

# Best Practices for Eliminating Disproportionality in Juvenile Justice

---

Strategy to Reduce Disproportionate Minority Contact (DMC):

- Juvenile Detention Alternative Initiative (JDAI) Partnerships
  - JDAI is a public safety partnership that focuses on establishing a more efficient and effective system for juvenile justice. Thirty-one counties in Indiana have developed a partnership with JDAI. The objectives of JDAI are to reduce the number of children unnecessarily or inappropriately detained, minimize the number of youth who fail to appear in court or reoffend pending adjudication, redirect public funds towards successful reform strategies, and improve conditions of confinement. JDAI's framework is "through a racial lens."

Examples of DMC reduction techniques used by JDAI are:

- Cultural awareness training
  - Ongoing training to develop staff member's cultural and relevant racial competencies.
  - Implicit Bias training/awareness.
- Community collaboration and involvement
  - The issues cannot be resolved without the unique perspective by those impacted the most.
  - Collaborate by engaging nontraditional partnerships with community organizations that are already working with youth of color.
- Objective admissions and risk assessment tools
  - Development of a race and gender neutral objective detention admission screening instrument based on risk.
  - Risk-based screening tools should not add unfair risk points for kids of color, for example, "gang association" which disproportionately affects youth living in impoverished neighborhoods where studies show gangs are more prevalent.
- Quality Data Collection
  - In order to plan reform it is important to determine if disparities exist through careful data collection and analysis.
- Legislative reform
  - Understanding the bias in policies like zero tolerance policies in school that disproportionately affect schools in poor areas, with a greater population of minorities.
- Prevention programs
  - Examples include family therapy, parent training mentoring, tutoring programs, job/vocational training and after school programs that are for youth who exhibit risk factors for delinquency.
- Diversion programs
  - Examples include informal hearing, community service, family group conferences, mentoring, teen court, and restorative justice strategies. Diversion programs reduce disparities by diverting youth from formal court processing, while still providing accountability.

\*Data on this page is from *DMC Technical Assistance Manual, 4<sup>th</sup> Edition, Chapter 3: Preparation at the Local Level & Chapter 4: Intervention*