



## Community DMC Reduction Initiative

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### DMC Defined:

Disproportionate Minority Contact (DMC) occurs when the rate of contact with the juvenile justice system among juveniles of a specific minority group is significantly different than the rate of contact for whites (non-Hispanic Caucasians) or for other minority groups.

### South Carolina Statistics:

African American youth (age 10 to 16) accounted for only 38% of the state's population. However, according to data from SC Department of Juvenile Justice (2004-05), this 38% of our state's youth accounted for 58% of juvenile arrests, 60% of the youth in detention, and 69% of the youth in our correctional institutions.

Using the Relative Rate Index (RRI), which is a standard used across the country for measuring DMC, African American youth in South Carolina are disproportionately represented at various stages of the juvenile justice system. For example, African American youth has a statewide index for arrest at 2.44, indicating these youth are arrested almost two and one-half times greater than white youth. Cases involving secure detention have an index of 1.30 (2005-06). An index of 1.00 would indicate that the rates for minority and non-minority are essentially the same.

*Note: The Relative Rate Index (RRI) for individual counties and judicial circuits are available at the Children's Law Center Website (courtesy available through SC Department of Public Safety, Office of Justice Program).*

### DMC Project Overview:

The South Carolina Governor's Juvenile Justice Advisory Council has funded a project to promote a greater awareness and understanding of our DMC issues. The Community DMC Reduction Project is an initiative of the Children's Law Center of the University of South Carolina. The project promotes alternatives to the use of secure detention of non-violent minority youth through local programs and initiatives. The greatest numbers of these minority children are status and minor property offenders. Through the dissemination of accurate information and the identification of proven initiatives, assistance is now available to aid communities to address DMC issues. When sought by a local community, there are often more effective, less costly alternatives to the prosecution and incarceration of many non-violent youth. By simply redirecting non-serious child offenders into alternatives that teach them positive life skills and emphasize the importance of education, many minority children will avoid contact with the juvenile justice system.

The role of the current project is to serve the local communities of South Carolina by identifying and enhancing local programs and initiatives that have demonstrated ability to help reduce DMC, which provide alternatives to the secure detention of non-violent minority youth, and which can possibly be replicated or developed in other areas of the state.

The Program Manager for the DMC Project will initiate meetings with local leaders in counties seeking to learn more about this issue and will provide fact-based information regarding DMC. The plan is simple: local awareness of DMC issues and the pursuit of responsible community alternatives to the formal prosecution and jailing of minor cases will benefit all children, including minorities who are overrepresented in the juvenile justice system.

### For additional information about the Community DMC Reduction Project, contact:

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