

Racial Disparities in the Criminal and Juvenile System Advisory Panel

Stakeholder Meeting- September 28, 2017

Horizontal Group

Rules of Engagement:

- We have cultivated system racism in this country
- Same factors cause problems throughout all systems
- What are the policy recommendations to suggest how to address root causes across these systems?

Group Conversation:

- We need look at this horizontally, especially across our state government
- Often, we look at these issues in silos, sometimes a coordinated effort comes out of that process, but often it fizzles out
- Need to recommend significant ways to state government on how to coordinate and communicate in addressing system racism
- How do these areas intersect?
 - there is a clear link between incarceration and housing
 - we see recidivism due to lack of housing
 - citizens not being able to find employment because many of the employment options are temporary
 - your whole life is impact by what seemingly is “just” a charge
 - you interact with all of these systems, so there are many ways in which one can fall through the cracks
 - what are the interactions/intersections of these systems that greatly impact an individual’s life
- Federal aspect- your criminal history can affect your eligibility for public housing
 - reasons for recidivism are often lack of access to housing, employment, etc.
- Racism permeates- keeps peoples at marginalized level
- Economic development
 - there has not been real program to help minorities or women owned businesses
 - need to see the data
 - we know some things anecdotally, but we need the data to support these conclusions
- Need to look at our legal framework, statues of the state
 - our statutes are contributing to institutional racism
 - are we doing enough to emphatically state that we’re protecting this group of people
 - need to hold agencies accountable for implicit bias
 - civil liberties- rights to be treated equally across all these sectors

- our state constitution allows for slavery, states prisoners are slaves
- the prison industrial complex has always been used to enslave people of color
- Sundown towns, restricted covenants
 - there are communities that still have these on the books across the U.S.
 - how much of this thinking is still in VT?
- Look at what our kids are being taught in schools about systemic racism, minority groups
- Consent decrees- city police departments act under the supervision of the Department of Justice
 - current administration is not seeking any further consent decrees
 - consent decrees offer a framework- based on data collection, policy, training, oversight
 - we need effective oversight

Conclusion:

How to address racial disparities horizontally:

- 1) Data collection
 - Need to choose indicators
 - 2) Education/ Community Empowerment
 - Educating about institutionalized racism
 - Look at what we currently have in place and what we don't
 - 3) Policy
 - What is compounding on these challenges within existing policies
 - Need implicit bias policy that could span across all these systems, intersections
 - 4) Training
 - Implicit bias training across all systems- housing, education, employment, health, economic development, etc.
- How to prove to state legislature that this approach is necessary
 - need to show the problem exists
 - the data collection allows us to gauge our progress
 - by tracking performance, we can then be held accountable, to hopefully enact change
 - need data infrastructure at state wide level that is accessible
 - Crucial decision are being made at all levels that greatly impact people's lives
 - these decisions must be captured
 - Need to ask other breakout groups what these indicators should be