

## Analysis of the Impact of Juvenile Justice Programming in Six New Mexico Counties

### INTRODUCTION

Juvenile justice intervention programs describe a range of programs that are designed to both prevent youth from entering the juvenile justice system and to provide alternatives to detention for youth who have escalated to the juvenile justice system.

The New Mexico Children, Youth and Families Department (CYFD) has contracted with the New Mexico Sentencing Commission (NMSC) to study juvenile justice programs funded by the Juvenile Justice Advisory Committee (JJAC) in six New Mexico counties.

The purpose of this project is to contribute to the understanding of law enforcement and juvenile justice system factors, which perpetuate Disproportionate Minority Contact in New Mexico, and analyze the impact of juvenile justice programming in six New Mexico counties.

Project deliverables include:

- Literature review regarding minimum standards and outcome measures for five juvenile programs being administered through New Mexico JJAC continuum site funding.

- Develop a minimum set of data elements to be collected by managers for each type of program and recommend, if needed, additional data to be collected by program managers based upon unique regional demographics or offense trend data.
- Conduct fieldwork in six counties regarding the types of juvenile programs identified below. The fieldwork will be conducted for programs in the following counties:
  - a) Reception and Assessment Centers: Santa Fe, Sandoval and Dona Ana counties;
  - b) Restorative justice panels: Santa Fe, Sandoval and Chaves counties;
  - c) Girls circles: Taos and Chaves counties;
  - d) Day reporting programs: Taos, Santa Fe and Bernalillo counties;
  - e) DMC reduction programs: Taos, Santa Fe and Dona Ana counties.

Additionally, we have been contracted to review disproportionate minority contact efforts and how these efforts are being developed and implemented. The following table outlines the programs and

disproportionate minority contact efforts by county.

As part of this study we completed a review of relevant literature. The purpose of the literature review was to report on best practices in the area of juvenile justice intervention programs, focused on the four distinct types of programs that are the subject of this study.

Most of the programs we visited admit youth before they are ever formally referred to CYFD. These programs are more than simply alternatives to detention, defined as formal detention in a juvenile detention facility; they are alternatives to formal entrance into the juvenile justice system, including informal referral to a juvenile probation officer.

During the course of interviewing the numerous program heads and county continuum site leaders for this study, one informal “outcome” measure was voiced by nearly every one: This program keeps kids out of the system, keeps the detention center population down and thus saves the state and county money. And while not a formal research finding, it is also worth noting that all of the continuum and program coordinators with whom we met expressed their dedication for their work and commitment to helping children turn their lives in a more positive direction.

Finally, every person interviewed, whether a continuum or program leader, stated that with additional funding they could serve more children and keep more kids from dropping out of school and into risky life-style choices or lives of crime.

## METHODOLOGY

NMSC staff used information provided by CYFD staff to contact appropriate program staff to interview. An initial visit to one program was made in February to determine the content for the interview guide that was to be used in future program visits. The interview guide can be found in Appendix 1.

The purpose of the visits was a first step to gathering information on the programs with the intent of comparing how the programs operate compared to national standards or best practices. Repeated attempts via email and

Table 1. List of Programs by New Mexico County

County	Name of Programs	Interviewed
Bernalillo	Day Reporting	
Chaves	<i>Restorative Justice Panels</i> <i>Girls Circle</i>	X X
Dona Ana	<i>Reception and Assessment Center</i> <i>DMC Efforts</i>	X X
Sandoval	<i>Reception and Assessment Centers</i> <i>Restorative Justice Panels</i>	X X
Santa Fe	Reception and Assessment Centers <i>Restorative Justice Panels</i> <i>DMC Efforts</i> <i>Day Reporting Center</i>	X X X
Taos	<i>Day Reporting Center</i> <i>DMC Efforts</i> <i>Girls Circles</i>	X X

phone mail messages were made to schedule interviews with all the programs. Ultimately some programs were not interviewed. Table one lists the programs by county.

## PROGRAMS

### ***Reception and Assessment Centers***

RACs offer screening, mental health and psychosocial assessment, and referral to outside counseling, health and treatment services. The Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention (OJJDP) (2000), lists

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four “key elements” to community assessment centers that, when implemented properly, have the potential to positively impact the lives of youth and divert them from the path of serious, violent, and chronic delinquency:

- 1) Single point of entry.
- 2) Immediate and comprehensive assessments.
- 3) Management information system (MIS).
- 4) Integrated case management.

The studies of assessments centers discussed in the literature review generally note positive outcomes regarding both behavioral changes in youth and increased efficiencies for communities. Our review of the literature also found assessment centers vary widely in how they function. For example, both the Sandoval County, New Mexico and Miami-Dade centers are referred to as “models”. However, the Miami-Dade assessment center is a police-based drop off and booking center whereas the Sandoval County New Mexico assessment center follows the Annie E. Casey Foundation model of providing intake services, a risk assessment, crisis and case management, mental health/psychosocial assessment and referral services for pre-arrested and post-arrested youth.

During this reporting period NMSC staff visited assessment centers in Sandoval and Dona Ana Counties. During this reporting period we were not able to schedule a visit to the center in Santa Fe County.

***Reception and Assessment Center - Dona Ana Juvenile Assessment and Reception Center “JARC”***

NMSC staff attended a juvenile justice continuum board meeting in Dona Ana in February 2010 and observed that the JARC was experiencing some management and

data-gathering challenges which were affecting its efficacy. In March 2010 we learned that the JARC was taken over by the local CYFD Juvenile Probation office and that the city of Las Cruces appointed a new JARC Director.

NMSC staff interviewed the new JARC Director in June 2010 and found the JARC had begun to collect client information using a Microsoft Excel spreadsheet. We obtained a copy of the spreadsheet during the visit. The Excel file contains data elements such as age, race (needed for Disproportionate Minority Contact study), start and completion dates, and other information.

Based on the information obtained during the site visit, we believe the Dona Ana JARC partly uses the OJJDP key elements for reception and assessment centers, that is:

- 1) It serves as a **single point of entry** for some but not all juveniles in the county. While we were told that City of Las Cruces Police bring juveniles to the JARC as the point of entry, County Sheriffs tend to bring juveniles to the Juvenile Detention facility.
- 2) **Immediate and comprehensive assessments.** The JARC uses a screening tool to screen for needs, acute needs or suicide risk. We have not reviewed the screening tool to determine if it is sufficient to be termed a comprehensive assessment.
- 3) **Management information system (MIS).** Beginning sometime after February 2010, the program began using a Microsoft Excel spreadsheet to collect client level and program level information. While an Excel spreadsheet is not a MIS system, it does represent an attempt to collect information on clients.
- 4) **Integrated case management.** The JARC recommends services such as the Day Reporting Program, schooling, vocational education, anger management, substance abuse counseling, etc. JARC staff are supposed to follow up with the youth to see if they have

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attended and completed the recommended services.

### ***Reception and Assessment Center - Sandoval County***

The Juvenile Detention Alternatives Initiative (JDAI), a project of the Annie E. Casey Foundation, lists reception centers as an important alternative to detention. The Sandoval County New Mexico reception center is listed among JDAI model centers. As with many of the other programs visited, this RAC indicated that most of its youth come to the RAC prior to a referral to a juvenile probation officer.

The Sandoval County, New Mexico Reception and Assessment Center partly aligns with the OJJDP model in many aspects:

1) **Single point of entry.** This RAC serves youth arrested by law enforcement for low level misdemeanor and felony offenses. It also serves as an early intervention by preventing the incarceration of youth that are in police custody for a non-detainable offense.

Our interview with the RAC Director found that while some police and juvenile probation officers within Sandoval and Bernalillo counties bring youth directly to the RAC, many do not. Because not all youth are served by the RAC it does not serve as a single point of entry.

2) **Immediate and comprehensive assessments.** This RAC provides intake services, a juvenile justice risk assessment, as well as mental health/psychosocial assessment. They use the “JIFF” needs assessment tool by Functional Assessment Systems which helps screen for acute needs or suicide risk, or the lack thereof. This is part of their immediate screening and assessment process. Users pay a fee for each JIFF assessment.

3) **Management information system (MIS).** The Sandoval County RAC, in conjunction with the Town of Bernalillo Juvenile Youth Services, maintains a management information system. This system appears to be the most sophisticated MIS attached to any of the juvenile programs and areas we visited during the course of this study. However we need to further investigate what data is tracked.

4) **Integrated case management.** The Sandoval County RAC includes crisis and case management intervention. As needed, they recommend services such as a Day Reporting Program, schooling, vocational education, anger management and substance abuse counseling.

During the interview the Director indicated they had recently received grant funds to provide “wrap-around” service for kids with the most complex needs. He also indicated, as did several other juvenile program managers around the state, that the issue of transportation – actually getting kids to and from recommended services – was an unanticipated challenge. Many of the youth in programs are not able to drive and many have parents who cannot get off of work in order to transport their children. We were told that many juveniles are also from single-parent families, which further aggravates the transportation issue.

Neither the Dona Ana or the Sandoval Reception and Assessment centers formally collect recidivism data on juveniles who were assessed at their centers, but both counties indicated they were reducing delinquency and recidivism in almost all cases. Both sites indicated they were in the process of increasing their efforts to collect recidivism data on their clients.

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## **Restorative Justice Panels**

Restorative justice is more than just an alternative to detention, and like many of the programs preliminarily reviewed in this report, more often than not serves as a pre-juvenile probation, pre-court alternative. Restorative justice is designed to bring together offenders, victims, and others in the community for a healing of the broad range of harms caused by an offender. In most cases, this includes restitution and some form of apology by the offender to the victim and others affected by the crime, as well as an opportunity for the offender, police, victim and others to work together to find the best possible outcome.

While the “net” of those youth who participate in Restorative Justice panels may be wider than those who are formally adjudicated, current literature indicates this offender-victim-community communication helps the offender make changes necessary to avoid such behavior in the future. As with many of these relatively recently-implemented juvenile justice alternatives, there is little objective outcome recidivism data.

A key outcome of restorative justice is to ensure offenders takes responsibility for their actions.

Taking responsibility requires that offenders:

- Understand how their behavior affected other human beings (not just the courts or officials)
  - Acknowledge the behavior resulted from a choice that could have been made differently.
  - Acknowledge to all those affected that the behavior was harmful to others.
- Take action to repair the harm when possible.
  - Make changes necessary to avoid such behavior in the future.

In 2006, Skills for Justice, the standards-setting body for justice in Great Britain, published formal standards designed to be used by practitioners and communities interested in developing restorative justice practices (See *National Occupational Standards for Restorative Practice*). The standards include the following:

1. Practitioners must obtain and evaluate information on incidents for which restorative justice is appropriate.
2. Practitioners must assess risks in using restorative practice approaches
3. Process and agree on a timetable and plan of action.
4. Assess and advise on the risks in using restorative practice.
5. Establish effective relationships with potential participants.
6. Advise participants about the restorative process and the options available within them.
7. Agree on a plan of action and timetable.
8. Facilitate the restorative practice process.
9. Support and advise participants before and during the restorative practice process.
10. Form outcome agreements.
11. Evaluate and report on outcomes of the restorative process.

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For this report, we met with and interviewed the program leaders for Restorative Justice in Chaves and Sandoval counties. Despite several attempts, we were unable to schedule a visit with the restorative justice program in Santa Fe County.

### ***Restorative Justice – Chaves County***

Nearly all of the youth referred to the Chaves County program are referred from the local Juvenile Probation Office or directly from the court system. The program accepts all referrals, except those youth with a gun-related charge. Much of the Director's job involves educating victims and police about the restorative justice process. The Director is also responsible for getting the diverse group of offenders, victims, parents and police to a meeting in which the circle as a whole develops a restorative plan and timetable.

This program lacks an automated management information system. The program does provide a manual count of required data, including the number of clients served and completion dates, to the county continuum coordinator. The coordinator aggregates and reports the data to the Children, Youth, and Families Department. Of 55 restorative justice circles held in Chaves County, 51 were for boys and 4 were for girls. Nearly all were first offenders. The program Director indicated the racial and ethnic makeup of those youth seemed to be consistent with the population in the county.

### ***Restorative Justice – Sandoval County***

Several aspects of the Sandoval County Restorative Justice Circles are similar to those held in Chaves County. Nearly all of the youth referred come from the local Juvenile Probation Office or from the local court system. This program likewise accepts

all referred youth. Children are excluded from the program only if the youth is referred to a residential treatment, drug court or private counseling program, or if there is a pending lawsuit with the victim.

Similar to Chaves County, the restorative justice coordinator oversees all restorative justice circles in the county. Much of the coordinator's time and energy is spent getting the diverse group of offenders, victims, parents, police, and other community members to know what a restorative justice circle is and scheduling meetings. Also in accordance with restorative justice practices, the entire circle of people in Sandoval county develops the restorative plan ("contract") and its timetable. Sandoval does not require the youth to write an apology letter to the victim as a matter of course, although it may be part of the process.

This Restorative Justice program maintains a management information system.

This program tracks youth for recidivism at 30 days, 90 days and one year after program completion. They do this by checking the CYFD FACTS case management system to see if there have been any referrals for their clients.

This program has client intake forms and other documentation that could be used at other sites if Restorative Justice expands around the state.

When asked what she felt was the most accurate measure of the effectiveness of the program, the Coordinator indicated that this program has a broad and positive community impact in helping kids succeed. She added that restorative justice results in healing the community after a bad event occurs.

Both the Chaves and Sandoval county restorative justice coordinators indicated a need for increased education of law

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enforcement officials regarding the restorative justice concept.

### **Girls Circles**

The Girls Circle Association (Girls Circle) was founded in 1996 as a support system to help young girls make healthy decisions, to encourage girls to be themselves within a structured support group and to instill self-confidence and improve girls' interpersonal relationships. The expected outcome is that these improved relationships will, in turn, improve girls' current lives as well as their futures.

Much of the current literature supports the concept that gender-specific programming for girls is an important aspect of the juvenile justice system. One research study noted that gender-specific programming for girls aims to help girls already in trouble, while preventing future delinquency among girls who are at risk. (Hossfeld, B., and Tyrol, K. (2007).

Girls Circle encourages girls to be themselves within a structured support group and is designed for girls between the ages of 9-18. The Girls Circle model includes a structured support group for girls in a specific format designed to increase positive connection, personal and collective strengths, and competence in girls.

Girls Circles are held on a weekly basis for 1 to 1 ½ hours. A facilitator leads the group through a format of talking and listening to one another. Often the programming provides an opportunity for personal expression through accompanying creative outlets, including activities such as role playing, drama, journaling, poetry, dance, drawing, collage and clay. Girls Circles often incorporate gender specific themes that relate to the girls lives, such as trust, friendships,

body image, goals, sexuality, drugs, alcohol, tobacco, competition, and decision-making.

Girls Circle Inc. is the primary source for Girls Circle information, training, research and standards. Outside Girls Circle Inc, there is little research about the program. The most recent studies on Girls Circles revealed a statistically significant improvement for girls in four long-term outcomes: 1) self-harming behavior, 2) alcohol use, 3) attachment to school, and 4) self-efficacy. And statistically significant improvement for middle school girls in four areas: 1) self-efficacy, 2) body image, 3) social support, and 4) increased resiliency through bonding to school. (Roa, J., Irvine, A., and Cervantez, K. (2007). Girls Circle National Research Project. *Ceres Policy Research*).

In terms of keeping girls out of juvenile detention when possible, a study by Hossfeld and Tyrol (2007) reported on Girls Circles success, and indicated: "There were very few differences across subpopulations of girls. This indicates that most groups of girls benefit equally from participating in a Girls Circle. We did find that girls held in juvenile detention, residential treatment or another secure facility did improve, but not as much as girls who had never had these experiences." We visited the Girls Circles programs in Taos and Chaves counties.

### **Girls Circles – Chaves County**

The Chaves County program is one of several programs overseen by Court Appointed Special Advocates (CASA). The Girls Circle program follows the guidelines and curriculum set forth by Girls Circle Inc. Most girls referred to the program are middle school and high school aged and are deemed high risk by teachers and principals, especially girls with truancy and fighting problems. Girls are also referred to the program by Juvenile Probation

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or self-referral. Foster children are also often referred. The idea is to help girls before they get into gangs, drugs or delinquency.

While this program does not formally track recidivism and does not maintain any formal tracking system we were told that they informally track clients by checking with Juvenile Probation about CYFD referrals or delinquent acts which occur after program completion. Challenges expressed include finding space and time in the schools and transportation issues.

After discussing the details of the Girls Circle program in Chaves County, the program coordinator added “There should be a Girls Circle in every school and they should start as early as 5th grade.” She also suggested JJAC look into the use of Boys Councils, a program similar in design to Girls Circles.

### ***Girls Circles – Taos County***

The Taos County Girls Circle program also follows the guidelines and curriculum set forth by Girls Circle Inc. While a few of the girls in the Taos program are referred by Juvenile Probation, the large majority are referred to the program from the local middle school and high school. Middle school referrals make up the bulk of girls referred to the program. The Taos program coordinator indicated that experience has shown that the middle school at risk girls are best served by Girls Circles.

This program also targets “at risk” girls, indicated by high truancy rates and number of fighting incidents, as opposed to girls who have already committed delinquent acts. This program does not exclude any girls or type of delinquent act, but indicated that some girls are referred to more specific treatment if needed, such as drug treatment.

Taos County has not had to remove any girls from this program since its inception, but some girls who have dropped-out of school have simultaneously left their circle. Girls circles have a duration of approximately one school semester and hold 10-12 circles during that time.

This program maintains an Excel spreadsheet to track client-level information, but has no formal recidivism tracking. The county juvenile continuum coordinator we interviewed indicated that girls who have completed a girls circle are involved in fewer fights and receive fewer referrals to the juvenile justice system. We were also told that, in general, the girls are doing better in school. They are seeing improved self-esteem in the girls and indicated the schools are reporting a decrease in fighting by girls circles attendees.

After discussing the details of their Girls Circle program in Taos County, the program coordinator added “If we had more manpower we could provide more services and reach more kids.” “Schools get more funding when kids stay in schools,” was one ancillary but important outcome discussed as well. One other important outcome is that, since the girls circle format is sometimes the safest place the attendees have experienced, they are more likely to share the personal struggles in their lives. Thus, the program coordinator stated, “We are catching and stemming abuse.”

Challenges expressed include scheduling time in the high schools and providing transportation for girls to attend the circles.

### ***Day Reporting Centers***

Day treatment facilities originated in Great Britain in the 1970s. By 1995 there were at least 114 programs in the United States spread across 22 states. Since the day reporting

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concept is still relatively new, little research exists on juvenile day reporting center outcomes.

In its 2010 Model Programs Guide, the Office of Juvenile Justice Delinquency Programs (OJJDP) defines day reporting centers as “highly structured, community-based, post-adjudication, nonresidential programs for serious juvenile offenders.” OJJDP further stated that the goal of day treatment is to provide intensive supervision, to ensure community safety, and to provide a wide range of services to the offender to prevent future delinquent behavior. The intensive supervision is fulfilled by requiring the offender to report to the facility on a daily basis at specified times for a specified length of time.

For this study, we visited day reporting centers (DRC) in Taos and Santa Fe counties. We were unable to schedule a visit with the day reporting center in Bernalillo county. The Taos and Santa Fe DRCs differ greatly in how youth are referred to their programs. In Santa Fe’s DRC, virtually all youth are referred by a Children’s Court judge or probation officer. Children are referred to the Taos County DRC predominantly by the schools.

#### ***Day Reporting Center – Taos County***

The Taos County DRC, called the “Learning Lab,” is operated by Rocky Mountain Youth Corps under an agreement with the local juvenile justice continuum. While the OJJDP definition of day reporting center includes “post-adjudication” programs for “serious juvenile offenders,” this program gets most of its referrals from the local school district, who identify and refer youth who are having serious truancy problems or who commit delinquent acts in the school. The way in which youth are referred in Taos County is

unique. The juvenile probation and parole officers (JPPO) serve as the referrer, even when no formal referral has been made to the JPPO. Thus, in Taos County the JPPO is the de facto referrer for both pre-referral and post-referral situations. This is the agreed-upon procedure in Taos County and the school, JPPO and Learning Lab coordinate on these issues.

We were informed that Taos County is developing a collaborative (similar in concept to Reception and Assessment) center to handle and coordinate all juvenile issues. However, under the current model the Juvenile Probation and Parole office (which they referred to as “severely understaffed”) handles nearly all kids in the county.

The program indicated its mission is to provide a support net to catch students before criminal or juvenile justice referral. We help them finish school or reintegrate back into school. The Learning Lab will not accept a youth if: 1) he or she has already been in the program for one full semester, 2) there is an opposing gang member already in the lab, or 3) the child exhibits severe behavioral health issues. These youth are referred to residential treatment.

The Learning Lab requires that each of its students complete attendance, physical training, community service, a resume, and a Presentation of Learning. We attended the Learning Lab “graduation” and listened to the 8 clients ranging in age from 14 to 18 make their Presentation of Learning. These were inspiring, first-person accounts by each child describing the changes they had made after a semester at the Learning Lab. At the beginning of the term, all 8 children were candidates for school expulsion, dropping out or the juvenile justice system. Of the 8 youth, two were graduating high school. The younger ones were committed to going back to school in the fall. During their presentations, each

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child made statements that affirmed the Learning Lab's goals of self-empowerment and small steps to self-esteem: "Now I come to school." "I handle anger better." "I am graduating high school and going to get a job." One tenth grader who had not attended school for nearly three years expressed that he was looking forward to going back to school.

Due to financial constraints, the program can only teach ten children per semester. The single teacher for this program is provided by the Taos School District. Program leaders feel they can help a child make significant changes in their life and school participation, but they would also like to reach the Native American population and also be available for kids who have already dropped out. This would require more funding.

This program manually reports its required statistical information up to the county continuum coordinator on a quarterly basis. No detailed client-level data is kept. Since this program ideally is taking in children prior to any delinquent referral, the question of tracking "recidivism" is not quite relevant. Program leaders believe that kids in their program turn "upward" and that programs such as these keep kids out of the juvenile justice system.

#### ***Day Reporting Center - Santa Fe***

The Santa Fe County DRC program is located inside the Santa Fe Youth Development Center building, which also houses the juvenile detention facility. This program much more closely aligns with the OJJP definition of day reporting center, particularly since all referred youth are post-adjudication. In Santa Fe, nearly all are referred to the DRC by a Children's Court judge or probation officer as an alternative to detention. They are referred to this DRC as

deferred prosecution (pre-adjudication), post-adjudication and for probation or parole violations. This program is not open to youth prior to referral, so school referrals do not occur.

This program lists "habilitation" among its main goals. "We help them finish school, get their GED, or reintegrate back into school," the program director told us. In addition to basic school work, this DRC provides secure supervision for kids, narcotics anonymous, music, art, and counseling. And whereas the Taos Learning Lab is limited to one semester, this program provides service "as long as child is assigned here," since the Children's Court judge may sentence a child to this center for more than one semester. The program is open every week of the year, even when public schools are closed.

This program runs like a "one room schoolhouse" for both boys and girls 13-18 years of age. Because of the way children get referred to this program it is comprised of high-risk youth and youth who have already committed delinquent acts. Youth can be removed from this program for sustained or serious misbehavior or severe behavioral health issues. Those youth are referred to residential treatment. Notwithstanding the challenges, the program director reported that several of their students are getting GEDs and that many have even gone on to community college. When asked how effective he felt this DRC is in comparison to the traditional juvenile justice system, the program director stated, "Very. Our multi-disciplinary approach serves a range of kids. They become more focused, busy and find alternatives to a life of crime."

This program maintains an automated management information system as well as a paper system to collect and store client information. The Santa Fe County continuum

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coordinator compiles quarterly reports based on data this program provides.

### ***Disproportionate Minority Contact Data Collection and Programs***

Since approximately 2006, several counties in New Mexico have received funding through the Juvenile Justice Advisory Council and Children, Youth, and Families Department to collect data and develop programs designed to address the issue of Disproportionate Minority Contact (DMC). Counties began this process by determining what DMC contact points should be addressed in their county through best practices models, assessment and data analysis.

Much of that baseline work is still being done, even as counties work to develop, study, fund and improve alternatives to detention. The goal is to reduce the number of minority youth having contact with the juvenile justice system.

As part of this project, we looked at DMC initiatives in Santa Fe and Dona Ana Counties. DMC efforts in these counties look very different: Dona Ana has made efforts in the area of DMC data collection. Santa Fe is now focusing on disparities, including socio-economic factors and other risk factors at the “street” and “neighborhood” level rather than at race or ethnicity alone. We were unable to schedule a visit in Taos to discuss DMC efforts in Taos County.

### ***Disproportionate Minority Contact - Santa Fe County***

At the behest of the Juvenile Justice Advisory Committee, DMC reduction efforts in Santa Fe has transitioned in recent years

through three distinct “phases” of addressing Disproportionate Minority Contact. The first involved looking at the major decision points in the juvenile justice system to see if there is disproportionate contact with minorities. The second phase involved a direct service approach based on the information discovered in phase one. The third and current phase is a disparities approach – to select children deemed high-risk, notwithstanding race or ethnicity.

During this third phase Santa Fe realized the need to identify “red flags” in school behavior before a youth is expelled or commits delinquent acts, based on the premise that these kids are “asking” for help. High-risk youth are identified as having experienced trauma, school absence/truancy, having been left back, disruptive behavior or bullying. They have also noted that children in households where parents do not speak English have more power and separate lives than children whose parents do speak English. This is a risk factor in and of itself. Increased parental involvement is a goal of this program.

The continuum director indicated that they have been able to keep 86% of the children selected in school. These outcomes included both kids finishing the school year and passing on to the next grade. This was identified as a very positive outcome for the high risk youth selected for the program.

The program is based at a middle school. Students are screened as high risk using the criteria determined by the National Center for Dropout Prevention. The focus of the program is a weekly School Success class which clients are required to attend. The program uses restorative justice principles that include an emphasis on accountability in student behavior, a student art program, and building student commitment to school. This program does keep records in an Excel spreadsheet and

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indicated they could provide early outcome or recidivism data in the near future.

The program director indicated that the “cutting edge” in DMC research is to focus on disparities. This is much more pro-active than traditional juvenile justice, which is available only after more serious trouble occurs with a youth. “The disparities approach gives kids and families more options,” he said. He also stated, “We have gained insight on how to deal with perceived high-risk population. If they can get connected to school and services they are more apt to take risks to succeed.”

### ***Disproportionate Minority Contact – Dona Ana County***

Dona Ana County has studied DMC in detail for a number of years. This research has been led by researcher Jonas Mata from Oklahoma, who has collaborated in Las Cruces with Dr. Carlos Posadas and Dr. Robert Duran of New Mexico State University. Dr. Posadas and Dr. Duran expressed the programs main goal is to understand, study and then reduce DMC in the juvenile justice system. This DMC team works closely with the county juvenile justice continuum, headed by District Court Judge Fernando Macias, who is the Children’s Court judge in the Third Judicial District. When we asked about a management information system, we were directed to the Technical Assistance and Resource Center web site at <http://dmctarc.nmsu.edu/index.html>. This site contains both Dana Ana County and state-wide DMC data and is used by the Dona Ana continuum team to inform juvenile justice professionals on ways to reduce and eventually eliminate DMC.

Dr. Posadas and Dr. Duran expressed that their DMC work has increased the

community’s engagement in juvenile justice by meeting with Juvenile Probation and Parole Officers and by building other relationships. They also use DMC information when they teach criminal justice students at New Mexico State University. Both expressed concern about inconsistent funding for DMC.

## **CONCLUSION**

This report is a first effort to understand county-level juvenile justice intervention programs funded by local juvenile justice continuum programs in New Mexico. We discovered that there are variations in programs from one county to another. Additionally, there are variations in the amount of information collected by each program.

Standardization of data collection by programs is strongly recommended. In order for the State of New Mexico to accurately know and report on the type of programs and the number and types of clients served by funded programs, a standardized minimum data set is necessary. A data set is necessary to track the program’s progress, to analyze the program’s trends, to help improve upon the program’s practices, and to hold the program accountable for the services provided. To help with that task, the New Mexico Sentencing Commission has developed a proposed minimum data set and provided it to the Children, Youth and Families Department.

The current literature generally supports each of the juvenile justice programs discussed in this report. Adherence to model program principles and best practices by the county-level programs will also enhance their operations. ■

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# Appendix 1

## JJAC Program Interview Guide

### General Information

Interview Date: \_\_\_\_\_ / \_\_\_\_\_ / \_\_\_\_\_

Interviewer Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Program Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Program Type: \_\_\_\_\_

Program Location (City and County) \_\_\_\_\_

Position or Job Title of Interviewee: \_\_\_\_\_

Name of Interviewee: \_\_\_\_\_

Number of years and months as a member of this program: \_\_\_\_\_ / \_\_\_\_\_

Briefly describe your role in the program: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

### Section A: Program Information

1. How long has this program been in operation?: \_\_\_\_\_

2. In your words, what do you believe is this program's main goal?: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

3. Are there other goals?: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

4. Does this program have a policies and procedures manual?

- 
1. Yes
  2. No

Request a copy. Did you obtain a copy? \_\_\_\_\_

5. What is the capacity of this program? (how many clients can be served): \_\_\_\_\_

6. How long is the program designed to last in days? \_\_\_\_\_

7. What types of cases does this program include? (mark all that apply)

- Pre-Referral
- Deferred prosecution (Pre-adjudication)
- Post-adjudication
- Probation/Parole violation
- Other, (*specify*) \_\_\_\_\_

8. What type of offenses are eligible? (mark all that apply)

- Misdemeanors
- Felonies
- Drug sales
- Drug possession for sale
- Drug user
- Non-drug offenses
- Juveniles with no offense

9. Are there reasons for exclusion?  Yes  No  
(If yes, specify) \_\_\_\_\_

10. Under what circumstances is a juvenile offender removed from the program?  
\_\_\_\_\_

11. What is the most likely disposition of a case when a participant is removed from the program?  
\_\_\_\_\_

12. Who makes the determination to remove someone from the program?  
\_\_\_\_\_

13. What conditions must be met to complete the program?  
\_\_\_\_\_

14. Is this program an alternative to detention?: \_\_\_\_\_

15. How would you define 'alternative to detention'? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

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16. What days of the week and what hours is this program open? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

17. How often are services provided to clients?: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

18. Does your program have a client management information system?:  
Yes \_\_\_\_\_ No \_\_\_\_\_  
If yes, can you describe the system: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

If no, can you describe how the program stores client information?: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

19. Ask for clean copies of any forms used to collect client information. (sign in sheets, assessment forms, screening forms, referral forms, service forms, discharge forms, etc.)

## Section B: Client Information

1. What are the major characteristics of this program's target population (i.e. age range, gender, other demographic characteristics, criminal history, family history, etc.)pre-adjudication, post-adjudication, arrested youth, detained youth)?  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

2. Is race/ethnicity self-reported? \_\_\_\_\_

3. Do you feel this program is reaching and serving the most appropriate population?  
Yes \_\_\_\_\_ No \_\_\_\_\_  
If no, why: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

4. What do you believe is the appropriate population this program should be serving? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

5. In your opinion, is the population being served by this program benefiting from the program?  
Yes \_\_\_\_\_ No \_\_\_\_\_  
If no, why : \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

6. Do you believe there are other populations that could benefit from this program?  
Yes \_\_\_\_\_ No \_\_\_\_\_

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If so, who? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

## Section C: Services

1. How are juveniles referred to this program? (police, parents, schools, juvenile probation, other CYFD, other): \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

2. Please describe program eligibility criteria: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

3. How often are services provided to clients?: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

4. What services does this program provide ?  
Probe by program type:  
(RAC: screening, mental health, and psychosocial assessment, referrals for outside treatment services and counseling, case management)  
(Restorative Justice Panel: personal services to victims, community service, written apologies, verbal apologies)  
(Girls Circle: role playing, gender specific themes, journaling)  
(Day Reporting Program: intensive supervision, schooling, vocational education, anger management, substance abuse counseling)

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

5. Briefly describe the juvenile programs you feel are most effective and why ? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

6. Is there room for improvement in the services provided to your clients?  
Yes \_\_\_\_\_ No \_\_\_\_\_  
If so, how would you change this program to make it more effective? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

7. Are ancillary services available? (For example: job training, employment assistance, medical care, and after care)  
Yes \_\_\_\_\_ No \_\_\_\_\_  
If yes, please list some examples of these services: \_\_\_\_\_

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## Section D: Outcomes

1. How do you feel clients benefit from this program?: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

2. How effective do you feel TYPE OF PROGRAMS is in comparison to the traditional juvenile justice system? \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

3. Do you feel this program has an impact on the juvenile justice system?

Yes \_\_\_\_\_ No \_\_\_\_\_

Why or why not? \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

4. To what extent do you feel this program is successful in retaining participants?

\_\_\_\_\_

5. Overall, how important do you believe the role of this program is in impacting recidivism rates?

- 1- Very important
- 2- Important
- 3- Somewhat important
- 4- Not that important
- 5- Not important at all

6. How does this program track or measure recidivism? \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

7. Do you feel the program has succeeded in enhancing participant's capacity to function in the community? (i.e. education, job skills, employment, housing and health)

Yes \_\_\_\_\_ No \_\_\_\_\_

If yes, please explain: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

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## Section E: Final Perspectives

1. What do you feel is the most accurate measure of the effectiveness of the program?

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2. Please describe any benefits the program has brought about for your job and office? \_\_\_\_\_

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3. Please describe the most serious problems you encountered in the implementation of the program?

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How were these problems resolved? \_\_\_\_\_

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4. Have any unanticipated issues arisen since the implementation of the program?

Yes \_\_\_\_\_ No \_\_\_\_\_

If so, please briefly explain these issues: \_\_\_\_\_

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How were these issues resolved? \_\_\_\_\_

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5. Has this office incurred any extra costs due to the implementation of the program?

Yes \_\_\_\_\_ No \_\_\_\_\_

If so, please explain the sources of these extra costs? \_\_\_\_\_

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6. Has this office achieved any savings because of the implementation of the program?

Yes \_\_\_\_\_ No \_\_\_\_\_

If yes, please explain how were these savings achieved? \_\_\_\_\_

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