

## **Arkansas DMC Plan**

The State of Arkansas, Division of Youth Services (DYS), along with the Arkansas Coalition of Juvenile Justice (ACJJ)-State Advisory Group (SAG) are committed to maintain an approach that allows us to focus on identifying Racial and Ethnic Disparities/Disproportionate Minority Contact. The enclosed plan allows us to be more effective in addressing the issue of Racial and Ethnic Disparities/Disproportionate Minority Contact within our state. DYS continues to work with the four targeted counties Pulaski, Jefferson, Sebastian and Crittenden in identifying contributing factors or mechanisms that result in overrepresentation of youth of color involved within the criminal and juvenile justice system. Each county has made major progress in solidifying a core group of individuals for their Community - Based Coalitions. In addition, DYS, along with the University of Arkansas Little Rock (UALR), has provided technical assistance and training to the counties in understanding local and statewide data, as well as understanding and applying the Five Phase Logic Reduction Model.

Our four target counties all have community-based coalitions. The State DMC Coordinator has worked very closely with the coalitions to stress the importance of the need for key stakeholders' involvement. The buy in and the acceptance from the local communities that racial and ethnic disparities exist in their communities must be data driven efforts along with narratives of explanation in order to raise community awareness. Community Readiness is an issue the state and community-based coalitions have struggled with for some time.

The action plan is working to be more engaged with community stakeholders to address the pitfalls associated with the lack of community readiness that the state has experienced within some of our target counties. The State DMC Coordinator will continue guiding the community-based coalitions to utilize current data while working toward implementing data driven decision making. Supplying the community-based coalitions with the OJJDP approved list of the evidence-based programs that have positive outcomes and proven to provide change.

By encouraging each Arkansas community-based coalition to model the national organization Community Anti-Drug Coalitions of America (CADCA) has provided an overall knowledge of coalition structure and sustainability. Each target county community-based coalition has also trained on coalition building, capacity strengthening, and strategic framework methods. These action plans have equipped the community-based coalitions in the process of moving forward. The community-based coalitions have implemented a productive structure by the assignment of sub-committees within the coalitions to obtain the ability to function more efficiently. CADCA provides prevention and intervention training which will equip communities on recognizing contributing factors or mechanisms which result in DMC. The community-based coalitions have also partnered with a tri-area based task force which are working with school districts to divert disruptive students, this will be an added layer of resource.

### **What does your DMC numbers tell you about your jurisdictions?**

The State of Arkansas's data continues to show a significant overrepresentation of

minority youth in the criminal and juvenile justice system. Arkansas finds it beneficial to continue to collect data at all nine decision points to track various trends within the state. For federal reporting purposes the five decision points (arrest, diversion, pretrial detention, secure confinement, and transfer to adult court) will be utilized to meet federal requirements. Therefore, our efforts of continual education on the changes in DMC trends and racial and ethnic disparities are ongoing.

### **What safeguards will you put in place to ensure that as you work to reduce DMC.**

During the 2019 Arkansas Legislative Session the State of Arkansas presented Act 189 into law as reform to the juvenile justice system and creating a plan for diversion programs. This plan includes a validated risk assessment which shall be used by stakeholders within the juvenile justice system. In addition, House Bill 1621 succeeded and will become law to develop primary prevention programs to address at-risk youth and contributing mechanisms.

The implementation of these laws is designed to increase prevention and diversion programming within communities. The Act requires the use of a validated risk assessment which may reduce court interaction and secure confinements. The Bill 1621 requires a primary prevention strategy and educational approach which will directly affect early prevention efforts and indirectly address contact with the juvenile justice system.

The Division of Youth Services will partner with multiple agencies and courts to support the newly implemented laws which will affect components of Arkansas's Racial and Ethnic Disparities/DMC data. Agencies such as the DHS-Division of Aging, Adult, and Behavioral Health Services as well as State Regional Prevention Providers will work to capture data regarding risk behaviors. By utilizing the Arkansas Prevention Needs Assessment Survey (APNA) that is coordinated by the University of Arkansas at Little Rock, MidSouth Center for Prevention will provide frontline data from schools. This survey is conducted in 498 schools across 189 Arkansas school districts that participate in administering this survey. By collaborating with key stakeholders such as Mental Health Professionals, Area Police Departments, Juvenile Court Personnel, Juvenile Judges and Administrative Office of Courts the state of Arkansas will be better equipped to provide safeguards to promote healthy lifestyles.

### **Protecting the Public by Equipping Communities working to Reduce DMC.**

The State DMC Coordinator will continue to offer and provide technical assistance to all communities to bring awareness to racial and ethnic disparities which ultimately ends in the disproportionality that plagues our state. Our four target counties will continue to train on the transition from disproportionate minority contact to racial and ethnic disparities. Implementing evidence-based programs, being more visible and assessable to communities and their leaders are action steps our community-based coalitions will take to empower youth. The State DMC Coordinator will continue to educate key stakeholders, conduct site visits and provide technical assistance to assist in monitoring program effectiveness.

Our community-based coalitions along with key stakeholders in the community will partner with local police departments. Coalitions and stakeholders hosting townhall meetings to encourage communities to bridge the gap between law enforcement and youth through interaction. This local action plan has brought forth the willingness to acknowledge the racial and ethnic disparities that leads us ultimately to disproportionate minority contact.

**How much does the state of Arkansas want to reduce DMC next year?**

The state of Arkansas wants to reduce Disproportionate Minority Contact by 1% - 3% by year 2020. Overall the state of Arkansas has aligned practices to support the wanted reduction in percentages.

**What does the state of Arkansas need from OJJDP to be successful with your plan?**

The State of Arkansas will need an open line of communication with OJJDP to manage strategic planning that will address racial and ethnic disparities. We will also need solid guidelines from federal level perspectives that provide a comparison as to what is acceptable from the states. Adding quarterly conference calls with OJJDP to allow questions and open discussion would also be a needed tool for success. By having these key factors available Arkansas's plan will turn in the direction of being successful.

**DMC/RED Reduction Plan UPDATE**

Goals	Activities	Completion time
1. Educate Juvenile Justice Stakeholders, other youth organizations and general public about DMC. Identify and analyze data on race and ethnicity at decision points (RED)	Implement trainings, forums and other information sessions for probation officers, Juvenile Detention Officials, police, schools and others working with at-risk youth.	Ongoing activity
2. Effective strategies to Reduce Racial and Ethnic Disparities which will address the DMC issues within the counties.	Meeting with the four target counties to develop intervention strategies based on data and assessment findings. Develop county specific action plans	Ongoing activity
4. Decrease the numbers for secured confinement. Work with Administrative Office of Courts training court officials on a statewide	Identify and work with communities in Arkansas that successfully divert school misconduct from the juvenile justice.	Ongoing activity
5. Strengthen DMC County Coalitions, build county Working Task Force Group and capacity building to address racial and ethnic disparities in their counties.	Utilize MidSouth, UALR, Attorney General's Office, JDAI and various other partners for continual education	Ongoing activity
6. Utilize and partner with Juvenile Detention Alternative Initiatives data and counties.	Expand DMC/RED efforts by including adjacent counties based on data.	Ongoing activity:

