

# Hillsborough County, New Hampshire

## Disproportionate Minority Contact Reduction Case Study

### The Problem

Hillsborough, New Hampshire has a small minority population, but they were overrepresented in juvenile justice processing. In 2008, the relative rate index for Hispanic youth in Hillsborough at the arrest stage was 1.8. Racial disparities existed at other levels of the system as well, though small numbers made interpreting the data difficult. During this time, many juvenile justice stakeholders and community members did not trust the accuracy of juvenile justice data that was being collected. They were also distrustful of census data. Additionally, many felt that the minority population was too small to utilize its scarce resources to focus on DMC.

### Juvenile Justice Strategies

Between 2008 and 2011, there were four key changes in Hillsborough, New Hampshire related to DMC. First, there was a dramatic increase in the number of minority residents in New Hampshire. From 1990 to 2011 while the white youth population increased 14%, the black youth population increased 299% and the Hispanic youth population increased 345%.<sup>1</sup> This increasing number of minority youth created a sense of awareness and urgency to understand what the data was saying and also to make sure that the data was accurate.

Second, there was a focus on improving the accuracy of the data statewide, which led to an increase in the understanding of and the use of data. Data can be powerful tools and should guide every phase of DMC reduction efforts.<sup>2</sup> However, many in New Hampshire were mistrustful of the data, which hindered any work on data-driven solutions. When a new DMC Coordinator for the State of New Hampshire was hired in 2010, he wanted to make sure there was accurate information. New Hampshire DMC Coordinator Andrew Smith emphasized that he did not want anyone questioning the data. He stated, "I am relentless in making the point that if you're data is not accurate and challengeable you can't improve." Before becoming the DMC Coordinator, Mr. Smith worked for the New Hampshire Census Bureau and supervised the count for the 2010 Census. His background in data collection, specifically as it related to race, helped to bring much needed attention to the importance of accurate data collection and analysis.

Hillsborough County, New Hampshire has a population of approximately 400,000 people, including 92,181 children and youth under the age of 18. The youth between the ages of 10 and 17 are approximately 85% white, 8% Hispanic, 3% African American and 3% Asian. Hillsborough is northern New England's most populous county as well as its most densely populated. Its largest cities are Nashua and Manchester.

Third, there was strong leadership from many of the key police chiefs in the county, including Chief David J. Mara in Manchester, Chief John J. Seusing in Nashua, Chief Mike Allen in Rochester, and Chief Eddy Edwards, the chief liquor enforcement officer for the State of New Hampshire. These chiefs supported DMC reduction efforts at the state and local level and contributed to increasing awareness of DMC and finding solutions to decrease it. Many of the

<sup>1</sup> "Youth" refers to individuals ages 10-17. Data from Puzzanchera, C., Sladky, A. and Kang, W. (2012). "Easy Access to Juvenile Populations: 1990-2011." Online. Available: <http://www.ojjdp.gov/ojstatbb/ezapop/>

<sup>2</sup> [https://www.ncjrs.gov/html/ojjdp/dmc\\_ta\\_manual/dmcfull.pdf](https://www.ncjrs.gov/html/ojjdp/dmc_ta_manual/dmcfull.pdf) (page Intro-2)

chiefs participated actively on committees that address racial disparities. One of the chiefs was even the chair of the statewide DMC Committee. The police chiefs also use their leadership to initiating officer trainings and make changes to programs when necessary. The New Hampshire DMC Coordinator noted that, the chiefs “could have said this wasn’t important. They could have said the population is so small that it didn’t matter, but they didn’t do that. They put aside limited funding to do these trainings. We have built a lot trust, and they have my support.”

Fourth, the police departments trained their officers in cultural competency, diversity, and police-youth interactions. Police officers were trained using the Effective Interactions with Youth curriculum, which was designed in Connecticut and customized for New Hampshire. The curriculum is designed to improve knowledge and skills among officers in how to interact with youth, particularly minority youth, to reduce negative outcomes and/or result in police action. Specifically, the curriculum helps officers to differentiate problematic adolescent behavior from typical adolescent behavior and to de-escalate situations involving agitated or defiant youth. The goals of the training are to increase patrol officer awareness of DMC, increase patrol officer knowledge of youth behavior and strategies for interacting effectively with youth, improve police attitudes toward young people, increase the likelihood that police/youth interactions will have positive outcomes for youth, and increase the likelihood that youth will respond positively toward police officers (Sanderson, Kosutic, Griggs & Anderson, 2008). In addition to the curriculum, police were able to benefit from the expertise of the DMC Coordinator who also had been a diversity consultant before accepting his current role. This expertise served to put stakeholders and decision-makers at ease and build trust when discussing race, which can be difficult for many in the juvenile justice and law enforcement fields as well as the community.

Finally, there are statewide and local committees focused on racial issues. For example, the statewide DMC Subcommittee has been meeting for years, and Nashua has an Ethnic Awareness Committee whose mission is to encourage understanding and appreciation of ethnic diversity in the City of Nashua and to facilitate communication between the ethnic community and city government.<sup>3</sup> Most importantly, in 2010 local DMC Committees formed in both Nashua and Manchester. These subcommittees have strong leadership from police (see above) and meet monthly. Additionally, there are representatives from the juvenile court, probation, juvenile diversion programs, the superintendent of schools, school resource officers, and judges on the committee. Primary topic areas included data collection and police trainings, but other topics were also addressed. Each has developed its own goals and objectives according to local realities. For example, the purpose of Nashua DMC committee is to begin a dialog between police, educators, parents, youth and community leaders seeking to identify things the community can do together to prevent all youth from entering the juvenile justice system and reduce the disparity evident among minority youth.<sup>4</sup>

### **Improvements in the Data**

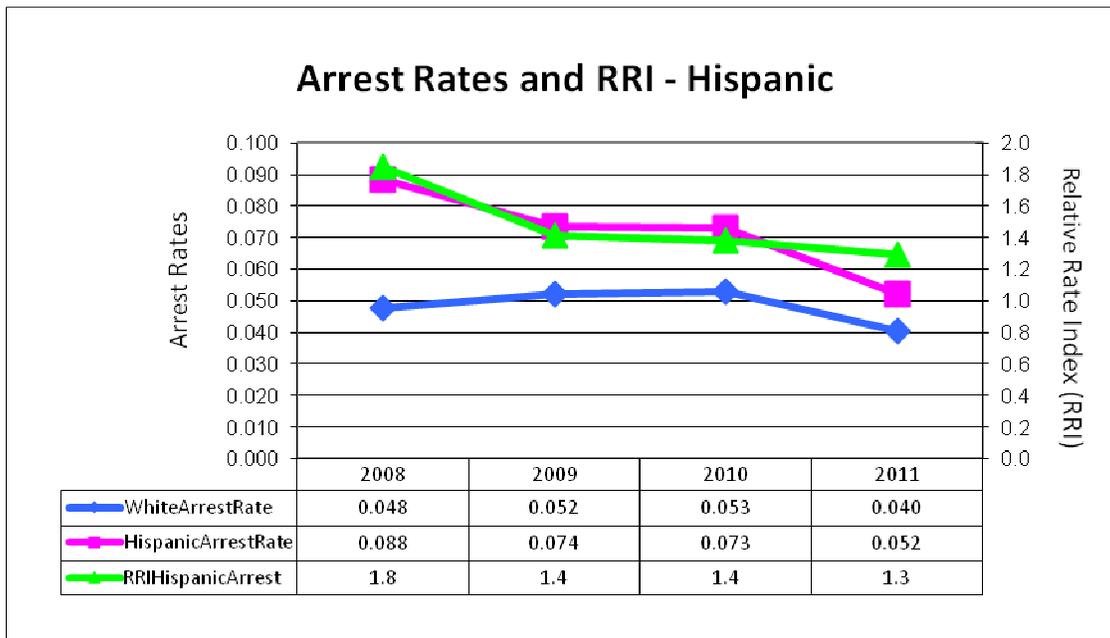
The overall juvenile arrest rate in Hillsborough decreased from 5.7 arrests per 100 youth in 2007 to 4.2 arrests per 100 youth in 2011. In 2007 there were 2,740 juvenile arrests compared to 2011 when there were 1,892 juvenile arrests. Arrest rates for Hispanic youth also declined steadily

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<sup>3</sup> <http://www.nashuanh.gov/LinkClick.aspx?fileticket=eMvOvoOstGw%3d&tabid=931>

<sup>4</sup> <http://www.nashuanh.gov/LinkClick.aspx?fileticket=7D5ME%2fKSnp%3d&tabid=931>

from 8.8 per 100 in 2008 to 5.2 per 100 in 2011.<sup>5</sup> During this same time, the white arrest rate increased slightly then decreased. Finally, from 2007 to 2001, the relative rate index for Hispanic youth at arrest also decreased from 1.8 to 1.3, indicating a reduction in DMC.



### Hillsborough County Arrests, 2007-2011

	Total Arrest	White Arrest	Black Arrest	Hispanic Arrest	Asian Arrest	American Indian Arrest
2007	2,740	2,348	170	187	35	0
2008	2,269	1,868	113	269	19	0
2009	2,387	1,971	162	234	17	3
2010	2,426	1,988	179	242	15	2
2011	1,892	1,516	159	173	12	0

### Conclusion

Hillsborough, New Hampshire provides some insight into the DMC problems and responses of a jurisdiction with a small but growing minority population. Small numbers make meaningful data analysis difficult at more than just a few juvenile justice stages. However, the trends in arrest rates do indicate a decrease in arrest rates for both white and Hispanic youth as well as a decrease in racial disparities. Strategies such as improving data accuracy, engaging police chiefs in DMC work, and providing training to police officers in diversity and police-youth interactions seem to have had a positive impact.

### References and Interviews

#### References

<sup>5</sup> Population data for Hispanic youth in 2007 was not entered into the RRI database thus not used in the analysis of rates.

City of Nashua. "History of the Nashua Ethnic Awareness Committee (EAC)." Retrieved from <http://www.nashuanh.gov/LinkClick.aspx?fileticket=%2b%2f0Fnr526Tc%3d&tabid=931>

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## **Interviews**

Andrew C. Smith, DMC Coordinator, Division of Juvenile Justice Services, Sununu Youth Services Center