

# Addressing Racial Disparity in Denver

A presentation to the Colorado  
Commission on Criminal and Juvenile Justice

Denver Crime Prevention and Control  
Commission  
April 8, 2011

# Overview

- ◆ Timeline: Foundational work to address disparity in Denver
- ◆ CPCCC's Racial and Gender Disparity Committee
- ◆ Denver data to date
- ◆ Challenges
- ◆ Next steps

# Denver Timeline

- ◆ 2000 Biased Policing Task Force
- ◆ 2005 Crime Prevention and Control Commission (CPCPC) established by city ordinance
- ◆ 2008 Fix Broken Policing Campaign
- ◆ 2009
  - ◆ CPCPC seats the Racial and Gender Disparity Committee
  - ◆ CPCPC adopts the Resolution condemning racial disparity in Denver's adult and juvenile justice systems
- ◆ 2010
  - ◆ Decision points are identified and defined and work begins to collect and analyze decision point data

# CPCC Resolution

*Adopted August 19, 2009*

The Crime Prevention and Control Commission (CPCC) condemns racial and gender disparity in the adult and juvenile criminal justice system in Denver, Colorado.

Racial and gender disparity is a result of many factors which may include those outside of the criminal justice system itself and is defined as the unequal treatment of people by the criminal justice system based on race and/or gender.

The CPCC resolves to actively assess and counteract the impact of policies and procedures that contribute to disparity at all decision points within the system and will consider racial/gender impact as part of any decision to back any funding, initiative, new program, etc. Agencies are urged to do the same.

The Executive Director is urged to push for similar policies by The Colorado Criminal and Juvenile Justice Commission.

Denver legislators are urged to do the same; and to seek legislation requiring racial/gender impact assessments.

# CPCC – Racial and Gender Disparity Committee

- CPCC leadership committee planning: 2008
- RGD committee seated: May, 2009
  - Comprises 7 community members, 13 CPCC members and representatives from the Dept of Human Services and CO Dept of Public Safety
- Conducted literature review of the issue
- Committee adapted OJJDP's model for addressing disparity in the juvenile justice system to the adult criminal justice system in Denver
- Determined and defined major decision points for analysis

# OJJDP Disproportionate Minority Contact Technical Assistance Manual (4th Edition, August, 2009)

1. Identification and Monitoring  
Where, for who, and to what extent does disparity exist?
2. Assessment  
Testing potential causes, or mechanisms, of disparity
3. Preparation at the Local Level  
Funding, collaborations, prioritization of work
- ◆ Interventions  
Direct services, Training/technical assistance, System change
- ◆ Evaluation  
Establishing performance measures  
Process and outcomes  
How will data be collected, by whom and how reported?

# Possible Mechanisms Causing Disparity

- ◆ Differential Behavior
- ◆ Mobility Effects
- ◆ Indirect Effects
- ◆ Differential Opportunities for Prevention and Treatment
- ◆ Differential Processing or Inappropriate Decision-making Criteria
- ◆ Legislation, Policies, and Legal Factors

# Relative Rate Index

- ◆ Measures rates of volume of activity between two or more different categories/groups
- ◆ Moves across decision points to measure increase/decrease in representation through the system
- ◆ Does not require transactional data or single source of data
- ◆ Does not rely on population numbers for each decision point



# Denver to Date

- ◆ Stages 1 and 3: Identification, Preparation at the Local Level
- ◆ Decision points reviewed
  - ◆ Police contact\*
  - ◆ (Cite and Release) and Custodial arrests\*
  - ◆ Pretrial decisions (those referred for pretrial assessments/services)\*\*

*\*Unable to examine race/ethnic level data at calls for service/contact level unless the suspect is known or an arrest takes place (cite/release or custodial arrest). Cite/release data does not capture ethnicity, skews Latino data as all Latinos are likely classified as White.*

*\*\*Due to data integrity issues, information on defendants who bond and amount of bail paid is not complete and cannot be studied at this time*

# Denver to Date continued

- ◆ Committee established, strong participation of system leadership, consensus on strategic work (goals and objectives) and priorities: initial focus on data, education on system processing, dialog between system and community members
- ◆ Education
  - ◆ Police contact types, arrest and processing
  - ◆ Bonding process and pretrial assessments and supervision
  - ◆ Prosecution process at District and City Attorney levels

# Custodial Arrests and Pretrial Decisions Data

Decision Point Data Element	Asian	Black	Latino	Native American	White
Population at Risk	16,562	44,885	127,947	5,908	256,637
Custodial Arrests	192	6,411	8,973	145	9,833
Arrests per 1,000	10	140	70	30	40
Arrests per 1,000	0.01	0.14	0.07	0.03	0.04
RRI	0.30	3.73	1.83	0.78	1.00
Pretrial Recommendations	41	1,821	1,998	29	1,920
Pretrial Per 100 Arrests	21	28	22	20	20
Pretrial Per 100 Arrests	0.21	0.28	0.22	0.20	0.20
RRI	1.09	1.45	1.14	1.02	1.00

- Population and race data based on 2010 Census data for Denver County, Age 18+ (data total excludes approximately 16,000 residents (3%) who identified as 2+ races within age 18+ population)
- Latino population data based on estimates as percentage of race data
- Arrest data represents 1/1/2010-12/31/2010 and is limited to custodial arrests
- Arrest data includes race/ethnicity data. Where Hispanic listed as Ethnicity, defendant classified as Latino
- Pretrial data represents 1/1/2009-12/31/2009, includes Hispanic as race, not ethnicity and includes those arrested on felony or Class 1 misdemeanors who have not bonded.

# Challenges

- ◆ Resource intensive (staffing)
- ◆ Time to work through stages
- ◆ Data challenges:
  - ◆ Data integrity
  - ◆ Access to data
    - ◆ Police, Sheriff moving to new data systems
    - ◆ City Attorney bringing on new data system
    - ◆ City's Technology Services Department traditionally functions as technical support, not a data analysis unit
    - ◆ Budget cuts have delayed implementation of analysis tools
  - ◆ Availability of data
    - ◆ District Attorney does not include race/ethnicity in its tracking of cases
    - ◆ Ethnic data limited to Hispanic or Non-Hispanic
    - ◆ Race/ethnicity is usually determined and recorded by officers, not self-reported
    - ◆ Political will and understanding of scope and depth of work

# Next steps/opportunities

- ◆ Complete data collection at remaining decision points
- ◆ Select decision point/population for further examination
- ◆ Assess causes, develop interventions, evaluate of interventions
- ◆ Incorporate social/economic information, victim data, conduct analysis by census blocks/neighborhood

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