

**PROPOSED PLAN OF THE FAMILY COURT OF ST. LOUIS COUNTY IN RESPONSE TO THE FIRST BI-ANNUAL DISPROPORTIONATE MINORITY CONTACT (DMC) REPORT BETWEEN THE UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF JUSTICE AND THE ST. LOUIS COUNTY FAMILY COURT**

Under the terms of the Memorandum of Agreement between the U.S. Department of Justice and the Family Court of St. Louis County, the “Court, in collaboration with the Family Court Administrator, shall develop a proposed plan...to address concerns found in the Disproportionate Minority Contact (DMC) report.” (Section II.G.42). The Court has consulted with Dr. Brad Wing, the author of the DMC report, and Mark Greenwald, the DMC expert, regarding the analysis of the data and any possible suggestions and recommendations arising out of that process. Their advice and suggestions were extremely insightful for which the Court is very grateful. Based on the data, the Court proposes the following courses of action:

1. **TREND ANALYSIS**: The DMC Report contains data for the first six (6) months of calendar year, 2017. We will continue to collect data at the same contact points in order to enable the Court to conduct a more detailed trend analysis. We will also develop performance measures in order to monitor a strategy to minimize racial and ethnic disparities at select decision points in the system from time of referral to the commitment of youth to the Division of Youth Services.
2. **AGE OF YOUTH AT TIME OF REFERRAL**: According to the data in Table 6 of the Report (p.25), approximately 36% (429) of the total youth (1,195) of the informally resolved delinquency referrals were 14 years of age or younger. Research has revealed that a youth’s early contact with the juvenile justice system is a good predictor that the youth is more likely to return to the system with more serious and violent crime. The Court will explore how it can provide more and better diversionary measures to the younger youth in order to avoid future contact with the juvenile justice system.
3. **SECURE DETENTION**: As reflected in Table 70 of the Report (p.101), the relative rate index (RRI) for black youth in detention is high (3.4) and warrants further attention. While the rate is high, the data does not tell us **why** the figure is so high. The Court will engage experts to conduct further analysis to start looking at potential determinant(s) of the high rate including the analysis of admission to secure detention data while controlling for a number of factors that might predict detention. The Court anticipates that the data will ultimately be examined by the DMC subcommittee of the JDAI collaborative with oversight by the JDAI executive team led by Commissioner Heather Cunningham.
4. **YOUTH, FAMILY AND COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT**: The Court realizes that the “clients” of the juvenile justice system are in the best position to provide the Court with input and feedback about their needs and how we can improve the system generally. The Court has authorized Rick Gaines, the Chief Juvenile Officer, and Tymasha Buckner-Dobynes, Director of Court Programs, to develop

a plan to actively engage youth, families and the community through regular meetings of selected individuals and the utilization of surveys to measure the “client” experience in the court. The Court will also consider expanding our engagement to all community based organizations including but not limited to youth advocates and faith leaders.

5. **IDENTIFICATION OF THE ORIGINATION OF LAW ENFORCEMENT**

**REFERRALS:** Law enforcement is a major source of referrals to the court system. However, the Court is unable to glean from the current data where the data originated within the law enforcement community. For example, if the Court knew that a referral came from a school resource officer, it would allow the Court to work with the school district to generate alternatives to court referrals in an effort to hold the juvenile accountable. At the same time, if the Court knew that a referral came from the “street,” the court would be in a better position to work with that specific law enforcement agency to minimize referrals. The Court will collaborate with law enforcement and schools to capture the relevant data and develop overall strategies to reduce referrals from law enforcement.