

W. HAYWOOD BURNS INSTITUTE



READINESS ASSESSMENT CONSULTATION (RAC) REPORT

Douglas County, Nebraska

Submitted by:

Clinton Lacey, W. Haywood Burns Institute
Michael Finley, W. Haywood Burns Institute

Date:

July 13, 2010



I. INTRODUCTION

Over the past two decades, jurisdictions throughout the country have spent significant time and money trying to reduce racial and ethnic disparities in their juvenile justice systems with limited results. Stakeholders often become discouraged by the lack of practical proven approaches and examples that have led to measurable results. Consequently, jurisdictions continue to support studies, well-attended annual conferences and scattershot funding of prevention and intervention programs to address racial and ethnic disparities. While these strategies may have some value, they are not necessarily designed or funded based on their ability to significantly impact racial and ethnic disparities, particularly in secure detention. Ironically, these ideas are often fervently and repeatedly supported by those who want to see change but are overwhelmed by the magnitude and complexity of the issue.

The W. Haywood Burns Institute (BI) is a national organization that has worked successfully with local jurisdictions to reduce racial and ethnic disparities by leading traditional and non-traditional stakeholders through a data-driven, consensus-based process. However, despite the prevalence of the overrepresentation of youth of color throughout our nation's juvenile justice systems, the BI believes that local jurisdictions can engage in practical, intentional efforts to reduce racial and ethnic disparities at critical decision-making points with a focus on secure detention.

In assessing readiness, the BI does not assume to predict the actual commitment a jurisdiction will eventually make nor the course of action it will take to address its DMC issues. Nor is this assessment designed to regurgitate the county's juvenile justice policies. Instead, this assessment seeks to provide an objective view of the overall juvenile justice policies and practices and how they may impact DMC; and to identify strengths, weaknesses, assets and challenges which may enhance or hinder the jurisdiction's ability to engage in an effective DMC reduction initiative.

We appreciate the cooperation and participation of everyone involved with the RAC in Douglas County. We found the stakeholders to be generous with their time and forthcoming with their observations.



II. METHODOLOGY and DATA SOURCES

This section describes the overall approach to conducting the Readiness Assessment Consultation (RAC) in Douglas County. The RAC was developed by the Burns Institute Staff in collaboration with the Institute for Social and Environmental Justice Education.

A. Evaluation Design

The purpose of this RAC is to identify and assess factors influencing Douglas County's ability to successfully address DMC. The following evaluation goal was established:

- 1) Assess and document how the following impact Douglas County's ability to address disparities:
 - a. Understanding racial and ethnic disparities
 - b. Purpose of detention and detention utilization;
 - c. Community engagement and collaboration;
 - d. System Stakeholders' engagement and collaboration; and
 - e. Data collection and analysis capacity.

B. Data Collection and Analysis

1) *Interviews.*

On April 6 and 7, 2010, BI staff interviewed key stakeholders from Douglas County's Juvenile Justice system and broader community. Stakeholders included representatives from Community Based Organizations, Community Members, the Judiciary, Service Providers, Court Administration, Intake/Probation, Law Enforcement, Detention, Department of Health and Human Services, Public Schools, the County Attorney's Office and the County Public Defender's Office.

The interviews ranged in length from 60 to 90 minutes.



2) *Document Review.*

The following documents were obtained and consulted in the course of the assessment:

- a. District 4J Juvenile Intake Data (2009)
- b. Douglas County Youth Center, Annual Census 2009
- c. Douglas County Youth Center Report (2008)
- d. Nebraska Juvenile Detention Screening Instrument
- e. Nebraska Office of Probation Administration Detention Screening Assessment
- f. Douglas County Juvenile Assessment Center Data (2009)
- g. Juvenile Assessment Center Completion By Race Data (2009)
- h. Excel Spreadsheet Analysis of Placements by Type of Placement, Race and Ethnicity (November 30, 2009 Snapshot)
- i. Youth Prosecuted in Adult Court by City Prosecutor Analysis (2009)
- j. DMC Data Presentation, Referrals 2006-08; Diversion Success Rates (2008)
- k. Nebraska Probation System Policies and Procedures for:
 - Juvenile Intake
 - Intake Transportation of Juveniles
 - Intake Training
 - Structured Decision-Making
 - Classification and Supervision
 - Right to Call or Consult Counsel

III. FINDINGS

This section discusses the BI's findings. It is organized into six sections:

- A. Understanding Racial and Ethnic Disparities**
- B. Purpose of Detention and Detention Utilization**
- C. Collaboration**
- D. Data Collection and Analysis Capacity**
- E. Conclusion**
- F. Recommendations**



A. Understanding Racial and Ethnic Disparities

1. Current Juvenile Justice Reform Structure for Reducing Racial and Ethnic Disparities

Douglas County represents a unique experience for BI because the county's stakeholders have begun to reform their system absent the assistance of reform initiatives and/or organizations such as the Juvenile Detention Alternatives Initiative, the MacArthur Foundation's Models for Change project or the W. Haywood Burns Institute. As part of this effort, the relevant stakeholders have established at least two committees, the Juvenile Justice Coordinating Council (Council) and the DMC Committee (Committee), to address juvenile justice reform and/or DMC issues.

Several years ago the County commissioned an outside organization to conduct a study to assess the jurisdiction's juvenile system. The report was viewed unfavorably by some stakeholders and is clearly a point of contention among the stakeholders with whom we spoke. This is relevant because the Coordinating Council was established as an outcome of the study.

This group consists of key system officials including members of the judiciary, representatives from the prosecutor's office, the Public Defender, probation officials and others. The Council works on various issues that impact outcomes for youth who come into contact with Douglas County's juvenile justice system. More recently, one such issue has been the problem of over-representation of youth of color in the system or DMC.

In addition to the Council's interest in DMC, Douglas County also has a well-established DMC Committee. The Committee is comprised of a cross section of juvenile justice professionals, service providers and representatives of key community based organizations. The Committee meets on a monthly basis and focuses on various issues including key factors that may be contributing to DMC. Other issues discussed at the DMC Committee meetings include arrest and detention data; case processing timeline issues; and failure to appear warrants.

Stakeholders expressed divergent opinions regarding the committee's effectiveness. Some individuals interviewed believe that the DMC Committee hasn't "made great strides" because it was spending too much time "explaining the flowchart of juvenile detention" and that "they didn't know what they were doing." Other individuals noted



that while the group’s effectiveness does ebb and flow, the DMC Committee has been “pretty active” and “very good at pulling out small little [things] that strengthened the overall work.”

These types of varying viewpoints are an expected aspect of any reform effort. From BI’s perspective, it is more important that stakeholders recognize that the DMC Committee exists, has a regular meeting schedule and champions the DMC issue. It is important that the Committee is viewed as the “starting place” for future racial and ethnic disparities work in the County. This clarity provides the County with a foundation for developing subsequent disparities work. Thus, people should view the DMC Committee as a critical asset to the local efforts to address racial and ethnic disparities.

Interestingly, while people have different opinions regarding the Committee’s role and impact, several Committee members were quite clear about the group’s potential to achieve significant reform. These same members expressed an understanding of the role of data in directing the work and discussed their frustration with the lack of access the committee has to pertinent information. When questioned about the “missing” data, these committee members suggested that key juvenile justice agencies are still not comfortable sharing the data needed to pin point the particular policies and practices that may be adversely and/or disparately impacting sub-populations of youth of color.

Indeed, issues involving the availability of sufficient data and frustration over lack of tangible progress are not particularly surprising nor should it serve to obstruct progress on the disparities work. Instead, these issues are indicative of the Committee’s work and ongoing need to evolve and continue to focus its efforts. This is the natural course of real reform work and will lead to continued progress. Importantly, unlike many jurisdictions, Douglas County’s stakeholders have the appropriate structures in place to move the DMC work forward. However, forward progress can be thwarted unless the DMC Committee members establish consensus regarding their specific approaches to disparities reduction.

In addition to addressing the issues mentioned above it is critical to address the DMC Committee’s structure. The Committee appears disconnected from the broader based Council and therefore runs the risk of operating in a silo. Leaders from the DMC Committee and the Council should ensure that the Committee’s efforts are connected to the broader objectives of the collaborative. Further, it is important that the DMC Committee reports regularly to the larger group to ensure ongoing communication and



accountability for its work. Without clear lines of communication and strategic planning between the two bodies, it will be very difficult – if not impossible to implement the reforms necessary to address racial and ethnic disparities in Douglas County.

2. Perceptions of Racial and Ethnic Disparities

a. General DMC Knowledge

A critical component for any stakeholder group working to reduce racial and ethnic disparities is to develop a common understanding around what racial and ethnic disparities are and to identify whether and to what extent disparities exist in the local juvenile justice system. Initially, stakeholders should approach their understanding of their local situation by considering three issues. First, stakeholders should determine if youth of color in their jurisdiction are admitted into secure detention (or at some other system point in the juvenile justice system) at a disproportionate rate compared to White youth. Second, stakeholders should discuss whether similarly situated youth of color and White youth are treated disparately or receive disparate outcomes as a result of their involvement in the juvenile justice system. Finally, the group should use the previous two discussions to begin to intentionally and strategically define the issues on which it will work.

Generally, the individuals with whom we spoke accepted the notion that when compared to their numbers in the general population a disproportionate number of youth of color are admitted and housed in secure detention. While the current statistical anomalies represent a “red flag” that highlights the racial and ethnic disparities issue, the disproportionate percentage of youth of color in secure detention is not, on its face, evidence of unequal or unfair treatment on the part of system decision-makers toward youth of color.

As in most jurisdictions, Douglas County officials should clarify the difference between overall statistical disproportionality and the existence of disparity at key decision points. Our Interviews indicate that many stakeholders continue to emphasize and focus upon disproportionate representation of youth of color in the system. Such a focus is generally the first and most obvious place to begin, but will not yield substantive progress without digging deeper into the actual disparate treatment of similarly situated youth of color in Douglas County’s juvenile justice system. Thus Douglas County stakeholders should begin to collect and analyze data that will inform such a process of digging deeper.



b. Causes of Racial and Ethnic Disparities

Stakeholders maintained diverse perceptions regarding the causes of racial and ethnic disparities in Douglas County. When asked why disproportionality exists, several stakeholders focused on community factors and deficits to youths' family. Several stakeholders indicated that juvenile justice system involvement was often directly related to a youth's "family situation" and a lack of support and involvement from youths' families.

Other stakeholders firmly believed that disproportionality was the result of youth of color committing more serious crimes than White youth. According to one stakeholder, "our jobs are about ensuring public safety. If there are a disproportionate number of youth who are violent and are a threat to public safety, and they happen to come from minority communities, they're going to be detained." However when asked if there were clear data to demonstrate that disproportionality in Douglas County was driven by violent youth of color offenders, the stakeholder was unsure.

Some stakeholders reported that disparities were the result of how the current system operated. Stakeholders maintained varied perspectives regarding how the system contributes to disparities. According to some stakeholders, neighborhoods with high concentrations of youth of color are "over-policed." According to other stakeholders, youth are "over-charged" both at arrest and when their petitions are filed.

Stakeholders should engage in a facilitated conversation regarding the causes of disproportionately within Douglas County. The purpose of this conversation is not necessarily to establish consensus regarding a single specific cause for disproportionality but rather to allow committee members the opportunity to express their personal opinions regarding the problem of disparities to the full group. Doing so will help build trust among group members and provide a foundation as the group identifies issues and solutions to existing racial and ethnic disparities. Further, this discussion will serve as the foundation for the group as it develops clear objectives and goals.



B. Purpose of Detention and Detention Utilization

BI believes that decision-makers should use secure detention only as the least restrictive option, pre and post adjudication. This belief is based on a significant amount of research that indicates that secure confinement is, on the whole, harmful to youth. In addition, research has found that pre-adjudication secure detention negatively affects youth during later stages in the juvenile justice process. For example, detained youth are more likely to receive severe dispositions than their similarly situated non-detained counterparts.¹ This data combined with the well-established reality that youth of color are disproportionately confined in secure facilities, both pre and post adjudication, in jurisdictions across the nation² has led BI to support the best practice of limiting secure detention to those youth who present a significant community safety threat, and - in the case of pre-adjudication detention - a flight risk, when no less restrictive alternatives are available.

In the context of racial and ethnic disparities work, stakeholder groups should establish an overarching philosophy to guide their use of secure detention. Obviously, not every situation falls neatly within an articulated philosophy but the philosophy represents the ideal and the goal to which a juvenile justice stakeholder group should aim. To ensure that a system is adhering to its articulated use of secure detention, a stakeholder group should regularly review the reasons for which youth are admitted to secure detention and determine whether those reasons are consistent with the system's philosophy. This is not meant as an abstract exercise but as a means for a stakeholder group, particularly in a system that has reduced their detention population but continue to experience a statistical overrepresentation of youth of color, to continually review their views and beliefs regarding the purpose of secure detention. If stakeholders disagree as to why youth are placed in secure detention, it is likely that they will make inconsistent decisions for youth who enter their local juvenile justice system.

In Douglas County, most of the interviewees with whom we spoke agreed that the primary uses for secure detention is to protect public safety. However, similar to many jurisdictions in which BI works, stakeholders provided additional explanations to justify

¹ Leiber, M., and Fox, K. 2005. "Race and the impact of detention on juvenile justice decision making." *Crime & Delinquency* 51(4):470-497.

² See Sickmund, M., Sladky, T.J., and Kang, W. (2004), "Census of Juveniles in Residential Placement Databook," <http://www.ojjdp.ncjrs.org/ojstatbb/cjrp/>. According to the Census of Juveniles in Residential Placement Survey, 214 African Americans and 106 Latinos were detained for every 100,000 juveniles. Only 47 whites for every 100,000 juveniles were detained. According to 2003 data, African American youth were detained at a rate 4.5 higher than White youth, and Latino youth were detained at twice the rate of White youth.



the purpose and use of secure detention. These additional ‘drivers’ into detention included a wide range of factors such as unavailable parents, youth with mental health issues, the severity of the crime, prior history, weapon-related offense, gang involvement, some types of assaultive behavior and whether a youth has pending case in the system.

Further, several people indicated that, as state law allows, secure detention is also used to “protect” the youth from themselves. One individual expressed the concern that “protection from self,” similar to “public safety” has become another catchall category. Another stakeholder provided an example of the “protection from self” rationale in practice in those cases when secure detention is used to hold youth with mental health issues when more appropriate services are unavailable.

The collaborative should engage in a facilitated data-driven discussion to try to establish consensus regarding how secure detention is presently used, the reasons supporting its present use and whether changes are needed. Even if the stakeholder group does not reach full agreement, this is a critical discussion that provides members with an opportunity to voice concerns or issues they have with the present use of secure detention in the context of racial and ethnic disparities.

C. Collaboration

Collaboration is a key component of any reform effort. This is particularly true in the difficult work to reduce racial and ethnic disparities. It is critical that the collaborative include key traditional (e.g. Police, Probation, the Judiciary) and non-traditional (e.g. community providers, neighborhood leader, parents) stakeholders. Then, these stakeholders should work to establish a data-driven action plan with clear goals and objectives to tackle DMC. A well-functioning committee should benefit from the natural tension that often exists between traditional system stakeholders and community members and collaboratively develop sustainable solutions to improve the efficiency, effectiveness and objectivity of the juvenile justice system.

1. Community Engagement

The active participation of community leaders from the neighborhoods most affected by the juvenile justice system is a critical component of the work to reduce racial and ethnic disparities. These community-based, non-traditional stakeholders often bring



information, insight into the community, as well as a sense of urgency that often is missing from groups that consist solely of traditional system stakeholders. In addition, community partners often represent an untapped resource that might provide an alternative to secure detention. In some jurisdictions, community stakeholders have the desire and capacity to collaborate with system stakeholders to help supervise youth while they are in the community. This relationship serves the dual purposes of ensuring youth are properly supervised in the community and potentially providing youth with access to positive role models, programs and community based services.

During our visit to Douglas County, we had the opportunity to meet with several stakeholders representing both the formal juvenile justice system, as well as, the broader community. When asked to comment on system - community relations, there was a range of responses. Some officials stated that the juvenile justice system does an adequate job responding to the needs of the community. Conversely, others felt that there are a lot of “tensions” and “misunderstandings” that separate the system from various sectors of the community. Still others expressed a more nuanced view, stating that there are significant challenges impacting system – community relations, but that there are current efforts underway to improve relations and address pertinent issues.

In response to questions regarding community involvement in the county’s efforts to address DMC, many system officials pointed to the DMC committee as the primary forum through which community stakeholders are engaged in addressing disproportionality.

When posed the same set of questions, community stakeholders shared some of the perceptions of their system counterparts, yet offered a somewhat different set of interpretations of Douglas County’s system – community relations. Regarding the general state of relations, there was general consensus among community stakeholders that disproportionality, apparent racial disparities, communication issues and various other factors contribute to tensions and strain system – community relationships. Further, while community stakeholders acknowledged that the DMC committee does have viable community participation, there was also general consensus that the committee should expand its community membership (community representatives of color in particular) and enhance its effectiveness in impacting DMC.

Reportedly, the DMC committee is in the process of expanding its membership. As this process continues it is important to consider leveling the playing field, or ensuring that



all stakeholders involved are equally informed about the various efforts to address DMC. In most cases, community stakeholders are less informed as system stakeholders regarding the inner workings of the juvenile justice system. This information gap can often end up frustrating the collaborative and lead to tension and distrust.

Thus, to ensure the effective participation of committee members, measures should be taken to ensure that all stakeholders involved share a working understanding of the relevant decision points, policies and practices within the juvenile justice system. Such measures may include “coaching” new (and potential) committee members and creating informational materials.

While the DMC committee is apparently in the process of such expansion, as discussed in Section A (1) above attention must be paid to assure those efforts are not disconnected from the larger system reform efforts. Further, while the DMC committee uses data to focus its work, some community members expressed frustration with the committee’s lack of access to pertinent data disaggregated by race, ethnicity, offense, etc.

The apparent disconnect between the DMC Committee and Juvenile justice Council’s reform efforts is problematic in the sense that the Committee’s efforts may prove fruitless if not incorporated into the larger context. Further, lacking the specific data required to effectively understand and address racial/ethnic disparities, the DMC committee’s effectiveness will be greatly curtailed.

Another common theme expressed by community stakeholders was the need for increased and enhanced partnering with local, community based service providers. In their view, there is a significant number of youth serving entities that could be engaged and far better utilized to provide a continuum of services to system involved youth.

This perception is particularly compelling, given the reported high number of youth being removed from their homes and sent out of state, for incarceration and/or treatment. One stakeholder stated there is a growing perception in the community that out of home placements are feeding an “industry,” while there are viable services available in the local community.

If local community based services are indeed being under-resourced and under-utilized, Douglas County is missing a valuable opportunity to develop and enhance a local



continuum of services that could better meet the need of youth, while keeping them in (or at least close to) their communities.

2. System Stakeholders' Engagement

Douglas County's system stakeholders have collaborated to reduce the secure detention population, improve case processing times and other reforms. During our interviews, system stakeholders were thoughtful and demonstrated expertise regarding their individual areas of work. Some stakeholders stated things such as "[we're] all on the same page," while others noted that the system operates in silos. In discussing the inner-workings of probation, one stakeholder explained that "I don't know what goes on all the time with them." Our interviews revealed that not all of the stakeholders have been involved in the work of the Council or the DMC Committee.

This disconnect will most likely prove to be problematic to the County's overall efforts to address DMC, racial/ethnic disparities and larger juvenile justice reforms. Thus, it is important the County ensure its various reform initiatives are collaborating in a coherent manner. Such coordination will increase effectiveness while decreasing confusion, duplication, or even worse, subversion and alienation.

In our opinion, people did not appear uncomfortable with talking about racial and ethnic disparities. However, in BI's opinion, there are some discussions that have yet to occur that need to happen. Thus, the stakeholders can benefit from a more in depth discussion regarding racial and ethnic disparities in Douglas County. This is a requisite discussion that will help the group overcome any discomfort in tackling what is a difficult and challenging issue while simultaneously building trust among stakeholders.

A theme throughout this assessment is the need for the entire stakeholder group to engage in discussions to clearly define its work. This is true for the system stakeholders, and community members who are participating in the county's DMC and racial disparities effort. While people did not appear uncomfortable with talking about racial and ethnic disparities, there are some discussions that have yet to occur that need to happen. The group would benefit from having a facilitated meeting to more clearly define racial disparities, the purpose of detention and what success looks like as the initiative moves forward. While the various issues are described in separate sections of this assessment they are interrelated and should be discussed as part of a focused



facilitated discussion.

D. Data Collection and Analysis Capacity

An essential component to reducing racial and ethnic disparities in the juvenile justice system is the capacity to collect and analyze reliable and consistent data. Stakeholders must have the ability to identify which youth are involved in the juvenile justice system to know where to target efforts to reduce racial and ethnic disparities. To do so, system stakeholders and analysts must collect the “right” data and ask the “right” data-related questions to drive the reform initiative forward. In addition, stakeholders and analysts must both evaluate gaps in current data systems and the quality of the available data.

To assess Douglas County’s data collection and analysis capacity, the following “readiness” indicators were assessed:

- Commitment to utilize data to drive policy;
- Quality of current data collection systems;
- Stakeholders comfort level with data;
- Staff positions dedicated to collecting and analyzing data;
- Consistency of data reporting; and
- Consistency of disaggregating data by race and ethnicity.

Based on BI’s data request, Douglas demonstrated the capacity to provide a significant amount of juvenile justice related data. Further, the County is contracting with a researcher who can provide data to the DMC Committee. Thus, the County has the capacity to collect and analyze relevant data to help move the racial and ethnic disparities work forward.

Importantly, a jurisdiction’s data capacity is meaningless without a substantive, strategic plan, which carefully considers a Committee’s goals and objectives. For example, a quick review of detention related data indicates that African-American youth represent 52.4% of the detention admissions. Further, ten offenses represented 60% of the detention admissions in 2009.



Top 10 Reasons for Secure Detention Admissions (2009)

1. Capias Delinquency (252)
2. Violation of OJS/Parole (157)
3. Burglary (100)
4. Juvenile Court Hold (96)
5. Failure to Appear (93)
6. Assault (all degrees) (74)
7. Immediate Custody (delinq.) (62)
8. Capias (Status Offense) (61)
9. Violation of Probation (42)
10. Theft by Unlawful Taking (42)

A deeper dig reveals that two of those offenses, Capias Delinquency and Violation of OJS/Parole, account for approximately 25% of all admissions during that time period. Further, in 2009 the average daily population was 146 and the average length of stay was 30.3 days. Finally, almost half, 47.1%, of the youth in secure detention are adjudicated youth. This cursory data review confirms that the County has an excellent foundation for the stakeholders to begin to engage in serious racial and ethnic disparities work.

The above discussion is a brief example of the type of intentional and strategic process necessary to seriously engage in the difficult issue that is DMC. The County stakeholders are well-positioned to engage in a data driven process to identify disproportionality indicators and develop a specific plan to collect, analyze and deliberate upon pertinent DMC related data

E. Conclusion

Douglas County is a quite unique jurisdiction that does not really fit nicely inside of a box. BI observed an interesting mix of liberal and conservative views of juvenile justice. With the proper leadership and coordination this diversity can help inform and sustain significant reform.



There are two primary areas on which the Council and DMC Committee must focus to move their efforts to reduce racial disparities forward in a meaningful way. First, the entire collaborative should engage in a facilitated discussion to establish clear definitions for racial disparities, develop consensus regarding the purpose of detention and begin to identify measures for success. BI does not question the stakeholders' willingness to confront the difficult issues associated with addressing racial disparities. However, BI's interviews revealed that it appears many of these conversations occurred in smaller groups or only in the DMC Committee. Thus, it is important that the full spectrum of stakeholders, those individuals on the both the DMC committee and the Council, reach some level of consensus regarding these key foundational issues.

Second, as discussed above, stakeholders should consider strategies to help incorporate a wider array of community representatives into the reform process as equal, respected partners. We cannot overstate the importance of attempting to bring additional community participants to the reform table. Importantly, the stakeholder group must consider the affect of bringing community partners into the process and determine whether they are truly committed to valuing the views of community representatives. This is a threshold conversation that will help the group develop a more thoughtful strategy regarding community.

Whether Douglas County elects to continue working with BI or moves forward on their own, BI is confident that this report outlines several of the key issues, substantive and structural, that the group must address. The purpose of this report is not to criticize but to identify and provide strategies to overcome some of the traditional stumbling blocks that prevent well-meaning individuals from engaging in a serious effort to identify and reduce racial disparities.



F. Recommendations

Recommendations Regarding Decision Making Structures

- Members of the DMC Committee and Juvenile Justice Coordinating Council should clearly define the relationship between the DMC Committee and the Council. Specifically, the members should determine whether the DMC Committee will serve as a subcommittee or workgroup to the Council or will the groups operate entirely separately. This may require merely re-establishing a process that is in place or developing a new process.
- Establish and/or clarify various roles and responsibilities of DMC Committee members for making recommendations and implementing any policy changes. (e.g. do all Committee members have equal voting power)

Recommendations Regarding Committee Composition and Approach

- The DMC Committee should evaluate its current membership to ensure that it is comprised of diverse stakeholders. If the work progresses the Committee should either include organizations and/or individuals from the most affect communities on the Committee or establish a process to involve them in the process outside of the regular DMC meetings.

Recommendations Regarding Clarity on DMC Committee Objectives

- The DMC Committee should develop a specific work plan to guide their work. The work plan will incorporate specific goals, tasks, timelines and who is responsible. Also, the plan should include a consistent review of data and a thorough review of departmental policies and practices that may contribute to disparities.
- As part of the work plan development the DMC Committee should engage in a discussion (and or discussions) regarding three areas:
 - Causes of DMC in Douglas County
 - Purpose of Secure Detention in Douglas County
 - Defining Success for Douglas County's DMC work

These conversations may occur over the course of 1-3 meetings. The group should establish consensus on each issue.



- The DMC Committee should define success by developing multiple measures of success for the racial disparities work.

Recommendations Regarding Collaboration (Community and System Stakeholders)

- Due to the complexity of Douglas County’s juvenile justice system, stakeholders should facilitate a system mapping exercise with community and system partners to establish a common understanding among stakeholders about how the system works.
- System stakeholders should recruit community stakeholders (e.g. service providers, community advocates) to participate on the DMC Committee.
- System stakeholders should conduct Community Coach Up Trainings to these non-traditional stakeholders on the fundamentals of the system, alternative to detention placements and the history of reform in Douglas County.
- At least some DMC Committee meetings should be held in a community setting in Douglas County at times reasonable for non-system stakeholders to attend.
- Convene a “DMC retreat” with all stakeholders to focus on building relationships and in a manner that all stakeholders feel valued, respected and focused on moving the work forward.
- The DMC Committee should develop and/or re-disseminate system acronyms and definition document. This will particularly benefit new members to the reform process.
- The DMC Committee should provide opportunities for community partners and different key system stakeholders, when applicable, to attend local, state and national trainings and conferences related to juvenile justice related training events.

Recommendations Regarding the Current Capacity to Collect and Analyze Data

- The DMC Committee, working with the County’s data person/people, should more clearly identify which data it seeks to monitor on a regular basis.
- The DMC Committee should consider whether it can receive regular reports to consistently track and monitor indicators of racial and ethnic disparities. For example, the Committee should determine if the Youth Center can provide monthly



reports documenting information such as reasons for admissions and releases, average daily population and average length of stay.

- The DMC Committee should identify key data points disaggregated by race, ethnicity, gender, geography (residence), offense and age to highlight at each meeting (e.g. detention population count, detention admissions data specific to target offenses, average length of stay, average daily population etc.).