

### Introducing the DMC Action Network

**Disproportionate Minority Contact**, or DMC, is an ongoing problem in juvenile justice systems across the nation. In many places, **youth of color receive harsher treatment** than white youth, even when charged with the same category of offense. But there is good news: **some jurisdictions are reducing DMC**. The twelve sites in the [DMC Action Network](#) are among the leaders in this effort. The Network serves as a national learning bank, promoting strategies that other states and local jurisdictions can replicate.

**DMC reduction work is data-driven.** DMC Action Network sites collect and analyze comprehensive data and regularly report performance measures for their work. **Network sites each adopt strategies that reduce racial and ethnic disparities at key system decision points**, and they share their experiences with each other. For example, some sites reduce the number of youth in detention by using detention screening instruments and creating detention alternatives, such as Evening Reporting Centers.

Other sites have focused on **providing culturally competent services and programs** and **reducing the language barriers** that can significantly contribute to the incarceration of low and moderate risk youth. Network sites are also exploring post-disposition DMC reduction strategies. These enable sites to reduce the number of youth who are incarcerated for probation violations and address placement and community adjustment issues for youth of color.

The DMC Action Network is a project of the John D. and Catherine T. MacArthur Foundation's [Models for Change](#) juvenile justice reform initiative. The [Center for Children's Law and Policy](#) organizes and supports the Network.

### Resource

#### [Critical Condition: African American Youth in the Justice System \[pdf\]](#)

This excellent new [Campaign for Youth Justice](#) report details continued racial disparities and overrepresentation of African American youth at most stages in the juvenile justice system. Find it at <http://www.campaign4youthjustice.org/documents/AfricanAmericanBrief.pdf>

### Action Network Sites



Peer jury members in Peoria. Photo: Lori Brown

#### DMC Action Network Sites

**Pennsylvania:** Allegheny County, Berks County, Philadelphia

**Illinois:** Peoria County

**Louisiana:** Jefferson Parish and Rapides Parish

**Washington:** Pierce County and Benton-Franklin Counties

**Kansas:** Sedgwick County

**Maryland:** Baltimore City

**North Carolina:** Union County

**Wisconsin:** Rock County



Peer jurors in Peoria. Photo: Lori Brown

### DMC Story Bank

#### Restorative Justice in Schools

In Peoria, we've introduced restorative justice practices in the schools to reduce referrals to secure detention. It was hard to implement peer juries at first, so we turned to peacemaking circles, another restorative justice practice. **We had a 35% drop in referrals to detention from the schools, and a 43% drop in referrals of African American students.**

We hired a Restorative Justice Coordinator to help the schools, and one high school now has trained peer jurors.

As one of our judges pointed out, "The schools should be in charge of [school] discipline," not the courts!

*Your turn: share a story (100 words or fewer) about changing a DMC skeptic into a supporter. Email stories to [DMCeNews@cclp.org](mailto:DMCeNews@cclp.org)*