Diversity Projects

Racial Justice Improvement Project

In 2010 the American Bar Association Criminal Justice Section launched the Racial Justice Improvement Project (RJIP), with support from the **Bureau of Justice Assistance (BJA).** RJIP is currently conducting reform in the following project sites: **Dane County, Wisconsin; Montgomery County, Pennsylvania; North Carolina; and New Orleans, Louisiana (Municipal Level)**.

The RJIP was originally a two-year, federally funded initiative designed to identify and reform policies and practices that produce racial disparities in local criminal justice systems across the country. The original task force groups included **Delaware (statewide); St. Louis County, Minnesota; Kings County, New York; and New Orleans, Louisiana**, each of whom received financial support and technical assistance to implement a local racial justice improvement task force focused on addressing problems contributing to the racially disparate impact of their local criminal justice system. In June 2013, RJIP received additional funding from the **Public Welfare Foundation** (PWF) to sustain their reform efforts. Each of the four original sites are in the process of evaluating their reforms' effectiveness, and are working to continue, expand, and sustain their current reform efforts utilizing the funds from PWF. The Project Staff is working to create a promising practices report and a task force replication guide to assist other jurisdictions in implementing criminal justice reform using the RJIP reform model.

Learn more about the project at http://racialjusticeproject.weebly.com/index.html.

Achieving an Impartial Jury: Addressing Bias in Voir Dire and Deliberations

The ideal of an impartial jury is enshrined in the American ethos and is critical to the legitimacy of our system of justice. However, achieving this ideal has remained elusive. Emerging research, particularly in the social sciences, enables us to better measure bias and understand the role that unconscious or implicit bias plays in our courtrooms.

The ABA Criminal Justice Section, with co-sponsorship from other ABA Entities has embarked on a new project that offers a methodical, research-based approach to increasing impartiality among jurors, attorneys, and judges.

The "*Achieving an Impartial Jury: Addressing Bias in Voir Dire and Deliberations*" Project seeks to create a Tool Chest of user-friendly options for education and debiasing techniques and offers a strategic, collaborative rollout of the Tool Chest and training to courts.

Learn more about the project at http://www.americanbar.org/groups/criminal_justice/voir_dire.html.