



U.S. Department of Justice

Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention

January 31, 2008

Mark Masterson
Director
Sedgwick County Department of Corrections
700 S. Hydraulic
Wichita, KS 67211

Dear Mr. Masterson,

Congratulations!

After a thorough review of the program nomination information you submitted for the **Sedgwick County DMC Initiative**, we have selected your program as a Disproportionate Minority Contact (DMC)-reduction best practice. We have already added it to the *OJJDP DMC-Reduction Best Practices Database*, which is on the *OJJDP Model Programs Guide* Web site.

Our review found that your program meets the DMC-reduction best practices criteria: namely, it is based on the sound identification of DMC problems and contributing mechanisms, it utilizes the results of a DMC assessment, and it shows empirical evidence of some impact on DMC trends for at least two years.

The *OJJDP DMC-Reduction Best Practices Database*, which was unveiled in October 2007 at the OJJDP DMC Conference in Denver, can be accessed at <http://mpg.dsgonline.com/dmc>. The profile of your program can be found at http://mpg.dsgonline.com/dmc_county_detail.aspx?DMCcountyID=34. Please review the profile and notify us of any corrections, additions, or deletions that you believe more accurately describe the program. Also, please let us know of any new strategies and evaluation reports or data that become available, so that we can keep the profile up-to-date. You can mail this information to Marcia Cohen, Project Director, Model Programs Guide, Development Services Group, Inc., 7315 Wisconsin Avenue, Suite 800E, Bethesda, MD 20814, or you can email the information to mcohen@dsgonline.com.

In addition, if you know of any other DMC programs that you believe meet the criteria of program effectiveness, please encourage them to submit nominations to OJJDP (the nomination form may be accessed at <http://ojjdp.ncjrs.gov/dmc/resources/nomination.pdf>).


Again, congratulations on the selection of your program, and thank you for making such a substantial contribution to reducing DMC and to advancing the field of DMC research.

Sincerely,

Heidi Hsia, Ph.D.
DMC Program Manager, OJJDP



Sedgwick County, KS

Printer Friendly Version 

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DMC Problem:

Sedgwick County, Kansas is an urban/suburban community with a total population of 525,000. Wichita, Kansas (population 400,000) is located in the County. The Hispanic population more than doubled in Sedgwick County during the 1990s. The 2000 census indicates that there were 53,440 youth ages 10-17 in Sedgwick County, the age range set by Kansas statutes that would make them eligible for arrest and adjudication in the juvenile justice system. The racial composition of youth ages 10-17 was 72.3% White, 12.3% African American, and 10.4% Hispanic/Latino.

Over the past 15 years, Sedgwick County's focus on DMC and how to remedy disproportionate representation of minority youth in its juvenile justice system has evolved in four general and overlapping stages and has been lead by the Sedgwick County Department of Corrections (SCDOC) and the Sedgwick County Board of County Commissioners (BOCC):

Stage 1: Initial SCDOC focus on detention, and policy and procedural changes within the system to both reduce systemic biases that may contribute to DMC and the creation and use of alternatives to secure detention for all youth based on more objective risk assessments.

Stage 2: Broadened SCDOC focus on all aspects of youth involvement with the juvenile justice system, including DMC in initial intake, assessments, court-ordered placements and other interventions.

Stage 3: BOCC development and implementation of prevention programs in high-risk neighborhoods for youth at all ages to reduce the incidence of risk factors among low income and minority youth that are powerful predictors of eventual contact and involvement with the juvenile justice system; and

Stage 4: Enhanced county government and SCDOC engagement with communities and families affected by DMC to promote awareness and involvement in programs and activities designed to reduce current and future contact with the juvenile justice system.

The process utilized the Communities That Care planning model for

County Specification

Age: Between 5 and 18
Gender: Both

Ethnicity:
Black or African American (Non-Hispanic)
Hispanic or Latino (of any race)

Program Origination:
Originated as a DMC reduction program

Component Type: Multi-component strategy

Target Settings:

Urban
Suburban

Contact:

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change. A community planning process resulted in a juvenile justice strategic plan and advisory board process to coordinate funds, programs and services. DMC was included in the Sedgwick County Strategic Plan.

The SCDOC began to address Disproportionate Minority *Confinement* in 1992 when Kansas implemented amendments to the Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention (JJDP) Act that elevated DMC to a core protection for minority youth and tied funding eligibility to state compliance. At that time, the Sedgwick County youth detention facility was experiencing a rapid increase in population in response to law enforcement crackdowns on gang violence in the community. The prevalence of gangs at that time was largely African American (AA) and this was reflected in disproportionate numbers of AA youth being confined in the County's juvenile detention facility.

The initial response of Sedgwick juvenile justice officials to the growing demand for secure detention beds was to establish a continuum of detention alternatives that were consistent with juvenile justice (JJ) system reforms emerging throughout the country at that time. By mid-1994, a continuum of alternatives to detention were put into place, including traditional secure beds in the detention facility, non-secure residential beds, home-based supervision with or without electronic monitoring.

In 1996, a Detention Utilization Committee was formed to oversee the use of detention and alternative programs on the continuum as well as to plan for future needs and additional reforms. Tracking systems were put into place to develop a baseline of information regarding admissions, reasons for admissions, length of stays, and to profile youth in detention by legal status, race, gender, and age. These reports documented continuing higher percentages of minority youth in the Sedgwick County detention population. As a result, further steps were taken to identify and reduce potential biases that might pertain to the system of detention decision-making and thereby be contributing to minority overrepresentation at the detention facility. Two critical DMC initiatives were put into place between 1998 and 2000: 1) The development, implementation, and validation of an objective detention screening tool, called the Juvenile Detention Risk Assessment Instrument (JDRA) to help courts assign juveniles along the continuum of supervised alternatives. The JDRA has proven successful in reducing the likelihood of detention due to race or minority status; and 2) The creation of a Detention Advocacy Service (DAS) program that provides specialized legal representation with case management services to minority and low-income youth detained pending a detention hearing. DAS serves approximately 160 new clients each year of which two thirds are minority youth (49% African American, 14% Hispanic, 2% Asian, 1% Native American).

In 2000, Sedgwick County juvenile justice officials, the BOCC and other youth-serving agencies began to plan and implement prevention programs in areas with high concentrations of vulnerable minority youth to address and ameliorate risk factors associated with delinquency and mitigate their disproportionate involvement with the juvenile justice system. These prevention initiatives proceeded, and were reinforced by, the 2002 modification of the definition of DMC in the JJDP Act to address issues broader than "confinement" or detention, and focus on "contact" with the entire JJ system. Data systems to track minority contact and representation within the Sedgwick County JJ system were developed and implemented during 2003 and 2006. Sedgwick County has served as a demonstration site for DMC reduction activities since 2003.

As indicated, Sedgwick County government and juvenile justice offices

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have increased significantly over the past two years their outreach to individuals and organizations in zip codes with high concentrations of low income and minority households with youth that are at high risk to current or future delinquency. Officials believe that heightening awareness of the ongoing DMC issue among affected populations and stronger collaboration on prevention and early intervention strategies will ultimately reduce the number and proportion of minority youth that come into contact with the juvenile justice system. Reductions in funding in recent years to support DMC, general juvenile justice system reforms, community outreach and delinquency prevention programs are now threatening a number of current and planned program improvement initiatives. Officials fear that gains made in recent years will erode due to a lack of sufficient funding to sustain and expand their efforts.

Overall Strategy:

The Sedgwick County Department of Corrections and the Sedgwick County Crime Prevention Program of the Sedgwick County Board of County Commissioners, utilized a variety of Federal, state, local and private resources to operate an extensive array of juvenile delinquency prevention and intervention programs for parents of pre-school children, elementary through high school age youth and their parents. These programs are designed to address four categories of risk factors to, and predictors of, juvenile delinquency and contact with the juvenile justice system that have been identified by Sedgwick County juvenile justice and government officials: 1) family management problems; 2) academic failure beginning in late elementary school; 3) lack of commitment to school; and 4) early and persistent anti-social behavior. Two critical DMC programs were put into place between 1998 and 2000: 1) the Juvenile Detention Risk Assessment Instrument (JDRA) to help courts assign juveniles along the continuum of supervised alternatives, and 2) a Detention Advocacy Service (DAS) program that provides specialized legal representation with case management services to minority and low-income youth detained pending a detention hearing.

Direct Services

Advocacy

Within the Sedgwick County Department of Corrections, the Detention Advocacy Service (DAS) provides minority and low-income juveniles critical legal assistance and representation to assure that when decisions regarding detention assignment are made by judges, these youth receive equal treatment under the law, and appropriate opportunities for diversion from secure detention and case managed services in the community. Services are provided to minority and low-income youth detained pending a detention hearing.

DAS serves approximately 160 new clients each year of which two thirds are minority youth (49% African American, 14% Hispanic, 2% Asian, 1% Native American).

Points of Contact:

Detention

Contributing Mechanisms:

- Differential Offending
- Indirect Effects
- Differential opportunities for prevention and treatment
- Differential processing
- Accumulated disadvantage

Training and Technical Assistance

Cultural competency training and program development

A significant amount of training and technical assistance has been provided to the Sedgwick County DMC initiatives, especially from the School of Community Affairs, WichitaStateUniversity, OJJDP, and through OJJDP technical assistance contractors. Within the program, cultural sensitivity training has been provided to SCDOC judges, officials, and staff that serve and are responsible for decisions affecting minority youth. A Spanish-speaking court official has been hired to participate in court assessments and assignments of Hispanic youth.

Points of Contact:

- Referral
- Detention
- Petitioned/ Charge filing
- Delinquent Findings
- Probation
- Confinement in Secure Correctional Facilities
- Transferred to Adult Court

Contributing Mechanisms:

- Differential Offending
- Differential opportunities for prevention and treatment
- Differential processing
- Accumulated disadvantage

Systems Change

Administrative, Policy and Procedural Changes

The Sedgwick County DMC initiative has involved extensive system change, both within and outside the SCDOC. DMC reduction is a community-wide responsibility shared by public and private governance, education, social service and law enforcement authorities.

Within the SCDOC, court ordered confinements of youth in the county detention facility have been reduced significantly over the past 7 years due to the development and implementation of a continuum of detention alternatives, new diversion programs, objective risk-assessment procedures, and intensive managed and monitored Detention Advocacy Service that provides specialized legal representation and case management services to low-income and minority youth.

Sophisticated data systems have been put into place that enable the juvenile justice authority to capture and report DMC information on aspects of youth contact with the system, especially at key "decision points" in the juvenile justice process. This information has helped identify evolving issues, challenges and successes of the DMC initiative.

Points of Contact:

- Arrest
- Referral
- Diversion
- Detention
- Petitioned/ Charge filing
- Delinquent Findings
- Probation
- Confinement in Secure Correctional Facilities
- Transferred to Adult Court

Contributing Mechanisms:

- Differential Offending
- Indirect Effects
- Differential opportunities for prevention and treatment
- Differential processing
- Legislation, policies, legal factors with disproportionate impact
- Accumulated disadvantage

Structured decisionmaking tools

Sedgwick County developed, implemented, and validated an objective detention screening tool, called the Juvenile Detention Risk Assessment Instrument (JDRA) to help courts assign juveniles along the continuum of supervised alternatives. The JDRA has proven successful in reducing the likelihood of detention due to race or minority status.

Points of Contact:

- Detention

Contributing Mechanisms:

- Differential Offending
- Indirect Effects
- Differential opportunities for prevention and treatment
- Differential processing
- Accumulated disadvantage

Impact on DMC Trends:

The Sedgwick County DMC initiative has collected considerable evaluation information concerning the impact of juvenile justice system changes, risk-reduction and delinquency prevention programs, community outreach and education, on the incidence and severity of crimes committed by minority youth and their subsequent contact and involvement with the juvenile justice system. Each of the prevention programs described in this summary collects outcome information that is available from the Sedgwick County Department of Corrections.

Data from FY 2003 to 2006 indicate mixed results from the initial comprehensive DMC initiative. While overall arrest numbers are down among all youth, there continue to be disproportionately high rates of minority youth arrests compared to arrests of Caucasian youth (4-year RRI for all minority youth = 2.77, 4-year RRI for African American youth = 3.88; 4-year RRI for Hispanic youth = 2.38). Similarly, rates of admission to juvenile correctional facilities remain disproportionately high for minority youth (4-year RRI for African American youth = 2.96; 4-year RRI for Hispanic youth = 6.11). Minority youth remain disproportionately underserved in admission to diversion programs (RRI = 0.69). Minority youth are admitted to detention at a disproportionately high rate (RRI 1.58). Rates are high (RRI 1.56) but slightly declining for minority youth admissions to state custody for placement. Rates remain extremely high (RRI 3.42) in the rate of minority youth admission to juvenile correctional facilities.

There appear to be a number of positive DMC trends that could be attributed to systemic changes within the juvenile justice system, including a relatively proportionate rate of minority youth admitted to residential detention alternative (RRI 0.72), admission to home detention alternative (RRI 0.88), charges filed in juvenile court (0.70), and admission to intensive probation (RRI 1.30). Data also indicate that as a result of the Juvenile Detention Risk Assessment Instrument (JDRA), "race," as a factor in determining youth confinement decisions in the system is relatively non-existent as compared with the nature and severity of youth offenses or their assessed continued risk to the community.

Local juvenile justice and government officials anticipate that the extensive prevention programs undertaken over the past 7 years will begin to help reduce RRI numbers as more at-risk youth are helped to avoid unhealthy risk-taking and committing initial or repeat criminal acts that result in contact and involvement with the juvenile justice system. Threats to current and future funding of the DMC and broader crime prevention program may undermine continued positive DMC trends.

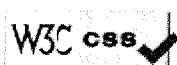
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