RED
PRACTICE
MANUAL

Chapter 2: Using Data Strategically to Reduce Racial and Ethnic Disparities

CENTER FOR
Children's
Law *and* **Policy**

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Using Data Strategically to Reduce Racial and Ethnic Disparities

Strategic collection and analysis of data is a necessary component of any successful effort to reduce racial and ethnic disparities. "Strategic" means that the data collection and analysis have a clear and useful purpose. All data collections and analyses are not created equal, and a boatload of data is no guarantee of effective reforms. The data *collection* should focus on significant characteristics of young people in the system (race, ethnicity, gender, home location), why they go into the system (new offense, violation of probation, warrant for failure to appear in court), how deeply they go into the system (arrest, referral to court, detention, adjudication), and what happens to them afterwards (diversion, release, probation, commitment). The data *analysis* should aim to reveal patterns in the process as they relate to the demographics. Are African-American boys more likely to be arrested for drug possession than white boys? Are Latino girls more likely to be referred to juvenile court for school disturbances than white girls? Are black youth less likely than white youth to be offered diversion for low-level offenses? Do youth of color spend more time incarcerated than white youth when charged with the same offenses?

This issue is important for two reasons. First, when they begin reform efforts, many jurisdictions do not have the capacity to collect and analyze data on key indicators. They need to address the issue up front, either by revising the way they mine the data they currently collect or by increasing their overall capacity to collect and analyze data. Without adequate data capacity, a reform effort is doomed at the outset. Second, many jurisdictions collect a great deal of data and believe *that* is the goal. In truth, data collection and analysis are the means to an end. The end is actual reduction of racial and ethnic disparities: the data piece is one of several critical components of the effort to achieve that goal.

When properly collected, disaggregated, and analyzed, data enable the governing collaborative to talk about what *actually* happens in the juvenile justice system rather than what people inside or outside the system *think* is going on. Everyone has their own subjective impression of how the system works – data anchor the discussion in the real world.

Data also make it possible to determine whether reform efforts are working, and if not, where improvement is needed. Thus, regular monitoring of data is a way of ensuring accountability for the reform effort and key parts of the juvenile justice
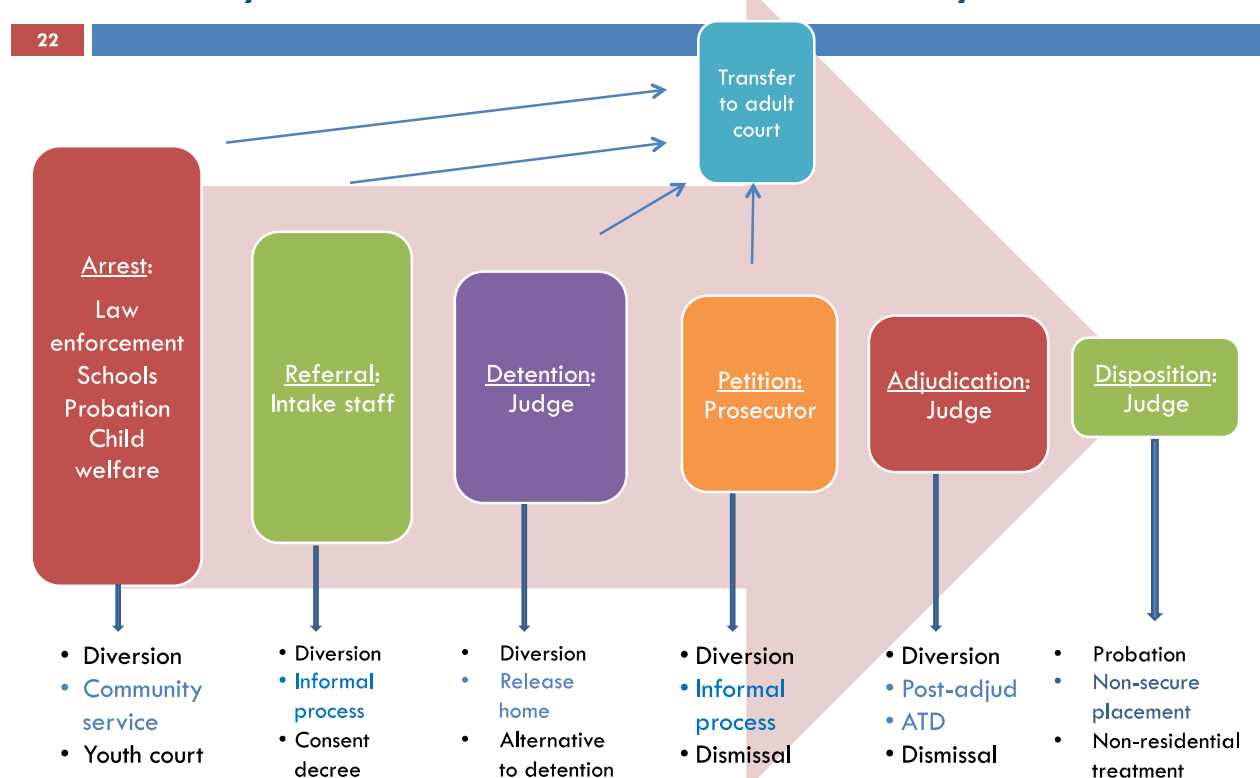
system. In addition, data provide an objective and understandable way of articulating the racial and ethnic disparity problems and the impact of reforms.

I.   Initial Data Collection

A. Mapping Decision Points

For data collection purposes, it is useful to view the juvenile justice system as a series of decision points. At each decision point, there is a key person or key people – law enforcement officers, probation officers, detention intake staff, prosecutors, judges – who determine what happens to a youth at that point in the system. The decision points have two important characteristics. First, at each point the key decision makers have considerable discretion. Second, at every key decision point, there are pathways for the youth to exit or move to the "shallow end" of the system. The graphic below shows the key decision points and those pathways to exit or to move to the shallow end of the system.

The Juvenile Justice Process:
Key Decision Points and Pathways Out

The Juvenile Justice Process diagram showing the key decision points:

Transfer to adult court

- **Arrest:** Law enforcement, Schools, Probation, Child welfare
  - Diversion
  - Community service
  - Youth court
- **Referral:** Intake staff
  - Diversion
  - Informal process
  - Consent decree
- **Detention:** Judge
  - Diversion
  - Release home
  - Alternative to detention
- **Petition:** Prosecutor
  - Diversion
  - Informal process
  - Dismissal
- **Adjudication:** Judge
  - Diversion
  - Post-adjud
  - ATD
  - Dismissal
- **Disposition:** Judge
  - Probation
  - Non-secure placement
  - Non-residential treatment

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To understand how a juvenile justice system works in a jurisdiction, it is necessary to collect data about what happens at the decision points: the characteristics of youth who arrive at the decision point, the reasons they get there, what happens to them there, and where they go next. To put it another way, the data illustrate how decision makers at each point use their discretion. Racial and ethnic disparities occur, in part, because decision makers have sufficient discretion that racial stereotypes and subjective perceptions are able to affect their decisions. Thus, the data make it possible to understand how bias may impact youth in the system.

B. Gathering Decision Point Data

The most basic data needed at each decision point for each youth is on race, ethnicity, gender, geography, and offense. "Geography" may be location of the offense or residence of the youth. "Offense" is the delinquency offense with which the youth is charged, or another reason the youth is at the decision point (e.g., for violation of probation or for a warrant for failure to appear in court). The W. Haywood Burns Institute refers to this data set as REGGO.

Geographic data on location of offense make it possible to see if many youth are arrested at a particular spot such as a high school or housing project. In communities of color, that is often the case. If so, then the reform effort can dig deeper into the data

> ## Basic Data Needed at Each Decision Point: REGGO
>
> **R**ace
>
> **E**thnicity
>
> **G**ender
>
> **G**eography
>
> **O**ffense

to learn why so many youth are arrested there, and determine if there are strategies to reduce the arrests. For example, in Sedgwick County, Kansas, a Models for Change DMC Action Network site, juvenile arrest data demonstrated that shoplifting was the most common arrest offense for African-American youth in the county, and 58% of youth arrested were girls. Geographic data showed that most arrests occurred at two

shopping malls. With this information, county officials developed a multi-prong strategy to reduce the thefts, including an anti-shoplifting campaign in the mall, enhanced diversion options for shoplifting, and a "girl empowerment" program with research-supported shoplifting interventions. As a result, shoplifting thefts by young people were reduced by 27% in one year (including 26% for African-American youth and 18% for Latino youth).

Geographic data on residence of youth enable probation departments and others to locate community-based alternative-to-incarceration programs so that they are in neighborhoods where most youth in the system live. This is important for the programs to operate effectively. Young people need to be able to get to community supervision programs. Programs located across town carry built-in challenges for attendance. Programs in the neighborhood may be more likely to succeed.

The data on offense or other reason for involvement provide information on how many youth are in the system for new offenses and how many for violation of probation or other court orders. For new offenses, the data indicate the type of offense (crimes against persons, property crimes, drug offenses, or public order offenses) and seriousness of the offense (misdemeanor or felony).

The next level of data that is useful includes age and referring agency (i.e., law enforcement, schools, or probation). The data on age may be helpful in understanding why youth enter the juvenile justice system and in planning alternative to incarceration programs that are developmentally appropriate. This may be particularly important in looking at school-based arrests and referrals to the juvenile court. Research has demonstrated racial disparities in school discipline and referrals to court in a number of jurisdictions. In some communities, pre-teens (i.e., youth in middle school) are referred to the juvenile court. Age data is equally important for planning community-based alternatives. A program designed for 13-year-olds may not be very effective for 17-year-olds.

The data on referring agency, particularly at arrest, are helpful to see how youth are coming into contact with the system. Referrals for new offenses are usually made by the police. Referrals for violations of probation or other court orders are usually made by probation officers. If crossover youth – who are in both the child welfare and juvenile justice systems – act out or run away from court-ordered group homes, they may be referred to court by their social workers. Data on referral by agency provide an opportunity to focus on potential disparities in an agency's policies or practices, and on the need for specialized programs in the agency.

At particular decision points, there also may be specific information to gather. For example, in the Juvenile Detention Alternatives Initiative (JDAI), which focuses on the detention decision point, participating sites collect data on three key indicators of

detention use: admissions, average daily population (ADP), and average length of stay (ALOS). These are useful because the population of a juvenile detention facility is a function of (a) the number of youth admitted to the facility and (b) how long they stay at the facility. Reducing either the number of youth admitted *or* the average length of stay will reduce average daily population. Reducing both provides double benefits in terms of the number of youth detained. As a strategy to reduce racial and ethnic disparities, reduction of ADP is notably effective in jurisdictions in which the majority of youth in detention are youth of color.

The data described above should be collected and reported to the governing collaborative on a regular basis – ideally on a monthly basis, but at least bi-monthly or quarterly. JDAI also does a one-time data collection, called the Detention Utilization Study or DUS, at the very beginning of work in a new site. The DUS includes three types of data: (1) trend data such as population and juvenile arrest trends over the past five years, (2) snapshot data on the detention population on one day in the county juvenile detention facility, and (3) detailed data on a sample of 250 youth held in detention recently. The detailed data on the 250 youth include demographic information (including age), arrest date, date detained, primary reason for detention, most serious offense for which the youth was detained, type of most serious current offense (violent, weapon, drug, property; misdemeanor, felony, or violation of probation), number of current charges, prior offenses, previous detentions, supervision status, other factors related to detention (e.g., parent/caregiver availability), date of release from detention, and person or program to whom the youth was released.[1] The resulting report provides a wealth of information on detention usage in the county and is very helpful in setting priorities for reform in the site. The DUS is discussed in more detail in Chapter 4 of this Practice Manual, and there are several examples of Detention Utilization Studies on the JDAI Helpdesk.[2]

> ### Public Sources of Data on the Youth Population
>
> - Federal Census
> - Annie E. Casey Foundation's KIDS COUNT
> - Public School Enrollment

In addition to gathering the data outlined above for each major decision point in the juvenile justice system, officials should also obtain the most current overall youth demographic data for the jurisdiction. Most jurisdictions gather data for youth age 10 through 17 as the age range of youth who are most likely to come into contact with the juvenile justice system. Federal Census data,[3] the Annie E. Casey Foundation's

KIDS COUNT,[4] and public school enrollment data may be helpful in compiling this information.

C. Accessing Quantitative Data

A good data system has important benefits for reducing racial and ethnic disparities. It enables analyses of where disparities occur in the system. It helps to monitor the impact (or lack of impact) of strategies designed to reduce those disparities. It can reveal new, emerging trends (e.g., in law enforcement or school policies) that may disparately impact youth of color. And it provides information to continually engage stakeholders in the effort by looking at what is actually going on in the system, rather than relying on anecdotes.

Nevertheless, accessing the data is often time-consuming and frustrating. Few data systems contain all of the information needed. Arrest information is usually only available from law enforcement agencies, which means separate police departments and sheriffs' agencies. Petition information (i.e., which cases prosecutors decide to prosecute and which they decline) is often available only from prosecutors' offices. Detention data may be kept by the juvenile court, or by the probation department, or by the juvenile detention facility. Juvenile court records may be kept by the court or the probation department. Often these data systems are not connected, and in some cases they are incompatible. Many jurisdictions do not collect any data on the use of alternatives to detention or alternatives to incarceration, or the effectiveness of existing programs. In addition, although data reports used in racial justice reforms present only aggregate (i.e., non-identifiable) information, there are often difficulties accessing the individual records that make up the aggregates because juvenile court information is confidential under state laws, and school and child welfare records are confidential under state and federal laws.[5]

Nevertheless, many jurisdictions are able to access the necessary data. This may require coordination by information technology (IT) specialists in several agencies, and modification of data collection programs in the agencies. Pennsylvania, for example, which has participated in both Models for Change and JDAI, has recently modified its statewide data system, the Juvenile Court Management System (JCMS), to include all of the data described above.[6] There are also national databases. The National Center for Juvenile Justice is a repository for juvenile court data from states throughout the country.[7] The Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention (OJJDP) has extensive juvenile justice data on every state.[8] The Burns Institute has data on racial and ethnic disparities in every state.[9]

To collect the data to be used for reform, it is often necessary to work with each agency in or connected to the system: police, sheriffs, prosecutors, juvenile court,

probation department, schools, child welfare, and mental health. For this complex work, many jurisdictions turn to local universities as partners.[10] In addition, local and state juvenile justice advocacy organizations often collect portions of this data to support their efforts.[11] As part of Models for Change, the Juvenile Law Center and the Robert F. Kennedy National Resource Center for Juvenile Justice have developed an interactive Information Sharing Toolkit designed to help jurisdictions coordinate their data collection and reporting efforts.[12] The Center for Juvenile Justice Reform at Georgetown University also offers an Information Sharing Certificate Program that allows officials to travel to Washington, DC to learn about effective data sharing strategies, collaborate on action plans, and receive technical assistance to overcome barriers.[13]

If all of the desired data is not readily available, or is not available electronically, the effort to collect data is still worthwhile. As long as a jurisdiction can regularly collect basic data (race, ethnicity, gender, geography, offense) at key decision points, it can identify problem areas and monitor reform efforts.

D. Data Collection Templates and Software

Several organizations have developed templates for collecting and reporting data on racial and ethnic disparities. As part of Models for Change, the Center for Children's Law and Policy and the Burns Institute developed a data collection template for the initiative's DMC Action Network, which you can download by following this link. JDAI has templates for both quarterly reports and annual reports on utilization of detention and alternatives to detention.[14] A sample quarterly report is available for download by clicking this link. You can also download an expanded JDAI report from Baltimore City by clicking here.

JDAI has also developed software for JDAI sites to use in collecting data on detention and alternatives. The Quarterly Reporting Spreadsheet, or QRS, collects and analyzes basic data and JDAI's key indicators, and displays the data in easy-to-read bar graphs. There is a library of training videos on the QRS available through the JDAI Helpdesk.[15]

E. Collecting Data on Ethnicity Separate from Race

Race and ethnicity are different. The word "race" is used in many ways in the juvenile justice system and other areas of society, often with political or sociological overtones. A discussion of the complexities of defining race is beyond the scope of this Practice Manual.[16] As a practical matter, the federal government has identified

five races for the purposes of collecting information for the decennial census and reporting information to government agencies. Those are (1) American Indian or Alaska Native, (2) Asian, (3) Black or African American, (4) Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander, and (5) White.[17]

"Ethnicity" is often used as a synonym for "culture," i.e., shared values, attitudes, beliefs, customs, history, traditions, norms, and language among a group of people. In the juvenile justice system, the most common ethnicity is Latino or Hispanic. The federal government has identified Hispanic or Latino ethnicity as meaning a person of Cuban, Mexican, Puerto Rican, South or Central American, or other Spanish culture or origin, regardless of race.[18]

Many state and local law enforcement and juvenile justice agencies do not collect accurate information on Latino youth because they either don't ask the youth any questions about ethnicity, they rely on a law enforcement officer's or probation staff's visual assessment of a youth's ethnicity, or they count "Latino" as a race. These methods result in an undercount of Latino youth in the system and a corresponding over-count of white youth.[19] The undercount may be very significant.[20]

To remedy this problem, the White House Office of Management and Budget (OMB) issued guidelines to federal agencies to collect information on ethnicity and race separately through two questions.[21] The Census Bureau follows those guidelines. Thus, the preferred method for collecting ethnicity and race information is to ask an initial question, "Are you Hispanic or Latino?" The second question is, "What is your race?" Pennsylvania has adopted this procedure in collecting juvenile justice data and has issued guidelines to agency staff and others.[22]

Question 1: Are you Hispanic or Latino?	• Yes • No
Question 2: What race do you most closely identify with?	• Asian • White • Black • Other • Multiracial • American Indian or Alaska Native • Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander

F. Capturing Information on Multiracial Youth

The youth population in the United States is becoming increasingly multiracial. However, capturing information on multiracial youth is difficult. One obvious method is to have an option in records, in addition to the five races identified by the federal government, for youth to identify as "multiracial." The benefit of this option is that it reports the number of youth who belong to more than one race. The disadvantage is that it doesn't allow for accurate reporting of the number of youth who identify with each race. If a youth has a white mother and a black father, should the youth be counted twice, once for white and once for black? Or should the youth be counted once for "multiracial," and not for either white or black? Either way is problematic.

OJJDP recommends that juvenile justice systems follow the data collection guidelines set forth for all federal agencies by OMB. The guidelines direct agencies to ask separate questions about ethnicity and race, with a third optional question for youth to report any other country of origin, ancestry, or tribe with which they identify. OJJDP recommends self-identification as the primary method for answering the questions. OJJDP also recommends that jurisdictions collect data on the English language proficiency of youth and their families as well as data on other family characteristics such as national origin and household composition, to help systems better provide culturally and linguistically competent interventions.[23] Some sample questions appear on the following page.

Sample Questions on Language Proficiency of Youth and Family Members

I feel most comfortable speaking . . . .

[ ] English, [ ] Spanish, [ ] Other _____

I prefer speaking . . . with my friends.

[ ] English, [ ] Spanish, [ ] Other _____

I prefer speaking . . . with my parents/caregiver.

[ ] English, [ ] Spanish, [ ] Other _____

My parents / caregiver feel most comfortable speaking . . .

[ ] English, [ ] Spanish, [ ] Other _____

My parents / caregiver prefer speaking . . . with me.

[ ] English, [ ] Spanish, [ ] Other _____

I need a translator to help me understand what is happening in my case.

[ ] Yes, [ ] No

My parents / caregiver need a translator to help them understand what is happening with my case.

[ ] Yes, [ ] No

G. Gathering Qualitative Data

Quantitative data is not the only useful information for understanding how a juvenile justice system works and how it affects youth of color. Qualitative information gathered through interviews, focus groups, examinations of policies and procedures, and reviews of narrative reports, is also data. Qualitative data presents the stories behind the numbers. It provides background, analysis, perspective, nuance, and opinion. Qualitative data shows the effects of racial and ethnic disparities in human terms. For many stakeholders, individual stories are more powerful motivators for reform than even the best quantitative analysis.

Gathering Qualitative Data

- Interview stakeholders
- Conduct focus groups
- Use surveys

Quantitative data and qualitative data are most useful when used together. Quantitative data provide a "hard" look at operation of the system – "just the facts" – while qualitative data provide context that can explain the facts.

There are several effective ways to gather qualitative data. One is to interview key stakeholders in the system: judges, probation staff, prosecutors, juvenile defenders, law enforcement officers, school administrators, child welfare officials, youth who have been in the system, parents, and community representatives. Each has valuable information derived from their role in the system. Many reform efforts use checklists of questions for interviews. For example, JDAI's "System Assessment" of new sites uses checklists of questions for each of JDAI's core strategies.

Equally valuable is comparing how different stakeholders answer the same questions. Do school officials use school-based programs before referring youth to the police for misbehavior? School officials and law enforcement officers often differ in their opinions. Are white youth more likely to be offered diversion programs? Prosecutors and public defenders may disagree. Are alternatives to secure detention equally available for all youth charged with low- and medium-risk offenses? Judges, probation officers, and parents may have different responses.

Another way to gather qualitative data is through focus groups. Focus groups are often more effective – i.e., participants are more likely to give honest answers -- when they consist of people in similar roles, such as groups of school resource officers or probation officers or parents. In the Models for Change effort to reduce racial and ethnic disparities in Berks County (Reading), Pennsylvania, focus groups of Latino

parents were conducted by a CCLP staff member in Spanish. Surveys are another way to collect information about observations and perceptions of the juvenile justice system.

Another source of data, in many communities, is reports by state or local agencies or advocacy groups about racial or ethnic disparities in the jurisdiction. These reports may give the reform effort a running start by providing a preliminary analysis of where and why disparities occur. They often generate interest in the issue in ways, and with language, that are different from that used by traditional stakeholders. They may also point to specific problems in policies and practices that are appropriate for further, more systemic investigation.

H. Identifying and Filling Gaps in Availability of Information

1. Data Improvements

Where important quantitative data is not available, it may be necessary to modify computer programs to include the missing information. Often this can be done by adding one or more fields to the programs. Planning and consultation with IT specialists is necessary to ensure that the modifications provide all of the new data needed without making unnecessary changes in the programs. Modifying computer programs can be expensive. Where data is collected in Excel-type programs, modifications may not be difficult. However, many jurisdictions use proprietary software developed by private companies, and each change a jurisdiction wants to make in the software will increase the costs.

2. File Reviews

File reviews may be used for one-time data collections such as the JDAI Detention Utilization Studies, or for digging deeper into data such as analyzing racial differences in the filing of probation violations. File reviews involve the development of a specific list of questions to be answered or data to be collected, selection of a sufficient number of files to provide a valid finding (usually in consultation with a researcher), and training of the individuals collecting the data to ensure inter-rater reliability. Files reviews can be very advantageous because they can provide data on critical questions about racial and ethnic disparities, and they don't have to be conducted by professional researchers as long as those collecting the data are trained to interpret and answer the research questions consistently.

II. Data Quality

A. Assessing the Accuracy of Data

Several problems commonly arise regarding accuracy of data. First, in many jurisdictions it is difficult to obtain accurate data on ethnicity, i.e., whether a youth is Latino or Hispanic. The federal government, through the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI), does not require states to report ethnicity data on arrests in its Uniform Crime Reports (UCR) or its National Incident-Based Reporting System (NIBRS).[24] Because the federal government does not require the information to be reported, many states do not collect ethnicity information on arrests or require local jurisdictions to collect such data. After arrest, juvenile courts and probation departments vary widely in their data-collection practices. Some do not ask the youth about ethnicity, or rely on probation staff's visual assessment of a youth's ethnicity, or count "Latino" as a race. These methods result in an undercount of Latino youth in the system. Research has shown that the undercount may be very significant.[25]

Second, and more generally, aggregate data are often inaccurate because agency staff do not consistently provide answers to questions on questionnaires. If the box on "race" (or "offense" or "source of referral") is not filled in for a substantial number of youth, the aggregate data will not reflect accurate information for the population as a whole.

A third source of inaccuracy is inadequate training of agency staff who collect the data. If staff members do not understand that *every* question must be answered, or if staff are unclear on how questions should be interpreted, the resulting data will be inconsistent and compromised.

B. Reliability and Validity

These terms usually apply to screening and assessment tools such as detention screening instruments (also known as Risk Assessment Instruments or RAIs) and comprehensive youth risk and needs assessments such as the Youth Level of Services/Case Management Inventory (YLS/CMI) and the Structured Assessment of Violence Risk in Youth (SAVRY).[26] For the tools to be useful in supplying data on youth in the system, they should be free from bias and distortion. Reliability and validity are core components of scientific method, designed to reduce inaccuracy.

"Reliability" means that the instrument provides consistent results. A detention RAI is intended to measure the risk that a youth who is arrested will appear in court at hearings and will not re-offend before his or her disposition hearing. The instrument measures the risk by assessing points for various factors such as current offense, prior adjudications, and history of failures to appear in court. Then, based on the resulting score, the instrument categorizes the risk as high, medium, or low. The level of the risk score determines the level of supervision the youth receives, i.e., whether the youth will be detained (high risk), released to a community-based program or under supervision (medium risk), or released to parent or guardian (low risk). Reliability means that if detention intake staff administer a RAI to a particular youth who is arrested, the instrument will produce the same score whether the county chief of juvenile probation or a recently hired probation officer administers the tool.

Key Concepts: Reliability and Validity

- *Reliability:* The instrument provides consistent results

- *Validity:* The instrument measures what it purports to measure.

"Validity" means that the instrument actually measures what it purports to measure. A detention RAI is valid if a low score actually means low risk, e.g., if youth with low scores who are released to parents show up at all of their detention hearings and do not re-offend while awaiting their court proceedings. To *validate* their detention screening instrument, jurisdictions compare the level of RAI scores for a sample of youth with how the youth actually behaved.[27]

An instrument can be reliable without being valid. For example, if a screening instrument scored every youth charged with a drug offense as "high risk" (and therefore needing to be detained until adjudication), it would be reliable (i.e., consistent) but not valid, since youth charged with possession of marijuana, for example, do not pose a significant threat to the community.

III. Analyzing and Using Data to Identify and Support Reform Strategies

A. Using Different Types of Analyses – Trends, Snapshots, Baselines, and Headlines

Several types of analyses are helpful in efforts to reduce racial and ethnic disparities. *Trend data* provide a picture of the jurisdiction over a period of time. The most common trend data analyses are increases or decreases in youth population in the jurisdiction, youth of color population, youth arrests, and youth admissions to detention. In the JDAI Detention Utilization Study, for example, trends are reported and analyzed over a five-year period.[28] Trend data may be used to identify particular issues for further study. For example, the data may show a significant decrease in overall detention admissions over a five-year period, but little decrease in detentions of youth of color. Stakeholders will want to learn the reasons for that.

Different Types of Analyses

- *Trend Data*: A picture of the jurisdiction over time.

- *Snapshots*: Report on data at a particular point in time.

- *Baseline Data*: Initial data about a jurisdiction *before* initiating reforms.

- *Headlines*: Selected data findings that are relevant to a reform effort or encapsulate the impact of a reform effort.

Snapshots are the opposite of trend data: they report on data at a particular point in time. Thus, a snapshot of the youth in detention on January 1, 2015, might include the number of youth in the facility on that day; the number of those youth who identify as Latino; the number of youth who consider themselves white, African-American, Asian, and Native American; the number of boys and girls; the number who live in each zip code in the county; and the number charged with crimes against persons, property crimes, drug offenses, public order offenses, status offenses, and violations of probation or other court orders. The JDAI Detention Utilization Study also calls for a one-day snapshot of the detention center population in the new JDAI site.[29] Snapshots provide a quick look at a particular decision point. Like trend data, they may suggest potential lines of inquiry. For example, if a jurisdiction has a Latino population of 10% and a snapshot shows that

35% of the youth detained on a particular day were Latino, then the snapshot data point to a topic for further investigation.

Baseline data provide initial data about a jurisdiction *before* reforms are introduced. Baselines make it possible to measure the amount of change that occurs. For example, if youth of color are three times as likely as white youth to be detained during the baseline year of 2014, and 1.5 times as likely as white youth to be detained after detention reforms are put in place in 2015, then there has been a reduction in racial disparities. Comparisons of baseline data with current data that demonstrate success at reducing disparities can bolster the efforts of champions of the reforms and sustain the commitment of the governing collaborative.

Juvenile justice stakeholders often are not interested in *every* possible analysis of collected data. *Headlines* are selected data findings that are especially relevant to the reform effort or that encapsulate the impact of reform efforts. Headlines are often the most effective means of summarizing the progress of reform for audiences that do not need to know the background and details. This is particularly important when working with non-traditional stakeholders in a reform initiative. They are less familiar with complex explanations of data findings, and headlines provide the most succinct statements about what is happening in a jurisdiction.

B. Establishing Regular Collection and Reporting of Data

The collaborative or committee that governs the racial justice reform effort should meet on a regular basis: either monthly, bi-monthly, or quarterly. At each meeting, review of data should be one of the first items on the agenda. Prior to the meeting, the site coordinator, IT specialist or on-site researcher should prepare an update on data at the decision points that are the focus of the reform effort. The update should include data on the youth moving through those decision points, disaggregated by REGGO. Ideally, the coordinator should share this information with collaborative members prior to the meeting so that people will have time to review the information and prepare any questions they may have.

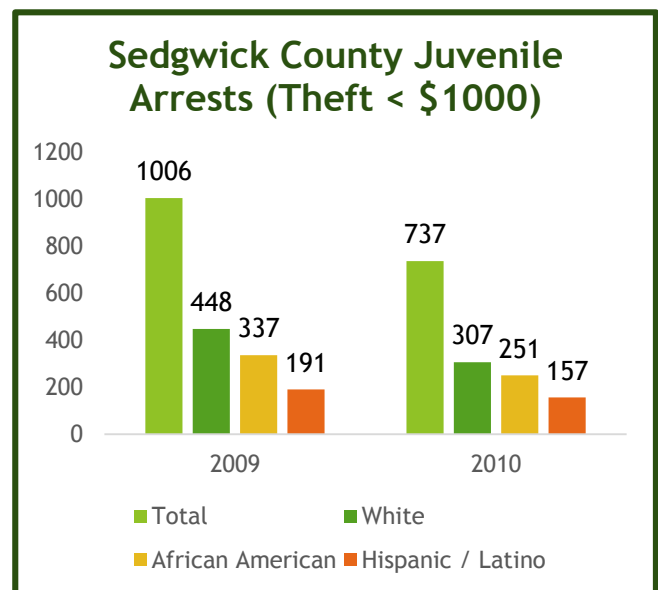## C. Digging Deeper into the Data

Often the data collected reveal the *existence* of racial or ethnic disparities, but do not reveal the *reasons* for the disparities. An example of data that reveal the existence of disparities is the Relative Rate Index (RRI) data that OJJDP requires states to report. The RRI compares the rate of white youth at a particular decision

point with the rate of another group, such as African-American youth, at the same decision point. This is usually represented as a fraction, with the rate of white youth as the denominator and the rate of the other group as the numerator. An RRI greater than 1.0 indicates over-representation. Thus, if the RRI for Native American youth at the arrest decision point is 3.6, then Native youth are arrested 3.6 times as often as white youth. That is over-representation at the arrest decision point. However, the RRI does not indicate *why* that over-representation occurs.

In order to get to the *reasons* for disparities, it is necessary to dig more deeply into the data, a process sometimes known as "peeling the onion" (i.e., layer by layer). For example, an analysis of data on detention in Peoria, Illinois, reported that a substantial number of African-American youth were detained for aggravated assault or battery.[30] Upon deeper analysis, the jurisdiction learned that a majority of the incidents were school fights and the detentions resulted from zero-tolerance school discipline policies. With this data, the reform collaborative worked with school authorities to develop ways to handle student conflicts in school rather than by referral to the police. Once new policies and new programs such as Peace Circles were implemented in the schools, school referrals to detention dropped by 35%, and referrals for African-American youth fell by 43%.[31]

As another example, an analysis in Sedgwick County (Wichita), Kansas, reported that the most common arrest offense for African-American youth in 2008 was theft of items valued at less than $1,000. Further analysis revealed that girls constituted about three-fifths of those arrested for the thefts, compared to girls constituting less than a quarter of arrests for all other offenses.

Digging deeper, the jurisdiction learned that 54% of the arrests in a sample took place at the two large malls in the county. Armed with this data, the reform collaborative developed a multi-pronged approach. They created a Community Anti-Shoplifting Campaign that emphasized theft deterrence and controlling peer influence, using local girls as "ambassadors" to other youth inside the malls. They also created enhanced diversion policies to target youth charged with shoplifting. Finally, they revised and enhanced an existing Girl Empowerment Program to incorporate research-supported shoplifting interventions.

Sedgwick County Juvenile Arrests (Theft < $1000)

Year	Total	White	African American	Hispanic / Latino
2009	1006	448	337	191
2010	737	307	251	157

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As a result of these interventions, juvenile arrests for theft under $1,000 in the county during 2009-2010 declined almost 20% for African-American youth, and 26% for Hispanic-Latino youth.[32]

D. Presenting Data Effectively

There are several principles to keep in mind in presenting data to audiences such as governing collaboratives. First, as in modern architecture, *less is more*.[33] Most people cannot take in a lot of data at one time. If they perceive visual overload, they shut down. Therefore, in presenting data, it is important to select the most important pieces of information and highlight them.

A corollary principle is that *simple is better than complex*. Although it is possible to combine a great deal of information into one image or PowerPoint slide,[34] the result is more likely to be confusing than helpful.
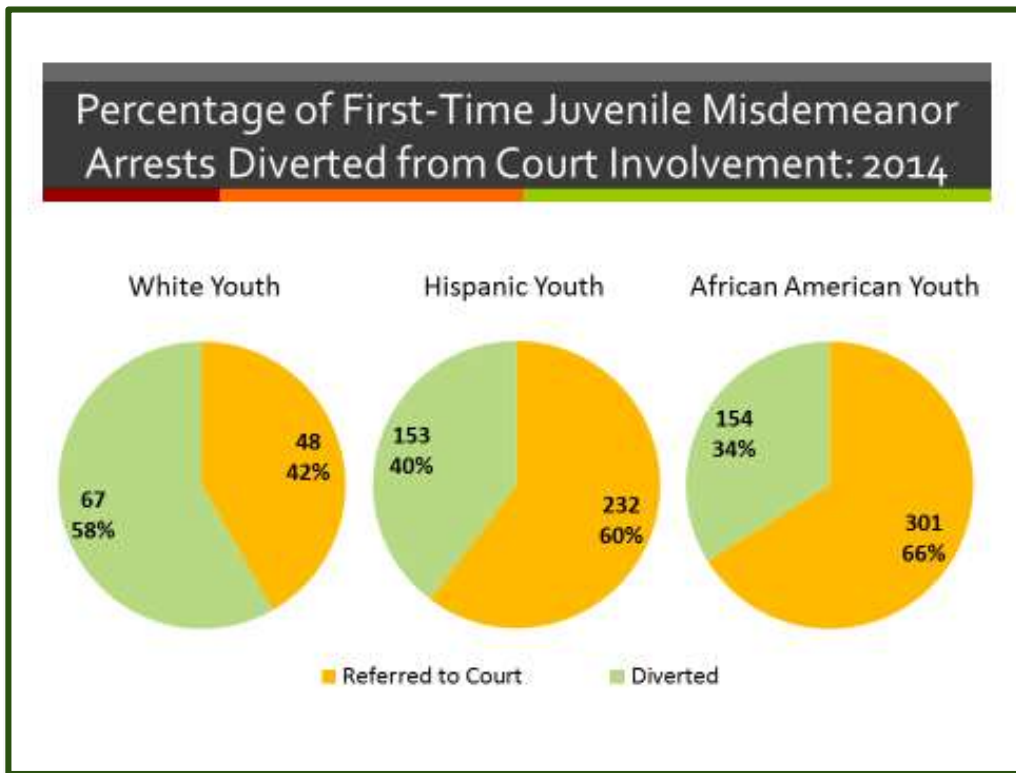
In addition, *visual is better than written*. Most people understand a data point much more easily if it is presented in graphic form. Also, most people respond more quickly to visual illustrations than to reading information in a narrative.

Bar graphs and pie charts are better than tables of numbers. Most people are intimidated by tables of numbers. Bar graphs, on the other hand, are particularly useful for making comparisons, e.g., the rate of arrest of African-American youth vs. the rate of arrest of white youth. Pie charts are most helpful for looking at entire data set (such as all youth held in detention in the site over the past year) and highlighting specific "slices" of the pie (white youth held in detention, Latino youth held in detention, African-American youth held in detention).

Tips for Presenting Data Effectively

- Less is more

- Simple is better than complex

- Visual is better than written

- Bar graphs and pie charts are better than tables of numbers

- Colors help to draw distinctions

Colors help to draw distinctions. Colors add vibrancy to a presentation. Contrasting colors on a bar graph, as in the figure below, help to distinguish data on different groups.

Percentage of First-Time Juvenile Misdemeanor Arrests Diverted from Court Involvement: 2014

Qualitative information is more difficult to present than quantitative information. However, the same principles apply. A PowerPoint slide with a full paragraph of text is analogous to a table of numbers. Bullet points, on the other hand, are analogous to bars on a bar graph. The goal should be to present the information in digestible pieces, focusing on the essential points and avoiding distractions.

Presenters should take care, before presenting data, to anticipate some of the barriers to discussing race that are identified in Chapter 1 of this Practice Manual. For example, if a data finding suggests disparate treatment by a particular agency or group, the presenter should be prepared to facilitate the discussion among members of the audience (e.g., the governing collaborative) so as to prevent finger-pointing and instead to emphasize useful strategies for reducing the disparate treatment.

E. Using Data to Develop a Work Plan

The work plan is a statement of the priorities for reform in the site and a road map to how the site will address those priorities over the coming six months or year. The

work plan provides accountability as the effort moves forward. The work plan also enables the collaborative to keep its focus on the goals of the initiative.

The work plan should identify key goals and, for each goal, the challenges or barriers to reaching the goal, the next steps or tasks to be carried out to overcome the challenges, the person responsible for each task, a completion date for each task, and objective measures to show when the task is done.

Data are particularly important for two components of the work plan: the goals and objectives, and the performance measures. The goals and objectives of the work plan should come out of the data collection and analysis of racial and ethnic disparities at key decision points in the juvenile justice system. For example, if the analysis shows that Latino youth are significantly overrepresented at the detention decision point, then the goals and objectives will be about learning why that overrepresentation occurs and how it can be reduced.

The performance measures provide feedback and accountability about progress in the reform initiative. If the goal is to reduce detention of Latino youth and the reduction from Year 1 to Year 2 is only 3%, then the reform effort has not made much progress. If the goal is to reduce referrals to law enforcement of youth of color from the county's schools and the reduction from Year 3 to Year 4 is 40%, then the reform effort has made substantial progress. In developing the work plan, it is important to identify data-based performance measures for each activity in the plan.

F. Identifying Low-Hanging Fruit

When the data collection and analysis of a site is completed, some areas of disparities are like low-hanging fruit: they are waiting to be picked. In most jurisdictions, disparities are likely to occur at arrest, detention, transfer, and commitment to secure facilities. At arrest, for example, disparities are often the result of zero-tolerance policies in schools. The "school-to-prison pipeline" has received enormous attention, and there are now a variety of strategies for reducing that pipeline, including mediation, Peace Circles, enhanced teacher training, Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports (PBIS) programs, in-school suspension, and alternative sanctions such as required school activities on weekends.[35] Many jurisdictions have found that coordinated attention to this problem can quickly lead to significant reductions in racial and ethnic disparities in school discipline. Other likely "low-hanging fruit" in racial justice reforms are a shortage of diversion programs for youth charged with low-level offenses, a need for additional community-based alternative to detention programs, and the absence of graduated sanctions and incentives for

youth who violate probation or other court orders. In all of these areas, it may be possible to achieve substantial reductions in disparities in reasonably short time periods.

Jurisdictions should reap these reductions as soon as possible and celebrate their successes. They represent quick victories in an area where progress is often hard to find. Significant and measurable changes in policies and practices are a triple benefit: they bolster the governing collaborative to continue its work, confirm the effectiveness of data-driven solutions, and promote expansion of racial and ethnic justice reforms.

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[1]National Council on Crime and Delinquency, *Planning for juvenile detention reform: Data collection handbook*. (2003). Baltimore, MD: The Annie E. Casey Foundation.

[2]JDAI helpdesk. (n.d.) *Best practices: Detention utilization study (DUS)*.

[3]United States Census Bureau. (n.d.) *Data tools and apps*.

[4]KIDS COUNT. (n.d.) *KIDS COUNT data center: A project of the Annie E. Casey Foundation*.

[5]U.S. Department of Education. (n.d.). *Federal educational rights and privacy act (FERPA)*.

[6]Juvenile Court Judges' Commission (n.d.).PaJCMS/PaJCRS.

[7]*National Center for Juvenile Justice*. (n.d.).

[8]Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention. (n.d.) *Statistical Briefing Book*.

[9]The W. Haywood Burns Institute for Juvenile Justice Fairness & Equity. (n.d.). *Unbalanced juvenile justice*.

[10]For example, the JDAI site in Shelby County, TN, had their detention risk assessment instrument validated by a team from the University of Memphis. The Philadelphia Probation Department works with a research professor from Drexel University on data collection and analysis for detention reform.

[11]See, e.g., *Juvenile justice initiative*. (n.d.); and National Juvenile Justice Network. (n.d.). *Fiscal policy center*.

[12]Juvenile Law Center & Robert F. Kennedy National Resource Center for Juvenile Justice. (n.d.) *Information sharing tool kit: Improving outcomes for youth in the juvenile justice system through responsible information sharing*.

[13]Center for Juvenile Justice Reform (n.d.) *Information sharing certificate program*.

[14]JDAI helpdesk. (n.d.) *Best practices: Quarterly reports*..

[15]The QRS training videos are also available through the JDAI Helpdesk, www.jdaihelpdesk.org.

[16]For example, the questionnaire used in the 2000 census listed 15 choices for race, even though Federal standards for promulgated by the White House Office of Management and Budget in 1997 listed only five race categories. Torbet, P., Hurst, Jr., H., & Soler, M. (2006). *Guidelines for collecting and recording the race and ethnicity of juveniles in conjunction with juvenile delinquency disposition reporting to the Juvenile Court Judge's Commission*. Pittsburgh, PA: National Center for Juvenile Justice, 3 [hereinafter, *Guidelines*].

[17] 62 Federal Register No. 210 (1997).

[18] 62 Federal Register No. 210 (1997).

[19]Villarruel, F.A., and Walker, N.E. (n.d). *Dondeesta la justicia? A call to action on behalf of Latino and Latina youth in the U.S. justice system*. Washington, DC: Building Blocks for Youth, 47.

[20]Holman, B. (2001). *Masking the divide: How officially reported prison statistics distort the racial and ethnic realities of prison growth*. Alexandria, VA: National Center on Institutions and Alternatives [hereinafter, *Masking the divide*].

[21]Office of Management and Budget. (1997). *Revisions to the standards for the classification of federal data on race and ethnicity*.

[22]Guidelines.

[23]Ramiu, M.F., and Shoenberg, D. (2009). Strategies for serving Hispanic youth. In *DMC technical assistance manual* (4th ed.). Washington, DC: Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention.

[24]Federal Bureau of Investigation. (n.d.) *Uniform crime reports*.

[25]*Masking the divide*.

[26]Vincent, G.M., Guy, L.S., and Grisso, T. (2012). *Risk assessment in juvenile justice: A guidebook for implementation*. Chicago: John D. and Catherine T. MacArthur Foundation, Models for Change.

[27]See, e.g., Dedel, K., and Davies, G. (2007). *Validating Multnomah County's juvenile detention risk assessment instrument*. Portland, OR: Multnomah County Department of Community Justice. See, generally, Steinhart, D. (2006). *Juvenile detention risk assessment: A practice guide to juvenile detention reform*. Baltimore, MD: The Annie E. Casey Foundation.

[28]National Council on Crime and Delinquency. (2003). *Planning for juvenile detention reform: Data collection handbook*. Baltimore, MD: The Annie E. Casey Foundation, 17.

[30]Id.

[30]Bell, J., Ridolfi, L.J., and Brown, L. (2009). *Collecting and Analyzing Data on Racial and Ethnic Disparities: The Peoria Pilot Project*. Chicago: Models for Change.

[31]Id.

[32]*Getting results: How Sedgewick County, Kansas, slashed arrest rates for youth of color*. DMC Action Network eNews, 22, 1.

[33]German architect Ludwig Mies van der Rohe, one of the giants of modern architecture, popularized the phrase "less is more."

[34]The most famous example is a graphic of Napoleon's march into Russia, drawn by Charles Joseph Minard, a French engineer, in 1869. It depicts six variables about the march, including the changing size of the army, it's location at different times, the direction of the army's movement, and temperatures on various dates during the retreat from Moscow. Tufte, E. (2001). *The visual display of quantitative information*. (2nd ed.) Cheshire, CT: Graphics Press. It is a remarkable illustration, but not a good model for juvenile justice reform initiatives.

[35]U.S. Department of Education and Department of Justice have issued a guidance package for schools on school climate and school discipline to promote safety and fairness. U.S. Department of Education. (n.d). *School climate and discipline*.