

# Juvenile and Domestic Relations District Court



## CY 2022 Equity Impact Plan

**Leadership Sponsor:** Matt Thompson, Director Court Services

**Equity Lead(s):** Daud Harris and Lauren Madigan

**Departmental Equity Guiding Statement:** For more than ten years, the Juvenile and Domestic Relations District Court (JDRDC), in collaboration with other justice system stakeholders, has worked to reduce the overrepresentation of people of color in the justice system and ensure equitable treatment for all people encountering the court. Despite this, racial and ethnic disparities continue to exist. JDRDC remains committed to addressing the overrepresentation of people of color in the justice system through intentional efforts to consider equity in our decision-making and eliminate or change policies and practices resulting in unintended consequences. However, these changes will only take us so far. Ultimately, a systems approach is necessary to address the root cause issues and other social determinants occurring *upstream* of the court, contributing to racial and ethnic disparities in the justice system. We will continue to work side by side with other agencies and justice system stakeholders to further identify and address root causes.

**Context:** Despite long term efforts in criminal justice reform over the past 10 years, large inequities still exist at all contact points within our system. While national crime rates have decreased 58% since peaking in 1991, Black or African Americans continue to account for a disproportionate number of violent offenses (45%) in 2020.<sup>1</sup> In addition, Hispanic offenders account for 14% of all offenses.<sup>2</sup> Similarly, juvenile delinquency cases processed by the courts decreased for all racial groups and by 56% overall in 15 years between 2005 and 2019. However, the case rate for Black Youth was three times the delinquency case rate per 1,000 juveniles for American Indian, White, and Hispanic youth. Even with an overall decrease in juvenile delinquency cases, the proportion of delinquency cases involving Black and Hispanic youth increased between 2005 and 2019.<sup>3</sup>

Following national trends, Fairfax County continues to see long-term decreases in overall adult and juvenile crime rates, however there was a small increase in property crimes between 2019 and 2020.<sup>4</sup> Over the past year, juvenile cases continue to be below average partly due to the COVID-19 pandemic and associated policy and practice changes. However, Hispanic, and Black youth continue to make up a disproportionate percent of

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<sup>1</sup> Data Source: FBI Uniform Crime Reports. Retrieved from [FBI — Offenses Known to Law Enforcement](#)

<sup>2</sup> Ethnicity is tracked separately in the FBI's Uniform Crime Reports.

<sup>3</sup> Data Source: OJJDP. (2019). Juvenile Court Statistics, 2019. Retrieved from [jcs2019c1.indd \(ojjdp.gov\)](#)

<sup>4</sup> As reported in the [FCPD Annual Statistical Report](#).

cases representing 27% and 10% of the youth in Fairfax compared to 49% and 28% of juvenile cases respectively<sup>5</sup>.

A specific subset of offenses continues to be of concern among JDRDC's population. Following along with other national trends indicating an increase in drug abuse violations<sup>6</sup>, probation officers report that substance use and abuse, including the use of opioids, continues to be an issue for many JDRDC clients. Locally, in Fairfax, challenges exist accessing some court-ordered substance abuse and mental health services for adult clients who are uninsured or underinsured and don't meet the Community Services Board's (CSB) priority population guidelines for treatment or services. Many private providers do not accept insurance. Paying out-of-pocket for services is not always an option for some clients, especially those with less income, which disproportionately tend to be people of color.

Overall JDRDC has a diverse workforce, with staff of different races, ethnicities, and gender represented at all levels of the agency. However, we continue to recognize the importance of our workforce being reflective of our client population. Finally, we continue to work on ways to improve our recruitment, hiring, promotion, and retention of minority staff to better reflect the client population we serve.

#### **Long-term Outcome(s):**

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| <input type="checkbox"/> Cultural and Recreational Opportunities                               | <input type="checkbox"/> Health                              |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Economic Opportunity  | <input type="checkbox"/> Housing and Neighborhood Livability |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Efficient and Effective Government                         | <input type="checkbox"/> Lifelong Education and Learning     |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Empowerment and Support for Residents Facing Vulnerability | <input type="checkbox"/> Mobility and Transportation         |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Environment   | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Safety and Security      |

#### **System-Level Infrastructure:**

JDRDC will continue working with and collaborating with other Fairfax County agencies to identify opportunities for earlier intervention and diversion away from formal justice system involvement and reduce racial and ethnic disparities. Central to this effort is Fairfax Co. Public Schools, the police department, the Department of Family Services (DFS), Neighborhood and Community Services (NCS), and the Community Services Board (CSB).

JDRDC and DFS are working together to identify dual-status youth; that is, youth involved in the child welfare system and juvenile justice for earlier identification and intervention to prevent justice system involvement. Statistically, youth encountering the child welfare system are more likely to be involved with the juvenile court for delinquency. This effort is ongoing with grant-funded technical assistance and support from the Robert F. Kennedy National Resource Center for Juvenile Justice.

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<sup>5</sup> Data source: JDRDC 2021 Annual Report. (Forthcoming).

<sup>6</sup> Data Source: FBI Drug Abuse Violations – Uniform Crime Reports.

JDRDC also continues to work with the police department, NCS, and FCPS to expand access to the Alternative Accountability Program (AAP), a community-based diversion program for first-time offenders. JDRDC has implemented a clearinghouse model whereby the police department refers all delinquency complaints to Juvenile Intake, where they are screened and referred to the appropriate level of intervention. By shifting centralized decision-making to Juvenile Intake, JDRDC has increased referrals to the AAP program and diversion opportunities for youth of color. JDRDC has also partnered with the police department to train recruits at the Criminal Justice Academy on juvenile-justice-related topics.

Addressing the issue of equitable access and availability of behavioral health and substance abuse services for adults not meeting CSB priority population guidelines remains an ongoing challenge for JDRDC. JDRDC, working with the CSB, will complete a gap analysis of the availability and accessibility of behavioral health and substance abuse services for adult probation and pretrial service clients to inform next steps.

The need for improved centralized coordination of activities and limitations on information sharing are barriers to effective cross-agency collaboration and system-level responses. Where appropriate and permissible by law, JDRDC continues to work with partner agencies to enhance communication and coordination of service delivery to shared clients.

## JUVENILE AND DOMESTIC RELATIONS DISTRICT COURT CALENDAR YEAR 2022 EQUITY IMPACT PLAN

Goals	One Fairfax Area of Focus	Actions	Stakeholders	Timeline	Resources and Supports	Responsible Parties	Performance Measures
<b>1. In response to the ongoing epidemic of substance abuse in the county resulting in issues such as opioid overdoses the Racial and Ethnic Disparities (RED) team will explore the accessibility and availability of services to ensure equitable delivery of services amongst all county residents served by JDRDC.</b>	7, 10	1a. Provide regular training and education updates to JDRDC staff on available substance abuse services within the community.	CSB, JDRDC, Children’s Services Act (CSA), Virginia Alcohol Safety Action Plan (VASAP) Commission, private treatment providers	January-December 2022	Staff, time,	RED team, Court Services Unit (CSU) staff	Time frame from referral to inception of service/tx; % of clients who received needed service; % of clients who received tx/services at reduced rate due to income
		1b. Explore the possibility of a separate substance abuse contract for assessment/service for both juvenile and adults.	Forensics/CSB, JDRDC CSU	January-December 2022	Staff, time, money	The RED team, JDRDC CSU Senior Management Team (SMT)(CSU Director, Deputy Director of Operations, Deputy Director of Residential Services), Probation Support Services Manager	% of juvenile clients with a decrease in Sub. Abuse domain on risk assessment.
		1c. Collect data and complete a gap analysis of substance abuse and mental health treatment and services for adult probation and pretrial clients	JDRDC	January-December 2022	Staff, time	Research, probation staff	% of clients with substance abuse and/or mental health needs

<b>2. To increase collaboration with state partners to ensure equitability of access.</b>	10	2a. Establish better lines of communication with Clerks' office and identify points of contact to answer questions and resolve common issues.	Clerks' office/state partners, JDRDC CSU, SMT and CSU supervisors	Jan-Dec 2022	Alcohol Safety Action Program (ASAP)/General District (GD) relationship, staff, time	RED, SMT, probation supervisors	Qualitative survey probation supervisors and clerks to rate relationships (outcomes-improved communication on both sides, client/community better served)  # of State clerks forms translated into top 5 languages i.e. calendar control form, motions form, etc)
		2b. To explore gaining access to Department of Criminal Justice Services (DCJS) data to expand JDRDC adult services data for further gap analysis	CSU SMT, Community Corrections (CC), Research, DCJS data team	Jan-Dec 2022	Staff, time	Research	
		2c. VASAP Commission/ Adding/collecting demographic stats on clients through ASAP	VASAP, CSU SMT	Jan-Dec 2022	Staff, time	ASAP/Research	
		2d. Develop a "cheat sheet" for clerk's office for Domestic Relations (DR) intakes	CSU, DR, Clerks Office	Jan-Dec 2022	Staff, time	DR, RED	
<b>3. To ensure the JDRDC workforce reflects the population we serve (ongoing goal from 2021 plan)</b>	10, 16	3a. Increase diversity of JDRDC staff within the juvenile probation department	Human Resources (HR), SMT, Hiring Managers	Jan-Dec 2022	Staff, time	HR, Hiring Managers	Does race and gender breakdown of staff match client population? - checked annually  Interview panelist sign document indicating they completed the review of bench card prior to beginning interviews.
		3c. Expand diversity and recruitment of JDRDC volunteers	Volunteer coordinator, Language Access Program (LAP), RED team	Jan-Dec 2022	Staff, time, money	Volunteer/Intern coordinator LAP RED team	
		3e. Ensure interview panels review implicit bias bench card together prior to beginning interviews. (Completed at same time as Non-Disclosure Agreement - NDA).	HR, SMT, Hiring Managers, RED team, Training Coordinator	Jan-Dec 2022	Staff, time	HR, Training coordinator, RED team	

4. To apply an equity lens to both new and existing JDRDC policies, practices and programming	7	4a. Develop, document, communicate, and train JDRDC staff on a process to review new and changing policies and procedures	SMT, RED team	Jan-Dec 2022	Staff, time	SMT, RED team, Initiatives and Special Projects coordinator	# of reviews completed
		4b. RED team to review new and changing JDRDC policies and procedures	RED, Diversity Equity and Inclusion (DEI) Ambassadors, SMT	Jan-Dec 2022	Staff, time	RED team, DEI Ambassadors	% of recommendations followed  Completion and approval of new process

Director's Signature:  .  
R. Matt Thompson