and the Obama Administration.
- The Coalition for Juvenile Justice is hosting its Annual Conference, Council of State Advisory Groups' Meeting, and Hill day from May 1st-4th, 2013, in Washington, DC. The event will focus on multi-stakeholder collaborations and coalitions that have come together to meet the needs of at-risk and court-involved youth and their families. Registration is open now through April 5th. [Click here for more information.](#)

- A new report from the Missouri Office of State Court Administrator explores the extent to which racial, ethnic, and gender disparities exist in transfers of youth from the juvenile justice system to adult court. The publication, [How Do Certified Youth Compare to Eligible Non-Certified Youth?: Descriptive Statistics](#), found that a higher percentage of African American youth were certified for all types of offenses, with the largest discrepancy emerging for crimes against a person.
- The federal Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention released a new issue brief analyzing the effect of transfer to adult court on a sample of youth in Maricopa County, Arizona. In [Transfer of Juveniles to Adult Court: Effects of a Broad Policy in One Court](#), researchers found that youth who were transferred to the adult criminal justice system for property offenses or felonies other than serious and violent offenses were arrested at a rate that was almost 50% greater than youth who remained in the juvenile justice system.
- Youth possess less maturity, intelligence, and competence than adults. Yet when police bring youth in for questioning, they often use the same tactics they use for adults to elicit confessions or to produce incriminating evidence to use against them. In a new book, [Kids, Cops, and Confessions](#), Professor Barry Feld offers the first report of what actually happens when police question children. The book analyzes interrogation tapes and transcripts, police reports, juvenile court filings, and probation and sentencing reports to help provide officials with the information they need to protect the public and the rights of youth.
- A new tool from the University of Washington - Seattle is designed to help jurisdictions develop family engagement programs in their jurisdiction. [A Guidebook for Implementing Juvenile Justice 101](#) describes an initiative developed through Models for Change that helped parents and guardians of justice system-involved youth understand the court process. The program, facilitated by caregivers of youth who have been through the juvenile justice system, includes court orientation, agency presentations, one-on-one support, and community outreach. The guidebook provides more information about this family engagement program, a 6-month plan for implementing the program in local courts, and training materials.

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 202-637-03 77 x108.