

**NCJA's Regional Conferences on Pretrial Justice Reform
Racial Justice Improvement Program Panel Proposal**

<http://racialjusticeproject.weebly.com/>

Thursday, June 9, 2016

9:30 – 10:30am

University of Baltimore School of Law.

Background: The Racial Justice Improvement Project (RJIP) works with jurisdictions to formulate Task Forces comprised of key local stakeholders and experts, who together identify and reform a discretionary points in their local criminal justice system that disproportionately impact minorities. This project is uniquely postured to bring together key stakeholders in the jurisdiction to implement policy changes which address inefficiency and unfairness in the system. Through the creation of a local Task Force, RJIP has been able to assist various jurisdictions in making sustained institutional commitment to racial justice reform.

Specifically, the panel will discuss the work of the RJIP Montgomery County, Pennsylvania Task Force. The Pennsylvania Task Force focused their reform efforts on disproportionate minority contact of youth. By expanding eligibility for their existing Youth Aid Panel (YAP) diversion program and piloting case management, the task force was able to help more youth succeed in being diverted from the criminal justice system. In addition, YAP participants were offered Aggression Replacement Therapy (ART), which has successfully helped many youth to better manage their anger, improve their social skills, and deal with their stress and anger.

Presentation Structure: RJIP would like to host a panel that would share RJIP's mission and its model, the success the project in Montgomery County, Pennsylvania with juvenile diversion, its aims moving forward, and encourage other stakeholders from around the country to consider joining the initiative as RJIP continues to grow in other jurisdictions.

Presenters:

Salma Safiedine (moderator): Salma Safiedine is the Program Director of the ABA Racial Justice Improvement Program and also serves as the current Co Chair of the American Bar Association's Race and Diversity Committee. She served as Assistant Director to the ABA Building Community Trust Curriculum and currently conducts implicit bias training to various constituencies nationwide.

Christine Kulumani (moderator). Christine Kulumani is a Project Assistant at the Racial Justice Improvement Project. She has helped to support the RJIP task forces, sought out funding to both sustain and expand current reforms, as well as worked to develop and advocate for new pretrial reform efforts.

Angela Bell: Angela Bell currently serves as the Task Force Facilitator for the RJIP Pennsylvania site team. Angela also serves as a Community Mobilizer for "Communities that Care". She will present on the work of RJIP in Montgomery County and the parameters of their newly designed Youth Diversion program.

Honorable Christopher Cerski: Judge Christopher Cerski has served as a Montgomery County District Judge since his initial election in 2005 and currently serves as the judicial representative on the RJIP Task Force. He received his J.D. from the Temple University Beasley School of Law in 2002. As a jurist, Judge Cerski advocates progressive restorative justice practices for teens and young adults. In 2009, he drafted a legislative proposal to seal all juvenile records and proceedings at Pennsylvania's district courts. As a result of his proposal, State Senator Greenleaf introduced Pennsylvania Senate Bill 850 that became law in October 2012. **Sharon Giamporcaro:** Sharon Giamporcaro joined the Montgomery County District Attorney's Office in 1992. She currently serves as a Deputy District Attorney and the Chief of the Juvenile Division. She serves as District Attorney representative on the RJIP Task Force. She has recently been awarded the "District Attorney's Medal". Ms. Giamporcaro assists the District Attorney in directing the Youth Aid Panel Program of which the RJIP team is currently working very closely to expand and enhance. In 2010 she was appointed to the Board of Managers for the Montgomery County Youth Center and to the Pennsylvania Bar Association's Task Force on the Interbranch Commission Report on Juvenile Justice. At the Montgomery Bar Association, Ms. Giamporcaro was Co-Chair for the Rules of Juvenile Court from 2011-2013, participated in the "Liberty and Law" Civics Program for 3 years and has served as a Continuing Legal Education speaker and program organizer.