

### **Scott County Capstone Proposal**

Scott County is working to prevent the unnecessary entry of youth into the juvenile justice system by using diversion options for first time offenders of non-traffic, simple misdemeanor offenses. This will be accomplished by working with the Davenport Police Department, local social service agencies, the Davenport School System and the Scott County community.

#### **What racial and ethnic disparity problem does your project seek to address?**

Local data tells us that the disparity impacting the most youth exists in the initial entry and/or referral to Juvenile Court Services. Scott County had 1,165 juvenile arrests in 2014. Of those, 58% were African American whereas only about 12.5% of the youth population is African American. Based on Scott County's relative rate index, African Americans are 8.78% more likely to be referred to Juvenile Court and -.26% less likely to have their cases diverted than their white peers. Not only does this show disproportionality, but also disparate treatment as less African American youth are being given options other than entry into the Juvenile Court System.

#### **Why is this problem important to your organization or community? Why have you identified this as your focus?**

Research tells us that 66% of first-time offenders will not recidivate, 22% will offend two or three times and around 8% will offend four or more times. The 'What Works Principle' is the result of over 30 years of meta-analysis. It tells us that if a child is pulled into the Juvenile Court System further than they need to be, their likelihood of remaining in the system also increases. There are myriad ways that youth are drawn into and 'lost' in the juvenile justice system. For example, a youth may miss their initial meeting with an intake officer. This can increase the youth's chances of their charge being processed as a formal probation case as opposed to an Informal Adjustment Agreement between the youth and a Juvenile Court Officer. Once a formal court case has been initiated, chances of being ordered into a more restrictive setting also increase for reasons ranging from infractions of court ordered probation agreements to failure to appear in court.

A concern for bringing low risk youth into Juvenile Court is that for low risk youth, probation violations and failures to appear can often be caused by social need as opposed to criminogenic thought. This can have the effect of pulling youth from pro-social/healthy networks in their lives and putting them in programs with higher risk youth (Peer Contagion). Often low risk/high needs youth find the stigma of delinquency more attractive than that of mental illness or childhood victimization. Recent studies have found that treating lower risk clients with dosages more appropriate for moderate or high risk youth actually increases their likelihood of recidivating. The factors listed above are components of the 'school to prison pipeline' and often hinder Juvenile Court's efforts to enhance public safety by lowering each youth's criminogenic risk level and enhancing their access to pro-social activities.

While we are proposing providing all first-time misdemeanor offenders a chance at a diversion no matter their race, we will be providing more of an opportunity for minority youth who are more likely to be pulled into the system. This allows youth to continue in their adolescence without the stigmas and pressures juvenile court involvement brings and increases their chance of success into adulthood. We will do this by working to eliminate the discretion of police officers and others who may initiate the involvement of the police and therefore Juvenile Court.

### **What is your plan to address this issue in your organization or community?**

We are working with the Davenport Police Department (DPD) to put into place new policy to be used by all officers. The policy will indicate that all officers when either on patrol or called upon by community members, businesses or organizations and faced with a youth (under the age of 18) who is accused of or caught for the first time performing a misdemeanor offense will NOT be arrested or be given a citation. Instead the youth will be given a referral to a diversion class. The DPD will provide Juvenile Court with the referrals that are made and Juvenile Court will follow-up with the youth and their families to give them specific information on the diversion classes offered.

It is anticipated that the diversion classes offered will be a mixture of topics utilizing community members and professionals already trained to facilitate these courses. This will include but may not be limited Youth Crossroads Curricula and Truthought. The Youth Crossroads Curricula integrates Real Color's with any of the following topics: anger management, cognitive life skills, curfew, drugs & alcohol, gang involvement, graffiti, high risk offenders, misdemeanor offenses, shoplifting, truancy and JOBTEC, a class designed to teach competencies necessary for finding and keeping a job. Truthought is a corrective thinking process class designed to teach accountability and positive decision making skills through interactive group exercises. The class assists students with the skills needed to make positive lifestyle choices. The class balances thinking barriers with responsible thinking to reinforce pro-social behavior. A schedule of diversion courses will be created and an attempt to refer youth to the most appropriate course will be made. The diversion courses will be held at community locations and within the Davenport Community Jr. High and High Schools. This mixture of locations removes barriers such as transportation, scheduling and location.

In order to create buy-in from the various stakeholders, system personnel and community members a series of trainings must occur. Training will be developed to explain the policy change and rationale including information on child brain development and implicit bias. A training roll-out will be developed and implemented to have those in attendance at the RED Certificate program train their own colleagues and peers. See below for a list of those systems and community entities represented on the RED team.

### **Who will be your partners? Outline the roles and responsibilities of your team members, and identify how you will obtain the buy-in from individuals who are not part of your team.**

Scott County's RED team is inclusive of almost all systems that youth would touch if they were charged with a crime and referred to Juvenile Court. Leadership for each of the systems listed below was in attendance at the RED Certificate program and is in full support of the proposed capstone project. Specific duties of each representative are listed below:

The **Davenport Police Department** will help develop and issue the policy to its police force, create the forms to be used by police officers, meet with command staff to keep them up-to-date and schedule trainings. They will also work with Juvenile Court Services to create a system and/or process to provide them with the youth who are eligible for the diversion classes.

**Scott County Juvenile Court Services** will help develop the policy, create a system and/or process in which it receives referrals from the Davenport Police Department and, in-turn, contacts families on the availability and schedule of diversion courses. Juvenile Court Services staff may also be responsible for

facilitating some of the diversion courses that are to be offered. In collaboration with Scott County Kids, Juvenile Court Services will collect the baseline data proposed below and collect ongoing data.

The **Davenport Community School District (DCSD)** will utilize, to the best of their ability, the seven staff employed by the school district that are trained to deliver Youth Crossroads Curricula. The DCSD will also provide the training that is to be developed to appropriate staff in an effort to reduce the number of calls to the police that originate from the schools.

The **Scott County Attorney's Office** will assist in training staff and colleagues within their office on the above mentioned training.

The **Davenport Civil Rights Commission** will meet with various community members and/or groups to share about the policy change, rationale behind the change and potential impact.

**Scott County Kids** will continue to organize and facilitate the initiative and will help to share information with the community and train personnel when needed. Scott County Kids will regularly evaluate the resources needed to keep the initiative going and allocate funds or staff to help when available. In collaboration with Juvenile Court Services, Scott County Kids will collect the baseline data proposed below and collect ongoing data.

The **Department of Human Services** will be training their own staff on juvenile court services and its resources and restrictions. Information and details on this initiative will also be shared with staff and throughout the state as it is relevant.

**Scott County Juvenile Court** - will assist in training staff and colleagues within their office on the above mentioned training.

**What barriers to implementation do you anticipate? How will you overcome them?**

<b>Barriers</b>	<b>Possible Solutions</b>
Staff time collecting baseline data	Utilizing students at local college
Lack of support or understanding on new policy	Town Hall meetings or continued trainings
Lack of personnel and/or time for diversion classes	Coordinated meetings with all trained facilitators to discuss schedules and logistics. Possible funding for facilitator's time if outside of work day.
The number of people to be trained on the policy, rationale, child development and bias	Work to "piggyback" on existing training so to not require additional time

**How does your work to improve issues in racial and ethnic disparities align with other efforts needed to fully address the problem in Question One?**

The proposed capstone aligns with several other efforts in our community. This includes the Davenport Community Schools initiative to divert youth from suspensions, expulsions, and increase academic performance and graduation rates. We know the more a youth can stay in school and engaged, the lower their likelihood of juvenile court involvement. There is also recognition that a child's involvement with the child welfare system increases their likelihood of involvement with the juvenile court system. Scott County has been working over the past year to develop and implement policies and procedures which address youth involved in both the child welfare system and the juvenile court system (also

known as “crossover youth”). Nationally, statistics show crossover youth are disproportionately youth of color. Policies and process that address crossover youth allow for more communication and collaboration between the two systems which creates better outcomes for youth and families. There is also an initiative currently underway to decrease the disparities of minority families in the child welfare system. With all of these local initiatives, there is continued communication and collaboration between committee members and stakeholders.

**Provide a work plan and timeline for your capstone project that indicates what will be done, by whom, and by when.**

	<b>Activity</b>	<b>Who is Responsible</b>
<b>By October 1<sup>st</sup>, 2015</b>	Hold meeting with diversion facilitators to discuss logistics	Rob Scott; Dave Tristan; Molli Nickerson
	Finalize the datasets to be gathered (baseline and ongoing)	Core Team
	Begin the development of policy language	Davenport Police (Shawn Roth)
<b>By December 1<sup>st</sup>, 2015</b>	Create schedule of diversion classes to be offered	Rob Scott; Dave Tristan; Molli Nickerson
	Create referral process and forms for the police department and juvenile court communication	Dave Tristan & Shawn Roth
	Collection of base-line data	College student (oversight by Juvenile Court or Scott County Kids)
	Issuance of policy change to staff in the Davenport Police Department to take effect January 1, 2016	Shawn Roth
	Begin trainings and community discussions	Core Team
<b>By March 1<sup>st</sup>, 2016</b>	Evaluation and analysis of first few diversion classes	Core Team
	Continued trainings with personnel and community	Core Team
	Data Collection	Juvenile Court; Scott County Kids

**How will you measure success? Describe how you will know whether your project had an effect on racial and ethnic disparities.**

The group will measure success if the number of youth referred to Juvenile court drops, specifically for minority youth. Success will also be measured if more youth, specifically minority youth, are offered and attend diversion courses. Specific data to be gathered as a baseline is listed below:

1. Number of youth referred to juvenile court over the past year by race, sex and age. (January 1, 2014 – December 2014).
2. Number of those youth who were first-time non-traffic, simple misdemeanor offenders. This will also be separated by race, sex and age.
3. Number of those youth who were first-time non-traffic, simple misdemeanor offenders that were brought into the Juvenile Court system (formally or informally) who reoffended (separated by race, sex and age).
4. Number of those youth who were first-time non-traffic, simple misdemeanor offenders who were diverted and reoffended (separated by race, sex, age).