

II. DMC Action Plan

South Carolina (SC) did not redevelop the Disproportionate Minority Contact (DMC) Action Plan submitted with the FFY 2018 application, and there are no changes in the plan to report. The latest contact point data was entered into the OJJDP web-based system, and is for calendar year 2016. DMC statewide has decreased in the greatest area of disparity, at arrest, and initiatives introduced in the FFY 2018 application will continue to be monitored by the members of the State Advisory Group and DMC committee. SC will be prepared to address Outcome-based Evaluation (included in this year's DMC instructions to be addressed in the FY 2020 application) should they remain relevant with the reauthorization of the Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention Act. The reduction efforts and focus of the SAG DMC committee were unchanged in FY2018.

1. What do your DMC numbers tell you about your jurisdiction?

In South Carolina our numbers tell us that DMC remains greatest at the point of arrest statewide. Youth arrests in SC decreased overall in 2016, and the disparity of arrests also decreased. SC has begun studying three counties (York, Aiken, Richland) in an attempt to determine the effectiveness of DMC reduction efforts deployed from the SC SAG. While the difference in the rates of arrest vary from county to county, the SAG noted that counties with established diversion programs had the least disproportionality, while counties with less support for youth diversion programs experienced the opposite with increased DMC. Using the Relative Rate Index (RRI) as the tracking value from 2015 data to 2016 data (the most current available) South Carolina's total RRI at arrest decreased while other contact points remained relatively stable. Pre-trial detention and commitments were contact points showing a slight increase in disparity statewide.

2. What would success in DMC reduction look like for your State?

South Carolina would consider DMC reduction successful when there is not only a measurable reduction in the disproportionality at arrest and other contact points, but also increased awareness and education for community groups and law enforcement around the topic of strategies to reduce DMC. Additionally, success would be establishing more relationships and opportunities for positive interaction between law enforcement, family court officials, and members of the community. These elements are difficult to quantify, but are important to influencing the numeric values associated with DMC.

3. How much do you want to reduce DMC next year?

The state would like to see DMC show a downward trend from 2015-2018. Our most current information is slightly little more than 2 years old, and many DMC reduction efforts by the SAG have only just begun to be evaluated for effect. We would like to see DMC reduced at arrest, detention and commitment to juvenile correctional facilities in at least one target county.

4. Is that reasonable?

Yes. A pilot program, first envisioned and championed by members of the DMC Committee, will combine concepts of the Florida Civil Citation program with elements from the SC Youth Arbitration program, should be implemented in Calendar year 2019. SC should be able to see some decline at contact points in York County in Calendar year 2020. During this pilot program implementation training, court officials will be advised of the disparity in detention orders and asked to consider creative alternatives where appropriate.

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

Technical assistance in educating communities, court officials, and law enforcement on strategies to reduce the factors that contribute to DMC, as well as assistance with implementing statewide initiatives involving local law enforcement and court systems. Lastly, an increase in funding that could be used for DMC reduction efforts.

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

The SAG will continue to encourage programs that educate youth, law enforcement, and the communities about DMC, while discouraging programs that demonstrate racial inequities in the delivery of services. The SAG only supports direct care programs that require youth to admit their mistakes, acknowledge the consequences that will occur if they do not accept services, abide by the rules of their program, and complete any sanctions assigned to them because of their crime.