

**Illinois Juvenile Justice  
Commission  
and  
Illinois Department of  
Human Services**

***Lessons Learned***

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From:  
W. Haywood Burns Institute Model Addressing  
Disproportionate Minority Contact

September 14, 2005

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## Overview

In 2002, the Illinois Juvenile Justice Commission, in partnership with the Illinois Department of Human Services followed through with the DMC Committee's recommendation and selected W. Haywood Burns Institute model to reduce disproportionate minority confinement in four pilot sites in Illinois. The sites are St. Clair County, Peoria County and the South Suburbs and North Lawndale area of Cook County.

The Burns Institute (BI) works intensively with local jurisdictions to reduce the disproportionality of youth of color in the juvenile justice system. The goals of the BI approach originally included,

- Reducing disproportionality in each site by at least 10% in three years
- Maintaining public safety
- Achieving better outcomes for youth

The BI model is a multi-phase process that focuses on three main decision points in the juvenile justice system that lead to the over representation of minorities.

- Police decision to arrest
- Probation department decision to detain
- Prosecutorial and judicial decisions at sentencing

In each BI site, a local Advisory Board was formed that consisted of high-level representatives from system agencies and active community members. The Advisory Board hired a Site Coordinator to manage the project locally. The local coordinator works closely with BI, the Advisory Board, and the State DMC Coordinator to implement the model.

The Burns model is a data-driven approach. Initially, the local Site Coordinator gathers baseline data to determine the extent of disproportionality, comparing the percentage of minority youth in the juvenile justice system with the percentage of minorities in the general youth population in the site. At each monthly Advisory Board meeting, the latest monthly data and other information related to disproportionality are presented for further assessment by the Board.

The project has three phases:

### Phase I

The Advisory Board analyses local juvenile crime data by race, offense, location and time. The data are plotted on a map to identify the "hot spot" for juvenile crime in the local site. Based on this "hot spot" data, the advisory board focuses on the community that contributes most to disproportionality. The Board then leads a community-mapping process in the chosen area, in which youth are hired to identify their community's strengths and weaknesses and then make recommendations for improvement.

The Board discusses these recommendations, then works to implement changes based on what it has learned of the community mapping and data analysis. The Board works with police officials to examine and modify police policies that lead to disproportionality.

## Phase 2

The Board works with the probation department to develop or improve an objective risk assessment instrument to determine which youth are appropriate for detention.

## Phase 3

Finally, the Board works with judges, prosecutors and public defenders to analyze decisions made at sentencing that lead to disproportionality. The Board also recommends policy changes that may affect the DMC.

## Summary

In retrospect, DMC grantees who received grants from the Illinois Juvenile Justice Commission to address DMC were to contract with BI in November 2002. Their goal was to implement the BI model (three years) to address disproportionate minority confinement. Subsequently, between January 2004 and January 2005 the BI model evolved to the current Burns Institute DMC Reduction Program, see attachment A. This report will attempt to highlight some of the *Lessons Learned* using the Burns Institute DMC Reduction Program.

This is not an evaluation of the BI model and should not be interpreted as such. The Burns Institute goal of "Reducing disproportionately in each site by at least 10% in three years" became an unrealistic goal and BI removed the percentage amount from the goal.

These are some of the *Lessons Learned* that can affect the goal of reducing disproportionality.

- The level of political will within a jurisdiction to address the problem.
- The quality and skill of the Site Coordinator hired to implement the BI model.
- The quality of the jurisdictions juvenile justice IT system.
- The quality of the Advisory Board leadership that arises within the jurisdiction.
- The effectiveness of the BI Site Manager assigned to the jurisdiction.
- Site accountability for non-compliance of implementing tasks/or follow through on the work plan of the BI model.

We now know that the BI DMC Reduction Program may take three to seven years of implementation and sustaining the project, before significant reduction in DMC numbers, see attachment A. Burns Institute must also give each DMC site (Advisory Board/Site Coordinator) a comprehensive orientation manual, in addition to training. The manual must reflect the duties and responsibilities of the Site Coordinator, BI Site Manager, Advisory Board agents (State DMC Coordinator; OJJDP Representatives, etc.) It should also provide the DMC Advisory Board what their duties and responsibilities are, and what if any reports will be requested from their DMC site, see examples in Attachments B, C, D & E.

As of August 2005, all four DMC sites have reported that their DMC project has provided other residual benefits in their jurisdictions, see Attachment F.

## Lessons Learned and Recommendations for Future Initiatives

In conclusion we have numerous "Lessons Learned" from using the BI DMC Reduction Program in Illinois. The work of reducing DMC is an on-going process, which is never entirely complete. The Illinois Juvenile Justice Commission's DMC Committee recognizes the efforts made in our current DMC sites and we recommend that funding be continued to sustain our current DMC pilot sites, to assist salary and travel expenses of the DMC Coordinator position, see Attachment G.

The DMC Committee also recommends that we provide funds to conduct "Site Readiness Work", see Attachment H, to assess the FY07 DMC new sites. The new sites are to be located in the following counties: Cook, Champaign, Jefferson, and Madison. In addition, the *Lessons Learned* and Gaps in Services reports from Illinois' current DMC sites are available upon request. Also, attached is the "Illinois BI DMC Impact Report."

## Illinois BI DMC Impact Report

The W. Haywood Burns Institute (BI) works with local jurisdictions to reduce disproportionality of youth of color in the juvenile justice system by identifying youth in secure detention who could be safely served in community alternatives. The BI is guided by a set of values which assures that traditionally under-represented groups are included in local efforts to reduce DMC and participate in sustained engagement with decision-makers.

The BI began work in Illinois three years ago with the goal of reducing disproportionate minority confinement in the Illinois sites if they maintained fidelity to the BI approach. During the last three years we have made significant strides in reaching our goal and gained meaningful learning about what can be improved.

Presently, the BI is operating in four jurisdictions in Illinois. The sites are:

- Cook County, IL - South Suburbs
- Cook County, IL - Lawndale
- St. Clair County, IL
- Peoria County, IL

This report will be divided into the major outcomes which each site achieved by engaging the BI process. It should be noted that sites were not uniform in their compliance with BI strategies and accomplished outcomes at varying levels of success.

### **Outcome 1**

The BI process established and nurtured collaboration among key decision makers and community stakeholders to reduce DMC using the BI model.

#### BI Activities during Engagement

--The BI provided oversight for development of advisory boards to ensure desired stakeholder representation. The local advisory boards are an on-going vehicle for sustainability and engagement by other initiatives. There is a direct correlation between the quality and leadership of the advisory board and the efficacy of the process.

--The BI made recommendations regarding qualifications and in some instances assisted with the hiring of competent site coordinators which are a key component to facilitate the BI process. Once again there is a direct correlation between the leadership on the advisory board and the efficacy of the site coordinator. The site coordinator position is crucial to bringing the intentionality this process requires.

## **Outcome 2**

The BI process has increased knowledge among community stakeholders about the policies, procedures and practices of the local juvenile justice system that can lead to reduced levels of DMC.

### **BI Activities During Engagement**

--The BI worked with each advisory board to establish a baseline about each jurisdiction's detention policies in order to determine where racial disparities might be most apparent.

--BI Staff worked with site coordinators to develop a map of the local juvenile justice system so that non-system stakeholders could grasp the complicated decision-making apparatus which would have to be understood in order to participate fully in efforts to reduce DMC. This also is a vehicle for sustainability.

## **Outcome 3**

The BI process has increased the capacity of jurisdictions to collect, analyze and use data to reduce DMC.

### **BI Activities During Engagement**

--None of the jurisdictions were able to gather data as prescribed by the BI at the time of engagement. As a result of BI engagement all sites have systematically collected core data elements necessary to meaningfully address DMC—i.e. disaggregate local data by race, gender, and geography.

--The BI worked with site coordinators and advisory boards to analyze the data once it was gathered correctly.

## **Outcome 4**

Develop and implement a plan to qualitatively measure baseline measures of community resources and interaction with local juvenile justice system.

### **BI Activities During Engagement**

--The BI assisted in analyzing juvenile crime data to determine target neighborhoods which contribute most youth of color to detention.

--The BI assisted in defining and conducting community profiles consisting of focus groups, physical mapping and a program resource matrix to inform detention utilization.

## **Outcome 5**

Use comprehensive data and community profile information to develop strategies and action plans that local stakeholders implement to reduce DMC .

### BI Activities During Engagement

--The BI assisted each jurisdiction in analyzing target populations of youth of color that could be safely supervised in the community.

--The BI assisted each jurisdiction in developing strategies and changes in policies and practices that they may use to reduce youth of color in detention. It should be clear that the BI has no leverage to compel jurisdictions to implement recommendations.

### Outcomes Yet To Be Accomplished

--On-going and sustained gathering of core data in each site to assure good decision-making.

--Implementation of strategies and changes in policies and practices to reduce youth of color in detention. (This process is just beginning)

--Monitoring of detention utilization. (We need more time to identify community alternatives and gaps in services as alternatives to detention.)