

OJJDP FY 2019 Title II Formula Grants Program State of Rhode Island

2018 – 2020 Three Year Plan

Plan for Compliance with the Disproportionate Minority Contact (DMC) Core Requirement

Identification

OJJDP DMC Data Worksheet:

Rhode Island identified statewide data at various points of contact in the juvenile justice system. An expanded DMC data worksheet is used to include other points of contact in addition to those required for reporting to OJJDP. The data worksheet used for this report contains data from calendar year 2017. Rhode Island has not submitted data for local jurisdictions due to conditions that exist such as the size and population of the state. Rhode Island can also sufficiently demonstrate that data systems exist, and data is collected at the state level in terms of the administration of juvenile justice within the state.

Various separate and distinct databases were used in the compilation of the number of youth from point of arrest to point of detention (i.e. a RI State Police UCR database for arrest data, the Department of Children, Youth and Families' RICHIST system, and the RI Family Court's case management system). Two of these systems allow for a breakout of race by Hispanic youth and Mixed/Other youth, however the RI State Police UCR data does not breakout Hispanic. They only have categories of multiracial or unable to determine so all are included under Mixed/Other. Also, the Asian and Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islander categories are combined at all data points. Since the later category is so small, it would result in an insufficient number of cases for analysis.

The most current data for analysis is not available early enough after the end of the calendar year for analysis and submission. Data is requested from various state agencies and is then validated and tabulated for the data worksheet. Therefore, Rhode Island is using the previous calendar year data for 2017 for submission with the FY 2019 Title II Formula Grant application to OJJDP. This is within the 3-year timeframe required by OJJDP.

Data for the population at risk was gathered from the Easy Access to Juvenile Populations website for juveniles age 0 to 17. Population data was used from 2017.

In past years, arrest data was collected by the Department of Public Safety Grant Administration Office from law enforcement agencies. This was data collected to adhere to certain core

requirements of the JJDP Act when apprehending and detaining juveniles. Record is maintained on the nature and characteristics of juveniles detained and is self-reported by all law enforcement agencies monthly. These reports only focused on juveniles securely and non-securely detained by police. Other juveniles may have been released at the scene, transported home, brought directly to the RI Training School or to Court. Accordingly, these numbers differed from other statistics such as court petition data, etc.

For this reporting of 2017 arrest data, Rhode Island has moved to using Uniform Crime Reporting/National Incident Based Reporting collected by the RI State Police from all local/state law enforcement agencies. Rhode Island plans to enhance the current data collection database to be able to drill down further into types of crime by race and ethnicity as well as by jurisdiction.

Rhode Island has included data reported to the RI Family Court by local law enforcement agencies on juveniles referred to Juvenile Hearing Boards (JHBs) rather than to the court. These JHBs are panels of community volunteers who review circumstances of certain lower-level or first-time offenses as an alternative or diversion from court. There are JHBs in most communities in Rhode Island. JHBs cannot see juveniles who are under the care of DCYF or youth previously found delinquent by RI Family Court. Youth who go before a JHB and complete the requirements may only have an arrest record remaining rather than a criminal court record, and sanctions are restorative in nature. The data provided here represents the number of youth reported by police as being referred to JHBs in 2017. Rhode Island continues to work towards enhancing this data to allow for further breakdown by types of offenses and collect data on recidivism.

Much of the data needed to complete the data worksheet comes from the RI Family Court management information system. This includes referral data. As referral data was collected from a different source than arrest data, there was no mechanism in place to identify how many arrested were being referred to the Family Court. The number of referrals to juvenile court data represents an unduplicated count of juveniles (each juvenile only counted once). The data for diversion at Family Court intake, petition (charges filed), delinquent findings and waived/transferred to adult court data also comes from the RI Family Court. This data shows duplicated counts in that it represents the number of cases. If a juvenile had more than one case, then each case is counted.

The Department of Children, Youth and Families (DCYF) provides data on detention and confinement in the secure juvenile facility. DCYF, which is Rhode Island's only child welfare agency, operates the only secure detention facility for youth in Rhode Island, the RI Training School. Adolescents are placed on probation by the Family Court either as an alternative to incarceration at the RI Training School or as the final part of their sentence after being incarcerated at the RI Training School.

Pretrial detention is represented by the number of pre-adjudicated juveniles who were in the care or custody of the RI Training School at any time during the calendar year. DCYF now has data that separates out detention and sentenced youth. Secure confinement data represents the number of adjudicated/sentenced juveniles at the RI Training School. The data used are a count of the number of juveniles who traveled through the RI Training School in 2017. These are duplicated counts as one juvenile may have been detained at the RI Training School more than once. DCYF through Rhode Island KIDS COUNT, and with the help of the Annie E. Casey Foundation, continues working to enhance the quality and availability of data on racial and ethnic disparities.

**OJJDP DMC Data Worksheet - Expanded Points of Contact
Calendar Year 2017**

		White	Black	American Indian	Asian	Hispanic	Other/Multi	Total
Population Data		126,004	19,148	1,403	8,365	52,412	0	207,332
Arrest	#	1,838	718	2	19	not avail	25	2,602
	%	1.46%	3.75%	0.14%	0.23%			1.25%
Juvenile Hearing Board	#	270	51	0	3	37	1	362
	%	0.21%	0.27%	0.00%	0.04%	0.07%		0.17%
Referral	#	1,313	467	10	28	509	410	2,737
	%	1.04%	2.44%	0.71%	0.33%	0.97%		1.32%
Diversions	#	451	183	2	9	187	150	982
	%	0.36%	0.96%	0.14%	0.11%	0.36%		0.47%
Pretrial Detention	#	145	129	0	0	101	16	391
	%	0.12%	0.67%	0.00%	0.00%	0.19%		0.19%
Petitioned	#	1,838	765	10	33	687	513	3,846
	%	1.46%	4.00%	0.71%	0.39%	1.31%		1.85%
Delinquent Findings	#	81	62	0	1	51	16	211
	%	0.06%	0.32%	0.00%	0.01%	0.10%		0.10%
Secure Confinement	#	45	39	1	0	40	3	128
	%	0.04%	0.20%	0.07%	0.00%	0.08%		0.06%
Transfer to Adult Court	#	0	4	0	0	0	2	6
	%	0.00%	0.02%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%		0.00%

Definitions:

- Arrest** Crime information is based on data received from local/state agencies. Source: RI State Police, UCR (Uniform Crime Reporting / National Incident Based Reporting)
- Juvenile Hearing Board** Data represents the number of cases brought before the community based Juvenile Hearing Board (referred by police department rather than to court) Source: RI Family Court
- Referral** Data represents an unduplicated count of juveniles referred (each juvenile only counted once) Source: RI Family Court
- Diversions** Data represents a duplicated count of cases (if a juvenile has more than one case, each case is counted) Source: RI Family Court (This data does not include JHB data which are diversion at the arrest point of contact.)
- Pretrial Detention** Data represents a duplicated count of the number of juveniles who traveled through the RI Training School during the year (one juvenile may have been detained at facility more than once). Includes pre-adjudicated youth. Source: DCYF
- Petitioned** Data represents a duplicated count of cases (if a juvenile has more than one case, each case is counted) Source: RI Family Court
- Delinquent Findings** Data represents a duplicated count of cases (if a juvenile has more than one case, each case is counted) Source: RI Family Court
- Secure Confinement** Data represents a duplicated count of the number of juveniles who traveled through the RI Training School during the year (one juvenile may have been detained at facility more than once). Includes post-adjudicated/sentenced youth. Source: DCYF
- Transfer to Adult Court** Data represents a duplicated count of cases (if a juvenile has more than one case, each case is counted) Source: RI Family Court

While there was some improvement from calendar years 2016 to 2017, the percentage of population calculations and RRI data continue to show that disproportionality is most significant with Black youth statewide at almost every point of contact aside from cases diverted and those transferred/waived to adult court. The percentage and RRI for Hispanic youth were also statistically significant at a few points of contact, such as cases involving secure detention and resulting in secure confinement.

The greatest volume of activity is for Black youth and Hispanic youth at various points of contact. To achieve statistical equality, the volume of arrests needs to decrease for Black youth. The volume of cases involving pretrial detention and secure confinement should decrease. Also, the volume of arrests for Hispanic youth should be reduced. Therefore, DMC reduction activities should be focused on the higher concentration of these minority youth at the points of arrest and secure detentions. Focus should also continue to be on increasing the number of cases diverted before any court referral through Juvenile Hearing Boards, and at RI Family Court intake.

Action Plan

The goal of Rhode Island's DMC advisory groups, convened by Rhode Island KIDS COUNT and Rhode Island for Community and Justice (RICJ), is to decrease disproportionate minority contact (DMC), or racial and ethnic disparity, in the Rhode Island juvenile justice system by improving systems and policies to help divert minority juveniles into community alternatives and build cultural competency of all who work with juveniles at risk. Rhode Island's DMC reduction plan is in response to the findings of the aforementioned data analysis showing disproportionate arrest, detention, and incarceration of minority juveniles in Rhode Island. These DMC advisory groups have created strategic action plans and working committees to address DMC.

Problem Statements:

In Rhode Island and nationally, youth are often inappropriately detained in secure detention facilities when their needs could be better addressed with supportive services in the community. Research shows that confinement in a juvenile correctional facility is an ineffective public safety strategy and can worsen behavior problems. Recidivism studies show that 70% to 80% of youth released from residential correctional facilities are rearrested within two to three years — even those who were not serious offenders. Research also shows that evidence-based interventions that engage the youth's family and support systems are more effective than other treatments in preventing recidivism. Nationally and in Rhode Island, minority youth, especially Black youth, are disproportionately represented in the juvenile justice system at all points and are held in correctional facilities at higher rates than White youth.

Arrest and incarceration are among the most devastating events a child can experience. A growing body of research (eg, [Barnert, et al, 2017](#)) demonstrates the pervasive, long-lasting negative effects on the mental and physical health of juveniles involved in the judicial system. At the same time, meta-analysis studies (eg, [Wilson & Hoge 2012](#)) strongly support diversion as more effective in reducing recidivism than conventional judicial interventions, especially for juveniles at lower levels of risk and need.

In Rhode Island, Juvenile Hearing Boards (JHBs) are an innovative post-arrest/pre-court community diversion program operating in 32 of the state's 39 cities and towns. JHBs provide a range of restorative sanctions and access to services while avoiding a juvenile record. Recent data on JHB recidivism collected through RI Family Court and RICJ indicates low rates of re-arrest over one (9%), two (15%) and three years (18%). The JHBs have been most active in suburban and rural areas, which have disproportionately diverted White juveniles from court, exacerbating racial and ethnic disparities in the system. In 2017 Providence, the state's largest and most diverse city, established a JHB that in its first year heard 27 cases, about 7% of potentially eligible juvenile arrests. Since urban and metro areas account for most juveniles of color arrested, adjudicated and incarcerated, Rhode Island's challenge is to expand pre-court diversion in these communities (Providence, Central Falls, Pawtucket, Woonsocket, Newport, Cranston, Warwick).

Goals and Objectives:

In 2009, Rhode Island KIDS COUNT joined the Annie E. Casey Foundation's JDAI initiative to provide technical assistance to transform Rhode Island's juvenile justice system. JDAI promotes system-wide reform by focusing on a variety of ways to safely reduce reliance on detention. Through this effort, Rhode Island KIDS COUNT has formalized a structure for work on juvenile justice issues that includes a Steering Committee that prioritizes and oversees the activities of the work groups.

Goal:

The goal of JDAI in Rhode Island is to reduce unnecessary secure detention of juveniles at the Rhode Island Training School. JDAI also addresses issues of systemic disproportionate minority contact (DMC), gender-specific treatment, expansion of alternatives to secure detention, and improvements to the conditions of confinement at the Training School.

Objectives for FY 2019:

- 1) Convene quarterly meetings of the Steering Committee and Work Groups,
- 2) Implement a detention Risk Assessment Instrument (RAI) to prevent youth from being unnecessarily detained,
- 3) Promote and support the enhancement of the array of alternatives to detention and incarceration that can allow juvenile justice involved youth to live safely in the community,
- 4) Utilize the JDAI Quarterly Reporting Spreadsheet (QRS) data system to produce quarterly and annual data reports to be used in decision-making and system reform
- 5) Enhance the quality and availability of data on racial and ethnic disparities at different decision points in the juvenile justice system,
- 6) Continue to coordinate with the Rhode Island for Community and Justice (RICJ) DMC Project, which shares JDAI's goal of reducing racial and ethnic disparities in the juvenile justice system,

- 7) Expand the juvenile justice system's capacity to provide gender-specific and trauma-informed care for girls in the juvenile justice system,
- 8) Monitor conditions of confinement at the Rhode Island Training School and assist the facility in maintaining the JDAI facility standards, and
- 9) Involve key stakeholders in trainings and JDAI-related travel (including the national JDAI Inter-site conference, JDAI Coordinators Meeting, and JDAI model-site visits).

Also in 2009, Rhode Island for Community and Justice (RICJ), through a subgrant from OJJDP under Rhode Island's Title II Formula Grant, convened representatives from court, law enforcement, education, social and mental health services, youth programs, diversion programs and community. Responding to a detailed statistical study of juveniles in the Rhode Island justice system (Spectrum Associates, 2007), the group created nine Action Plans, system reforms intended to decrease disproportionate minority contact (DMC). RICJ collaborated with the partners as they addressed DMC across multiple parts of the system. Over time, RICJ increasingly targeted efforts toward pre-court diversion with Juvenile Hearing Boards as an effective way to impact DMC.

Today, RICJ's DMC reduction activities focus on expanding urban Juvenile Hearing Boards and promoting best practices in JHBs statewide. They convene JHB members and juvenile detectives to share best practices, help to build new JHBs, provide orientation and training in restorative justice, cultural understanding, youth work, reflective listening and similar topics. For the new Providence JHB they provided access to a clinical social worker from Family Services RI and are working with DCYF seeking to extend such access to other JHBs.

Goal: The goal of RICJ's Rhode Island Racial and Ethnic Disparities (RI-RED) project is to reduce DMC in the juvenile justice system by strengthening community-based diversion and alternatives for minority juveniles.

Objectives for FY 2019:

- 1) Convene quarterly meetings of a RI-RED Advisory group to provide guidance and oversight, with representation from court, law enforcement, education, social/mental health services and diversion programs.
- 2) Provide support for urban and metro Juvenile Hearing Boards through consultation, training and networking to increase the number of juveniles of color that JHBs divert from the court and justice system, by:
 - a) Hosting statewide and regional convenings of JHB chairs, members, juvenile detectives, service and justice system professionals, allowing them to share best practices, challenges and resources.
 - b) Consulting with JHBs to assist in problem solving and resource sharing.
 - c) Training JHBs, law enforcement, justice, education and social and health service professionals in restorative practice, cultural understanding, implicit bias, youth work, reflective listening, vicarious trauma/self-care, etc. related to work with minority juveniles.

- d) Conducting outreach to inform community, parents, youth and system professionals about JHBs.
 - e) Providing a communication network linking JHB members, juvenile detectives and clinicians.
- 3) Collaborate with DCYF and the Providence and Central Falls JHBs on a new pilot program designed to increase the capacity of the JHBs to provide enhanced services for increased numbers of juveniles.
 - 4) Work with the Providence and Central Falls JHBs, Family Services RI and DCYF to create a pre-hearing screening process to assess strengths, developmental assets and behavioral health issues of juveniles prior to hearings to assist JHB members in crafting the most effective restorative sanctions for juveniles.
 - 5) Utilize data from the RI Family Court and Department of Public Safety to produce an annual report on: a) JHB recidivism at one, two and three years; b) Percent of potentially eligible juveniles seen by the JHBs; c) Racial disparities in referral to JHBs and in recidivism.
 - 6) Collaborate with RI Family Court to determine the extent that some categories of youth seen in court may have been eligible for JHB diversion, in particular juveniles given what has been called a “NFT” (no further trouble) ruling, whose charges are filed.
 - 7) Continue to coordinate with the Rhode Island KIDS COUNT JDAI initiative, which shares RICJ’s goal of reducing racial and ethnic disparities in the juvenile justice system.

What do your DMC numbers tell you about your jurisdiction?

We continue to see a steady decline in the number of young people at Rhode Island’s only youth detention/correctional facility, the Rhode Island Training School. A total of 383 youth (82% male and 18% female) were in the care or custody of the Training School at some point during 2017, down from 429 during 2016. Youth of color are disproportionately more likely than White youth to be in the care and custody of the Rhode Island Training School. During 2017, Black youth made up 37% of youth at the Training School, while making up 6% of the child population in Rhode Island. Also, we see from the OJJDP DMC Data Worksheet for calendar year 2017 that a much higher percentage of Black youth are arrested (3.75%) and in pretrial detention (0.67%) than White youth.

Disproportionate Minority Contact in Rhode Island

	% OF TOTAL CHILD POPULATION, 2010	% OF YOUTH IN THE CARE AND CUSTODY OF RHODE ISLAND TRAINING SCHOOL, 2017
White	64%	56%
Hispanic	21%	37%
Black	6%	30%
Asian	3%	1%
Multi-Racial	5%	8%
Other*	<1%	1%
Unknown	NA	5%
TOTAL	223,956	383

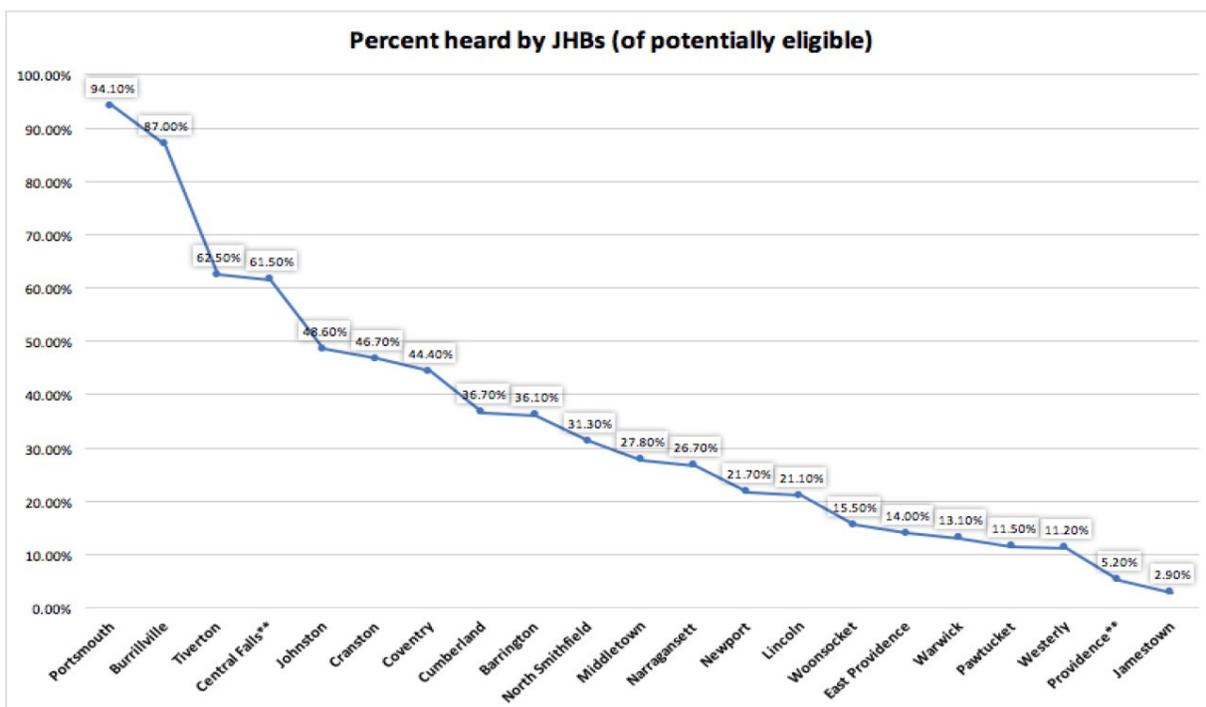
Sources: Child Population data by race are from the U.S. Census Bureau, 2010 Census. Youth at the Training School data are from the Rhode Island Department of Children, Youth and Families (DCYF). Percentages may not sum to 100% due to rounding.

Although relative rates have declined from previous years, in 2017 Black juveniles continued to be arrested at disproportionately higher rates than White juveniles (RRI=2.57). Both Black and Latino juveniles' cases were more likely to result in secure detention (RRI=2.50 & 1.80) and delinquent findings (RRI=1.84 & 1.68).

Fully 64% of juveniles referred to RI Family Court in 2017 were first-time offenders. Only 5% of offenses were violent offenses (2018 Rhode Island KIDS COUNT Factbook, p.96). At least some juveniles may have been eligible for and benefited from pre-court diversion to the JHB.

When RICJ compared data on juveniles seen by JHBs in 2017 with an estimate of the number potentially eligible for diversion, on average only about 21% (median = 27%) of the possibly eligible juveniles were diverted to a JHB. That the larger urban core and metro area jurisdictions of Providence, Pawtucket, Woonsocket and Warwick tended to have much lower-than-average rates (see chart below) implies that by increasing these rates we can decrease racial and ethnic disparities seen at the level of the court.

2017 Data on Juvenile Arrests Potentially Eligible for JHB and Cases Seen by JHB by City/Town



"Potentially Eligible" to be seen by JHB is based on the number of Adjusted Arrests: These are arrests by city/town for disorderly conduct, simple assault, shoplifting, malicious damage, and similar offenses that could potentially be eligible to be seen by a JHB. Note that adjusted arrests does not take into account variables such as prior arrests, severity of the violation, etc., which might make a juvenile ineligible for a JHB. **Thus these figures tend to overestimate the number of eligible youth, leading to an underestimation of the percent of juveniles seen by the JHBs.**

** Central Falls and Providence were new JHBs beginning in Sept. 2017. Potentially eligible cases are estimated for one quarter only. Thus for Providence and Central Falls, the figures used for Adjusted Arrests is based on only one-quarter of arrests for 2017, giving a truer picture of percent of cases seen by the JHB.

What would success in DMC reduction look like for your state?

Rhode Island KIDS COUNT is the coordinating agency for Rhode Island's statewide Juvenile Detention Alternatives Initiative (JDAI). As such, they regularly review quarterly reporting data provided by DCYF and the RI Family Court to analyze opportunities to influence change for DMC reduction. Currently, they are co-facilitating a work group charged with reviewing data on how children enter the child welfare and juvenile justice system and determining how to adjust policy and practice to reduce disproportionate minority contact at various decision points. In addition, they are working with local juvenile hearing boards and leaders in juvenile justice to increase capacity for juvenile hearing boards to hear cases and further divert young people from RI Family Court. DMC reduction is anticipated by adjusting policy and practice in these areas. In particular, we see opportunities to focus on policy and practice changes at the point of arrest, pre-court diversion and pretrial detention.

DMC reduction can be accelerated in Rhode Island when:

- a) Well trained and better resourced urban core and metro area JHBs serve increased numbers of eligible youth of color, diverting them from court and the system.
- b) Police in urban core areas, particularly Providence, increase referrals of eligible youth to the JHB.
- c) Police including school resource officers and schools are trained to work effectively with youth of color and to use de-escalation, cultural understanding and restorative practices, leading to fewer arrests.
- d) Juveniles whose cases would likely be filed at court, will instead be eligible for JHB diversion.

How much do you want to reduce DMC next year?

Arrested juveniles in the state's urban core and surrounding metro areas, including Providence, Central Falls, Pawtucket, Woonsocket, Newport, Warwick and Cranston are disproportionately likely to be juveniles of color. In 2017, the percent of potentially eligible juveniles served by JHBs were: Providence 5%; Pawtucket 12%; Central Falls 62%; Woonsocket 16%; Newport 21%; Cranston 47%; Warwick 13%.

2018 data will soon be available to better determine goals. Therefore, as an interim goal, we would seek to reduce DMC by 20% by increasing diversion of youth of color to urban/metro JHBs, implementation of the RAI, and supporting and enhancing an array of alternatives to detention and incarceration.

Is that reasonable? If yes, why?

We feel a reduction in DMC by 20% is reasonable given our focus on policy and practice opportunities for change at the points of arrest and pretrial detention, and our work to maximize diversion of cases to juvenile hearing boards, and ongoing work to implement a Risk Assessment Instrument in Rhode Island.

From the 2017 Relative Rate Index chart on "What Would It Take", referrals to court would need to be reduced by 865 minority youth to achieve statistical parity with white juveniles. 20% of this number yields 173 minority youth as a DMC reduction goal.

Improvement in the referral rates of arrested youth to the seven urban core and metro JHBs could achieve this goal. Further, the Providence JHB alone (which saw 27 juveniles in its first year, almost all youth of color), in 2019 will have the capacity to double their cases to about 50 per year. In the future once all members are appointed, Providence will essentially have two boards able to serve about 100 youth per year.

What do you need from OJJDP to be successful with your plan?

Juvenile Hearing Boards are a low-cost intervention with low recidivism that keep juveniles from entering the justice system. Although members are skilled and dedicated, they are unpaid volunteers with no budget. JHBs can be even more effective at giving youth “a second chance” if they are better resourced, to provide:

- A system for pre-hearing assessments of juveniles’ strengths, assets and behavioral health issues
- Access to mental health/substance abuse evaluation and care for juveniles
- Interpretation services at hearings
- Additional training for JHBs, police and service professionals in restorative justice, JHB best practices, trauma informed care, youth work, reflective questioning, cultural sensitivity and self-care.

This plan depends not only on well-functioning JHBs, but also on referrals from police who have the discretion to offer the juvenile the JHB instead of court, and from RI Family Court which might be able, as part of their intake system, to refer appropriate juveniles to the JHB in their community rather than to court. In all these areas (police and court referrals, creation of a pre-hearing assessment process, access to MH/SA services and training for JHBs, police and practitioners working with youth), technical assistance and additional opportunities for funding could greatly enhance the work and build success.

What safeguards will you put in place to ensure that as you work to reduce DMC, you are still protecting the public, holding youth accountable, and equipping youth to live crime-free, productive lives?

The Rhode Island KIDS COUNT JDAI and Rhode Island for Community and Justice DMC/RED projects draw on a diverse group of leaders and stakeholders from across the juvenile justice system in order to ensure there is collaborative engagement and accountability for the projects. Advisors from all parts of the system including DCYF, RI Family Court, the Office of the Child Advocate, the Attorney General’s Office, the Public Defender’s Office, social services, law enforcement, education, youth services and community provide guidance and oversight. Rhode Island KIDS COUNT and RICJ also participate in other groups such as the JDAI Steering Committee, DCYF Pivot to Prevention, Providence Mayor’s Gun Violence Task Force and other networks that similarly serve this purpose. It is critical to this work to include stakeholders with varied expertise when advocating for policy and practice change in order to protect the public and support youth simultaneously. We think it is important to hear directly from young people who have personal experience with the juvenile justice system and we plan to explore new methods for feedback in the coming year.

RICJ, the Providence JHB and the Central Falls JHB have begun partnering with the RI Department of Children, Youth and Families (DCYF) on a pilot project designed to help strengthen the JHB model through linkages with the Family Care Community Partnerships network and Probation's new "diversion officers" program. The expertise of DCYF lies in providing services to safeguard youth, families and communities.

Analysis of recidivism outcomes will allow a check on whether the JHB intervention continues to be successful as referrals of youth increase. We hope to see recidivism stay at the same low levels as referrals grow.

Finally, the Juvenile Hearing Board intervention itself is designed to hold youth accountable through sanctions based in restorative justice, while addressing deeper issues in the child's life that may be an underlying cause of delinquent behavior. Mental health services and positive alternatives such as youth programs provide an opportunity to change. Through this experience, youth can gain a better understanding of how their actions affect others. It can help them identify a need for support to deal with emotions or trauma. And they are kept out of a system that can harm their connection with community, employment prospects and self-esteem.