

For Immediate Release:
December 9, 2011

Sedgwick County Department of Corrections Director Mark Masterson Named Champion for Change in Juvenile Justice Reform

Efforts to create racial and ethnic fairness in juvenile justice recognized at national meeting of MacArthur Foundation-supported reform initiative

WICHITA – Mark Masterson, Director of the Sedgwick County Department of Corrections was honored at a national conference of juvenile justice leaders in Washington, DC for his efforts to reduce racial and ethnic disparities in the juvenile justice system. Colleagues involved in the Models for Change Disproportionate Minority Contact Action Network nominated Masterson for the award.

Models for Change is the John D. and Catherine T. MacArthur Foundation's 16-state juvenile justice system reform initiative. Now in its 6th year, Models for Change is accelerating movement toward a more effective, fair and developmentally sound juvenile justice system by creating successful and replicable models that improve outcomes for youth, use resources wisely, and protect community safety.

“Sedgwick County is doing remarkable work with a very impressive team,” said Bob Lamkey Director of Public Safety. “Strong local partnerships focused on solving problems using sound data and evidence based practices have laid a foundation for effective collaboration. Mark’s leadership in forming and cultivating trusting partnerships among a diverse group of stakeholders has been key to Sedgwick County’s success in effectively addressing juvenile justice issues ranging from shoplifting to disproportionate minority contact with law enforcement in schools and the community.”

The results speak for themselves. After Sedgwick County hired a juvenile justice education liaison to assist, school-based arrests for disorderly conduct fell by 37 percent from 2009 to 2010, and arrests at Wichita public schools dropped by more than 50 percent over the same period. After creative strategies for decreasing shoplifting were enacted, the arrest rate for property offenses dropped almost 20 percent for African American youth and 26 percent for Latino youth from 2009 to 2010.

After data analysis indicated a need for a weekend alternative to detention for low-risk youth, Team Justice found a model in Tacoma, Washington, identified freed-up state prevention funds, county funding, and federal block grant funding to pay for it, and within six months had it up and running in Sedgwick. The program served 123 youth in its first six months, 33 percent of whom were African American and 25 percent of whom were Latino.

“Mark has also been a catalyst for replication of Sedgwick’s successes in other counties in Kansas,” said Mark Soler, Executive Director, Center for Children’s Law and Policy. “Sedgwick has been a team effort, but Mark’s leadership has guided the creation of a more equitable juvenile justice system for all children. His dedication to racial and ethnic fairness has made Sedgwick County a model for smart and sustainable DMC reduction.”

About Sedgwick County Department of Corrections

SCDOC operates all corrections programs and facilities under the direct authority of the Board of Sedgwick County Commissioners. This involves a broad range of facilities and community-based corrections interventions necessary to promote community safety and successful supervision of assigned adult and juvenile offenders in the community. The department's commitment is to be a leader in the field and to provide correctional services in a manner consistent with the correctional values of the community.

About Disproportionate Minority Contact Action Network

Launched in 2007 as a project of the John D. and Catherine T. MacArthur Foundation, the DMC Action Network brings together state and local leaders from 17 select jurisdictions to expose them to the latest tools and ideas to effectively and sustainably reduce the disproportionate contact of youth of color with the juvenile justice system. The Network, which is managed by the Center for Children's Law and Policy, also provides jurisdictions with the opportunity to exchange information about strategy implementation and employ data to measure results.

About Models for Change: The Models for Change initiative is an effort to create successful and replicable models of juvenile justice system reform through targeted investments in key states. With long-term funding and support from the John D. and Catherine T. MacArthur Foundation, Models for Change seeks to accelerate progress toward a more rational, fair, effective, and developmentally appropriate juvenile justice system. www.modelsforchange.net