

Biennial Report on Disproportionate Minority Contact

Office of Policy and Management
December 31, 2011

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Biennial Report on Disproportionate Minority Contact is required by state law in Section 2 of Public Act 11-154, AN ACT CONCERNING DETENTION OF CHILDREN AND DISPROPORTIONATE MINORITY CONTACT IN THE JUVENILE JUSTICE SYSTEM, and reports on state juvenile justice agency plans to address disproportionate minority contact with the juvenile justice system (DMC) and on steps taken to implement those plans.

The most recent comprehensive assessment study of DMC in Connecticut, commissioned by the state's Juvenile Justice Advisory Committee (JJAC) with 2005-2007 data, shows that there was DMC at certain decision points in the juvenile justice system (nine of 18 points studied), for certain minority groups (generally DMC was greater for Black juveniles than for Hispanic juveniles), and for certain crimes (offenses were grouped as Serious Juvenile Offenses or SJOs, non-SJO felonies, misdemeanors, and violations). Researchers analyzed data on police, court and corrections decision points and controlled for factors that might influence how a juvenile is handled, including the nature of the offense and the juvenile's prior contact with the system.

After 20 years of data analysis and implementation of DMC recommendations, the JJAC has determined that to reduce DMC, strategies must focus on:

- Addressing DMC reduction, not general juvenile justice system improvement, and
- Changing the behavior of system practitioners, not that of youth.

JJAC efforts to reduce DMC have included:

- 1) Increasing police knowledge about youth and how to effectively interact with youth, through training and program funding.
- 2) Encouraging school/police collaboration, through program funding upon adoption of a model memorandum of agreement between the superintendent of schools and the chief of police.
- 3) Developing and implementing a tool to measure DMC within residential facilities.
- 4) Raising awareness about DMC by publishing DMC data and strategies online at www.ct.gov/OPM/JustStart or www.CTJustStart.org.

State juvenile justice agencies—Judicial Branch, Department of Children and Families, Department of Emergency Services and Public Protection, Division of Criminal Justice, and Division of Public Defender Services—have implemented and are planning to implement a range of data improvement efforts, policy and practice changes, shared initiatives, and training and technical assistance to address DMC. These activities are presented by type and by agency.