

Commission on Racial and Ethnic Disparity in the Criminal Justice System

MEDIA WORKING GROUP

Outcome Goal

The Commission on Racial and Ethnic Disparity in the Criminal Justice System's working group on media will act as an oversight working group to support the just, equal and unbiased reporting and representation of Connecticut's racial and ethnic minority population as it relates to criminal justice. This will be done in part through collaboration with other groups, organizations, businesses, agencies, schools and individuals.

Steps that will lead to the accomplishment of this strategy include:

1. Collaborate with other organizations to act as an independent auditor and oversight group of news media coverage.
 - a. To look at things such as the number of positive story press releases sent-out versus the number of stories actually covered
 - b. To review the use and display of mug shots; the percent of mug shots of racial and ethnic minority persons compared to Caucasian persons in relation to the percent arrested.
2. Promote a consistent policy governing the dissemination of mug shots
3. Facilitate collaboration between the media and community leaders including independent, local media, to identify positive stories and get feedback on their coverage.

The achievement of this goal will be measured by:

1. An increase in the number of positive stories as compared to the number of actual stories covered by the media.
2. The implementation of a policy to govern the consistent dissemination of mug shots.
3. An increase in the dialogue about news coverage of police activity.

EDUCATION, TRAINING AND CULTURAL COMPETENCE WORKING GROUP

Outcome Goal

The Commission on Racial and Ethnic Disparity in the Criminal Justice System's working group on education, training and cultural competence will act as an oversight working group to ensure support for education, training and cultural competence in the state of Connecticut as it relates to criminal justice. This will be done in part through collaboration with other groups, organizations, businesses, agencies, schools and individuals.

Steps that will lead to the accomplishment of this strategy include:

1. Support and sponsor education programs on race and racial issues, underlying social problems, and mental health and addiction challenges/concerns/needs. These problems should be addressed with a variety of people as listed below.
 - a. Media Personnel
 - b. Police
 - c. DOC personnel
 - d. Court system personnel
 - i. Judges
 - ii. State Attorneys
 - iii. Public Defenders
 - iv. DOC personnel
 - e. Community
2. Address the language and cultural barriers by making better use of technology.
 - a. Make a better use of technology
 - b. Have advocates at police departments to quickly identify any language needs at the time of an arrest.
3. Create community outreach programs to change the perception of police officers and the criminal justice system.

The achievement of this goal will be measured by:

1. An increase in the number of state-wide educational programs on race and racial issues, social problems, and mental health and addiction needs.
2. An increase in the use of technology to break language and cultural barriers.
3. A reduction in the number of reports of non-English speaking defendants having hearings without an interpreter.
4. Advocates in place at police departments to recognize language needs.
5. An increase in community outreach and collaboration with the Latino communities.

PRE-ARREST, PREVENTION, DIVERSIONARY AND COMMUNITY-BASED PROGRAMS WORKING GROUP

Outcome Goal

The Commission on Racial and Ethnic Disparity in the Criminal Justice System's working group on pre-arrest, prevention, diversionary and community-based programs will act as an oversight working group to promote alternatives to arrest through prevention and community-based programs in the state of Connecticut as it relates to criminal justice. This will be done in part through collaboration with other groups, organizations, businesses, agencies, schools and individuals.

Steps that will lead to the accomplishment of this strategy include:

1. Work to promote alternatives to arrest.
2. Work with grassroots agencies to build diversionary programs.
 - a. Communities must be the foundation for these efforts- neighborhoods, schools and local organizations working together.
3. Focus on prevention and building community-based services.
 - a. Support youth centers and community programs that provide children and youth with a safe place to learn, achieve and have fun.
 - b. Integrate the youth into the decision-making process and allow them to have a voice. Embracing rules that they are a part of will be much more successful.
4. Paradigm shift in funding to put more into prevention and preservation.

The achievement of this goal will be measured by:

1. Increased collaboration within communities to build diversionary programs and grassroots movements to prevent arrests.
2. Increase in support for community centers and in the number of youths asked to participate in making decisions.
3. Shift in funding to increase money spent on prevention.