UNIVERSITY OF SOUTHERN MAINE

University of Southern Maine

USM Digital Commons

Maine Statistical Analysis Center

Institutes and Research Centers

5-2012

2012 Cumberland County Law Enforcement Case File Review

Teresa A. Hubley
University of Southern Maine, Muskie School of Public Service

George Shaler MPH
University of Southern Maine, Muskie School of Public Service, Maine Statistical Analysis Center

Follow this and additional works at: https://digitalcommons.usm.maine.edu/
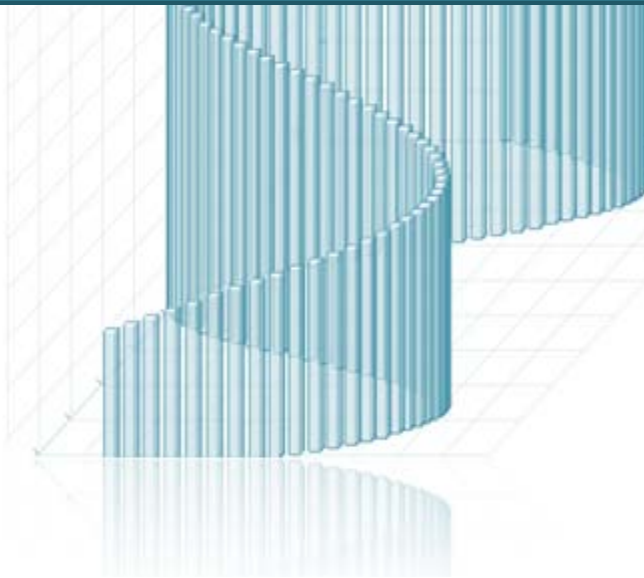maine_statistical_analysis_center

Cumberland County Law Enforcement Interviews & Case File Review

Authors:

Teresa Hubley
George Shaler

University of Southern Maine
Muskie School of Public Service
May 2012

Funder

Table of Contents

Since 1998, the Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention (OJJDP) has required all states that receive formula grant funding through the Juvenile Justice Delinquency Prevention Act to determine the rate of minority youth in confinement. In 2002, OJJDP enhanced this requirement to include other key decision points (e.g., arrest, referral, diversion, detention, petition, adjudication, probation, confinement, and bind over) in the juvenile justice process. This expanded view allows for a more comprehensive assessment of how minority youth are treated by various juvenile justice system actors (e.g., law enforcement, corrections, and the courts). The Act's goal is to ensure that all youth, regardless of race or ethnicity, are afforded and equal and fair treatment by the juvenile justice system.

In Maine, the Juvenile Justice Advisory Group (JJAG) partners with the Muskie School of Public Service at the University of Southern Maine to carry out disproportionate minority contact (DMC) research. For the past seven years, the Muskie School has been establishing relative rate indices for all nine decision points to gauge whether DMC occurs in Maine, and if so at what decision point and where.

DMC research in Maine presents some challenges.
1. Since Maine's minority population is relatively small we are only able to measure it with reliability in six counties.[1]
2. Arrest data which is tabulated by the Department of Public Safety does not include ethnicity data. As a result, we do not know if Hispanics are over or under-represented at the arrest decision point.
3. The Department of Public Safety and Department of Corrections, the source for the other eight decision points, are not able to distinguish between native born and immigrant minority youth. As a result, it is not known that when DMC occurs whether it is among native born or immigrant minority youth.
4. Even in some counties that meet the 1% minority population threshold, all minorities have to be combined for analysis purposes since the numbers are still low.
5. Since rates in some counties are based on relatively few events, they can fluctuate markedly.

The JJAG has followed the five phases – identification, assessment, intervention, evaluation, and monitoring - of DMC research and activities as outlined by OJJDP.[2]

Much of the early DMC research in ME has focused on Phase 1 – Identification which is quantitative in nature.

---

[1] The minority population has to be at least 1% of overall county population for meaningful analysis to occur.

[2] The five DMC research goals outlined by OJJDP are: 1. Identification - determine whether (and where) disproportionate minority contact exists in the juvenile justice system; 2. Assessment – determine reason(s) for DMC; 3. Intervention – develop and implement strategies to address DMC; 4. Evaluation – determine the effectiveness of intervention strategies; and 5. Monitoring – observe DMC trends and adjust strategies accordingly.

Research conducted over the past few years has shown high DMC rates in the early decision points – arrest, referral, and diversion – for Black/African-American youth in Androscoggin, Cumberland, Kennebec, and York counties.[3]

The purpose of the DMC Assessment phase is to assess reasons for DMC. This involves a search for the factors that contribute to DMC.

The JJAG's DMC Strategic Plan identified a need for assessment research activities in Cumberland County, the most populous county in the state, focusing on the arrest decision point. The study examines the arrest decision point in the three largest municipalities in the county – Portland, South Portland, and Westbrook.

Report Overview

This project sought to identify and describe the factors that law enforcement officers in the study area perceive as most important in dealing with minority and non-minority youth.

In this phase of the assessment process, data on the perspectives of local law enforcement officials was gathered and analyzed to assist in further understanding the mechanisms which may or may not lead to excess disproportionate minority contact at the arrest decision point in Portland, South Portland, and Westbrook.[4] The intended outcome of this research phase is to assist the JJAG and community coordinating group to increase its understanding of the DMC picture and make informed choices about strategies to reduce it where found and further build capacity of juvenile justice systems and communities to prevent occurrence and/or increase in DMC.

This report has two major sections. Part one summarizes interviews with law enforcement officials in Portland, South Portland, and Westbrook. The second part synthesizes findings from the case file review process with the same three law enforcement agencies.

---

[3] Noreus R, Hubley T, & Rocque M. Disproportionate Minority Contact in Maine: DMC Assessment and Identification, 2009. University of Southern Maine, Muskie School of Public Service, December 2009, http://muskie.usm.maine.edu/justiceresearch/Publications/Juvenile/Juvenile_DMC_AssessmentandIdentificationReport2009.pdf

[4] In 2009, Black/African American youth were 1.39 times more likely to be arrested than white youth ages 10-17.

Rationale**:** The DMC literature suggests that both qualitative and quantitative approaches are key to achieving a deeper understanding of the issues that affect decision making at each of the points measured by the program. These data must be collected from stakeholders who participate in and are affected by the policies and environmental factors that create the patterns observed in the quantitative data.

Law Enforcement Interviews

The following research topics guided the work in this research phase:

1. Law enforcement agencies response to a juvenile crime
2. Factors that influence a department's decision to recommend a certain course of action for some youth and not others
3. Whether minority youth are treated differently at the arrest decision point
4. Which populations of minorities most often come to be arrested
5. Challenges or barriers that influence decision making for minority youth.
6. Whether the department staff receive any type of cultural competency training
7. Community efforts to help minority youth avoid unnecessary arrest or jail time

Recruitment: Study participants were the police chiefs (or their designees) and law enforcement officials from the Portland, South Portland, and Westbrook police departments. The chiefs in the three departments provided the Muskie School with a list of potential interviewees who regularly come in contact with youth and/or work with them in the community.

Potential interviewees represented a cross-section of their respective departments' workforce. The research study protocol specified that no one would be compelled/ coerced to sit for the interview against his or her will.   Police chiefs were provided with a summary of the research project that they shared with potential interviewees to enable them to make an informed decision about participation in the interviews.

The Muskie School randomly chose law enforcement officials for interview from the list of potential volunteers provided by the chiefs.   In South Portland and Westbrook, five officers each, along with the chiefs were selected for interviews. Because Portland is a larger department, the research team requested and received a larger list of potential volunteers for interviews. The research team chose ten officers from the Portland officers' list and interviewed them and the acting chief.

Setting: Interviews took place at the respective police departments. The interviews typically lasted no more than 30 minutes. The research team interviewed a total of 23 individuals (11 from Portland and 6 each from South Portland and Westbrook).

Case File Review

Case Selection: The Muskie School requested 20 juvenile case arrest records each from 2010 and 2011 for review from the Portland, South Portland, and Westbrook police departments. Case file reviews were conducted to examine:

        a. where the youth are arrested,

        b. what the youth is arrested for (e.g., arrest type, charge, etc),

        c. demographic information (no names)

        d. victim information (no names)

For each department, the Muskie School requested that at least a quarter of the case records be those of minority youth. *Time and resource considerations prevented the Muskie School from reviewing a statistically significant sample of case records. The juvenile case records the Muskie School reviewed should not be considered a representative sample.*

To comply with the study protocol and stipulations, a Department of Corrections employee conducted review of each record and conveyed the information to the Muskie School research staff. Muskie School staff did not examine any records in accordance with the study protocol and stipulations of the research process.

Setting: All case file reviews took place at the respective departments.

Law Enforcement Interviews

Interview notes for each question were themed by both members of the research team. By agreement with the University Institutional Review Board (IRB) only themes that are common to all three departments were reported.

Case File Review

Coding: Department of Corrections' staff reviewed the files and made coding decisions with Muskie School researchers' input. (Please see the code sheet and coding definitions).

Data Handling: All case review results were entered directly into an Access database. No paper records were generated nor were any records taken off site. Muskie School researchers transferred the data to a limited access folder on the Muskie School server. Analysis of the data was conducted within the Access database. Analytical output was stored within the limited access folder.

Law Enforcement Interviews

Case Process and Approach

The first interview question elicited an open-ended discussion of how a juvenile case is handled when law enforcement is summoned to the scene. The purpose of this question was to create a framework of common knowledge about the general process of case handling to which the respondent could refer in later answers.

Regarding the process steps themselves, the following were most commonly cited (starred items were cited across all three departments):

- Determine situational aspects:
    - Biographical information for the victim, witness, accused (names, etc.)
    - Nature of the act (including witness testimony)*
    - Severity of the act and whether it is a crime (most acts are minor for juveniles: minor property damage, shoplifting, other theft, underage consumption, curfew violations)*
    - Youth's probation status, history with law enforcement contact, school status, mental health status, and family situation*
    - Victim interest in pursuing the case and preference for outcome
- Contact key parties:
    - Parents or other responsible adult*
    - JCCO*
- Process the case:
    - Decide if summons, arrest, or other action is warranted and proceed*
    - Fill out paperwork, reports
    - Refer onward as needed (detectives if felony, DHHS if domestic violence, etc.)

A significant group of respondents (roughly one quarter), expressed frustration that the juvenile summons mechanism is not a strong enough consequence for many youth. The repeat offenders who return to the system most often are not deterred by the brief inconvenience of a summons. The reason cited for this shift is that youth are not punished severely when caught. One respondent added that if a summons is ignored, the process is simply to issue another.

The length of time the process itself takes was repeatedly cited by respondents as a problem, not only in response to this question but across other questions. The length of the process was noted as highly dependent on the "contact" steps and paperwork requirements. Both parents and Juvenile Community Corrections Officers can be difficult to reach for their input in developing a plan for the case.

Parents or other responsible adults can provide (or fail to provide) direct assurance that youth will be well supervised and discipline reinforced if youth are released to them. If the officer does not feel the youth will be safe or properly handled by a parent, he or she can decide to divert the youth to the house of a friend or relative and, if the case appears to be intractable, alert Child Protective Services to the need to open a case. The JCCO was cited as having the greatest power over cases where youth are already on probation or in adjustment, in which case the follow-up action is prescribed. Time needed to process the case can lengthen if youth are injured or intoxicated and need to be medically cleared before release or other action is taken.

Disposition Factors

The second question dealt with the factors that go into a law enforcement agency's decision to recommend a certain course of action such release, summons or arrest. While many factors were raised by one department or another, four factors were mentioned by all departments and in many cases by multiple staff within a department. The factors are:

- Parental involvement or the lack thereof
  - Unstable or unsafe home environment
  - Safety of the juvenile if released
- A juvenile's prior arrest/offense history
- Cooperativeness of the juvenile
  - Remorse of the juvenile
  - Some youth want to be arrested
- Severity of the crime

With most misdemeanors one of the most important factors the officers consider in deciding whether to release, summons, or arrest a juvenile is the role of the parents, guardians, or other significant adults in their lives. If the officer feels that the youth's parent(s) are not involved or that the youth has an unstable or unsafe home environment, the officer may be more inclined to summons or arrest the youth. On the other hand, if the youth has a strong family support system, and the crime is not severe, the officer may use his or her discretion and release the juvenile to his/her parents.

Another important factor is whether the juvenile has any prior summons/arrests or is on probation. If the juvenile has no priors and the crime is not a felony, the officers at all three departments indicated they may opt to release the youth to his or her parents or other family members.

Further, if the juvenile is cooperative and expresses some level of remorse for his or her action, the officers may opt to release or summons them. This assumes the crime is not of a serious nature and that juvenile has few if any prior summons or arrests. Officers across all departments indicated that a confrontational and/or disrespectful youth may be arrested for an illegal activity that would often result in a release or summons. Some officers stated some youth feel getting arrested is "cool" and that berating law enforcement boosts their street image.

Not surprisingly, the other important factor mentioned by officers from all three departments is the seriousness/severity of the crime or offense. If the crime is a civil or misdemeanor offense, the officers have some discretion in whether to release, summons, or arrest. On the other hand, a felony will typically warrant an arrest, or at the very least a summons, regardless of the youth's cooperation and their parent's involvement.

Differential Treatment
The third question prompted respondents to reflect upon whether, in their opinion and based on their experience, the system handles minority youth any differently at any point. Most respondents indicated that minorities are not treated differently and the majority of this group restricted that observation to the arrest point, stating that this was the only point for which they could vouch. A smaller sub-group stated that no differential treatment is provided anywhere in the system. A very small minority commented that minorities are treated differently but for reasons other than race, including fear that they may accuse the system of bias or difficulty understanding them due to language barriers. One respondent noted that families in poverty may have a harder time coming to the station, resulting in longer holding times for their children. One respondent pointed out that bias may occur "before the fact" in the sense that victims or witnesses may be more inclined to report alleged crimes if minorities are involved.

For most respondents, the issue of potential differential treatment for minority youth is "taken seriously." Proactive work with the community was cited both here and elsewhere as a means to lessen the chance of differential treatment that is not legitimately related to non-racial or non-ethnic aspects of the case. Limitations of the system were mentioned in this set of responses as well, suggesting there is not enough capacity to absorb the caseload and its attendant paperwork.

Minority Arrests
Officers from the three departments were a bit less uniform in their response to the fourth question as to which population of minorities is most often arrested.   This may be reflective of the fact that the cities in which they work are demographically different. Portland is the most racially diverse community of the three with a minority population of 15.0%. This compares to 8.9% in South Portland and 7.7% in Westbrook. As a result, Portland law enforcement officials may have more contact with minorities. Further, certain immigrant communities might predominate in one of the three cities.

With that said, officers in all three cities specifically mentioned Somali youth as the juvenile minority population most often arrested. Some of the reasons cited as possible explanation are as follows:
- Somali youth
  - Different rates of acculturation for Somali youth and their parents
    - Language barriers for some parents
  - Girls/young women rarely involved in juvenile justice system
  - In some homes support systems missing
  - Gangs play a part

Some officers mentioned that some Somali male youth have difficulty adjusting to American culture. Some Somali male youth join gangs, such as the True Somali Bloods, in an effort to fit in or find a support system. Compounding this problem is that many Somali parents do not acculturate as quickly nor do they learn English as their children making it trying for some to parent their sons.

While no other specific minority group was mentioned by officers from all three departments, officers did mention that they arrest white youth the most. This is not surprising given that white youth constitute the overwhelming majority of young people in all three communities.

Law enforcement officials interviewed in all three communities mentioned they try to be proactive when it comes to crime in their respective communities, including juvenile crime. All of these agencies participate in the school resource officer program. Others deploy officers to certain neighborhoods in their respective communities to increase visibility and forge relationships.

Challenges and Barriers
The fifth question explored the problems specific to deciding a course of action for minority youth. The purpose of this question was to develop a detailed summary of issues for consideration that minority youth bring into the equation when they are involved in an incident.

Although not specific to the immigrant (generally African) population, this question was most commonly answered as if it pertained exclusively to this population. The most common answers reflect the greater weight given concerns related directly to this population (those noted across departments are starred):

- Language*
- Culture
    - Culture in general*
    - Elders as default disciplinarians, not wanting police or courts involved
    - Fear of or lack of respect for police/authority based on events in home country*
    - Pervasive belief that police "hassle" immigrants or minorities because of who they are
    - Unfamiliarity with the legal system of this country*; missed court dates causing history to "pile up"
    - Family structure or parenting styles that leave youth with less oversight*, parents and/or responsible adults who are hard to reach
    - Divide between generations made wider by youth more acculturated than their parents who can use their position as "family interpreter" to their advantage
    - Pervasiveness of gangs, especially True Somali Bloods and Tiny Rascals

Other issues were cited that were not tied only to immigrants. These responses did not cross departments. A small group of respondents cited "general youth culture" as leading to lack of respect for authority and the tendency to be defiant, both towards parents and police. "MTV or rap music" was identified in more than one response as a common source or exacerbating agent of this attitude.

Youth were cited as more likely to lie about their personal information or to run away from police officers, as compared to adults. While the influence of gang culture was mentioned most often as an immigrant issue (since the most prominent gangs are based in immigrant communities), it was also mentioned as generally motivating youth to defy police and engage in criminal activity. One respondent noted that arresting a youth in front of peers is to be avoided because they may think it makes them look cool or tough to friends. The smallest group of respondents made a point of noting that they have "no problems at all" with any minority youth.

Given that across many questions there were respondents who cite "listening and talking" as key tools for police work, the prominent concern with language as a barrier is a significant matter. If officers cannot make themselves understood or cannot understand persons involved in an incident, they are deprived of a major means to advance to development of a less punitive solution. In a previous study conducted by the Muskie School among court actors[5], a common suggestion to address language deficits found in immigrant communities was to engage more properly trained translators. It was suggested that this approach may lessen the degree to which youth are translating for their own parents and assure that everyone involved in an incident understands the steps to be taken and their roles in the plan.

Cultural Competency
Interviewees were asked whether they had received any type of cultural competency and if so, when did they receive it and what was covered. All law enforcement agencies reported that they receive a great deal of training on a variety of issues. Some of this training is mandated by either the Maine Criminal Justice Academy or their respective departments. In addition to the required training, some officers attend elective training on issues that are of specific interest to them.

Training responses:
- Some have received it, but could not recall when
- Training was pretty basic
- Many interviewees could not recall receiving any training on the topic
- Some did not fully understand the term cultural competence
- Need more information on understanding laws and norms of other countries

Training on issues of cultural competency or diversity issues is uneven. Some officers interviewed mentioned they had received it, but could not recall when. A few reported that the training they had received was fairly basic. Of those who had attended such training, most mentioned that it had been several years ago. Other officers claimed they had never attended cultural competency training. The term cultural competence was not familiar to all of the officers.

---

[5]Shaler, G; Noreus, B and Hubley, T. (2009) *Disproportionate Minority Contact in Maine: DMC Assessment and Identification.* Portland, Maine: Maine Justice Policy Center.

Some officers have attended training or classes on understanding people from other cultures/countries or one particular country such as understanding people from Somalia. However, these types of trainings are not mandated and given time constraints not all officers receive exposure to these types of issues.

While training on cultural competency has been uneven, officers from all three departments mentioned that they and their colleagues need more training understanding cultural norm and laws of countries from which many of the area's recent immigrants originate.

Best Practices
The final question drew on the respondents' knowledge to create a list of present strategies that work to keep youth out of the system and recommendations for additional strategies. The purpose of this question was to make use of the respondents' empirical experience with youth in formulating a prevention strategy.

One group of responses to this question consisted of citing programs that are already offered by the various departments and have had positive returns (i.e. "what works"). One of the most frequently mentioned programs (across all departments) was the School Resource Officer (SRO) program. According to respondents this program benefits law enforcement in two ways. In cases where law enforcement has been called in to manage a situation involving a youth, the SRO often has direct knowledge of and experience with the youth that can be used to develop a plan of action for the case. One respondent pointed out that this knowledge can be accessed even when the precipitating incident did not take place in a school setting.

The second key benefit of the program is that, through daily contact with officers in ordinary settings and circumstances, youth become comfortable with them as individuals and may seek their guidance. This greater comfort level is thought to lessen anxiety in interactions with police officers in general. One respondent commented that this program has been so successful that it could be used to design a parallel "Community Resource Officer" position based in a community office outside the police department and using the same method of developing familiarity and trust.

A second commonly cited approach was youth programming, such as the Police Activity League (PAL), as well as similar youth-engagement activities that occur outside of school (Blue Birthdays, Positive Ticketing, etc.), aside from the SRO. Like the SRO program, PAL and other community-based activities provide an opportunity for officers and youth to interact in a relaxed setting and develop knowledge that may lead to trust and also allow officers to function as positive role models. These programs also "keep kids busy," which was cited by a small number of respondents as a general remedy for preventing juvenile mischief and crime.

Along with activities and events that focus on youth, respondents across departments also cited connecting to community groups (such as minority advocacy groups, community-based councils, and local businesses) or engaging in community education (including informational sessions and Citizen

Police Academies) as useful venues for fostering mutual respect and cooperation. One respondent expressed the desire to see more community policing, should funding become available.

Another group of responses focused on approaches that should be developed or ramped up (i.e. "where to invest resources"). The above programs were mentioned as being so successful that more resources directed to them would likely amply the benefits and "the earlier the better" in a youth's life. One respondent specified that more summer-time programming for youth should be developed.

Community-based (non-police) approaches that were listed as being promising enough to warrant further investment were (with cross department responses starred):

- English as a Second Language (ESL) class, especially with a focus on social instruction*
- Diversion programs (including more community service options)
- Case management and counseling for families*
- Mentoring for immigrant youth

A third, smaller group of responses focused on behavioral changes that support prevention efforts. In particular, the need to increase parental responsibility for youth behavior was cited, although no solutions were offered.

Case Review Results

Please keep in mind that the information in this section should not necessarily be viewed as indicative of all juvenile crime in Portland, South Portland, and Westbrook. It should be considered a snapshot that may or may not represent most juvenile crime.

The information from this process was used to get some sense of what juveniles are ticketed or arrested, how the cases are handled and how race, if at all, impacts case processing. Information gleaned from the case record review included:

a. where the youth are arrested,
b. what the youth is arrested for (e.g., arrest type, charge, etc),
c. demographic information (no names)
d. victim information (no names)

The Muskie School reviewed 67 arrest records – 20 each from South Portland and Westbrook and the remainder (27) from Portland.

Arrest Location

Of the 67 records reviewed, 28 (41.8%) of them involved an arrest at a place of business. In some cases the place of business was a school. This arrest location type was followed by home (either the home of the juvenile or the victim) at 26.9% and a public place (11.9%). See table below for a full listing.

Juvenile Arrest Location Type (N=67)
Portland, South Portland, and Westbrook Police Departments

Arrest Location	Count	Frequency
Place of Business (inc. School)	28	41.8%
Home	18	26.9%
Public Place	8	11.9%
Street (non-vehicle related)	5	7.5%
Street (vehicle involved	1	1.5%
Other	7	10.4%

Incident and Incident Type

Among the records the Muskie School reviewed, 41.8% of the incidents involved a theft followed by assault (14.9%). No other incident type occurred more than five times. When incidents are collapsed into incident or offense types (e.g., person, property, and drugs/alcohol), the majority (61.2%) of incidents are for property type offenses, followed by personal offenses (32.8%), and drugs/alcohol offenses (6.0%).

Juvenile Arrest Incidents and Offense types (N=67)
Portland, South Portland, and Westbrook Police Departments

Property			Personal			Drugs/Alcohol		
Incident	Count	Percent	Incident	Count	Percent	Incident	Count	Percent
Theft	28	41.8%	Assault	10	14.9%	Consuming Liquor by a Minor	1	1.5%
Burglary	5	7.5%	Robbery	3	4.5%	Trafficking	1	1.5%
Criminal Mischief	5	7.5%	Criminal Threatening	3	4.5%	Other	2	3.0%
Other	3	4.5%	Terrorizing	3	4.5%			
			Disorderly Conduct	2	3.0%			
			Other	1	1.5%			
Total	41	61.2%	Total	22	32.8%	Total	4	6.0%

Relationship of Offender/Suspect to Victim

In more than half (50.7%) the case records reviewed, the victim's relationship to the offender was not indicated. In some cases, most notably thefts that occur at a place of business, the victim or store owner does not know the offender. Among those records in which the relationship was established, the victim(s) was a family member in 22.4% of the records reviewed followed by a friend and stranger at 10.4% each.

Relationship of Victim to Offender	Count	Frequency
Not Indicated	34	50.7%
Family	15	22.4%
Friends/Acquaintances	7	10.4%
Stranger	7	10.4%
Other	4	6.0%

Suspect Demeanor

During the case record review process, the Department of corrections staff who reviewed the files were able to ascertain the suspect's demeanor with law enforcement by reading the case file. The Department of Corrections and Muskie School established that 46 (68.7%) of the suspects in the case records were cooperative with law enforcement, while 26.9% were uncooperative. In three (4.5%) cases the suspect's demeanor with law enforcement could not be established.

Event Outcome

The Muskie School was able to determine from most arrest records the outcome of the incident. In nearly two-thirds (65.8%) the suspect was ticketed/summonsed. About a third (29.9%) of the time they were arrested followed by "not sure" 4.5%.

Arrest Case Records – What's Missing?

As might be expected, the arrest records for each of the departments are varied. This is indicative of the needs of each department. What the Muskie School did not observe in most cases is more detailed demographic data. With more and more immigrants moving to Cumberland County capturing this information may be important if these departments want to provide some type of cultural competency training for its officers or focus its law enforcements efforts in certain communities. Data such as language spoken in the home and ancestry were not present in the arrest records the Muskie School reviewed. In some cases, race and ethnicity information was limited or missing. School information (e.g., grade and school location) was missing in many records. This information would be helpful if a department was trying to link a student to a school resource officer. In the case of one department, their arrest record management information system defaults to white enhancing the possibilities that race determination may be inaccurate.

Summary of Case Record Review Findings

While the arrest records reviewed do not constitute a scientifically drawn sample, the findings are instructive. They begin to paint a picture of how law enforcement responds to juvenile crime and the types of information they collect and do not collect. Many of the records include information on crimes/incidents that took place at a place of business and were classified as property related. In most cases, the suspect/offender did not have a prior relationship with the victim/place of business. In a majority of cases, the juvenile was cooperative with law enforcement. In nearly two-thirds of the cases, the juvenile was not arrested, instead ticketed and possibly summonsed for court at a later time. In closing, the case processing in all three departments appears systematic, as was suggested by interviews, and race does not appear to have an impact.

Recommendations

1. **Assure Data Defaults Support Accuracy**: Data entry processes should be thoroughly reviewed for defaults that may lessen the accuracy of records. For example, in cases where "Race" defaults to one particular race instead of "Unknown," the counts for that race are distorted."

2. **Collect More Comprehensive Data**: The cases reviewed showed that data collection was not uniform across the departments and lacked certain elements that could be useful for case management and trend analysis.

   Language Spoken in Home: Given the growing number of non-native English speakers, officers and other professionals who work with a juvenile case may find it useful to record the dominant language of the youth's household in the event they have to communicate/speak with parents/guardians. The potential need for translation services for a case can then be quickly established and acted upon.
   Ancestry: Many officers claimed that male Somali youth were the minority population they arrest most. However, at least one of the departments was unable to stratify the "Black" population into further sub-categories for review. These data would be helpful for the respective police departments in their crime prevention efforts.
   School Status: Very few case records clearly depicted whether a youth was enrolled in school and at which grade or school level. This information can help connect the youth to SROs or make the case that an SRO position should be established. Youth who are truant can also be quickly identified in this manner and tracked for reporting.
   Family Situation: While officers indicated that the home situation (i.e. whether guardians or parents are present, etc.) was very important in deciding upon an outcome for the case, records did not systematically capture this information.

3. **Share and Cultivate Best Practices**: Each of the departments readily identified lists of programs and approaches that have proven useful and effective in preventing or managing youth crime. The School Resource Officer (SRO) program in particular was roundly praised as program that should be greatly expanded. The departments should develop a venue or mechanism for sharing with each other their best practices in juvenile crime prevention and management and lessons learned from implementing them.

4. **Engage in Effective and Regular Cultural Competency Training:** The interviews revealed that there was no regular cultural competency or diversity training requirement among the three departments. The departments should consider a training schedule that regularly includes this component.

   Cultural competency training curricula should be reviewed to make sure they include material that covers the basics of culture, cultural self-awareness, culturally sensitive service delivery, and cross-cultural communications. The concepts listed here should be both broadly defined and inclusive of specific examples that are relevant, such as information about ethnic and racial minorities present in significant numbers and issues of "youth culture." The training should provide law enforcement officials with an enhanced toolkit in responding to juvenile crime.

   Such training should occur systematically and at different levels. For example, many interviewees expressed desire to learn about specific cultural communities. Such narrowly focused trainings could be given as follow-ups to a general cultural competency training that is required of all staff and reinforces the concept of culture as part of the dynamic in all groups of humans. The training(s) should be tailored in way that meets the needs of law enforcement personnel from all three departments.

5. **Develop Systematic Community Connections:** Relationships with community organizations have proven to be useful to many interviewees. Such relationships help to inform community members about how to communicate and work with police and support personal connections that can be used when crises arrive in the community. Systematic and permanent relationships, such as membership on community boards and scheduled appearances at community events, should be established in order to make the most of these connections.

6. **Create More Diversion Channels:** Interviewees often commented that youth do not face enough consequences for their behaviors. Meanwhile, many ideas were shared in regards to ways youth can work out a consequence (such as various types of community service or some type of restorative justice undertaking) or be placed in a structured activity that will help develop skills. Currently, infrastructure for these type of diversion programs is limited in the three municipalities covered in this study. More sharing of best practices between the departments and greater connections with the community may be combined to yield new diversion channels that are low cost and effective. Community involvement in creating diversion programs is paramount.

About the University of Southern Maine Muskie School of Public Service:

The USM Muskie School of Public Service educates leaders, informs public policy, and strengthens civic life through its graduate degree programs, research institutes and public outreach activities. By making the essential connection between research, practice, and informed public policy, the School is dedicated to improving the lives of people of all ages, in every county in Maine and every state in the nation.