

# Reducing Racial & Ethnic Disparities

Targeting & Structuring  
the Work

JDAI National Site Conference  
2007



# Who is in Detention?

- AND THE ANSWER IS . . .
- 1999: **YOC** represented 34% of the U.S. population
  - **YOC** were 62% of youth in detention
  - **YOC** were 66% of youth committed to public facilities
  - **YOC** were 55% of youth committed to private facilities

# Who is in Detention?

- AND THE SAME ANSWER PERSISTED IN 2003 . .
  - **YOC** were detained at 3.1 times the rate of white youth
  - **YOC** were committed to public facilities at 2.9 times the rate of white youth
  - **YOC** were committed to private facilities at 2.0 times the rate of white youth

# Frame of Reference for Approaching the Work

- Point of Entry-Detention
- Remember Who Is in Detention-YOC
- Racial/Ethnic Equity Should be the Core/Goal of the Work
- Decision Making Points-Impact on YOC
  - **Who** is making this decision-racial/cultural responsiveness
  - **What** resources are utilized to make this decision, e.g., data, family, community
  - **How** will impact of this decision on YOC be monitored

# Disproportionality & Disparities

- What Are We Talking About: Shared Understanding and Consensus
  - Disproportionate Minority Confinement (DMC)
  - Disparities
- To What Extent Does DMC Exist
  - Base Line Data
  - Target Populations: “Youth of Color”

# Structuring the Work-Site Governing Structures

- Work Group/Standing Committee
  - Cook County
  - Santa Clara County
- Ad Hoc Committee
  - Pima County
- Executive Committee/Key Stakeholder Leadership
  - Washoe County

# Standing Committee-Cook County

- 12 members, one of 6 standing committees
- Role: establish a “DMC” agenda
- Strength: decision makers at the table keeping a focus on the issue
- Weakness: taxing on partners-yet another committee meeting, negotiating participation

# Ad Hoc Committee-Pima County

- Sub-Committee of Executive Committee
  - 2 Community Members Serve on Executive Committee
- Role: Implement BI/JDAI approach and submit recommendations to reduce disparities
- Strength: Full Participation b/c Seen as Time Limited
- Weakness: Maintaining Community Participation

# Executive Committee-Washoe County

- JDAI Executive Committee Co-chaired by Chief Juvenile Judge and Director of Juvenile Services
- Role: Implement JDAI
- Strengths: All Work Implemented thru a Racial/Ethnic/Gender Lens, No Need to Wait for Committee Recommendations, Facilitates Buy in From Line Staff
- Weaknesses: Lack of Significant Representation from Target Neighborhoods

# Figured Out the Working Structure- Now What: Fundamentals

- What Are We Talking About: Shared Understanding and Consensus
  - Disproportionate Minority Confinement (DMC)
  - Disparities
- To What Extent Does DMC Exist
  - Base Line Data
  - Target Populations: “Youth of Color”
- Purpose and Use of Detention
- Defining Success

# TACKLING MYTHS

1. NO KIDS SHOULD BE HELD IN SECURE DETENTION
2. URBAN CITIES LARGELY POPULATED WITH RACE/ETHNIC GROUPS CANNOT HAVE DMC
3. IF A POPULATION IS REPRESENTED AT 100% IN SECURE DETENTION, DMC REDUCTION WORK IS INEFFECTIVE

# DMC MYTH #1: Reduction Failed if there's 100% Representation by an Race/Ethnic Group



~~DMC Reduction has not occurred if 100% of youth in detention are the same race/ethnic group~~

**FALSE!**

ARE THE  
RIGHT KIDS  
HELD IN  
SECURE  
DETENTION?

If 100% of the confined population presents a **risk to public safety** and/or a **risk of not appearing**, and these factors are **objectively measured**, then DMC is not an issue



~~NO KIDS  
SHOULD BE  
HELD IN  
SECURE  
DETENTION?~~

**FALSE!**

ARE THE  
RIGHT KIDS  
HELD IN  
SECURE  
DETENTION?

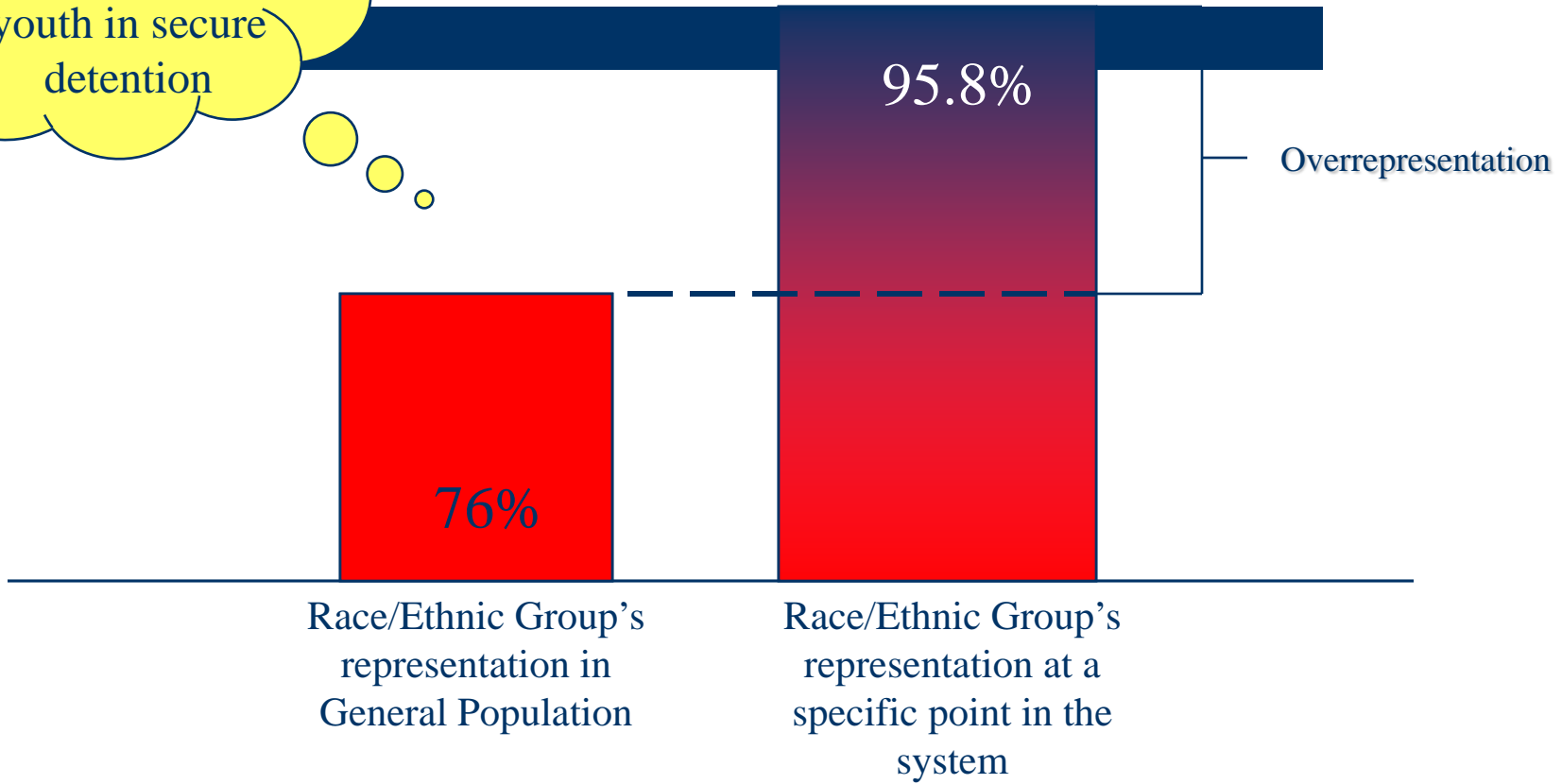
Who are the RIGHT KIDS?

1. Present A Risk to Public Safety
2. Present A Risk of Not Appearing for Court



# DMC Myth #3: Urban Cities Cannot Have DMC

Over-representation of African-American youth in secure detention



\* 2000 Census Data

# Figured Out the Working Structure- Now What

- Developing an Active Agenda
- Data Driven
  - Quantitative
  - Qualitative
- Measurable Outcomes
- Players at the Table

# Operationalizing the Work-Community Engagement

- What Do We Mean by “Engaging the Community”
  - Who Is Community
  - Why Engage Community
  - Roles of Community

# WHO IS COMMUNITY?

- Social Justice Advocates
- Students/Interns
- Legal Aide/Defense Bar
- Neighborhood Groups
- Societies of Color
- Parents & Youth



**Shining a Light – Being Transparent**

# Why Engage Community?

- CBO's Hold the Power to Change the Social Context
- CBO's Have the Time, Creativity, Flexibility, and Contacts
- CBO's, Parents' and Youth have the knowledge that system stakeholders often lack
- Community reps ask the tough questions
- Community reps can help sustain the effort when the consultants are gone

# Steps for Community Engagement

- Identify the neighborhoods contributing most to detention – using data already collected
- Identify the racial and ethnic groups most impacted by disparities
- Go to those communities and identify leaders that are interested and willing to join the process

# Actual Roles That community Members have Played:

- Assist in development of recommendations and attend the executive committee to present those recommendations
- Participate in the Juvenile Detention Reform Oversight Committee and other work groups
- Providing Alternatives to Detention
- Hold focus groups and forums in the community to identify issues contributing to disparities

# Engaging Community-Lessons Learned

- Involve Community Reps from the Start
- Level the Playing Field
- Respect and Value Community Input
- Real Community Engagement Takes Time