

DISPROPORTIONATE MINORITY CONTACT IN THE
LUCAS COUNTY (OHIO) JUVENILE JUSTICE SYSTEM

ASSESSMENT REPORT
PHASE 1
EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

AUGUST 2008



ISSUED IN COOPERATION WITH THE:

LUCAS COUNTY JUVENILE COURT

LUCAS COUNTY CRIMINAL JUSTICE
COORDINATING COUNCIL

LUCAS COUNTY FAMILY COUNCIL

OHIO DEPARTMENT OF YOUTH SERVICES

Acknowledgements

This report is made possible by the collaborative efforts of many individuals who have generously contributed their time and expertise.

Members of the Lucas County DMC Workgroup have met to review data, identify problems and possible solutions, discuss possible interventions and share project status with their departments and organizations. Their ideas, insight and observations have been the driving force in preparing this document. Workgroup members (past and present) are:

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The Ohio Department of Youth Services (DYS) has provided invaluable guidance and encouragement throughout this project. Their working partner, the Ohio State University, Center for Learning Excellence (CLEX), has been an excellent resource for demonstrating how to best organize the information collected and interpret our findings.

We are also grateful to our collaborating partner, the Lucas County Family and Children First Council and their Data & Evaluation Network Committee for conducting their current research effort to identify the risks and protective factors present in our target community and look forward to combining the results of their study with the findings presented here.

Above all, we are indebted to Administrative Judge Denise Navarre Cubbon and Judge Connie Zimmelman for their wisdom and courage to explore this sensitive and timely topic in an effort to improve the lives of children and families in Lucas County.

This project was supported by Award No. 2005-JJ-SI1-0021D awarded by the Office of Juvenile Justice & Delinquency Prevention, Office of Justice Programs through the State of Ohio, Department of Youth Services. The opinions, findings, and conclusions or recommendations expressed in this publication are those of the author(s) and do not necessarily reflect the views of the Department of Justice or the State of Ohio, Department of Youth Services.

**Disproportionate Minority Contact (DMC) in the Lucas County Juvenile Justice System:
Assessment Report-Phase 1
Executive Summary**

What is Disproportionate Minority Contact (DMC)?

Disproportionate Minority Contact is the overrepresentation of minority youth in the juvenile justice system. Overrepresentation exists when the percentage of minority youth who come into contact with the juvenile justice system is higher than their percentage in the total youth population. A significant body of research demonstrates that, throughout the United States, a disproportionate percentage of racial minorities come in contact with all stages of the juvenile and criminal justice systems.

The Office of Juvenile Justice Delinquency Prevention (OJJDP), an agency of the U.S. Department of Justice, supports states, local communities, and tribal jurisdictions in their efforts to develop and implement effective programs for juveniles. OJJDP sponsors research, program, and training initiatives; develops priorities and goals and sets policies to guide federal juvenile justice issues; disseminates information about juvenile justice issues; and awards funds to states to support local programming. OJJDP provides statistical tools, technical assistance and best practice models that communities can use to address their individual DMC issues. A local DMC Workgroup was established to study DMC in Lucas County.

Measuring DMC

- Obtain data for youth ages 10 through 17.
 - The City of Toledo represents 66% of Lucas County's population, 57% of the Caucasian population, 95% of the African-American population and 91% of the non-Caucasian population. The Caucasian population for Lucas County has decreased 8.3% from 1995 to 2005, with the African American (19.7%), Hispanic (28.1%) and Asian (9.1%) increasing for the same time period.
- Collect data from law enforcement agencies and Juvenile Court.
- Use collected data to calculate the Relative Rate Index (RRI).
 - The RRI compares the rate of occurrence for Caucasian youth to the rate of occurrence for minority youth.
 - If the RRI is 1.00, then the rate of occurrence for Caucasian youth is equal to the rate of occurrence for minority youth.
 - If the RRI is greater than 1.00, then the rate of occurrence for minority youth is higher than the rate of occurrence for Caucasian youth.
 - If the RRI is less than 1.00, then the rate of occurrence for Caucasian youth is higher than the rate of occurrence for minority youth.
 - The RRI rates were calculated for each decision point for 2004 through 2007.

OJJDP DMC Identification and Assessment Process

Nine decision points are identified in the OJJDP model. These decision points were used to identify and analyze DMC in Lucas County, Ohio. Based on the Assessment Phase 1 report, African-Americans are driving the disproportional minority rates for Lucas County as highlighted below.

Decision Point 1-Juvenile Arrests

- The RRI was calculated using Juvenile Court data that represents all official delinquency cases filed and unofficial cases for delinquency offenses received for the reporting period. Using number of referrals as the arrest rate provides a more complete starting point for review of local data since law enforcement data was incomplete at the time of analysis.
- The RRI calculation for this decision point is the rate of cases petitioned per population (1,000 youth).
- RRI values for African-American males and females have steadily increased since 2004. African-American females experienced the highest disproportionality in 2006; they were 5.18 times more

likely to be arrested than Caucasian females. African-American males encountered their highest disproportionality in 2007, being 5.01 times more likely to be arrested than Caucasian males.

Decision Point 2-Juvenile Arrests Referrals to Juvenile Court

- The RRI was calculated using all official delinquency cases filed and unofficial cases for delinquency offenses received for the reporting period. This excludes official status offenses and unofficial delinquency offenses related to alcohol and tobacco.
- The RRI calculation for this decision point is the rate of referrals to juvenile court per 100 arrests. The RRI for this decision point is not highlighted since it is an arbitrary number. By utilizing the referral number as the arrest rate, the referral RRI is held constant at 1, and has little value for purposes of this report.
- African-American referrals have steadily increased, accounting for 61.2% of all Juvenile Court referrals in 2007, compared to 54.5% in 2004. Caucasian referrals to Juvenile Court have steadily decreased from 2004 through 2007, reaching a low in 2007 with 33.1% compared to 37.7% in 2004. Hispanic and Other/Mixed referral percentages also decreased slightly from 2004 through 2007.

Decision Point 3-Juvenile Arrests Cases Diverted

- The RRI was calculated using all unofficial cases for delinquent offenses, excluding those related to alcohol and tobacco, received for the reporting period.
- The RRI calculation for this decision point is the number of juveniles diverted before adjudication per 100 court referrals.
- While the RRI for African-American youth peaked in 2006 at .95, indicating a minor difference in diversion between Caucasians and African-Americans, in 2007 the RRI for African-Americans dropped to .80, suggesting higher diversion rates among Caucasians.

Decision Point 4-Juvenile Arrests Cases Involving Secure Detention

- The RRI was calculated using all admissions to Juvenile Detention Center (JDC) for the reporting period.
- The RRI calculation for this decision point is the number of juveniles detained per 100 court referrals.
- African-American Cases Involving Secure Detention remained relatively constant from 2004 through 2006 and peaked in 2007. In 2007, an African-American youth was 1.44 times more likely to be securely detained than a Caucasian youth.

Decision Point 5-Juvenile Arrests Cases Petitioned (Charge Filed)

- The RRI was calculated using all official delinquency cases filed for the reporting period.
- The RRI calculation for this decision point is the number of juvenile cases petitioned (charges filed) per 100 court referrals.
- Data suggest little disproportionality among African-Americans regarding petitions from 2004 through 2007, except in 2006 where African-Americans were .73 times less likely to have a charge filed than a Caucasian youth.

Decision Point 6-Juvenile Arrests Cases Resulting in Delinquent Findings

- The RRI was calculated using official delinquency cases disposed for the reporting period that had an adjudication outcome of "found delinquent".
- The RRI calculation for this decision point is the number of juveniles found delinquent per 100 youth petitioned (charged).
- African-American Cases Resulting in Delinquent Findings have not experienced disproportionality from 2004 through 2007 except in 2006. In 2006, an African-American youth was 1.47 times more likely to have a case resulting in a delinquent finding than a Caucasian youth.

Decision Point 7-Juvenile Arrests Cases Resulting in Probation Placement

- The RRI was calculated using all referrals made to Probation Intake with a referral date in the reporting period.
- The RRI calculation for this decision point is the number of juveniles placed on probation per 100 youth found delinquent.
- African-Americans were slightly underrepresented from 2005-2006. The RRI showed a more even split between African-Americans and Caucasians by 2007.

Decision Point 8-Juvenile Arrests Cases Resulting in Confinement in Secure Juvenile Correctional Facilities

- The RRI was calculated using all youth committed to ODYS on new offenses or revocations, and all youth placed at the Youth Treatment Center (YTC) during the reporting period.
- The RRI calculation for this decision point is the number of juveniles placed in secure correctional facilities per 100 youth found delinquent.
- The data suggests that African-Americans are overrepresented in terms of secure confinement for the years 2004-2007. A substantial jump is noted in 2006 with regard to the disproportionality, where an African-American youth was 2.28 times more likely to be confined than a Caucasian youth. This jump was followed by a significant decrease in 2007, where the RRI for African-Americans declined to 1.37.

Decision Point 9-Juvenile Arrests Cases Transferred to Adult Court

- All referrals certified for bindover to the General Trial Division in the reporting period. It should be noted that there were an insufficient number of cases for analysis to calculate this decision point.
- The RRI calculation for this decision point is the number of juveniles transferred to adult court per 100 petitions for certification.
- The number of filings for certifications or bindovers to the General Trial Division has remained constant for the last four years, but has decreased by 40% since 2003. The number of youth bound over decreased by 25% from 2006 and 47% since 2003. It should be noted that these numbers are small and any fluctuation can lead to a significant percentage change.

Lucas County RRI: 2004-2006 Summary

- African-American youth have the highest levels of disparity throughout the Juvenile Justice System.
 - The decision points with the highest disparity for African-American youth are Juvenile Arrests and Cases Resulting in Confinement in a Secure Juvenile Correctional Institution (includes Ohio Department of Youth Services and the Youth Treatment Center).
 - The disproportionality for African-American youth has increased from 2004 through 2006.

Contact Points to be Addressed

The local RRI data gathered for Lucas County since 2004 suggests that the point of contact with the highest disproportionality among minorities as a whole is arrest. Additionally, Lucas County Juvenile Court has been proactive in combating detention overcrowding and in detention reform. Based on these factors, Lucas County will begin their DMC initiative by focusing on the arrest point of contact. It is hoped that by addressing the point of contact with the highest disproportionality first, the disproportionality at other points of contact will also be affected. The following secondary points of contact, based upon the RRI will also be addressed: Cases Resulting in Confinement in Secure Juvenile Correctional Facilities, Cases Resulting in Secure Detention, Probation Placement and Cases Diverted. Progress in reducing DMC at these points of contact will be monitored and will be examined more in depth as the initiative progresses. The remaining contact points (Referrals to Juvenile Court, Cases Petitioned, Cases Resulting in Delinquent Findings, and Cases Transferred to Adult Court) will continue to be monitored, but will not be the focus of the initiative unless future RRI data indicate a change in disproportionality.

Based on the data reviewed, the local DMC Workgroup decided to use selected data sets to further understand the types of crimes being committed. Below is a summary of the selected data sets.

Most Common Referred Offense Filings: Average from 2004-2007

- Safe School Ordinance (SSO) violations have been the most referred filings over the past four years, averaging 13% of offenses filed with Juvenile Court. The number of SSO filings are nearly double the next leading referred offense filings of assault and petty theft with an average of 7% of all filings.
- Since SSO violations are nearly double the next leading referred offense, the workgroup decided to analyze the schools that referred the most SSO violations to Juvenile Court. September 2006 was selected as the data snapshot period.

2006 Data Snapshot – SSO Violations

School		Enrollment	Number	Percent
Scott	HS	1,275	30	22.60%
Woodward	HS	862	29	21.80%
Leverette	JH	547	14	10.50%
Waite	HS	1,081	11	8.30%
Deveaux	JH	917	9	6.80%

- The chart above represents the five schools with the highest SSO filings for September 2006, ranked by the number of events.
 - Woodward and Leverette, which are in the same high school feeder system, accounted for 32.3% of all SSO violations filed.
- Based on the chart above and additional data collected, it was apparent that the Woodward feeder system is a leading contributor to the number of SSO violations filed at Juvenile Court. The Woodward feeder system was selected for additional analysis and implementation of DMC reduction activities.

Woodward Feeder System

- Located in the north end of Toledo
- Consists of one high school (Woodward), one middle school (Leverette), and five elementary schools
- Demographic profile:
 - Population: 19,107 (44% Caucasian and 47% African-American)
 - Median household income: \$25,385
 - Individuals living below poverty level: 26%
 - Homeownership: 62.5% owner occupied and 37.5% renter occupied

Demographics-2005/2006 School Year

- Woodward-1,056 students enrolled
 - 66% of students enrolled are African-American and 27% are Caucasian
- Leverette-577 Students enrolled
 - 59% of students enrolled are African-American and 24% are Caucasian
- Elementary Schools-2,472 students enrolled (5 schools)
 - 56% of students enrolled are African-American and 30% are Caucasian

Additionally, it was discovered that SSO violations were not only the leading referred offense to Juvenile Court, but over half of the youth committed to ODYS had at least one SSO violation in their history. More significantly, 67% of African-American youth committed to ODYS had at least one SSO violation in their history. The following chart highlights SSO histories and commitments to ODYS by race.

Number of Youth Committed to ODYS Charged With a Safe School Ordinance

	African-American	Caucasian	Hispanic
Percentage committed to ODYS	62%	32%	6%
Percentage committed to ODYS with an SSO offense in their history	67%	50%	53%
Percentage of Youth with an SSO as their first offense	17%	15%	11%
Number of SSOs			
None	33%	50%	47%
1	26%	18%	15%
2	14%	17%	17%
3	9%	4%	6%
4	6%	3%	8%
5	4%	2%	0%
6 or more	8%	6%	7%

Supporting Research

While focusing on the Woodward feeder pattern, it is important to consider the factors contributing to juvenile delinquent behavior. The greatest influences on a child's life, aside from individuals within his/her family structure, are the people that the child first comes into contact within the school system. Involvement and attachment to school are two factors that impact juvenile delinquent behavior. Poor academic achievement and lack of involvement in school increases the chance that a child will drop out of school, lack employment skills and exhibit delinquent or deviant behaviors.

Several studies identify lack of academic achievement as a contributing factor of juvenile delinquency. In a Washington study focusing on middle school and high school students, commitment to school was found to be affected by involvement with substance use and violence/delinquency.

According to Mandell, Hill, Cater, & Brandon (2002), the study finds that in middle and high school, non-classroom aspects of the social environment (substance use, violence/delinquency and socio-demographics - poverty, gender, ethnicity/race) are strongly linked to academic achievement. The study finds that moderate levels of substance use and violence/delinquency among group (peer or social) members are linked to poorer academic performance.

The Washington study also found that middle school students with low involvement in substance use, violence and delinquency scored higher in math, reading and writing on standardized tests than students with moderate involvement in these behaviors. This study suggests that improving peer/social groups, commitment to school and providing social-skills training at schools in high-risk communities could significantly reduce factors and behaviors related to substance use and violence/delinquency and may be an effective way to prevent delinquency in high school.

School-based social-skills training have also demonstrated impressive results in both prevention and intervention programs. The development of social skills has been proven to reduce both substance use and violence/delinquency. School-based programs, designed to change the social climate of the classroom or school, are more effective than programs only addressing individual change.

The Juvenile Offenders and Victims: 2006 National Report found that “educational failure leads to unemployment or underemployment, and if educational failure and unemployment are related to law violating behavior, then patterns of educational failure over time and within specific groups may help to explain patterns of delinquent behavior” (Snyder & Sickmund, 2006).

Another study, completed in 2005, suggests that low academic achievement contributes to the initiation of delinquent behaviors. This study asserts that a majority of detained delinquents in their sample had low test scores in both reading and math achievement. Further, upon being detained, juveniles in grades 4 through 12, were randomly given a reading and writing test. The sample youth had low achievement scores with less than half placing at the elementary level (Zamora, 2005).

When looking at the Woodward feeder system, the 8th grade Ohio Achievement Test scores for 2006-2007 for Leverette of 44.9% for Reading; 24.2% for Mathematics, 18.3% for Science and 13.3% for Social Studies are well below the state requirement of 75% for Reading, Mathematics, Science and Social Studies. Providing effective interventions at Leverette will help improve academic success which will ultimately lead to a reduction in delinquent behaviors as discussed above.

It is also important to note that in 2001 the Lucas County Juvenile Court issued a study (Pompa, 2001) of 115 youth who were certified to stand trial as adults between the years 1994 and 1999. The results of this study further emphasize the critical relationship between academic performance and criminal behavior. Consistent in the findings is that juvenile offenders certified to stand trial for prosecution as adults present the following profile:

- Male
- Non-Caucasian
- Live in Toledo
- Are 17 years of age or older
- More than likely live with mother and natural parents were never married
- There is both parental and sibling criminality in the family
- Parental substance abuse is present
- Are not attending school, with 9th grade being the highest grade attended (those in school are in the 9th grade in a regular classroom setting)
- Over half the cases involved using a weapon, usually a gun
- Over 80% were given a prison sentence averaging 13 years

Initial DMC Strategies

- Implement programs aimed at reducing SSO violations in Lucas County and more specifically the City of Toledo. The initial focus will be on the Woodward feeder system.

DMC Initial Interventions (Woodward Feeder System)

- Elementary School
 - Truancy Prevention through Mediation Program
 - Youth, exhibiting truancy and absenteeism, attend structured mediation sessions with the parent/guardian, a school representative and a trained mediator to resolve underlying problems leading to the behavior.
 - Began in September 2008 at Lagrange, Riverside, Sherman, Ottawa River and Chase Elementary Schools.
- Junior High School
 - SSO Diversion Program
 - Youth will receive wrap around services in lieu of charges being filed. Services will be provided at Leverette Junior High School and will initially target males.
 - Program began in March 2008 and services are being provided by House of Emmanuel.
- High School
 - Quantum Opportunities Program
 - A comprehensive youth development program for disadvantaged and low performing adolescents that provides education, development activities, community service and financial incentive for four years, beginning in 9th grade.
 - Scheduled to begin in fall 2008 at Woodward High School.

Next Steps

- Lucas County DMC Assessment Report-Phase 1 was released in August 2008.
 - The Assessment Report provides an in-depth analysis of DMC in Lucas County.
- Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention (JJDP)-Title II funds will target DMC reduction activities.
 - Lucas County has \$88,994 Title II funds to allocate for DMC Reduction activities in 2009.
 - Applications must be based on the Lucas County DMC Assessment Report-Phase 1.
- Collaborate with the Data Evaluation Network (DEN) of the Lucas County Family Council on the study of four zip codes (Lucas County DMC Assessment Report-Phase 2).
 - Investigating socio-economic factors impacting zip codes 43604, 43608, 43605 and 43609.
 - Focusing on protective factors that contribute to the success of some youth in these zip codes.

Lucas County DMC Collaborating Partners

- Criminal Justice Coordinating Council (CJCC)
 - Allocation Review Committee (ARC)
- Lucas County Juvenile Court
- Lucas County Family and Children First Council
 - Data and Evaluation Network (DEN)
- DMC Workgroup
- Ohio Department of Youth Services (ODYS)
- Ohio State Center for Learning Excellence (CLEX)