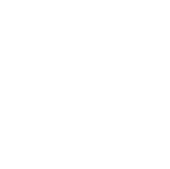




Juvenile Court Statistics



2015



Online resources

National Center for Juvenile Justice

ncjj.org

The National Center for Juvenile Justice's web site describes its research activities, services, and publications, featuring links to project-supported sites and data resources, including OJJDP's Statistical Briefing Book, the National Juvenile Court Data Archive, and the Juvenile Justice Geography, Policy, Practice & Statistics web site.

National Juvenile Court Data Archive

ojjdp.gov/ojstatbb/njcda

The annual *Juvenile Court Statistics* report series is one of many products supported by the National Juvenile Court Data Archive. To learn more, visit the Archive web site.

- ◆ The Archive web site was developed to inform researchers about data sets housed in the National Juvenile Court Data Archive and the procedures for access and use of these data. Visitors can view variable lists and download user guides to the data sets. The site also includes links to publications based on analyses of Archive data.
- ◆ *Easy Access to Juvenile Court Statistics* is an interactive web-based application that allows users to analyze the actual databases that are used to produce the *Juvenile Court Statistics* report. Users have access to national estimates on more than 40 million delinquency cases processed by the nation's juvenile courts between 1985 and 2015 and can explore trends of and relationships among a youth's demographics and referral offenses, and the court's detention, adjudication, and disposition decisions. Results of analyses can be saved and imported into spreadsheet and word processing software. Users can also view preformatted tables describing the demographic characteristics of youth involved in the juvenile justice system and how juvenile courts process these cases. This application is available from the "Products & Publications" section on the Archive web site.
- ◆ *Easy Access to State and County Juvenile Court Case Counts* gives users quick access to multiple years of state and county juvenile court case counts for delinquency, status offense, and dependency cases. This application is available from the "Products & Publications" section on the Archive web site.

OJJDP's Statistical Briefing Book

ojjdp.gov/ojstatbb

The Briefing Book is a comprehensive online resource describing various topics related to delinquency and the juvenile justice system, including the latest information on juveniles living in poverty, teen birth rates, juvenile victims of violent crime, trends in juvenile arrest rates, and youth in residential placement facilities. The Briefing Book is also a repository for more detailed presentations of juvenile court data than are found in the annual *Juvenile Court Statistics* report.

- ◆ Under the "Juveniles in Court" section of the Statistical Briefing Book users will find the latest statistical information on trends in the volume of cases handled by the nation's juvenile courts and the court's response (e.g., detention, adjudication, and disposition decisions) to these cases. Juvenile court data are displayed in an easy-to-read, ready-to-use format, using tables and graphs.
- ◆ The Briefing Book's "Juveniles in Court" section includes an interactive tool that describes how specific types of delinquency cases typically flow through the juvenile justice system. Annual summaries are available from 1985 to present for more than 25 offense categories, and include separate presentations by gender, age, and race.

Juvenile Court Statistics 2015

Sarah Hockenberry
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April 2018

National Center for Juvenile Justice

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Alabama—State of Alabama, Administrative Office of the Courts.

Alaska—Alaska Division of Juvenile Justice.

Arizona—Supreme Court, State of Arizona, Administrative Office of the Courts.

Arkansas—Administrative Office of the Courts, State of Arkansas.

California—California Department of Justice, Criminal Justice Statistics Center.

Colorado—Colorado Judicial Branch.

Connecticut—Judicial Branch Administration, Court Support Services and Court Operations Divisions.

Delaware—Delaware Family Court, Administrative Office of the Courts.

District of Columbia—Superior Court of the District of Columbia.

Florida—State of Florida Department of Juvenile Justice.

Georgia—Judicial Council of Georgia Administrative Office of the Courts.

Hawaii—Family Court of the First Circuit, The Judiciary, State of Hawaii.

Idaho—Idaho Supreme Court.

Illinois—Administrative Office of the Illinois Courts, Probation Services Division; and Juvenile Court of Cook County.

Indiana—Supreme Court of Indiana, Division of State Court Administration.

Iowa—Iowa Division of Criminal and Juvenile Justice Planning.

Kansas—Supreme Court of Kansas, Office of Judicial Administration.

Kentucky—Kentucky Administrative Office of the Courts.

Maryland—Department of Juvenile Services.

Massachusetts—Administrative Office of the Courts.

Michigan—State Court Administrative Office, Michigan Supreme Court.

Minnesota—Minnesota Supreme Court.

Mississippi—Mississippi Department of Human Services.

Missouri—Office of State Court Administrator.

Montana—Office of State Court Administrator, Youth Court Services.

Nebraska—Nebraska Crime Commission.

Nevada—Division of Child and Family Services, Juvenile Justice Programs Office.

New Jersey—Administrative Office of the Courts.

New Mexico—Children, Youth and Families Department.

New York—Office of Court Administration; and Division of Criminal Justice Services.

North Carolina—North Carolina Department of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention.

North Dakota—North Dakota Supreme Court, State Court Administrator's Office.

Ohio—Supreme Court of Ohio; Cuyahoga County Juvenile Court Division; Franklin County Court of Common Pleas; Hamilton County Juvenile Court; and Lucas County Juvenile Court.

Oklahoma—Oklahoma Office of Juvenile Affairs.

Oregon—Oregon Youth Authority.

Pennsylvania—Juvenile Court Judges' Commission.

Rhode Island—Rhode Island Family Court.

South Carolina—Department of Juvenile Justice.

South Dakota—Unified Judicial System.

Tennessee—Tennessee Council of Juvenile and Family Court Judges.

Texas—Texas Juvenile Justice Department.

Utah—Utah Administrative Office of the Courts.

Vermont—Vermont Court Administrator's Office.

Virginia—Department of Juvenile Justice; and Virginia Supreme Court.

Washington—Office of the Administrator for the Courts.

West Virginia—West Virginia Supreme Court of Appeals Administrative Office, Court Services Division.

Wisconsin—Supreme Court of Wisconsin.

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Preface

Juvenile Court Statistics 2015 describes delinquency cases and petitioned status offense cases handled between 2005 and 2015 by U.S. courts with juvenile jurisdiction. National estimates of juvenile court delinquency caseloads in 2015 were based on analyses of 664,931 automated case records and court-level statistics summarizing an additional 25,329 cases. Estimates of status offense cases formally processed by juvenile courts in 2015 were based on analyses of 68,775 automated case-level records and court-level summary statistics on an additional 4,857 cases. The data used in the analyses were contributed to the National Juvenile Court Data Archive (the Archive) by nearly 2,500 courts with jurisdiction over 86% of the juvenile population in 2015.

The first *Juvenile Court Statistics* report was published in 1929 by the U.S. Department of Labor and described cases handled by 42 courts during 1927. During the next decade, *Juvenile Court Statistics* reports were based on statistics cards completed for each delinquency, status offense, and dependency case handled by the courts participating in the reporting series. The Children's Bureau (within the U.S. Department of Labor) tabulated the information on each card, including age, gender, and race of the juvenile; the reason for referral; the

manner of dealing with the case; and the final disposition of the case. During the 1940s, however, the collection of case-level data was abandoned because of its high cost. From the 1940s until the mid-1970s, *Juvenile Court Statistics* reports were based on simple, annual case counts reported to the Children's Bureau by participating courts.

In 1957, the Children's Bureau initiated a new data collection design that enabled the *Juvenile Court Statistics* series to develop statistically sound national estimates. The Children's Bureau, which had been transferred to the U.S. Department of Health, Education, and Welfare (HEW), developed a probability sample of more than 500 courts. Each court in the sample was asked to submit annual counts of delinquency, status offense, and dependency cases. This approach, though, proved difficult to sustain as courts began to drop out of the sample. At the same time, a growing number of courts outside the sample began to compile comparable statistics. By the late 1960s, HEW ended the sample-based effort and returned to the policy of collecting annual case counts from any court able to provide them. The *Juvenile Court Statistics* series, however, continued to generate national estimates based on data from these nonprobability samples.

The Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention (OJJDP) became responsible for *Juvenile Court Statistics* following the passage of the Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention Act of 1974. In 1975, OJJDP awarded the National Center for Juvenile Justice (NCJJ) a grant to continue the report series. Although NCJJ agreed to use procedures established by HEW to ensure reporting continuity, NCJJ also began to investigate methods of improving the quality and detail of national statistics. A critical

innovation was made possible by the proliferation of computers during the 1970s. As NCJJ asked agencies across the country to complete the annual juvenile court statistics form, some agencies began offering to send the detailed, automated case-level data collected by their management information systems. NCJJ learned to combine these automated records to produce a detailed national portrait of juvenile court activity—returning to the original objective of the *Juvenile Court Statistics* series.

The project's transition from using annual case counts to analyzing automated case-level data was completed with the production of *Juvenile Court Statistics 1984*. For the first time since the 1930s, *Juvenile Court Statistics* contained detailed case-level descriptions of the delinquency and status offense cases handled by U.S. juvenile courts. This case-level detail continues to be the emphasis of the reporting series.

Chapter 1

Introduction

This report describes delinquency and status offense cases handled between 2005 and 2015 by U.S. courts with juvenile jurisdiction. Courts with juvenile jurisdiction may handle a variety of matters, including child maltreatment, traffic violations, child support, and adoptions. This report focuses on cases involving juveniles charged with law violations (delinquency or status offenses).

Unit of Count

In measuring the activity of juvenile courts, one could count the number of offenses referred; the number of cases referred; the actual filings of offenses, cases, or petitions; the number of disposition hearings; or the number of juveniles handled. Each “unit of count” has its own merits and disadvantages. The unit of count used in *Juvenile Court Statistics (JCS)* is the number of “cases disposed.”

A “case” represents a juvenile processed by a juvenile court on a new referral, regardless of the number of law violations contained in the referral. A juvenile charged with four burglaries in a single referral would represent a single case. A juvenile referred for three burglaries and referred again the following week on another burglary charge would represent two cases, even if the court

eventually merged the two referrals for more efficient processing.

The fact that a case is “disposed” means that a definite action was taken as the result of the referral—i.e., a plan of treatment was selected or initiated. It does not necessarily mean that a case was closed or terminated in the sense that all contact between the court and the juvenile ceased. For example, a case is considered to be disposed when the court orders probation, not when a term of probation supervision is completed.

Coverage

A basic question for this reporting series is what constitutes a referral to juvenile court. The answer depends partly on how each jurisdiction organizes its case-screening function. In many communities, an intake unit within the juvenile court first screens all juvenile matters. The intake unit determines whether the matter should be handled informally (i.e., diverted) or petitioned for formal handling. In data files from communities using this type of system, a delinquency or status offense case is defined as a court referral at the point of initial screening, regardless of whether it is handled formally or informally.

In other communities, the juvenile court is not involved in delinquency or status offense matters until another agency (e.g., the prosecutor's office or a social service agency) has first screened the case. In other words, the intake function is performed outside the court, and some matters are diverted to other agencies without the court ever handling them. Status offense cases, in particular, tend to be diverted from court processing in this manner.

Since its inception, *Juvenile Court Statistics* has adapted to the changing structure of juvenile court processing nationwide. As court processing became more diverse, the *JCS* series broadened its definition of the juvenile court to incorporate other agencies that perform what can generically be considered juvenile court functions. In some communities, data collection has expanded to include departments of youth services, child welfare agencies, and prosecutors' offices. In other communities, this expansion has not been possible. Therefore, while there is extensive data coverage in the *JCS* series of formally handled delinquency cases and adequate data coverage of informally handled delinquency cases and formally handled status offense cases, the data coverage of informally handled status offense cases is limited and is not sufficient to support the generation of national estimates. For this reason, *JCS* reports do not present any information on informally handled status offense cases. (Sub-national analyses of these cases are available from the National Juvenile Court Data Archive [the Archive].)

Juvenile Court Processing

Any attempt to describe juvenile court caseloads at the national level must be based on a generic model of court processing to serve as a common framework. In order to analyze and present data about juvenile court activities in diverse jurisdictions, the

Archive strives to fit the processing characteristics of all jurisdictions into the following general model:

Intake. An intake department (either within or outside the court) first screens referred cases. The intake department may decide to dismiss the case for lack of legal sufficiency or to resolve the matter formally or informally. Informal (i.e., nonpetitioned) dispositions may include a voluntary referral to a social service agency, informal probation, or the payment of fines or some form of voluntary restitution. Formally handled cases are petitioned and scheduled in court for an adjudicatory or waiver hearing.

Judicial Waiver. The intake department may decide that a case should be removed from juvenile court and handled instead in criminal (adult) court. In such cases, a petition is usually filed in juvenile court asking the juvenile court judge to waive juvenile court jurisdiction over the case. The juvenile court judge decides whether the case merits criminal prosecution.¹ When a waiver request is denied, the matter is usually then scheduled for an adjudicatory hearing in the juvenile court.

Petitioning. If the intake department decides that a case should be handled formally within the juvenile court, a petition is filed and the case is placed on the court calendar (or docket) for an adjudicatory hearing. A small number of petitions are dismissed for various reasons before an adjudicatory hearing is actually held.

¹Mechanisms of transfer to criminal court vary by state. In some states, a prosecutor has the authority to file juvenile cases directly in criminal court if they meet specified criteria. This report, however, includes only cases that were initially under juvenile court jurisdiction and were transferred as a result of judicial waiver.

Adjudication. At the adjudicatory hearing, a juvenile may be adjudicated (judged) a delinquent or status offender, and the case would then proceed to a disposition hearing. Alternatively, a case can be dismissed or continued in contemplation of dismissal. In these cases, the court often recommends that the juvenile take some actions prior to the final adjudication decision, such as paying restitution or voluntarily attending drug counseling.

Disposition. At the disposition hearing, the juvenile court judge determines the most appropriate sanction, generally after reviewing a predisposition report prepared by a probation department. The range of options available to a court typically includes commitment to an institution; placement in a group home or other residential facility or perhaps in a foster home; probation (either regular or intensive supervision); referral to an outside agency, day treatment, or mental health program; or imposition of a fine, community service, or restitution. Disposition orders often involve multiple sanctions and/or conditions. Review hearings are held to monitor the juvenile's progress. Dispositions may be modified as a result. This report includes only the most severe initial disposition in each case.

Detention. A juvenile may be placed in a detention facility at different points as a case progresses through the juvenile justice system. Detention practices also vary from jurisdiction to jurisdiction. A judicial decision to detain or continue detention may occur before or after adjudication or disposition. This report includes only those detention actions that result in a juvenile being placed in a restrictive facility under court authority while awaiting the outcome of the court process. This report does not include detention decisions made by law enforcement officials prior to court intake or those occurring after the disposition of a

case (e.g., temporary holding of a juvenile in a detention facility while awaiting court-ordered placement elsewhere).

Data Quality

Juvenile Court Statistics relies on the secondary analysis of data originally compiled by juvenile courts or juvenile justice agencies to meet their own information and reporting needs. Although these incoming data files are not uniform across jurisdictions, they are likely to be more detailed and accurate than data files compiled by local jurisdictions merely complying with a mandated national reporting program.

The heterogeneity of the contributed data files greatly increases the complexity of the Archive's data processing tasks. Contributing jurisdictions collect and report information using their own definitions and coding categories. Therefore, the detail reported in some data sets is not contained in others. Even when similar data elements are used, they may have inconsistent definitions or overlapping coding categories. The Archive restructures contributed data into standardized coding categories in order to combine information from multiple sources. The standardization process requires an intimate understanding of the development, structure, and content of each data set received. Codebooks and operation manuals are studied, data providers interviewed, and data files analyzed to maximize the understanding of each information system. Every attempt is made to ensure that only compatible information from the various data sets is used in the standardized data files.

While the heterogeneity of the data adds complexity to the development of a national data file, it has proven to be valuable in other ways. The diversity of the data stored in the National Juvenile Court Data Archive enables the data to support a wider range of

research efforts than would a uniform, and probably more general, data collection form. For example, the Federal Bureau of Investigation's (FBI's) Uniform Crime Reporting (UCR) Program is limited by necessity to a small number of relatively broad offense codes. The UCR offense code for larceny-theft combines shoplifting with a number of other larcenies. Thus, the data are useless for studies of shoplifting. In comparison, many of the Archive's data sets are sufficiently detailed to enable a researcher to distinguish offenses that are often combined in other reporting series—shoplifting can be distinguished from other larcenies, joyriding from motor vehicle theft, and armed robbery from unarmed robbery. The diversity of these coding structures allows researchers to construct data sets that contain the detail demanded by their research designs.

Validity of the Estimates

The national delinquency and status offense estimates presented in this report were generated with data from a large nonprobability sample of juvenile courts. Therefore, statistical confidence in the estimates cannot be mathematically determined. Although statistical confidence would be greater if a probability sampling design were used, the cost of such an effort has long been considered prohibitive. Secondary analysis of available data is the best practical alternative for developing an understanding of the nation's juvenile courts.

National estimates of delinquency cases for 2015 are based on analyses of individual case records from nearly 2,400 courts and aggregate court-level data on cases from nearly 200 additional courts. Together, these courts had jurisdiction over 86% of the U.S. juvenile population in 2015. National estimates of petitioned status offense cases for 2015 are based on case records from nearly 2,200 courts and court-level data from 94 additional courts, covering 79% of the juvenile

population. The imputation and weighting procedures that generate national estimates from these samples control for many factors: the size of a community, the age and race composition of its juvenile population, the volume of cases referred to the reporting courts, the age and race of the juveniles involved, the offense characteristics of the cases, the courts' responses to the cases (manner of handling, detention, adjudication, and disposition), and the nature of each court's jurisdictional responsibilities (i.e., upper age of original jurisdiction).

With each annual release of data, estimates for prior years are revised and replaced. There are two primary reasons for this. First, data submissions from contributing jurisdictions, particularly case-level data submissions, can change as newer data files submitted to the Archive replace previously submitted files. Second, the estimation procedure used by the Archive utilizes county level population estimates, which are revised by the Census Bureau each year. Therefore, readers should not compare estimates from *Juvenile Court Statistics* reports produced in different years, but should compare estimates across trending years within a *Juvenile Court Statistics* report.

Structure of the Report

Chapters 2 and 3 of this report present national estimates of delinquency cases handled by the juvenile courts in 2015 and analyze caseload trends since 2005. Chapter 2 describes the volume and rate of delinquency cases, demographic characteristics of the juveniles involved (age, gender, and race), and offenses charged. Chapter 3 traces the flow of delinquency cases from referral to court through court processing, examining each decision point (i.e., detention, intake decision, adjudication decision, and judicial disposition), and presenting data by demographic characteristics and offense. Together,

these two chapters provide a detailed national portrait of delinquency cases.

Chapter 4 presents national estimates of status offense cases formally handled by the juvenile courts in 2015 and caseload trends since 2005. It includes data on demographic characteristics, offenses charged, and case processing.

Appendix A describes the statistical procedure used to generate these estimates. Readers are encouraged to consult appendix B for definitions of key terms used throughout the report. Few terms in the field of juvenile justice have widely accepted definitions. The terminology used in this report has been carefully developed to communicate the findings of the work as precisely as possible without sacrificing applicability to multiple jurisdictions.

This report uses a format that combines tables, figures, and text highlights for presentation of the data. A detailed index of tables and figures appears at the end of the report.

Data Access

The data used in this report are stored in the National Juvenile Court Data Archive at the National Center for Juvenile Justice (NCJJ) in Pittsburgh, PA. The Archive contains the most detailed information available on juveniles involved in the juvenile justice system and on the activities of U.S. juvenile courts. Designed to facilitate research on the juvenile justice system, the Archive's data files are available to policymakers, researchers, and students. In addition to

national data files, state and local data can be provided to researchers. With the assistance of Archive staff, researchers can merge selected files for cross-jurisdictional and longitudinal analyses. Upon request, project staff is also available to perform special analyses of the Archive's data files.

Researchers are encouraged to explore the National Juvenile Court Data Archive web site at ojjdp.gov/ojstatbb/njcda/ for a summary of Archive holdings and procedures for data access. Researchers may also contact the Archive directly at 412-246-0833.

Changes Introduced in This Report

The Archive often receives updated submissions from data providers; these updates frequently replace data from prior years, typically to provide newer, more complete information. In other cases, updated submissions include information that was previously unavailable. Finally, some updates are provided to correct prior data. During data processing for the 2015 report, two significant changes occurred.

First, the coverage of detention data used to generate national estimates was improved. Detention estimates are now based on a larger number of jurisdictions and a larger number of cases than prior *JCS* reports. Readers familiar with this report series will notice an increase in the likelihood of detention for delinquency and petitioned status offense cases.

The second change improved the estimates related to the source of

referral (e.g., law enforcement, school, etc.) for petitioned status offense cases. Data previously used to develop estimates for petitioned status offense cases overestimated the volume and proportion of cases referred by law enforcement. This had the largest impact on truancy cases. Readers familiar with the series will notice a corresponding decline in the overall proportion of status offense cases referred by law enforcement, particularly for truancy cases, from previous *JCS* reports.

Other Sources of Juvenile Court Data

With support from OJJDP, NCJJ has developed two web-based data analysis and dissemination applications that provide access to the data used for this report. The first of these applications, *Easy Access to Juvenile Court Statistics 1985–2015*, was developed to facilitate independent analysis of the national delinquency estimates presented in this report while eliminating the need for statistical analysis software. It also enables users to view preformatted tables, beyond those included in this report, describing the demographic characteristics of youth involved in the juvenile justice system and how juvenile courts process these cases. The second application, *Easy Access to State and County Juvenile Court Case Counts*, presents annual counts of the delinquency, status offense, and dependency cases processed in juvenile courts, by state and county. These applications are available from OJJDP's Statistical Briefing Book at ojjdp.gov/ojstatbb.

Chapter 2

National Estimates of Delinquency Cases

Delinquency offenses are acts committed by juveniles that, if committed by an adult, could result in criminal prosecution. This chapter documents the volume of delinquency cases referred to juvenile court and examines the characteristics of these cases, including types of offenses charged and demographic characteristics of the juveniles involved (age, gender, and race).

Analysis of case rates permits comparisons of juvenile court activity over time while controlling for differences in the size and demographic characteristics of the juvenile population. Rates are calculated as the

number of cases for every 1,000 juveniles in the population—those age 10 or older who were under the jurisdiction of a juvenile court.¹

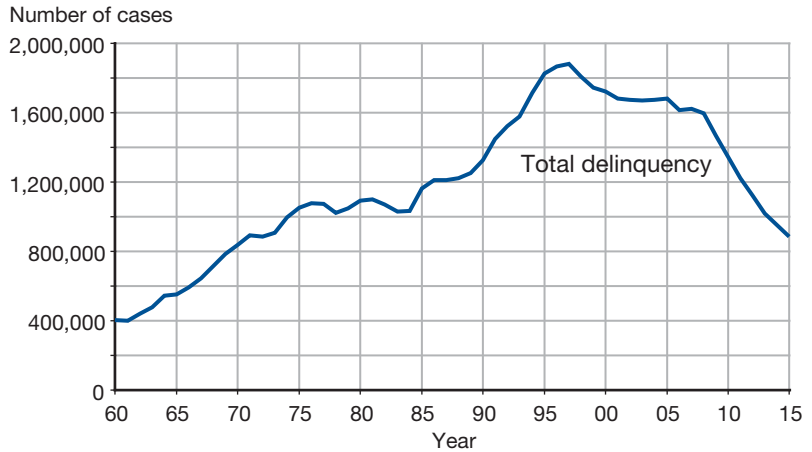
The chapter focuses on cases disposed in 2015 and examines trends since 2005.

¹ The upper age of juvenile court jurisdiction is defined by statute in each state. See appendix B, the “Glossary of Terms,” for a more detailed discussion on the upper age of juvenile court jurisdiction. Case rates presented in this report control for state variations in juvenile population.

Counts and Trends

- In 2015, courts with juvenile jurisdiction handled an estimated 884,900 delinquency cases.
- In 1960, approximately 1,100 delinquency cases were processed daily. In 2015, juvenile courts handled about 2,400 delinquency cases per day.
- The number of delinquency cases processed by juvenile courts decreased 47% in the 11 years between 2005 and 2015.
- Between 2005 and 2015, the number of cases decreased for all offense categories: property 51%, public order 49%, person 43%, and drugs 39%.

Between 1960 and 2015, juvenile court delinquency caseloads more than doubled (118%)



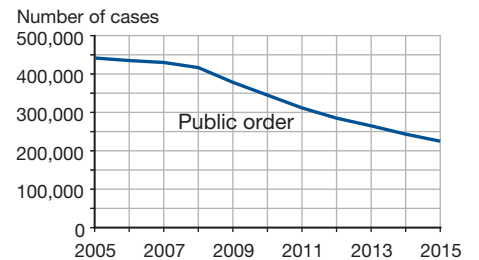
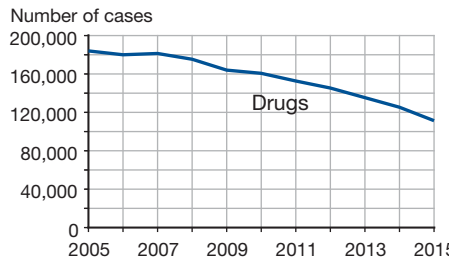
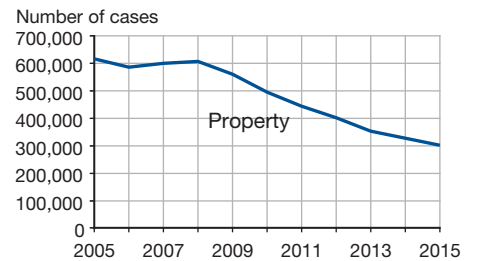
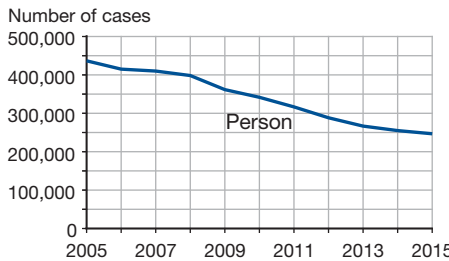
Offense profile of delinquency cases:

Most serious offense	2005	2015
Person	26%	28%
Property	37	34
Drugs	11	13
Public order	26	25
Total	100%	100%

Note: Detail may not total 100% because of rounding.

- The offense profile of the court's delinquency caseload was similar in 2005 and 2015.

Delinquency caseloads for all offense groups were at their lowest level in 2015



Counts and Trends

In the last 10 years (2006–2015), the number of cases handled by juvenile courts has decreased for all offenses

Most serious offense	Number of cases 2015	Percent change		
		10 year 2006–2015	5 year 2011–2015	1 year 2014–2015
Total delinquency	884,900	-45	-28	-7
Total person	246,800	-40	-22	-3
Criminal homicide	800	-33	2	-5
Rape	7,700	-26	-10	-5
Robbery	19,600	-36	-16	-3
Aggravated assault	25,700	-45	-18	4
Simple assault	161,800	-38	-23	-3
Other violent sex offenses	7,700	-36	-23	-13
Other person offenses	23,400	-53	-27	-5
Total property	301,500	-49	-32	-8
Burglary	54,400	-47	-32	-6
Larceny-theft	144,500	-42	-33	-11
Motor vehicle theft	13,200	-55	2	14
Arson	2,900	-62	-39	-19
Vandalism	44,300	-59	-36	-6
Trespassing	26,500	-50	-32	-2
Stolen property offenses	8,900	-58	-31	-14
Other property offenses	6,800	-60	-25	0
Drug law violations	111,500	-38	-27	-11
Public order offenses	225,100	-48	-28	-7
Obstruction of justice	114,500	-42	-25	-7
Disorderly conduct	58,300	-54	-34	-10
Weapons offenses	18,900	-56	-28	-5
Liquor law violations	6,100	-64	-39	1
Nonviolent sex offenses	11,200	-9	2	3
Other public order offenses	16,000	-56	-31	-14

Note: Detail may not add to totals because of rounding. Percent change calculations are based on unrounded numbers.

- Between 2006 and 2015, offenses with the largest percentage decrease in caseloads included liquor law violations (64%) and arson (62%).
- Trends in juvenile court cases were similar to trends in arrests² of persons younger than 18. The number of juvenile court cases involving robbery and aggravated assault cases decreased during the 5-year period between 2011 and 2015 (16% and 18%, respectively). The FBI reported that the number of arrests involving persons younger than age 18 charged with aggravated assault or robbery offenses also decreased during this period (down 28% and 24%, respectively).
- Between 2011 and 2015, the volume of juvenile court cases involving burglary or larceny-theft cases decreased (32% and 33%, respectively), and the FBI reported that arrests of persons under age 18 decreased 42% for burglary and 38% for larceny-theft offenses.

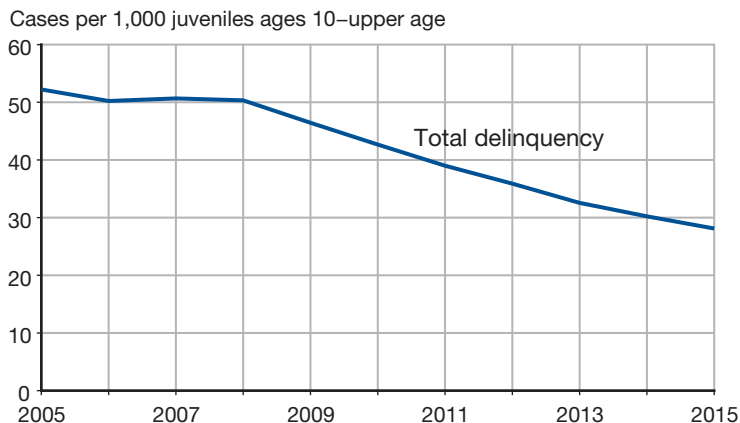
² The annual series of reports from the FBI, *Crime in the United States*, provides information on arrests and tracks changes in the general nature of arrests. The arrest trends reported above are from *Crime in the United States 2015*, Table 34.

Case Rates

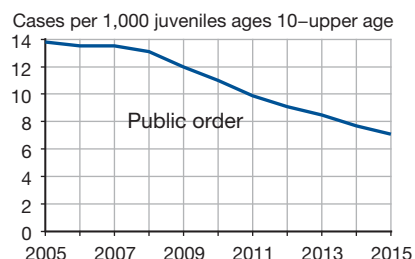
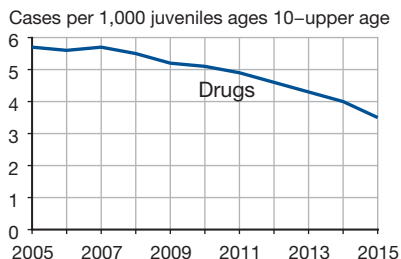
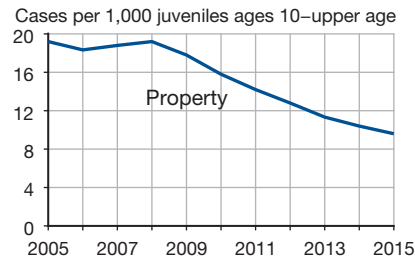
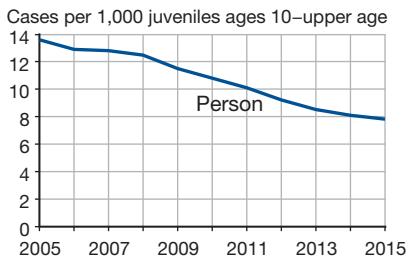
- More than 31 million youth were under juvenile court jurisdiction in 2015. Of these youth, 79% were between the ages of 10 and 15, 12% were age 16, and 9% were age 17. The small proportion of 16- and 17-year-olds among the juvenile court population is related to the upper age of juvenile court jurisdiction, which varies by state. In 2015, youth age 16 in 2 states were under the original jurisdiction of the criminal court, as were youth age 17 in an additional 7 states.
- In 2015, juvenile courts processed 28.1 delinquency cases for every 1,000 juveniles in the population—those age 10 or older who were under the jurisdiction of a juvenile court.
- The total delinquency case rate remained stable between 2005 and 2008 and then declined 44% to the 2015 level. As a result, the overall delinquency case rate in 2015 was 46% below the 2005 level.³
- Between 2005 and 2015, case rates decreased 50% for property offense cases, 48% for public order offenses, 42% for person offenses, and 38% for drug law violations.

³ The percent change in the number of cases disposed may not be equal to the percent change in case rates because of the changing size of the juvenile population.

The delinquency case rate declined from 52.3 per 1,000 juveniles in 2005 to 28.1 in 2015



Between 2005 and 2015, case rates decreased the most for property offenses (from 19.2 to 9.6 per 1,000 juveniles)



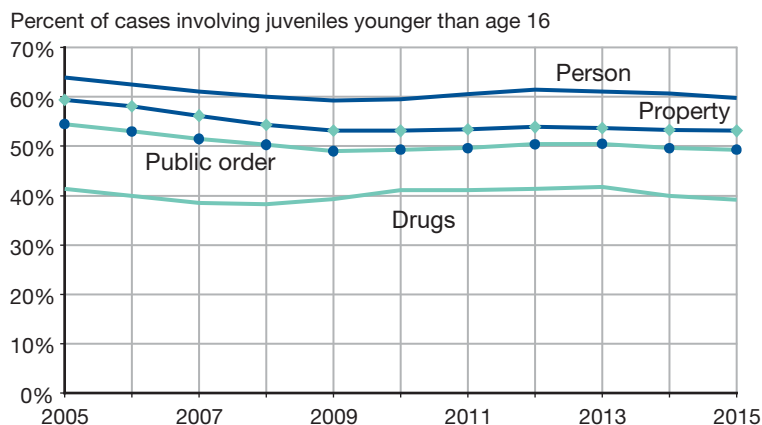
Age at Referral

Of the 884,900 delinquency cases processed in 2015, 52% involved youth younger than 16, 28% involved females, and 43% involved white youth

Most serious offense	Number of cases	Percentage of total juvenile court cases, 2015		
		Younger than 16	Female	White
Total delinquency	884,900	52%	28%	43%
Total person	246,800	60	31	40
Criminal homicide	800	30	16	35
Rape	7,700	63	4	54
Robbery	19,600	48	11	11
Aggravated assault	25,700	55	23	31
Simple assault	161,800	61	36	41
Other violent sex offenses	7,700	75	6	63
Other person offenses	23,400	62	31	57
Total property	301,500	53	27	43
Burglary	54,400	54	11	36
Larceny-theft	144,500	51	39	45
Motor vehicle theft	13,200	49	21	33
Arson	2,900	74	15	53
Vandalism	44,300	61	17	53
Trespassing	26,500	52	21	41
Stolen property offenses	8,900	50	16	30
Other property offenses	6,800	48	27	48
Drug law violations	111,500	39	22	55
Public order offenses	225,100	49	28	40
Obstruction of justice	114,500	41	27	38
Disorderly conduct	58,300	63	37	39
Weapons offenses	18,900	56	11	35
Liquor law violations	6,100	30	32	59
Nonviolent sex offenses	11,200	60	21	56
Other public order offenses	16,000	47	25	47

Note: Detail may not add to totals because of rounding.

In 2015, juveniles younger than 16 accounted for more than half of all delinquency cases, including 60% of person offense cases



- The proportion of cases involving juveniles age 15 or younger varied by offense category. Between 2005 and 2015, younger juveniles accounted for a smaller proportion of drug and public order cases than of person and property offense cases.

- In 2015, juveniles younger than 16 accounted for three-quarters (74%) of juvenile arson cases.

Offense profile of delinquency cases by age group:

Most serious offense	Age 15 or younger	Age 16 or older
2015		
Person	32%	23%
Property	35	33
Drugs	9	16
Public order	24	27
Total	100%	100%
2005		
Person	29%	22%
Property	38	35
Drugs	8	15
Public order	25	28
Total	100%	100%

Note: Detail may not total 100% because of rounding.

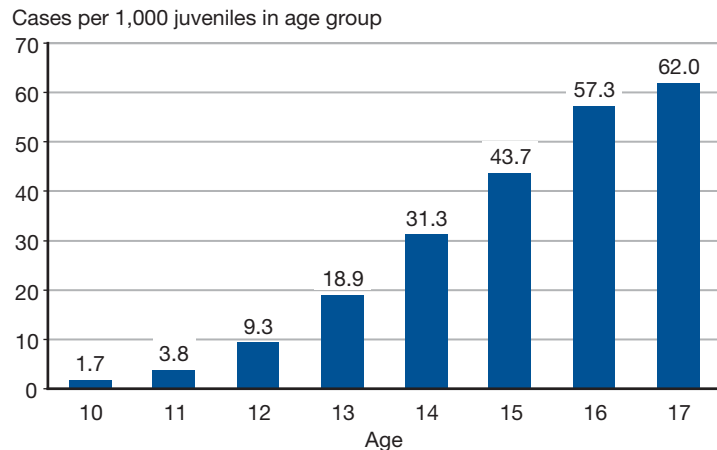
- Compared with the delinquency caseload involving older juveniles, the caseload of youth age 15 or younger in 2015 included larger proportions of person and property offense cases and smaller proportions of drug and public order offense cases.

- Compared with 2005, the caseload in 2015 for both younger and older juveniles involved slightly greater proportions of person and drug offense cases, and slightly smaller proportions of property and public order offense cases.

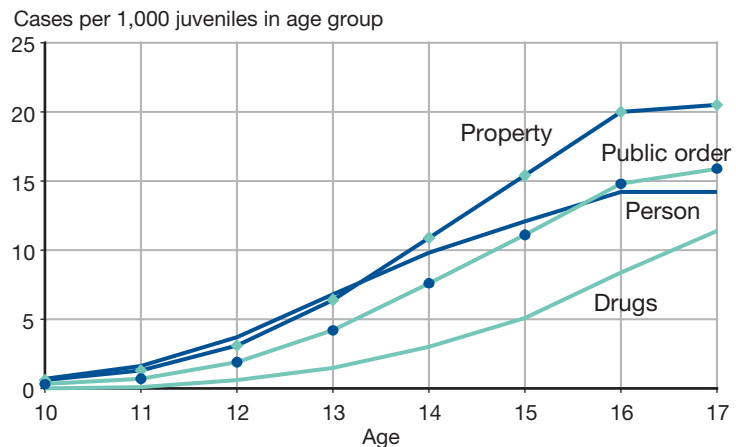
Age at Referral

- Although, in general, more 17-year-olds than 16-year-olds are arrested, the number of juvenile court cases involving 17-year-olds (178,500) was lower than the number involving 16-year-olds (218,300) in 2015. The explanation lies primarily in the fact that in 9 states 17-year-olds are excluded from the original jurisdiction of the juvenile court. In these states, all 17-year-olds are legally adults and are referred to criminal court rather than to juvenile court. Thus, far fewer 17-year-olds than 16-year-olds are subject to original juvenile court jurisdiction.
- In 2015, the delinquency case rate for 17-year-olds (62.0) was twice the rate for 14-year-olds (31.3) and more than 3 times the rate for 13-year-olds (18.9).
- The largest increase in case rates between age 13 and age 17 was for drug offenses. The case rate for drug offenses for 17-year-old juveniles (11.4) was more than 7 times the rate for 13-year-olds (1.5).
- For public order offenses in 2015, the case rate for 17-year-olds (15.9) was nearly 4 times the rate for 13-year-olds (4.2) and the property offense case rate for 17-year-olds (20.5) was more than 3 times the rate for 13-year-olds (6.4).
- For cases involving person offenses, the case rate for 17-year-olds (14.2) was nearly double the rate for 13-year-olds (6.8).

In 2015, delinquency case rates increased with the referral age of the juvenile



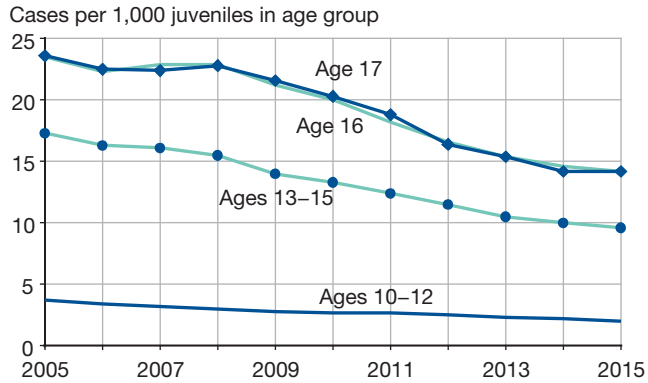
Case rates increased continuously with age for property, drug, and public order offense cases, while person offense case rates leveled off after age 16



Age at Referral

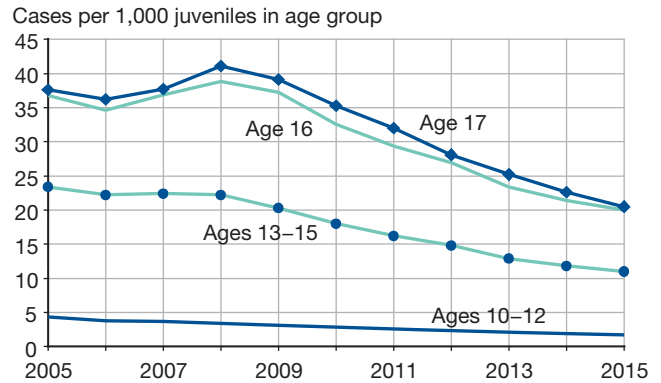
Trends in case rates were similar across age groups between 2005 and 2015 for each general offense category

Person offense case rates



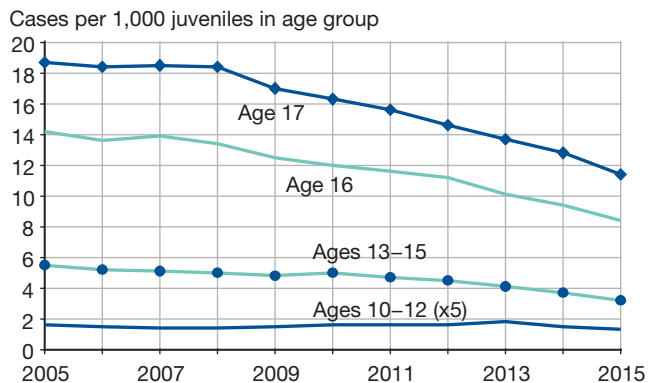
- Between 2005 and 2015, person offense case rates were at their highest in 2005 for all age groups.
- Since 2005, person offense case rates for all age groups declined through 2015: down 46% for youth ages 10–12, 44% for youth ages 13–15, and 40% each for 16-year-olds and 17-year-olds.

Property offense case rates



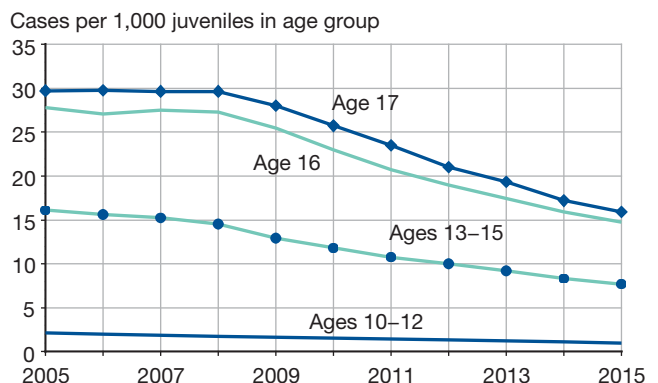
- Property offense case rates were at their highest in 2005 for youth ages 10–12 and 13–15, and peaked in 2008 for youth ages 16 and 17, before declining through 2015.
- Property offense case rates were lower in 2015 than in 2005 for all age groups. In 2015, the case rate for juveniles ages 10–12 was 61% less than the 2005 rate, the rate for juveniles ages 13–15 was 53% less, the rate for 16-year-olds was 46% less, and the rate for 17-year-olds was 45% less.

Drug offense case rates



- Drug offense case rates were at their lowest level in 2015 for youth of all ages. Compared to 2005, rates in 2015 were 21% lower for youth ages 10–12, 41% lower for youth ages 13–15 and for 16-year-olds, and 39% lower for 17-year-olds.

Public order offense case rates



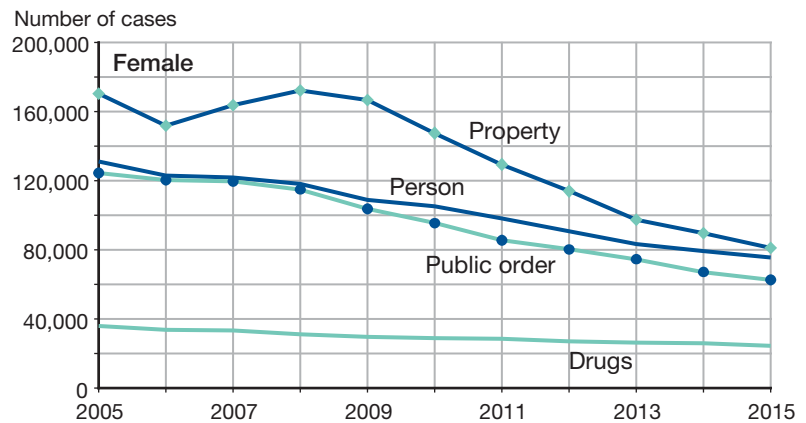
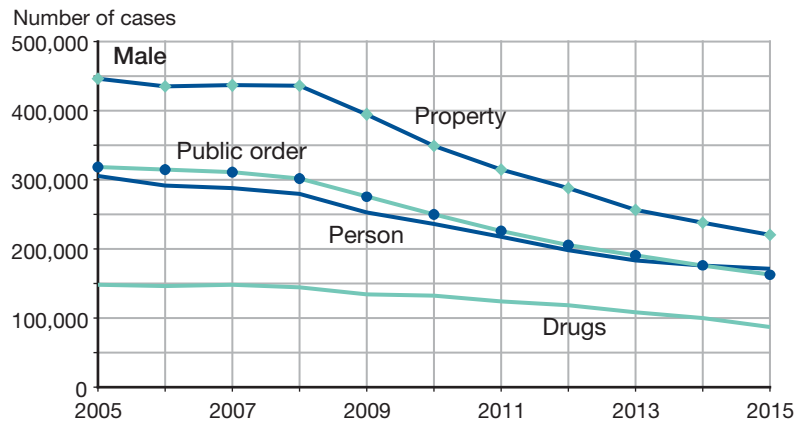
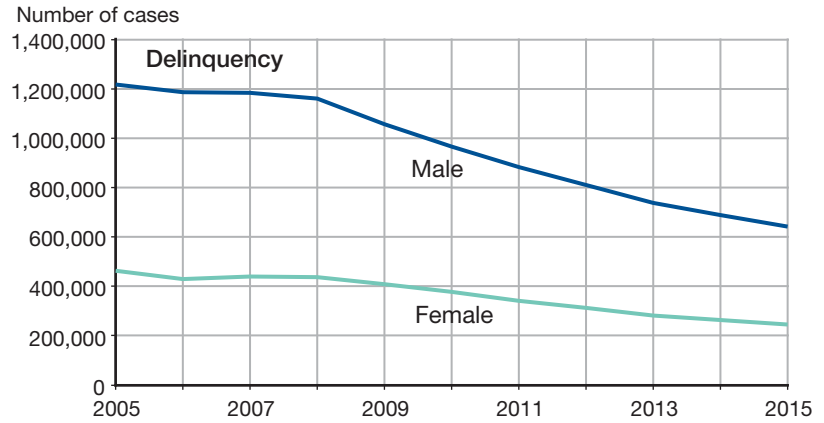
- Public order case rates for all age groups were at their lowest levels in 2015 since at least 2005. Case rates declined at a similar pace for all age groups: 54% for youth ages 10–12, 52% for youth ages 13–15, 47% for youth age 16, and 46% for youth age 17.

* Because of the relatively low volume of cases involving youth ages 10–12 for drug offenses, their case rates are inflated by a factor of 5 to display the trend over time.

Gender

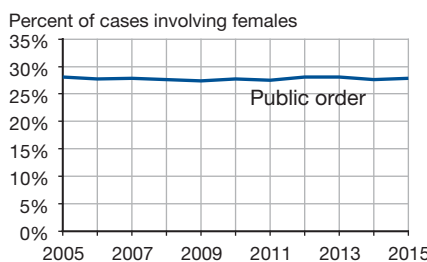
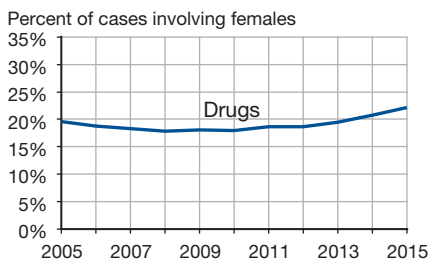
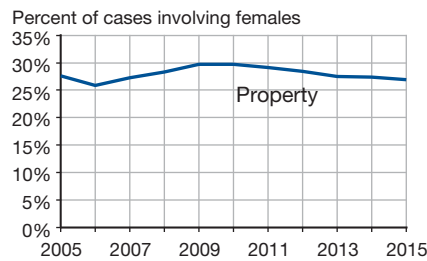
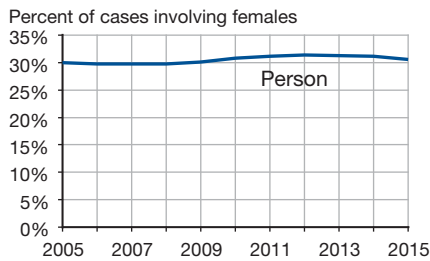
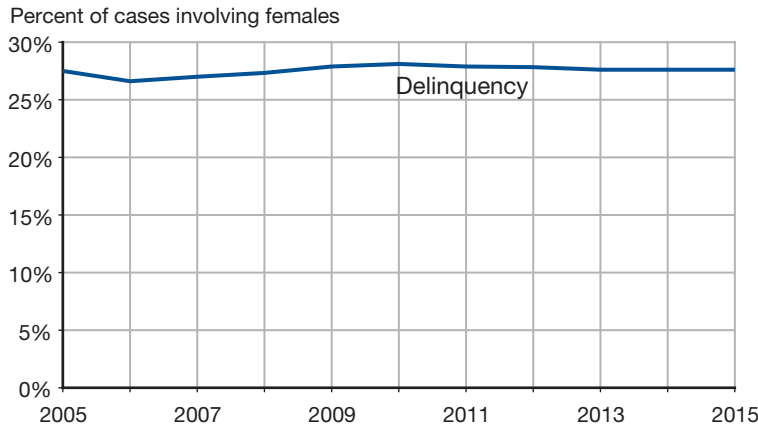
- Males were involved in 72% (640,900) of the delinquency cases handled by juvenile courts in 2015.
- The average annual decrease in the male and female delinquency caseloads was very similar for all offense types between 2005 and 2015. The average decrease was slightly larger for males than females for cases involving person (6% vs. 5%) and drug (5% vs. 4%) offense cases, equal for property offense cases (6% each), and slightly less for public order offense cases (6% vs. 7%).
- Between 2005 and 2015, the number of property offense cases involving males was at its highest level in 2005, and the female caseload peaked in 2008. Between their respective peaks and 2015, the male caseload declined 51% while the female caseload fell 53%.
- Drug offense cases involving males were level between 2005 and 2007, before decreasing 41% through 2015. Drug offense cases involving females decreased steadily between 2005 and 2015, and in 2015 the number of cases was 32% below the level in 2005.
- The public order offense caseload decreased at a similar pace for both males and females between 2005 and 2015 (49% and 50%, respectively).

The overall decline in the male and female delinquency caseloads between 2005 and 2015 was the same (47% each)



Gender

Females accounted for 28% of the delinquency caseload in 2015 — similar to 2005 (27%)



- Between 2005 and 2015, the female proportion of the person offense caseload has remained steady, from 30% to 31%.

Offense profile of delinquency cases for males and females:

Most serious offense	Male	Female
2015		
Person	27%	31%
Property	34	33
Drugs	14	10
Public order	25	26
Total	100%	100%
2005		
Person	25%	28%
Property	37	37
Drugs	12	8
Public order	26	27
Total	100%	100%

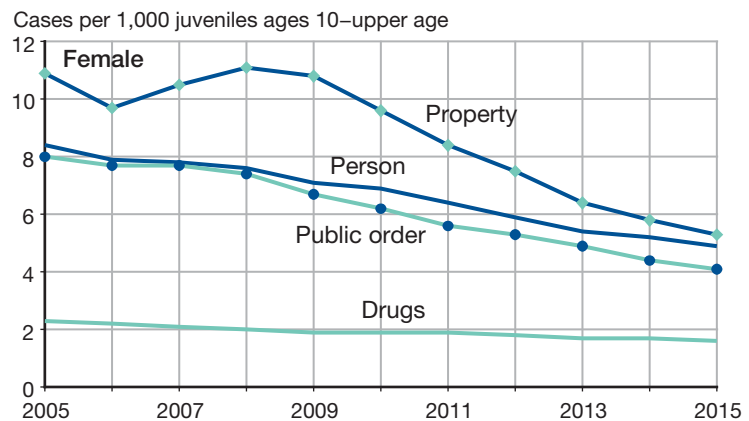
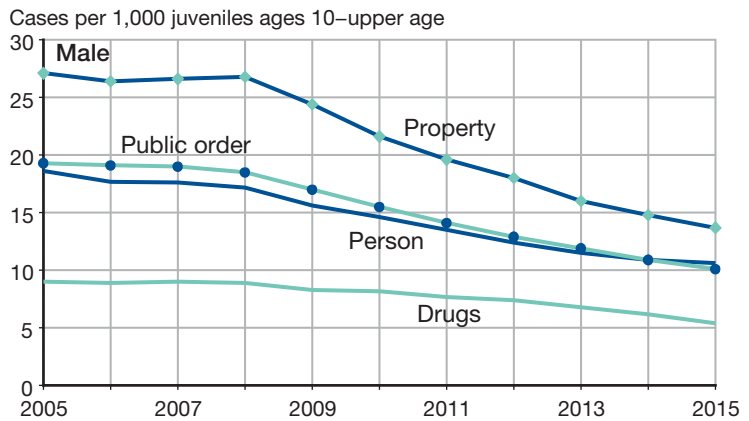
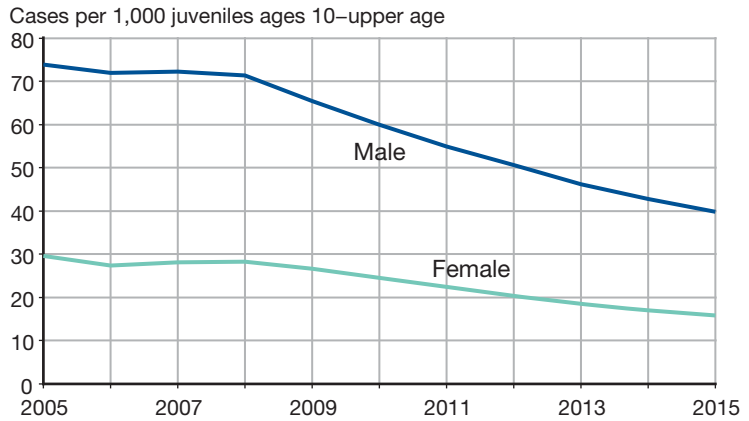
Note: Detail may not total 100% because of rounding.

- For both males and females, the property offense proportions of the delinquency caseloads were less in 2015 than in 2005.
- In 2015, the male caseload contained a greater proportion of drug offenses than the female caseload and a smaller proportion of person offenses.
- The male caseload contained similar proportions of property and public order offenses as the female caseload in 2015.

Gender

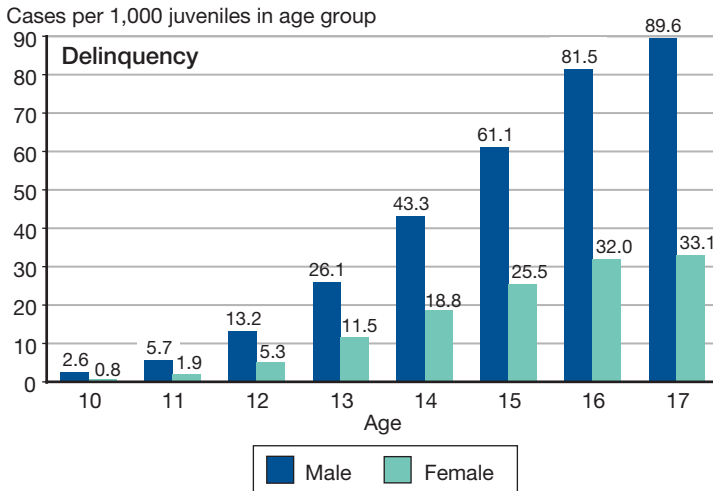
- The decrease in the delinquency case rate was the same for males and females between 2005 and 2015 (46% each). Most of the decline occurred between 2008 and 2015 (down 44% each).
- In 2015, the delinquency case rate for males was 2.5 times the rate for females, 39.8 compared with 15.8.
- In 2015, case rates for all offense types were at their lowest level since 2005 for both males and females.
- Between 2005 and 2015, male case rates decreased 40% for drug offenses, 43% for person offenses, 48% for public order offenses, and 49% for property offenses. The patterns in case rate decreases were similar for females, down 31% for drug offenses, 42% for person offenses, 49% for public order offenses, and 52% for property offenses.
- Despite a decrease in the disparity between male and female delinquency case rates between 2005 and 2015, the male case rate for drug offense cases was 3.4 times that of the female case rate. Male rates were between 2.2 and 2.6 times female rates for all other offense types in 2015.

Despite decreases in case rates for both males and females, the male case rate remained at least twice the rate of females for all years between 2005 and 2015

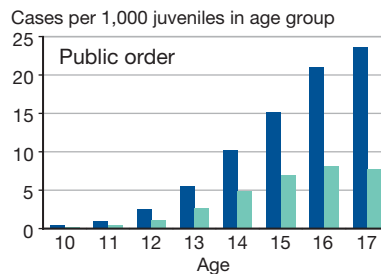
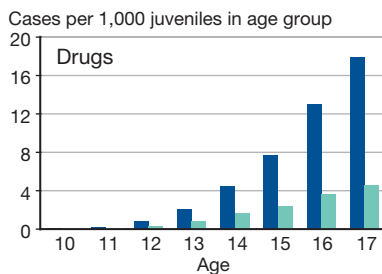
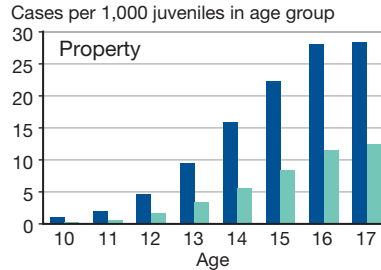
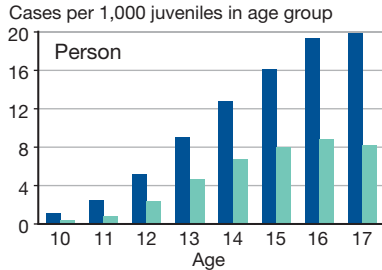


Gender

In 2015, the delinquency case rate for males and females increased steadily through age 17



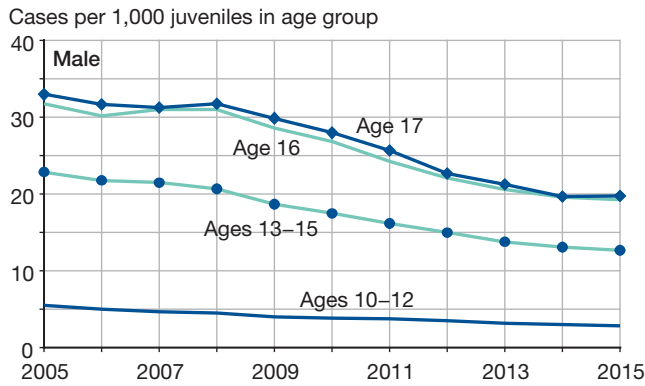
- In 2015, the difference between age-specific male and female delinquency case rates was greatest for the younger juveniles. The male delinquency rate for 10-year-olds was 3.4 times the female rate; for 11-year-olds, the male case rate was 3.1 times the female rate.
- In all four delinquency offense categories in 2015, case rates increased continuously through age 17 for males. For females, case rates for property and drug offenses increased through age 17, while case rates for person and public order offenses peaked at age 16.
- In 2015, the drug offense case rate for 17-year-old males was 21 times the rate for 12-year-old males; among females, the drug offense case rate for 17-year-olds was 15 times the rate for 12-year-olds.



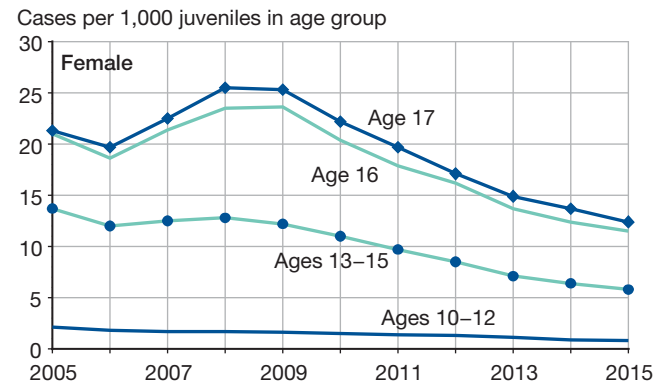
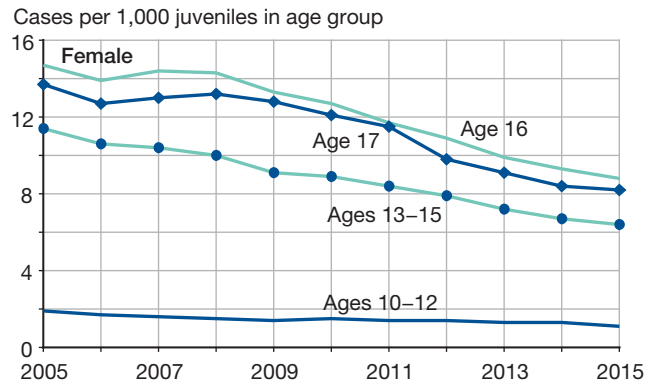
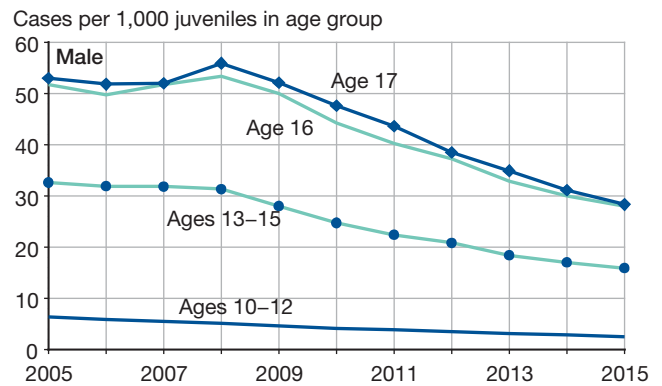
Gender

Across all age groups and offense categories, case rates for males exceed rates for females; however, rates for both males and females have declined substantially in the past 11 years

Person offense case rates



Property offense case rates

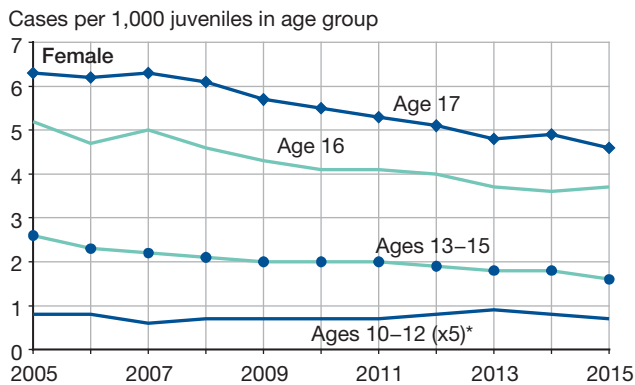
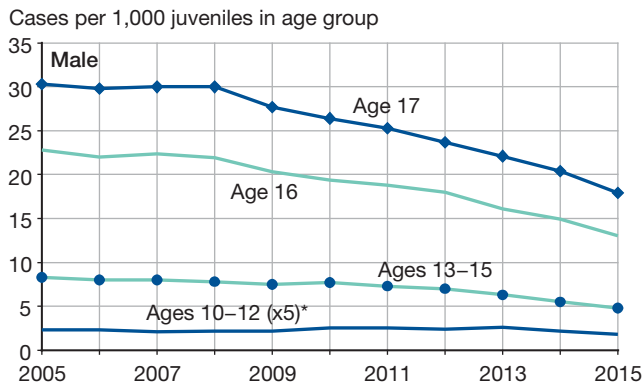


- In the last 11 years (2005 through 2015), male person offense case rates decreased for all age groups: 48% for youth ages 10–12, 45% for youth ages 13–15, 39% for 16-year-olds, and 40% for 17-year-olds.
- During the same period, female person offense case rates followed a similar pattern as males, decreasing 39% for youth ages 10–12, 43% for youth ages 13–15, 41% for 16-year-olds, and 40% for 17-year-olds.

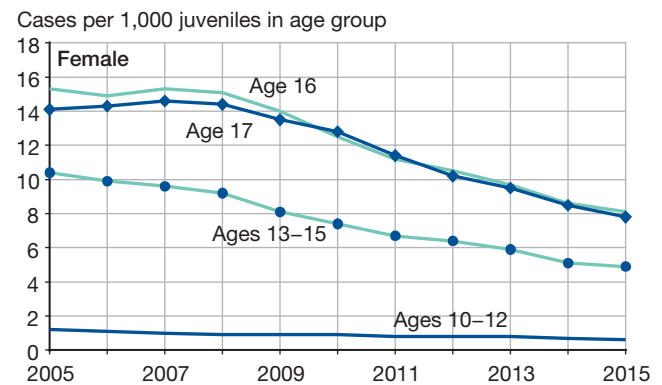
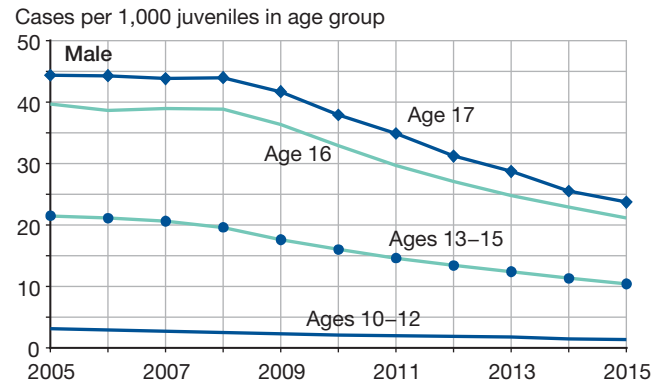
- Male property offense case rates decreased to their lowest levels for all age groups in 2015.
- Between 2005 and 2015, male property case rates decreased 60% for youth ages 10–12, 51% for ages 13–15, 46% for age 16, and 47% for age 17.
- Similar to the male rates, age-specific property offense rates for females were at their lowest level for all age groups in 2015.

Gender

Drug offense case rates



Public order offense case rates



- The male drug offense case rate decreased 21% between 2005 and 2015 for youth ages 10–12, while case rates decreased 42% for youth ages 13–15, 43% for youth age 16, and 41% for youth age 17. Most of the decreases occurred between 2008 and 2015 (down 16% for youth ages 10–12, 28% for youth ages 13–15, and 41% each for youth ages 16 and 17).
- Female drug offense case rates for youth ages 10–12 increased 7% from 2005 to 2013, before decreasing 27% in 2015. The case rates for all other age groups decreased relatively steadily between 2005 and 2015 — 38% for youth ages 13–15, 30% for 16-year-olds, and 27% for 17-year-olds.

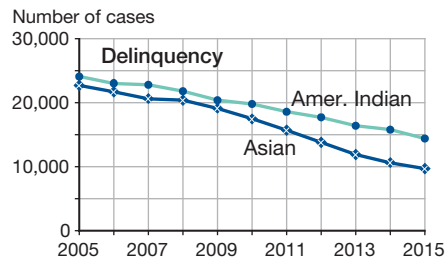
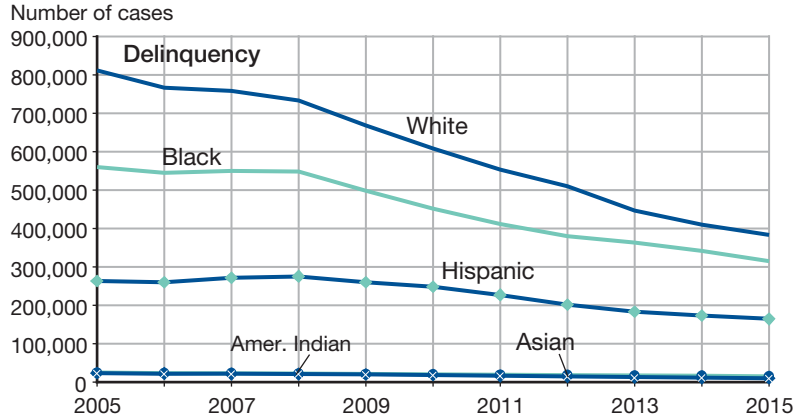
- Across gender and age groups, public order offense case rates in 2015 were at their lowest level since 2005.
- Between 2005 and 2015, public order case rates decreased at a similar pace for both males and females across all age groups. Male case rates decreased 56% for youth ages 10–12, 51% for youth ages 13–15, and 47% each for youth age 16 and age 17. Similarly, female case rates decreased 50% for youth ages 10–12, 54% for youth ages 13–15, 47% for youth age 16, and 45% for youth age 17.

* Because of the relatively low volume of cases involving male and female youth ages 10–12 for drug offenses, their case rates are inflated by a factor of 5 to display the trends over time.

Race

- Between 2005 and 2015, delinquency cases declined 57% for Asian⁴ youth, 53% for white youth, 44% for black youth, 40% for American Indian⁵ youth, and 38% for Hispanic⁶ youth.
- The number of property offense cases involving black youth and Hispanic youth peaked in 2008 before decreasing through 2015 (41% and 50%, respectively).
- In 2015, the offense profile was similar to that of 2005 for all racial groups.
- The offense profile was similar for white, black, and Indian youth; property offenses accounted for the largest proportion of caseloads, followed by person, public order, and drug offense cases.
- The offense profile for Hispanic youth was similar to that of Asian youth; property offense cases accounted for the largest proportion of caseloads, followed by public order, person, and drug offense cases.

The number of delinquency cases decreased substantially for all race groups between 2005 and 2015



⁴ The racial classification Asian includes Asian, Native Hawaiian, and Other Pacific Islander.

⁵ The racial classification American Indian (usually abbreviated as Amer. Indian) includes American Indian and Alaskan Native.

⁶ Persons of Hispanic ethnicity are treated as a distinct race group and are excluded from the other four race groups, with one important exception. Data provided to the Archive from many jurisdictions did not include any means to determine the ethnicity of American Indian youth. Rather than assume ethnicity for these youth, they are classified solely on their racial classification; as such, the American Indian group includes an unknown proportion of Hispanic youth.

Across all racial groups, property cases accounted for the largest proportion of the delinquency caseload

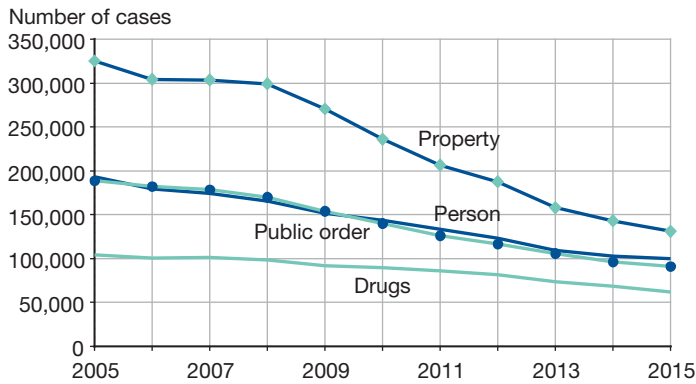
Most serious offense	Offense profile of delinquency cases				
	White	Black	Hispanic	Amer. Indian	Asian
2015					
Person	26%	32%	26%	24%	23%
Property	34	35	31	37	38
Drugs	16	7	15	16	15
Public order	24	26	28	23	24
Total	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%
2005					
Person	24%	32%	22%	23%	21%
Property	40	32	35	41	44
Drugs	13	8	12	12	8
Public order	23	28	32	25	26
Total	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%

Note: Detail may not total 100% because of rounding.

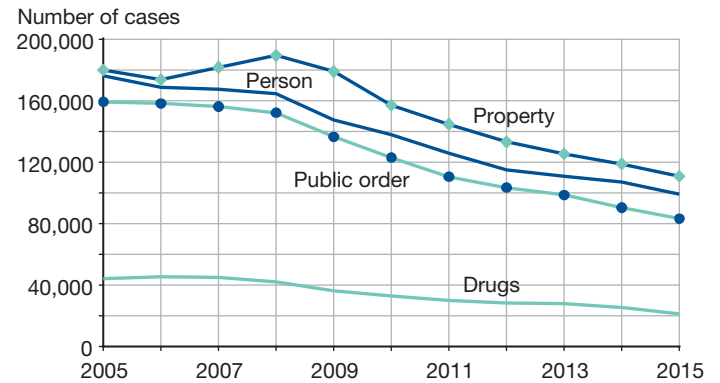
Race

Between 2005 and 2015, the number of cases decreased for all racial groups and offenses

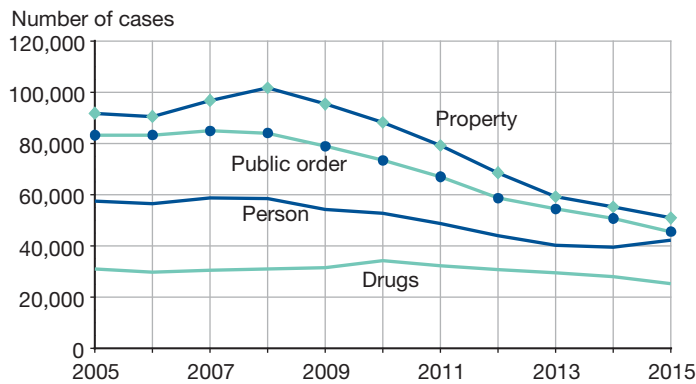
White



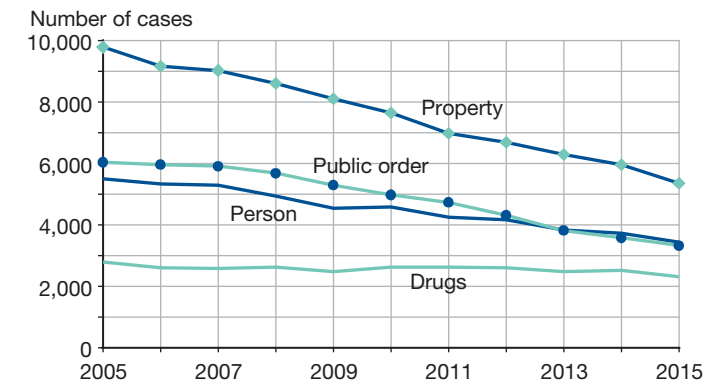
Black



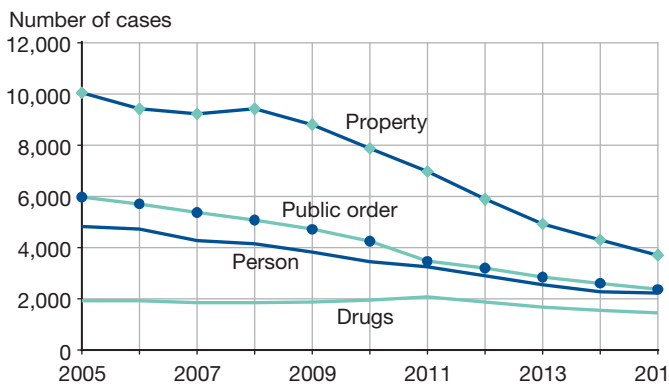
Hispanic



American Indian



Asian



Percent change in number of cases, 2005–2015:

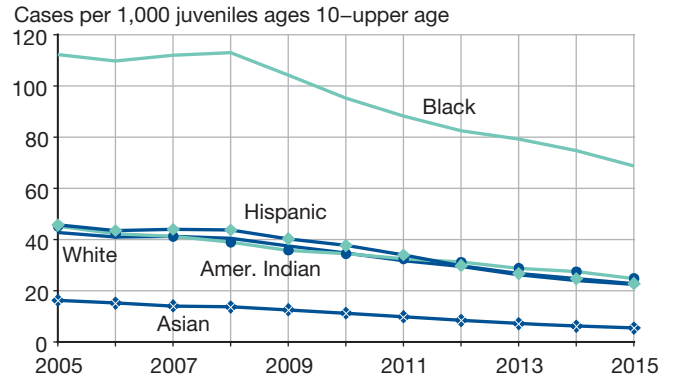
Most serious offense	White	Black	Hispanic	American Indian	Asian
Delinquency	-53%	-44%	-38%	-40%	-57%
Person	-48	-44	-26	-38	-54
Property	-60	-38	-45	-45	-63
Drugs	-41	-52	-19	-17	-25
Public order	-52	-48	-45	-45	-60

Race

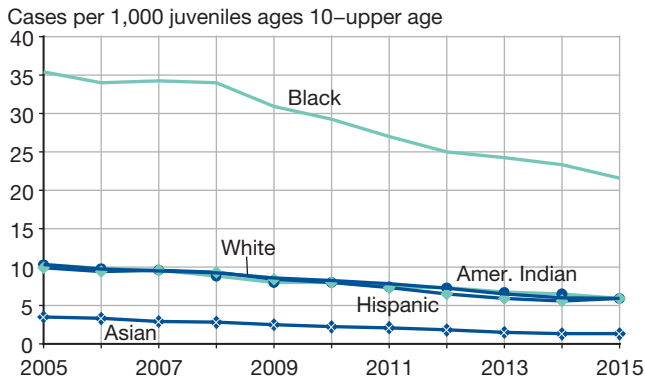
Between 2005 and 2015, delinquency case rates declined for youth of all racial groups: 48% for whites, 39% for blacks, 50% for Hispanics, 45% for American Indians, and 66% for Asians

- In 2015, the total delinquency case rate for white youth and Hispanic youth was similar (22.5 and 22.9, respectively). The case rate for black juveniles (68.7) was about triple the rates for white youth, Hispanic youth, and American Indian youth (24.9), and more than 12 times the case rate for Asian youth (5.5).
- In 2015, the person offense case rate for black juveniles (21.6) was more than 3 times the rate for Hispanic youth, white youth, and American Indian youth (5.9 each), and nearly 17 times that of Asian youth (1.3).
- Case rates in 2015 were lower than in 2005 for each racial group for all four offense categories.

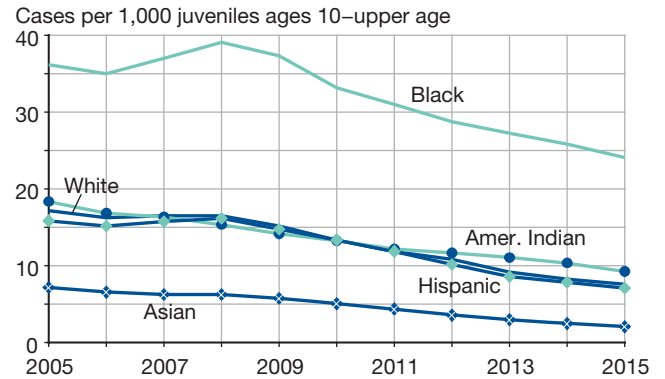
Delinquency



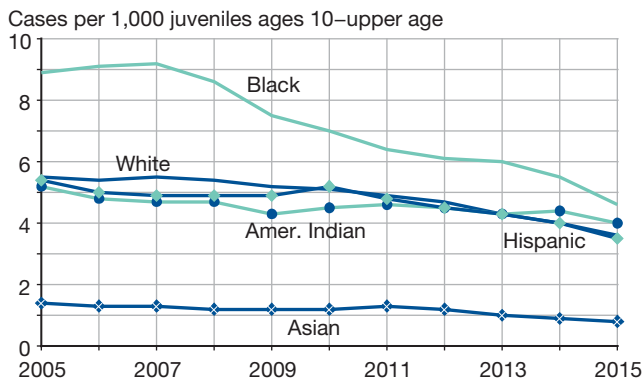
Person



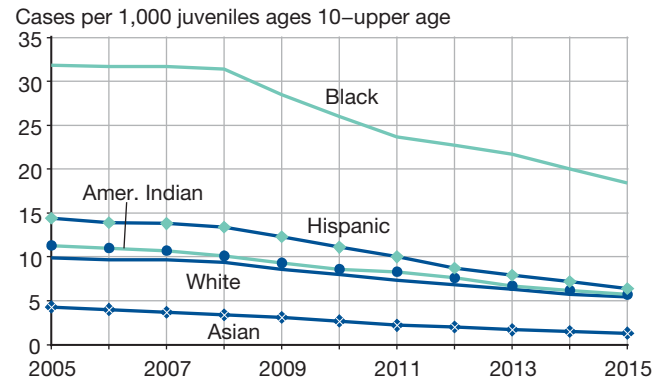
Property



Drugs

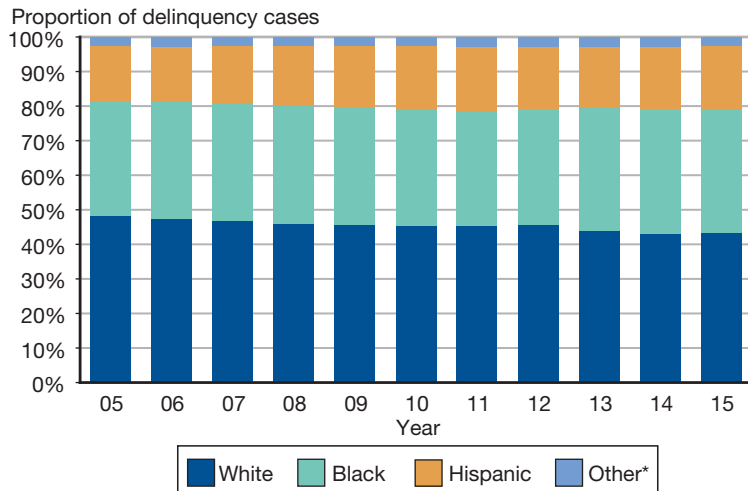


Public order



Race

In 2015, 43% of all delinquency cases involved white youth: 40% of person offense cases, 44% of property offense cases, 55% of drug offense cases, and 40% of public order offense cases



* Because American Indian and Asian proportions are too small to display individually, they are combined in the category "Other races."

In 2015, white youth made up 55% of the U.S. population under juvenile court jurisdiction, black youth 15%, Hispanic youth 23%, American Indian youth 2%, and Asian youth 6%.

Racial profile of delinquency cases:

Race	2005	2015
White	48%	43%
Black	33	35
Hispanic	16	18
American Indian	1	2
Asian	1	1
Total	100%	100%

Note: Detail may not total 100% because of rounding.

Although white youth represented the largest share of the delinquency caseload, their relative contribution declined between 2005 and 2015, from 48% to 43%.

The proportion of delinquency cases involving black youth and Hispanic youth increased between 2005 and 2015.

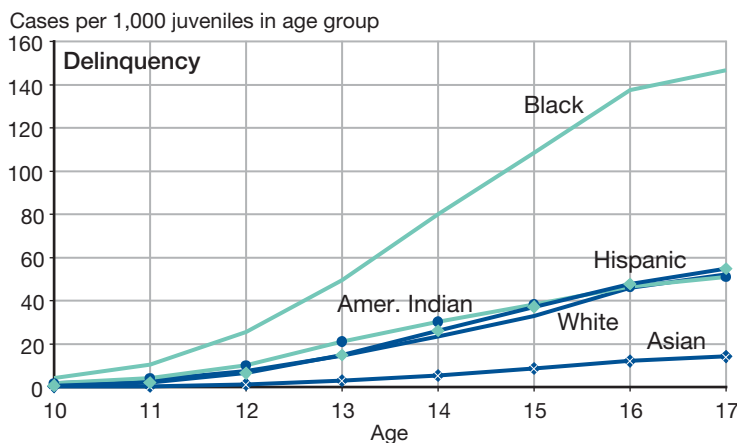
Racial profile of delinquency cases by offense:

Race	Person	Property	Drugs	Public order
2015				
White	40%	44%	55%	40%
Black	42	36	20	37
Hispanic	15	17	22	21
Amer. Indian	1	2	2	1
Asian	1	1	1	1
Total	100%	100%	100%	100%
2005				
White	44%	53%	57%	42%
Black	41	29	24	36
Hispanic	13	15	17	19
Amer. Indian	1	2	1	1
Asian	1	2	1	1
Total	100%	100%	100%	100%

Note: Detail may not total 100% because of rounding.

In 2015, the delinquency case rate for 13-year-olds was more than 8 times the rate for 10-year-olds for each racial group.

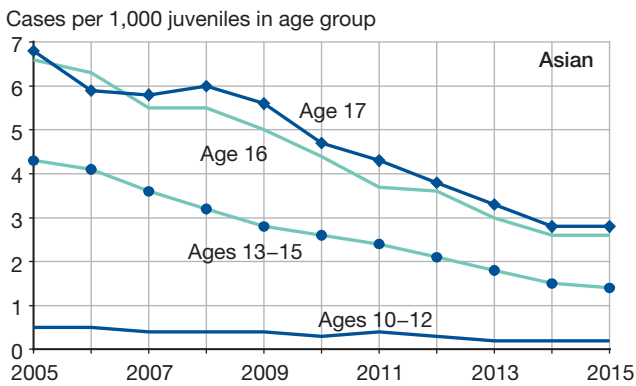
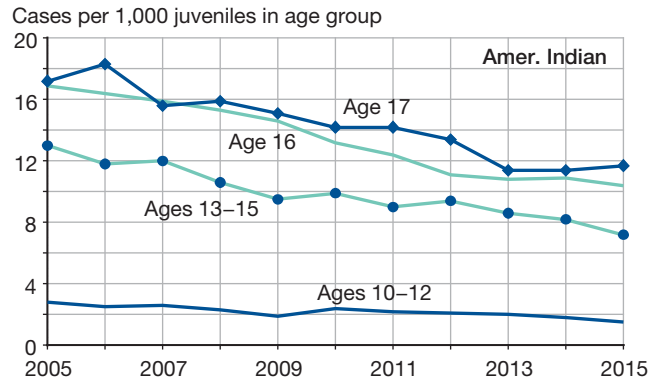
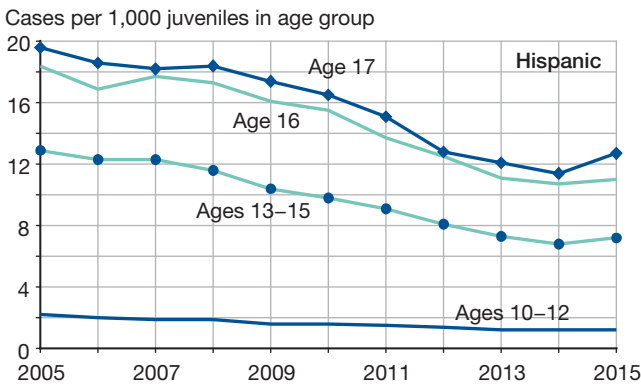
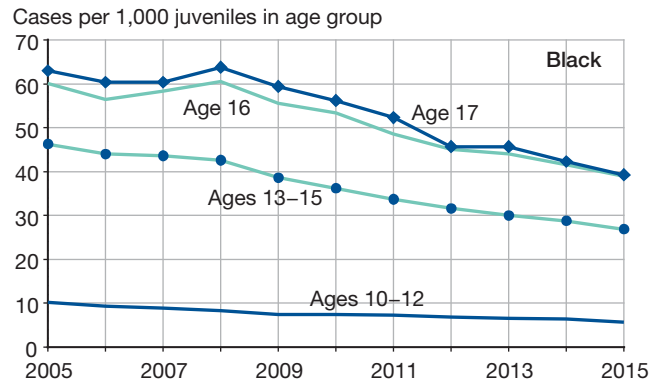
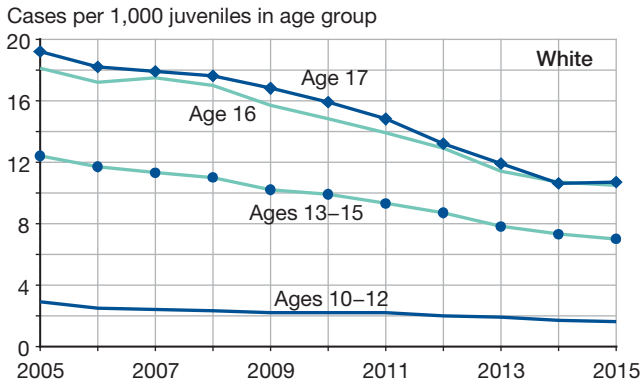
Case rates for juveniles increased with age, regardless of race



Race

Case rates for person offenses in 2015 were lower than those in 2005 for all age groups for all races

Person offense case rates

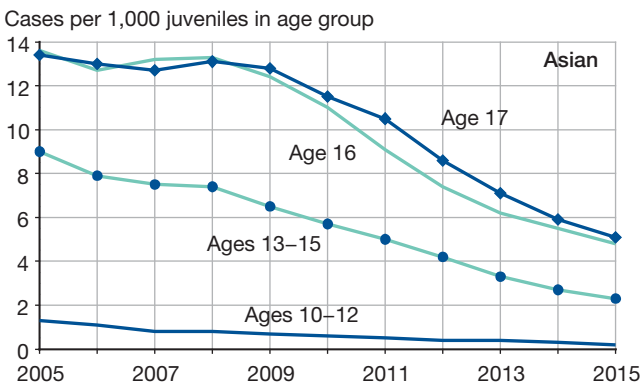
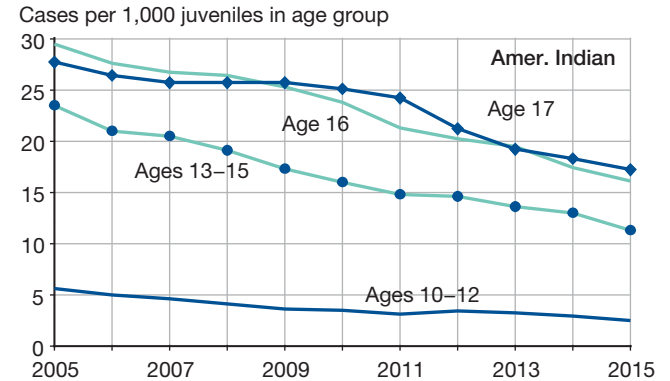
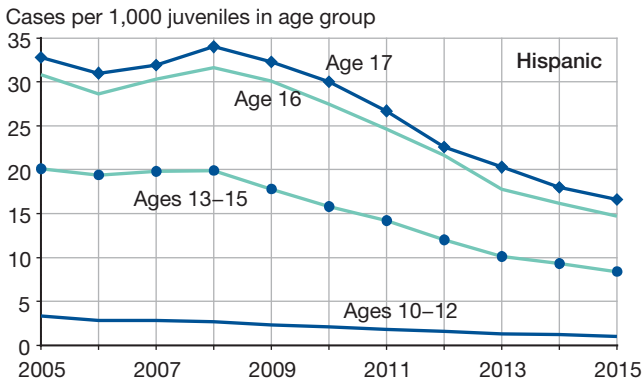
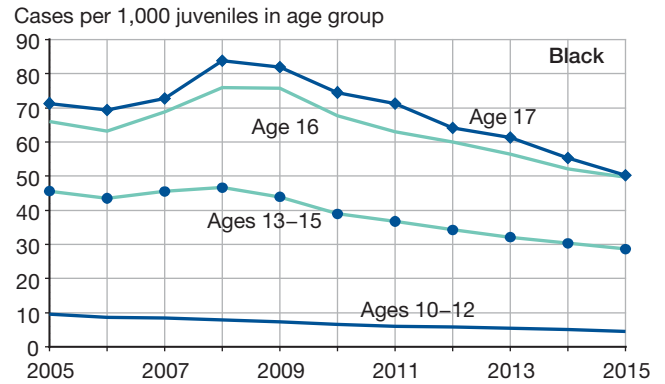
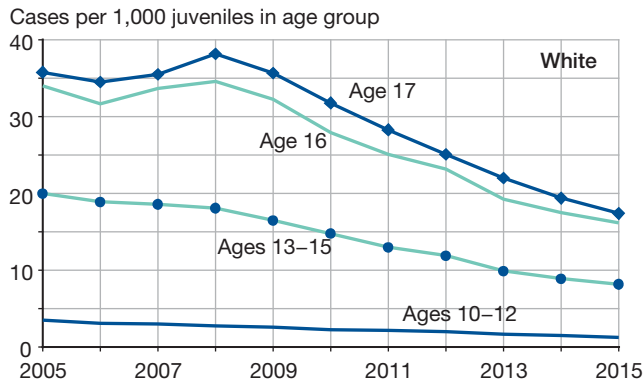


- Since 2005, person offense case rates were at their lowest level in 2015 for all age groups for black youth and for most age groups for youth of all other races with a few exceptions.
- In 2015, person offense case rates for 17-year-olds increased from the 2014 historic low levels for white, Hispanic, and Asian youth, and the 2013 historic low for American Indian youth.
- Between 2005 and 2015, person offense case rates for American Indian youth decreased less for youth age 17 (32%) than for youth ages 10-12 (44%), ages 13-15 (44%), and age 16 (38%).

Race

Property offense case rates were at their lowest level in 2015 for all age groups within each racial category

Property offense case rates

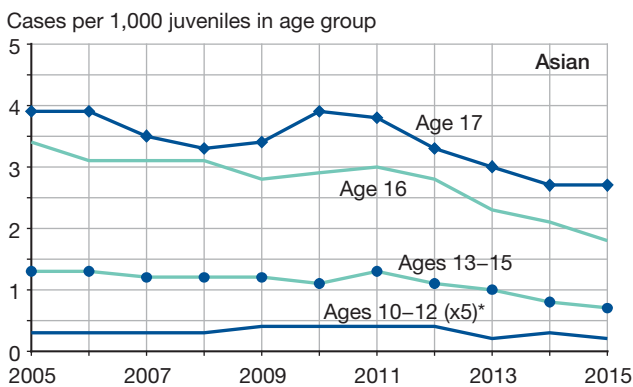
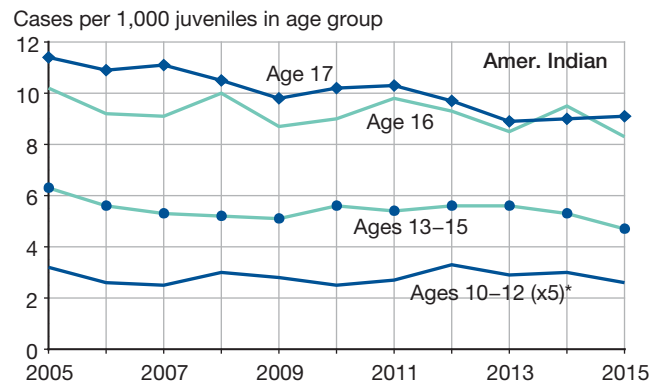
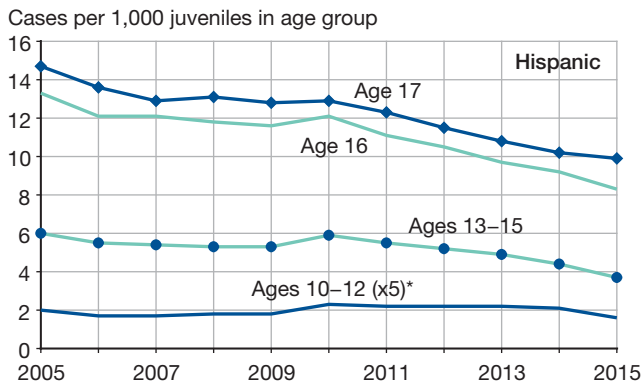
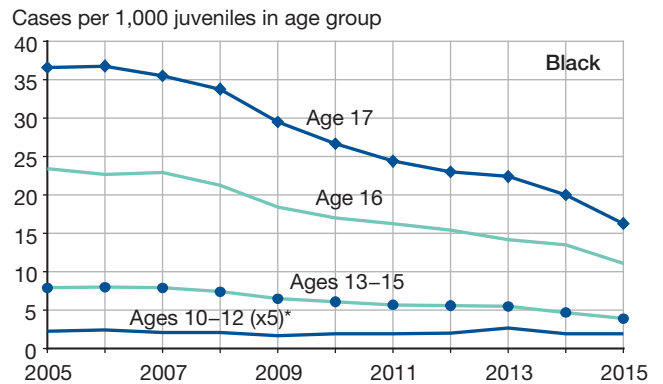
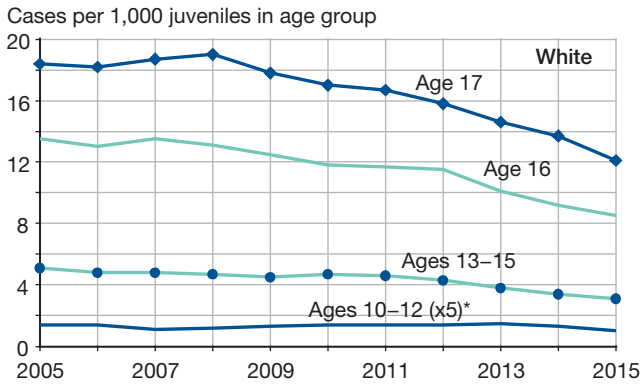


- Among all racial groups, property offense case rates decreased more for youth ages 10–12 and 13–15, than youth age 16 and age 17.
- Property offense case rates decreased the least for black youth age 16 and age 17 (25% and 30%, respectively), and decreased the most for Asian youth ages 10–12 and ages 13–15 (82% and 75%, respectively) between 2005 and 2015.

Race

With few exceptions, drug offense case rates for all age groups within each racial category declined in the 11-year period 2005–2015

Drug offense case rates



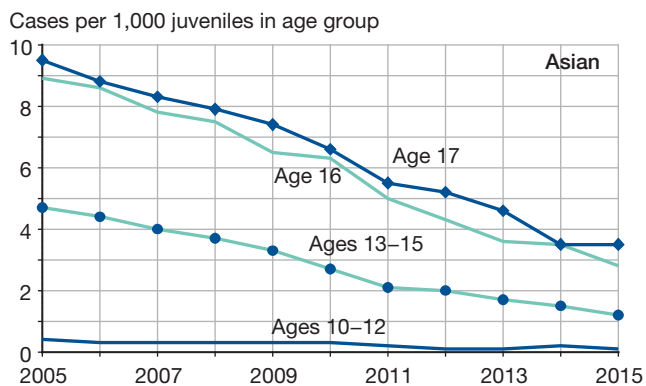
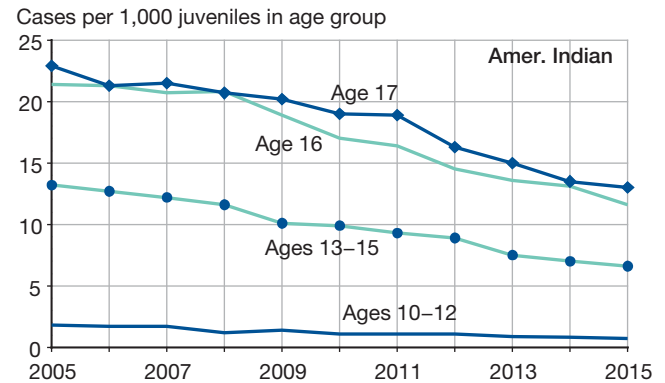
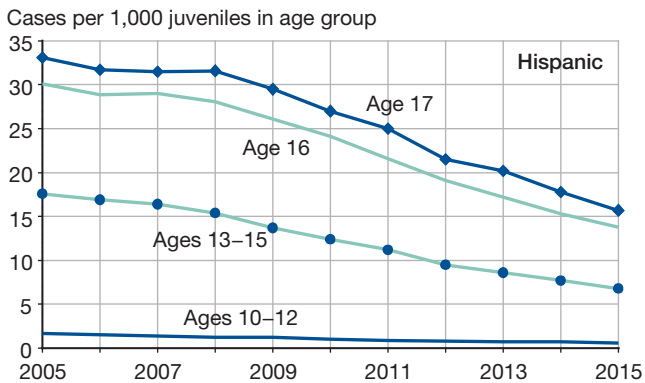
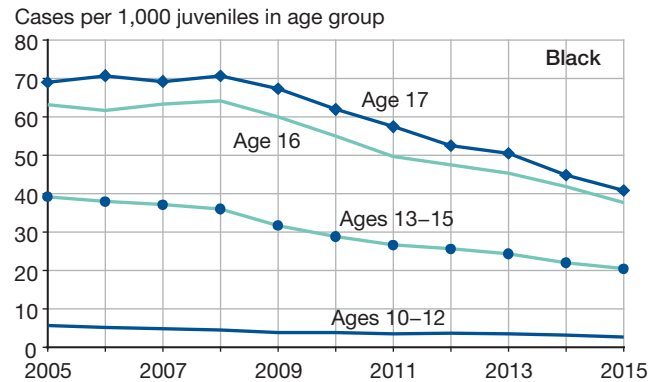
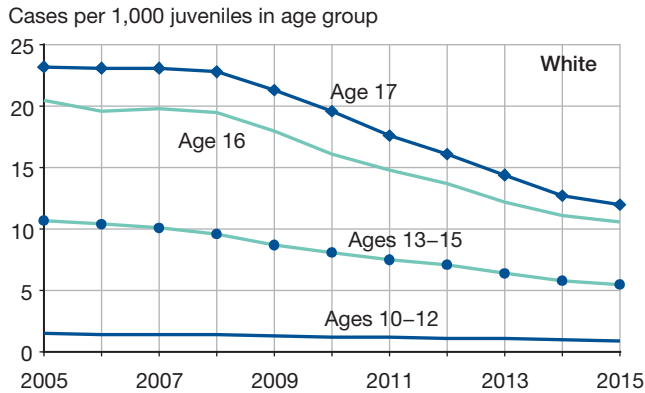
- Although changes in age specific case rates for drug offenses varied by racial group between 2005 and 2015, case rates decreased for all age groups for all races.
- Between 2005 and 2015, age-specific case rates for all racial groups decreased by at least 20% for youth age 17, while decreases in other age groups varied.

* Because of the relatively low volume of cases involving youth of all races ages 10–12 for drug offenses, their case rates are inflated by a factor of 5 to display the trends over time.

Race

In 2015, public order case rates were at the lowest level since 2005 for all age groups in all racial categories except Asian youth ages 10–12, which had its lowest rate in 2013

Public order offense case rates

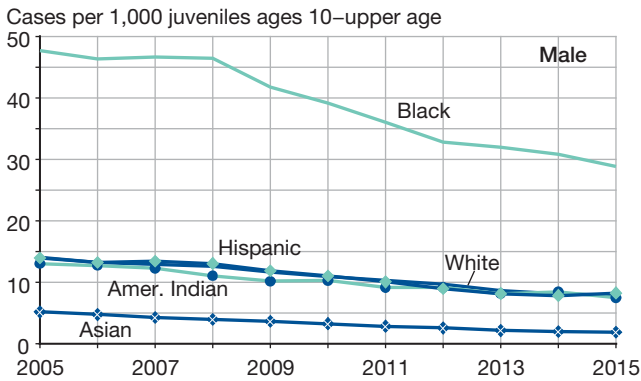


- Between 2005 and 2015, age-specific public order case rates decreased least for black youth age 16 and 17 (40% and 41%, respectively) and most for Asian youth ages 13–15 (74%).
- Case rates for Asian youth ages 10–12 decreased 69% between 2005 and 2013, before increasing 8% by 2015.
- With the exception of white youth, public order case rates decreased more for youth ages 10–12 and ages 13–15 than for youth age 16 and age 17 between 2005 and 2015.

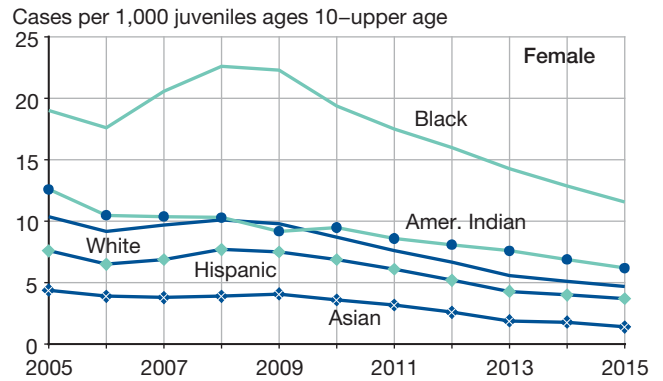
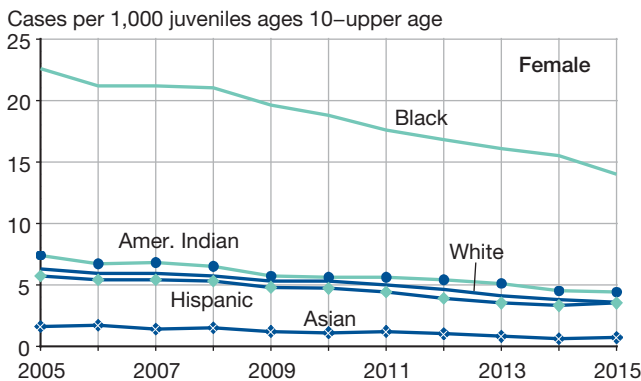
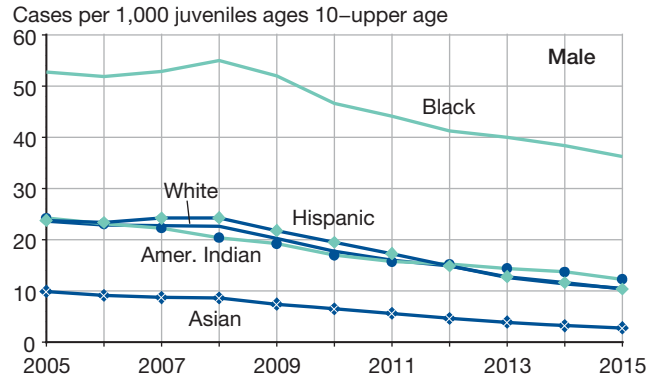
Race

For both males and females, case rates for black youth were higher than rates for all other racial groups for all offense categories except drug offenses involving females

Person offense case rates



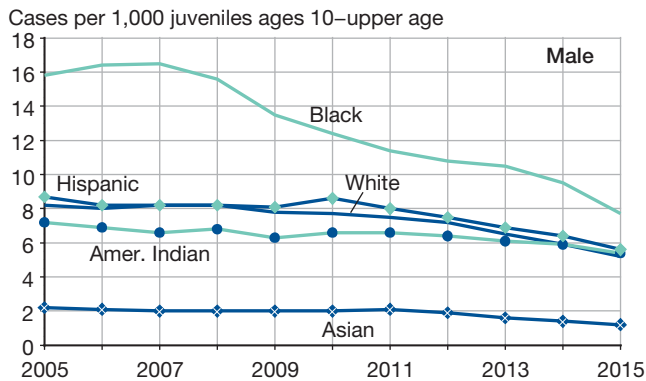
Property offense case rates



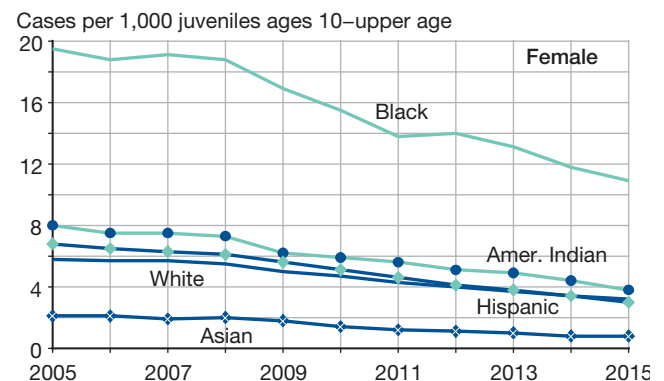
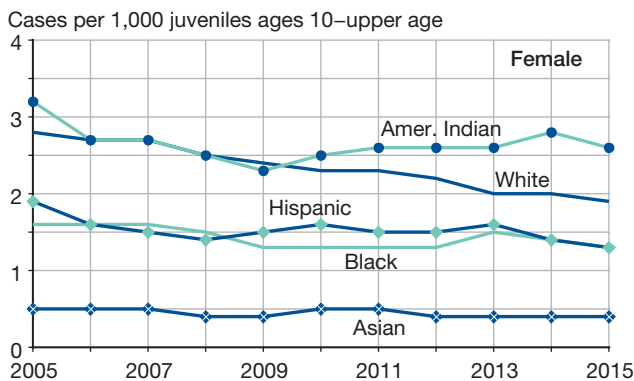
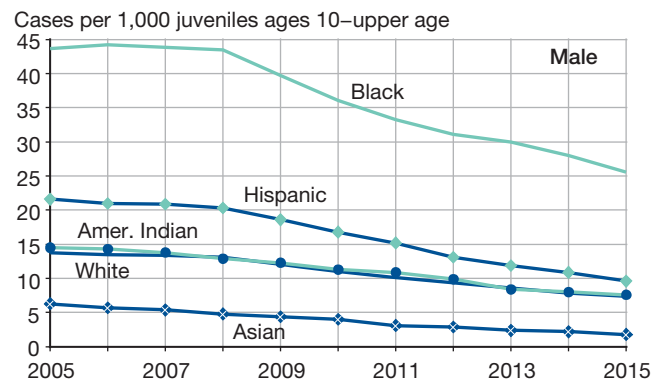
- For all years between 2005 and 2015, person offense case rates for black males were 3 to 4 times higher than the corresponding rates for white, Hispanic, and American Indian males, and 9 to 16 times higher than those for Asian males.
- In 2015, the person offense case rate for black females (14.0) was 21 times the rate for Asian females (0.7) and 3 to 4 times the rate for Hispanic females (3.5), white females (3.6), and American Indian females (4.4).
- Among males and females, property offense case rates were lower in 2015 than in 2005 for all racial groups.
- Between 2005 and 2015, cases involving Asian youth showed the largest relative decrease in property offense case rates. During this period, the property case rate for Asian males decreased 72% and the rate for Asian females decreased 67%.

Race

Drug offense case rates



Public order offense case rates



- For all years between 2005 and 2015, drug offense case rates were higher for black males than for males of all other races. In 2015, the rate for black males (7.7) was about 6 times the rate for Asian males, and at least 1.4 times the rate for white males, Hispanic males, and American Indian males.
- In 2015, the drug offense case rate for American Indian females was higher than the corresponding rate for all other race groups: nearly 1.4 times the rate for white youth, nearly double the rates for Hispanic youth and black youth, and more than 6 times the rate for Asian youth.
- Between 2005 and 2015, cases involving Asian youth showed the largest relative decrease in public order offense case rates for males and females. During this period, the public order case rate for Asian males decreased 71% and the rate for Asian females decreased 62%.
- In 2015, the public order offense case rate for black males was more than twice the rate for Hispanic males, more than 3 times the rate for both white males and American Indian males, and more than 13 times the rate for Asian males.

Chapter 3

National Estimates of Delinquency Case Processing

This chapter quantifies the flow of delinquency cases referred to juvenile court through the stages of the juvenile court system as follows.

Referral: An agency or individual files a complaint with court intake that initiates court processing. Cases can be referred to court intake by a number of sources, including law enforcement agencies, social service agencies, schools, parents, probation officers, and victims.

Detention: Juvenile courts sometimes hold youth in secure detention facilities during court processing to protect the community, to ensure a juvenile's appearance at subsequent court hearings, to secure the juvenile's own safety, or for the purpose of evaluating the juvenile. This report describes the use of detention between court referral and case disposition only, although juveniles can be detained by police prior to referral and also by the courts after disposition while awaiting placement elsewhere.

Intake: Formal processing of a case involves the filing of a petition that requests an adjudicatory or waiver hearing. Informally processed cases, on the other hand, are handled without a petition and without an adjudicatory or waiver hearing.

Waiver: One of the first decisions made at intake is whether a case should be processed in the criminal (adult) justice system rather than in the juvenile court. Most states have more than one mechanism for transferring cases to criminal court: prosecutors may have the authority to file certain juvenile cases directly in criminal court; state statute may order that cases meeting certain age and offense criteria be excluded from juvenile court jurisdiction and filed directly in criminal court; and a juvenile court judge may waive juvenile court jurisdiction in certain juvenile cases, thus authorizing a transfer to criminal court. This report describes those cases that were transferred to criminal court by judicial waiver only.

Adjudication: At an adjudicatory hearing, a youth may be adjudicated (judged) delinquent if the juvenile court determines that the youth did commit the offense(s) charged in the petition. If the youth is adjudicated, the case proceeds to a disposition hearing. Alternatively, a case can be dismissed or continued in contemplation of dismissal. In these cases where the youth is not adjudicated delinquent, the court can recommend that the youth take some actions prior to the final adjudication decision, such as paying restitution or voluntarily attending drug counseling.

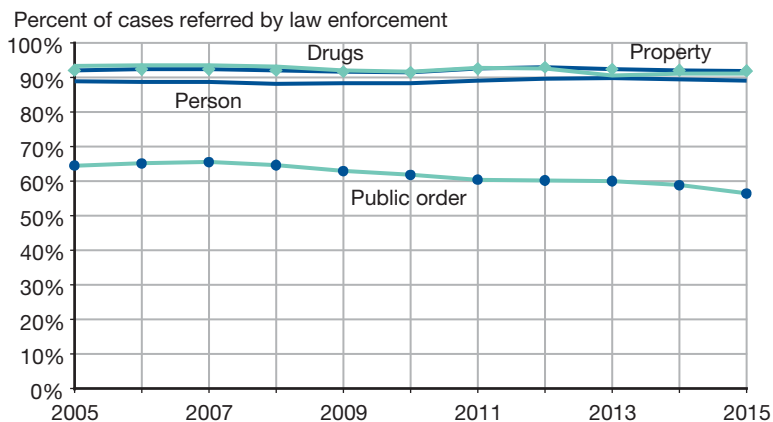
Disposition: Disposition options include commitment to an institution or other residential facility, probation supervision, or a variety of other sanctions, such as community service, restitution or fines, or referral to an outside agency or treatment program. This report characterizes

case disposition by the most severe or restrictive sanction. For example, although most youth in out-of-home placements are also technically on probation, in this report cases resulting in placement are not included in the probation group.

This chapter describes case processing by offense and by demographics (age, gender, and race) of the juveniles involved, focusing on cases disposed in 2015 and examining trends from 2005 through 2015.

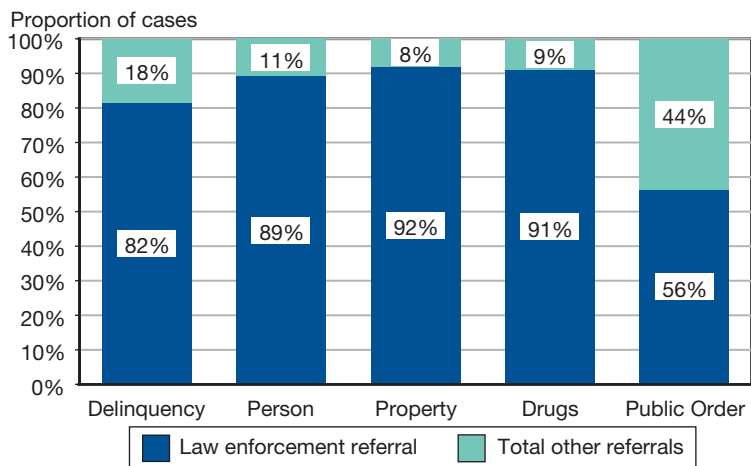
Referral

Law enforcement agencies are the primary source of delinquency referrals to juvenile court



- Between 2005 and 2015, law enforcement agencies were the primary source of delinquency referrals for each year.
- In 2015, 82% of all delinquency cases were referred by law enforcement; however, there were variations across offense categories.
- Law enforcement agencies referred 92% of property offense cases, 91% of drug law violation cases, 89% of person offense cases, and 56% of public order offense cases in 2015.
- For each year between 2005 and 2015, public order offense cases had the smallest proportion of cases referred to court by law enforcement. This may be attributed in part to the fact that this offense category contains probation violations and contempt-of-court cases, which are most often referred by court personnel.
- Law enforcement referred a slightly smaller proportion of all delinquency cases in 2015 (82%) than in 2005 (84%).

Property offense cases were most likely to be referred by law enforcement, compared with other offense types



Source of referral profile, 2015:

Referral source	Delinquency	Person	Property	Drugs	Public order
Law enforcement	82%	89%	92%	91%	56%
School	3	3	1	4	4
Relative	1	1	1	1	1
Other	15	7	6	4	38
Total	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%

Note: Detail may not add to totals because of rounding.

Detention

- The number of delinquency cases involving detention decreased 44% between 2005 and 2015 to its lowest level in the analysis period. The largest relative decline since 2005 was for drug offense cases involving detention, down 52%, compared with 43% for public order offenses, 46% for property offenses, and 39% for person offenses.¹
- Despite the decrease in the volume of delinquency cases involving detention, the proportion of cases detained was slightly larger in 2015 (24%) than in 2005 (23%).
- Between 2005 and 2015, the use of detention decreased for drug law violation cases (from 21% to 17%), while the use of detention increased for all other offenses. The use of detention increased from 28% to 30% for person offense cases, from 18% to 20% for property offense cases, and from 25% to 28% for public order offense cases.

Offense profile of detained delinquency cases:

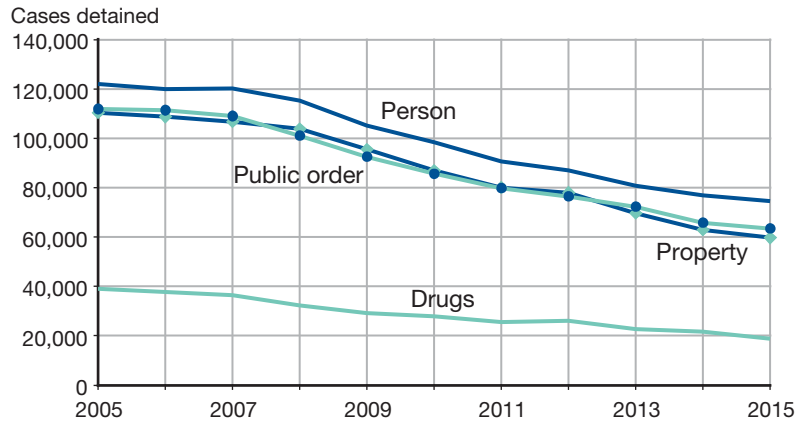
Most serious offense	2005	2015
Person	32%	34%
Property	29	28
Drugs	10	9
Public order	29	29
Total	100%	100%
Number of cases	359,000	212,900

Note: Detail may not total 100% because of rounding.

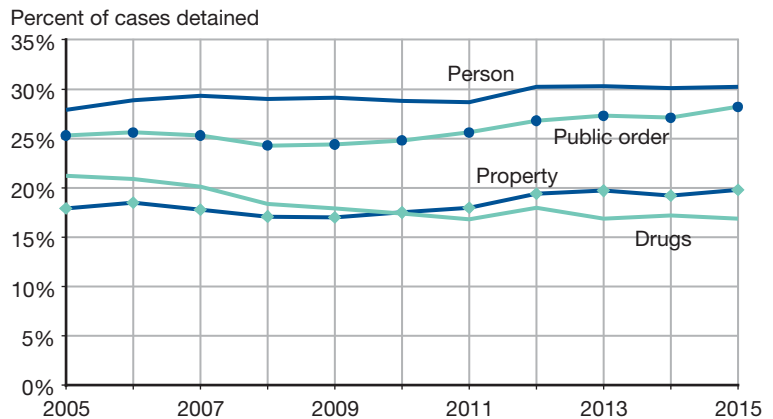
- Compared with 2005, the offense characteristics of the 2015 detention caseload were similar.

¹ Coverage of detention data used to generate national estimates was improved in *JCS 2015* (see p. 4). Readers familiar with this data will notice an increase in the likelihood of detention for delinquency cases as a result of the improvement.

The number of cases involving detention decreased between 2005 and 2015 for all offense categories

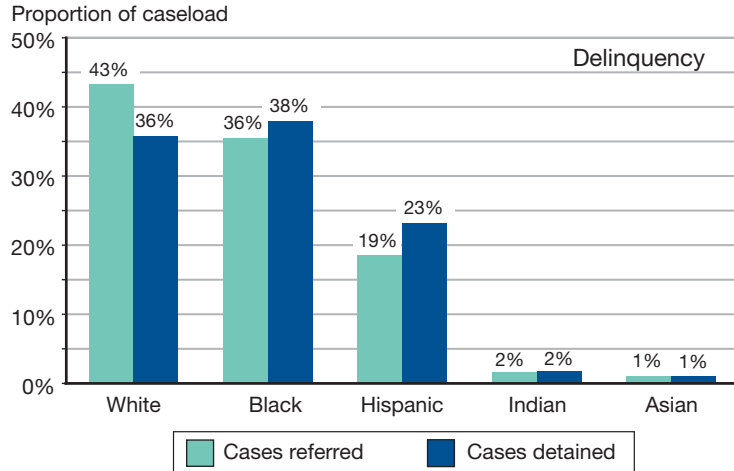


Between 2005 and 2015, the proportions of cases involving detention increased slightly for person, property, and public order offense cases and decreased for drug offense cases

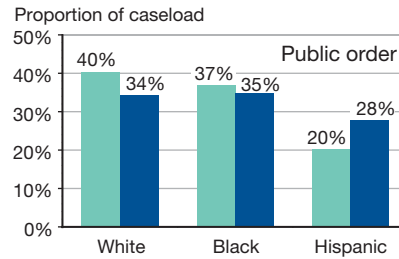
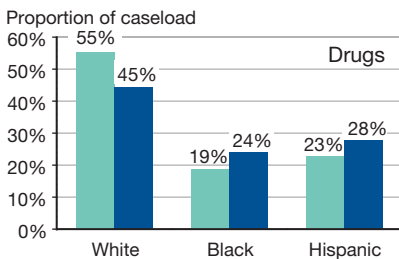
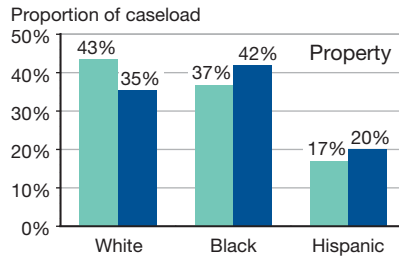
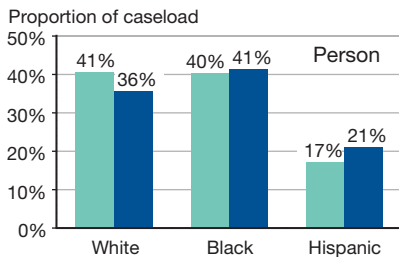


Detention

Black and Hispanic youth represented a larger share of the overall detention caseload than of the overall delinquency caseload in 2015



- In 2015, black youth accounted for 36% of the overall delinquency caseload, compared with 38% of the overall detention caseload. Hispanic youth accounted for 19% of the overall delinquency caseload and 23% of the overall detention caseload.
- White youth accounted for a smaller proportion of the detention caseload (36%) compared with the delinquency caseload (43%).
- Hispanic youth accounted for a larger proportion of the cases detained than of the cases referred for all offense categories in 2015.
- White youth accounted for a smaller proportion of the cases detained than of the cases referred for all offense categories in 2015.
- Black juveniles accounted for a greater proportion of detained cases than referred cases for person, property, and drug offenses, and a smaller proportion of detained than referred cases for public order offenses in 2015.



Note: Proportions for American Indian and Asian youth are not shown in the offense graphs above because their percentages are too small for display.

Detention

Age

- In each year from 2005 through 2014, delinquency cases involving youth age 16 or older were more likely to be detained than were cases involving youth age 15 or younger. In 2015, they were equally as likely.
- For all years between 2005 and 2015, person offense cases for youth age 15 or younger were more likely to involve detention than were other offenses.

Gender

- In 2015, male juveniles charged with delinquency offenses were more likely than females to be held in secure facilities while awaiting court disposition. Overall in 2015, 26% of male delinquency cases involved detention, compared with 20% of female cases.

Offense profile of detained delinquency cases by gender, 2015:

Most serious offense	Male	Female
Person	33%	41%
Property	29	23
Drugs	9	7
Public order	29	29
Total	100%	100%

Race

- Cases involving white youth were less likely to be detained than cases involving all other racial groups for most years between 2005 and 2015 across offense categories.
- In 2015, person offense cases involving Hispanic youth were more likely to involve detention (37%) than those involving all other races.

Detention was more likely for cases involving older youth than younger youth, and for cases involving males than females

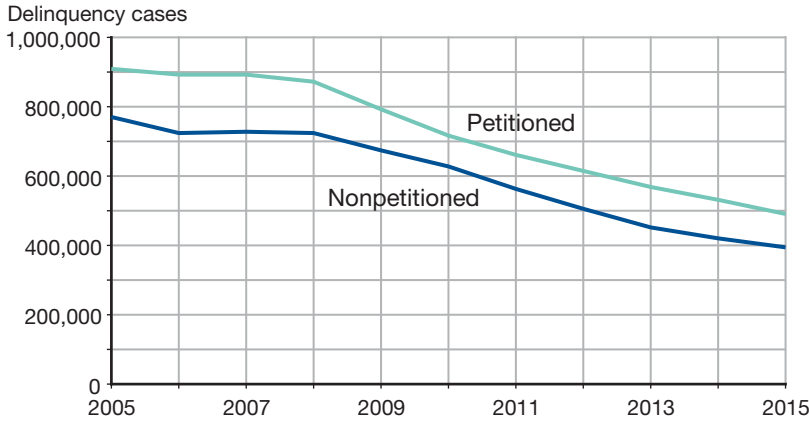
Most serious offense	Percentage of cases detained			
	Age 15 and younger	Age 16 and older	Male	Female
2015				
Delinquency	24%	25%	26%	20%
Person	29	32	32	27
Property	20	19	22	14
Drugs	17	17	18	14
Public order	26	30	30	23
2010				
Delinquency	21%	23%	24%	17%
Person	27	31	31	25
Property	17	18	21	10
Drugs	18	17	18	15
Public order	23	27	26	21
2005				
Delinquency	22%	24%	24%	19%
Person	27	30	29	25
Property	17	19	20	12
Drugs	22	21	22	19
Public order	24	27	26	23

Detention was more likely for cases involving Hispanic youth than cases involving youth of other racial groups

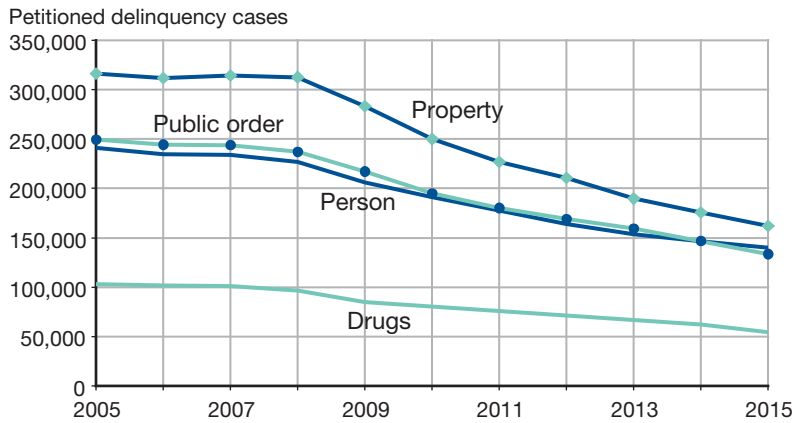
Most serious offense	Percentage of cases detained				
	White	Black	Hispanic	American Indian	Asian
2015					
Delinquency	20%	26%	31%	27%	23%
Person	26	31	37	29	32
Property	16	23	23	22	16
Drugs	14	22	21	18	18
Public order	24	27	39	40	28
2010					
Delinquency	19%	24%	27%	27%	21%
Person	26	29	36	34	29
Property	15	20	21	20	14
Drugs	14	22	22	18	17
Public order	22	24	31	34	30
2005					
Delinquency	20%	24%	28%	25%	23%
Person	26	28	35	30	32
Property	16	20	22	20	18
Drugs	17	28	26	21	19
Public order	23	24	31	32	27

Intake Decision

Each year between 2005 and 2015, delinquency cases were more likely to be handled formally, with the filing of a petition for adjudication, than informally



Regardless of offense type, the number of petitioned cases decreased between 2005 and 2015



- Between 2005 and 2015, the likelihood that a delinquency case would be handled informally (without filing a petition for adjudication) decreased at a similar rate as formally handled cases. As the overall delinquency caseload decreased 47% between 2005 and 2015, the number of non-petitioned cases decreased 49% to its lowest level in 2015, and the number of petitioned cases decreased 46%.
- The largest relative decrease in the number of petitioned cases between 2005 and 2015 was seen in property offense cases (49%), followed by drug offense cases (47%), public order offense cases (46%), and person offense cases (42%).

Offense profile of delinquency cases, 2015:

Most serious offense	Nonpetitioned	Petitioned
Person	27%	29%
Property	35	33
Drugs	14	11
Public order	23	27
Total	100%	100%
Number of cases	394,800	490,000

Note: Detail may not total 100% because of rounding.

- In 2015, the offense profiles of non-petitioned and petitioned delinquency cases were similar.

Intake Decision

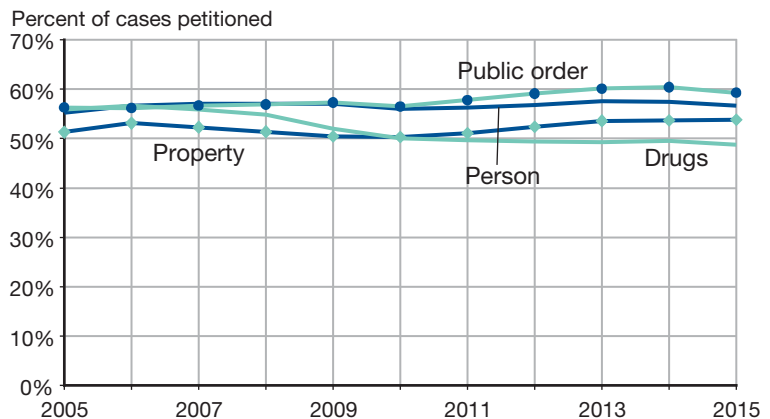
- The overall likelihood of formal handling was greater for more serious offenses within the same general offense category. In 2015, for example, 73% of aggravated assault cases were handled formally, compared with 50% of simple assault cases. Similarly, 73% of burglary cases and 75% of motor vehicle theft cases were handled formally by juvenile courts, compared with 45% of larceny-theft and 44% of trespassing cases.
- Youth younger than 16 accounted for 50% of the delinquency cases handled formally by juvenile courts in 2015; females accounted for 24% and white youth accounted for 40% of petitioned cases.
- Between 2005 and 2015, the likelihood of formal processing increased: from 56% to 59% for public order cases, from 51% to 54% for property offense cases, and from 55% to 57% for person offense cases.
- In 2015, 49% of drug offense cases were petitioned—a lower percentage than in 2005, when 56% were petitioned.
- Between 2005 and 2009, property offense cases were less likely than cases in each of the other general offense categories to be handled with a petition for adjudication; in 2015, drug offense cases were the least likely.

In 2015, juvenile courts petitioned 55% of all delinquency cases

Most serious offense	Petitioned cases	Percentage of total delinquency cases	Percentage of all petitioned cases, 2015		
			Younger than 16	Female	White
Total delinquency	490,000	55%	50%	24%	40%
Total person	139,900	57	57	27	36
Criminal homicide	600	76	32	16	34
Rape	5,800	75	64	3	52
Robbery	17,000	87	49	11	11
Aggravated assault	18,800	73	54	23	29
Simple assault	81,700	50	59	34	39
Other violent sex offenses	5,400	70	74	5	60
Other person offenses	10,700	46	56	28	48
Total property	162,200	54	52	21	39
Burglary	39,500	73	54	8	35
Larceny-theft	65,600	45	50	31	40
Motor vehicle theft	9,900	75	49	19	31
Arson	2,000	69	72	15	54
Vandalism	22,800	51	59	17	50
Trespassing	11,800	44	51	17	37
Stolen property offenses	6,700	76	47	14	27
Other property offenses	3,800	56	44	26	47
Drug law violations	54,400	49	35	19	54
Public order offenses	133,500	59	45	25	38
Obstruction of justice	83,400	73	40	26	36
Disorderly conduct	25,100	43	60	33	39
Weapons offenses	11,300	60	50	9	28
Liquor law violations	1,800	29	30	29	59
Nonviolent sex offenses	5,500	49	57	17	56
Other public order offenses	6,400	40	50	22	50

Note: Detail may not add to totals because of rounding.

Between 2005 and 2015, the use of formal processing increased in all general offense categories except drug offense cases



Intake Decision

Formal processing was more likely for cases involving older youth than younger youth, and more likely for cases involving males than females

Most serious offense	Percentage of cases petitioned			
	Age 15 and younger	Age 16 and older	Male	Female
2015				
Delinquency	53%	58%	58%	47%
Person	54	60	60	50
Property	53	55	58	42
Drugs	44	52	51	42
Public order	55	64	62	54
2010				
Delinquency	50%	57%	57%	45%
Person	53	60	59	49
Property	48	53	56	37
Drugs	45	54	51	44
Public order	51	62	58	51
2005				
Delinquency	51%	58%	57%	47%
Person	53	59	58	49
Property	49	55	56	40
Drugs	52	58	58	49
Public order	52	61	58	53

Between 2005 and 2015, the likelihood of formal processing increased for cases involving black youth and decreased for cases involving Asian youth

Most serious offense	Percentage of cases petitioned				
	White	Black	Hispanic	American Indian	Asian
2015					
Delinquency	51%	62%	53%	56%	53%
Person	51	63	55	54	57
Property	49	62	50	54	44
Drugs	48	58	55	49	48
Public order	56	63	53	66	65
2010					
Delinquency	50%	59%	50%	58%	53%
Person	51	62	54	58	61
Property	47	56	48	54	45
Drugs	47	63	45	50	51
Public order	55	60	52	68	63
2005					
Delinquency	51%	59%	53%	56%	56%
Person	51	60	55	55	61
Property	49	57	50	51	51
Drugs	51	70	55	50	59
Public order	56	57	53	66	62

Age

- In each year between 2005 and 2015, delinquency cases involving juveniles age 16 or older were more likely to be petitioned than were cases involving younger juveniles.
- In 2015, 53% of delinquency cases involving youth age 15 or younger were petitioned, compared with 58% of cases involving older youth.

Gender

- Between 2005 and 2015, the likelihood of formal case processing for delinquency cases increased slightly for males (from 57% to 58%) and remained the same for females (47%).
- Between 2005 and 2015, for both males and females, the likelihood of formal case processing decreased for drug offense cases (down 7 percentage points each). The use of formal case processing increased slightly for all other offense types for both males and females, with the largest increase occurring for males involved in public order offense cases (up 4 percentage points).

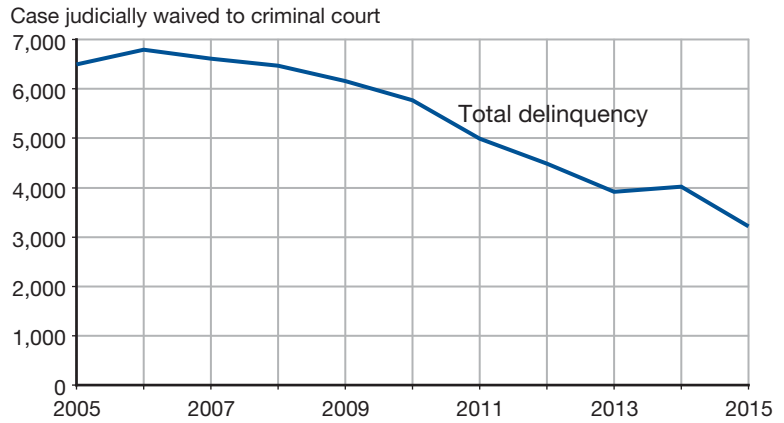
Race

- The proportion of delinquency cases petitioned decreased between 2005 and 2015 for Asian youth (down 3 percentage points), remained the same for white, Hispanic, and American Indian youth, and increased for black youth (up 3 percentage points).
- For each year between 2005 and 2015, drug offense cases involving black juveniles were more likely to be petitioned than were such cases involving any other racial group.

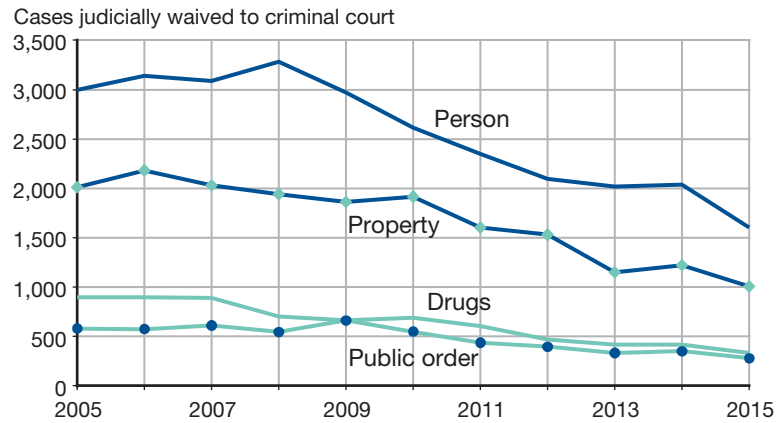
Waiver

- Between 2005 and 2015, the number of delinquency cases waived to criminal court was at its highest in 2006 (6,800). By 2015, the number of cases waived had decreased by 53%, to its lowest level during that time period.
- The number of judicially waived person offense cases increased 10% between 2005 and 2008 and then fell 51% through 2015.
- The number of drug offense cases judicially waived remained stable between 2005 and 2007 before falling 63% by 2015.
- For public order offenses, the number of waived cases decreased 52% between 2005 and 2015.
- Between 2005 and 2015, the largest number of judicially waived cases involved person offense cases.
- Historically, the number of cases judicially waived declined after 1994 and may be attributable in part to the large increase in the number of states that passed legislation excluding certain serious offenses from juvenile court jurisdiction and legislation permitting the prosecutor to file certain cases directly in criminal court.

The number of cases judicially waived to criminal court decreased 50% between 2005 and 2015

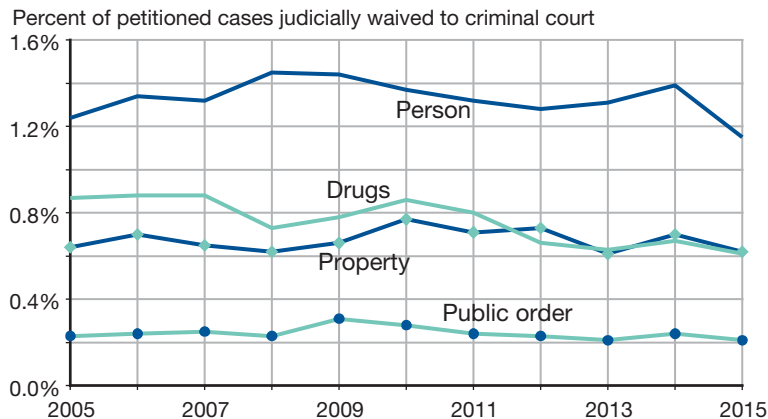


Since 2005, the number of cases judicially waived to criminal court decreased the most for drug offenses (63%), followed by public order (52%), property (50%), and person offenses (47%)

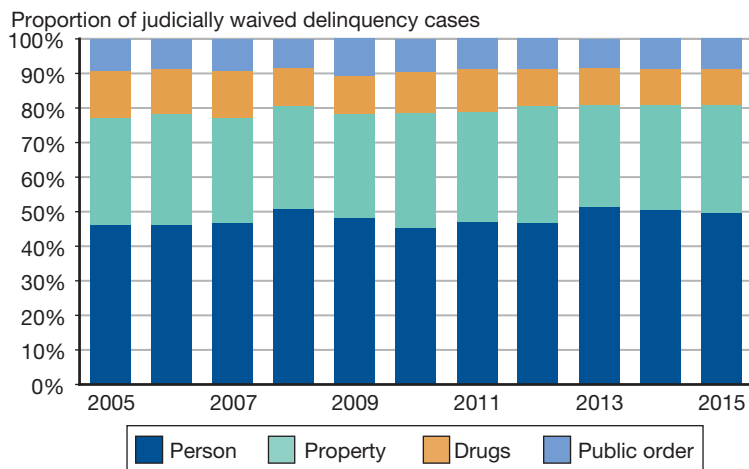


Waiver

For all years from 2005 to 2015, cases involving person offense cases were most likely to be judicially waived



Between 2005 and 2015, the offense profile of the judicially waived caseload changed slightly—the share of person offense cases increased while the share of all other offense cases decreased



- The proportion of judicially waived drug offense cases remained stable between 2005 and 2011, with a relative decline through 2015.
- Between 2005 and 2008, the likelihood of waiver for person offense cases increased and then declined through 2012. Despite an increase through 2014, the proportion of person offense cases judicially waived in 2015 was lower than that in 2005.
- Between 2005 and 2015, the proportion of property offense cases that were judicially waived fluctuated, with the likelihood of waiver being slightly lower in 2015 than in 2005.
- After an initial increase between 2005 and 2009, the proportion of judicially waived public order offense cases decreased through 2015 to a level just below that in 2005.
- The proportion of the waived caseload involving person offenses grew between 2005 and 2015. In 2005, person offense cases accounted for 46% of the waived caseload; by 2015, person offense cases were 50% of the waived caseload.
- The proportion of all waived delinquency cases that involved a property offense as the most serious charge was 31% in both 2005 and 2015, and ranged between 29% and 34% over the time period.
- Drug offense cases represented 14% of the judicially waived cases in 2005 and 10% in 2015.
- Between 2005 and 2015, public order offense cases comprised 8% to 11% of the waived caseload.

Waiver

Age

- In 2015, 1.2% of all petitioned delinquency cases involving juveniles age 16 or older were waived to criminal court, compared with 0.1% of cases involving younger juveniles.
- For both age groups, the probability of waiver remained relatively stable between 2005 and 2015.

Gender

- The proportion of person offense cases judicially waived decreased from 1.6% in 2005 to 1.4% in 2015 for males, and the proportion of drug offense cases judicially waived decreased from 1.0% to 0.6%.
- The use of waiver remained relatively stable for all offense types involving females between 2005 and 2015.

Race

- The likelihood of judicial waiver among cases involving white youth was slightly lower in 2015 (0.6%) than in 2005 (0.7%); the likelihood for cases involving black youth was the same in both years (0.8%).
- In 2015, cases involving person offenses were more likely than other offenses to be waived for youth of all races: 0.9% among white juveniles, 1.4% among black juveniles, 1.1% among Hispanic youth, 2.1% among American Indian juveniles, and 0.7% among Asian juveniles.

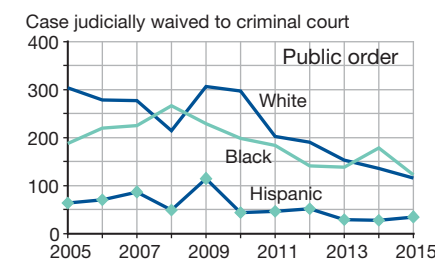
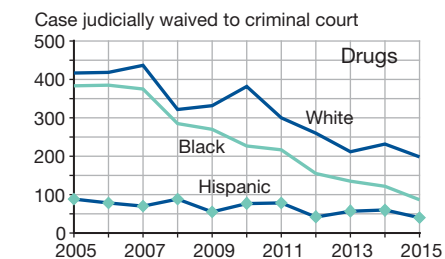
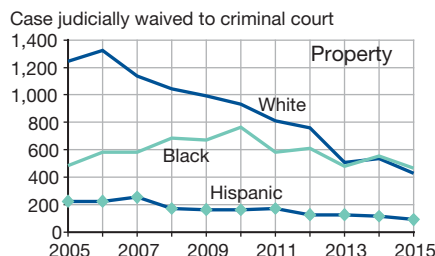
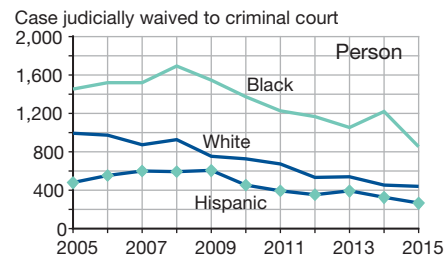
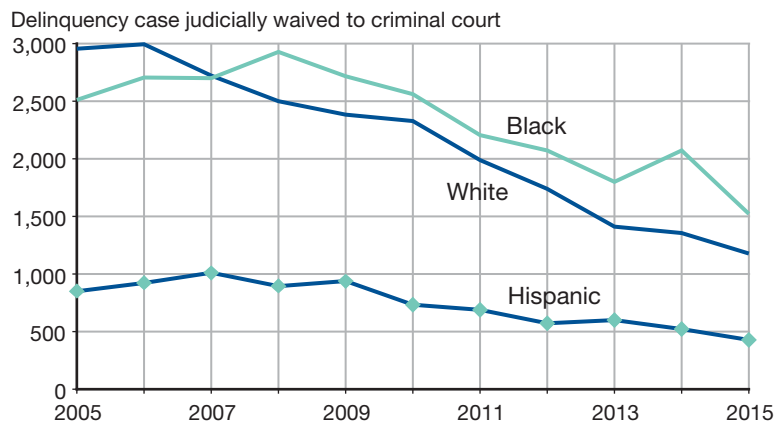
Cases involving juveniles age 16 or older were much more likely to be judicially waived to criminal court than those involving younger juveniles

Most serious offense	Percentage of petitioned cases judicially waived			
	Age 15 and younger	Age 16 and older	Male	Female
2015				
Delinquency	0.1%	1.2%	0.8%	0.3%
Person	0.3	2.3	1.4	0.4
Property	0.1	1.2	0.7	0.3
Drugs	0.0	0.9	0.6	0.5
Public order	0.0	0.4	0.3	0.1
2010				
Delinquency	0.2%	1.4%	1.0%	0.2%
Person	0.4	2.6	1.8	0.3
Property	0.1	1.4	0.9	0.3
Drugs	0.1	1.3	0.9	0.5
Public order	0.1	0.5	0.4	0.0
2005				
Delinquency	0.2%	1.4%	0.9%	0.3%
Person	0.3	2.7	1.6	0.4
Property	0.1	1.4	0.7	0.3
Drugs	0.1	1.4	1.0	0.4
Public order	0.0	0.4	0.3	0.1

Person offense cases involving black youth were more likely than cases involving white youth to be judicially waived

Most serious offense	Percentage of petitioned cases judicially waived				
	White	Black	Hispanic	American Indian	Asian
2015					
Delinquency	0.6%	0.8%	0.5%	0.9%	0.3%
Person	0.9	1.4	1.1	2.1	0.7
Property	0.7	0.7	0.3	0.8	0.3
Drugs	0.7	0.7	0.4	0.6	0.2
Public order	0.2	0.2	0.1	0.2	0.0
2010					
Delinquency	0.8%	1.0%	0.6%	1.0%	0.4%
Person	1.0	1.6	1.6	1.8	1.0
Property	0.8	0.9	0.4	1.2	0.3
Drugs	0.9	1.1	0.5	0.4	0.3
Public order	0.4	0.3	0.1	0.2	0.1
2005					
Delinquency	0.7%	0.8%	0.6%	0.8%	0.5%
Person	1.0	1.4	1.5	1.5	1.1
Property	0.8	0.5	0.5	0.8	0.4
Drugs	0.8	1.3	0.5	0.6	0.3
Public order	0.3	0.2	0.1	0.4	0.2

For white, black, and Hispanic juveniles, the number of delinquency cases judicially waived to criminal court in 2015 was at its lowest level since 2005



- The number of judicially waived cases involving white youth increased slightly between 2005 and 2006, and then declined 61% to its lowest level (1,200) in 2015. Similarly, the number of judicially waived cases involving Hispanic youth increased 18% between 2005 and 2007, before also decreasing to its lowest level in 2015 (down 57%).
- For black juveniles, the number of judicially waived cases increased 17% between 2005 and 2008, and then fell 48% to its lowest level in 2015.
- The number of judicially waived person offense cases involving white youth decreased 56% between 2005 and 2015.
- The number of judicially waived drug offense cases involving black juveniles decreased substantially between 2005 and 2015—down 78% to its lowest level.

Offense profile of waived cases:

Most serious offense	White	Black	Hispanic
2015			
Person	37%	56%	61%
Property	36	30	21
Drugs	17	6	9
Public order	10	8	8
Total	100%	100%	100%
2005			
Person	34	58	56
Property	42	19	26
Drugs	14	15	10
Public order	10	7	8
Total	100%	100%	100%

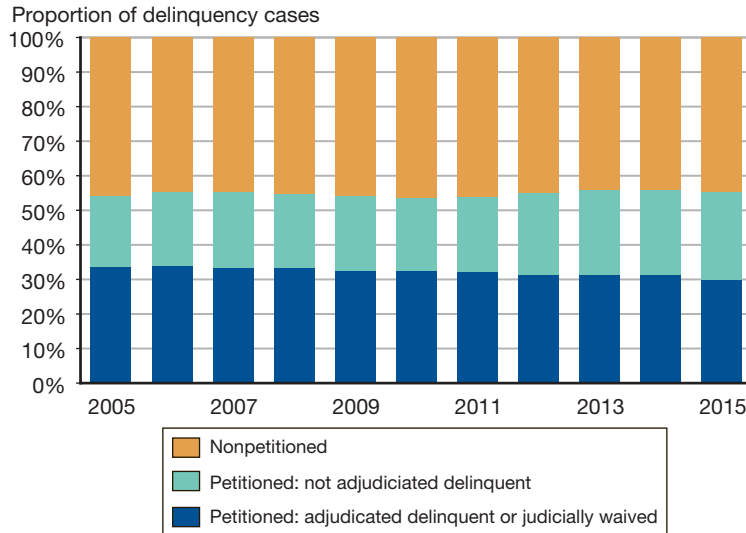
Note: Detail may not total 100% because of rounding. Offense profiles are not presented for American Indian and Asian youth because counts were too small to calculate meaningful percentages.

- In 2015, person offense cases accounted for the largest proportion of judicially waived cases for all racial groups.
- Nearly equal proportions of person and property offense cases involving white youth were judicially waived in 2015 (37% and 36%, respectively).

Adjudication

- In 2005, 33% of all delinquency cases resulted in either adjudication of delinquency or waiver to criminal court. This proportion decreased to 30% in 2015.
- In general, the likelihood of being adjudicated delinquent was greater for more serious offenses within the same general offense category.
- Within the 2015 person offense category, 56% of petitioned aggravated assault cases were adjudicated delinquent, compared with 48% of simple assault cases.
- In the property offense category in 2015, similar proportions of petitioned burglary and motor vehicle theft cases were adjudicated delinquent (60% and 59%, respectively), compared with 51% of larceny-theft cases.
- Among public order offenses in 2015, 60% of obstruction of justice cases were adjudicated delinquent, compared with 48% of disorderly conduct cases.
- Youth younger than 16 accounted for 50% of all adjudicated delinquency cases handled by juvenile courts in 2015, females accounted for 22%, and white youth accounted for 40%.

The proportion of formally processed delinquency cases that resulted in a delinquency adjudication or waiver changed little since 2005



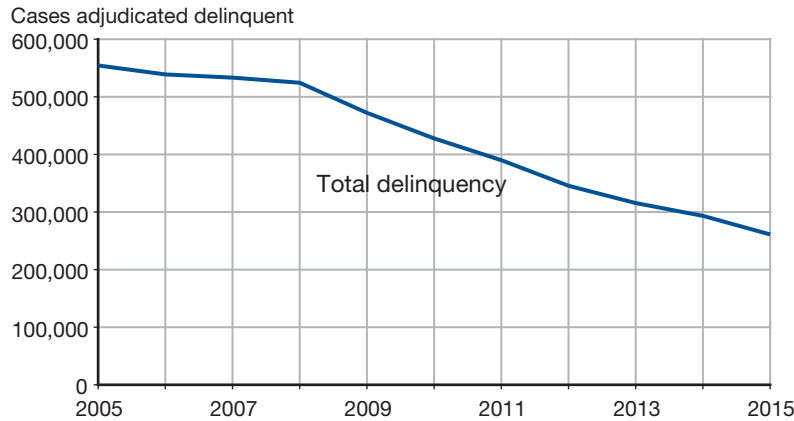
In 2015, youth were adjudicated delinquent in more than half (53%) of petitioned delinquency cases

Most serious offense	Cases adjudicated delinquent	Percentage of total petitioned cases	Percentage of all adjudicated cases, 2015		
			Younger than 16	Female	White
Total delinquency	261,000	53%	50%	22%	40%
Total person	72,300	52	58	24	36
Criminal homicide	300	49	37	17	37
Rape	3,200	56	67	3	53
Robbery	10,300	61	49	11	12
Aggravated assault	10,500	56	53	21	29
Simple assault	39,500	48	59	32	39
Other violent sex offenses	3,100	57	76	4	60
Other person offenses	5,400	51	58	26	50
Total property	86,300	53	53	19	40
Burglary	23,500	60	55	8	34
Larceny-theft	33,400	51	51	29	43
Motor vehicle theft	5,900	59	51	18	32
Arson	1,100	54	73	16	54
Vandalism	11,600	51	59	16	52
Trespassing	5,100	43	53	16	38
Stolen property offenses	3,800	56	48	13	27
Other property offenses	2,000	51	47	26	48
Drug law violations	27,100	50	38	18	54
Public order offenses	75,300	56	45	24	38
Obstruction of justice	50,000	60	39	25	37
Disorderly conduct	12,000	48	61	32	42
Weapons offenses	6,300	55	47	7	26
Liquor law violations	900	50	31	26	58
Nonviolent sex offenses	2,900	53	59	12	57
Other public order offenses	3,100	48	47	20	53

Note: Detail may not add to totals because of rounding.

Adjudication

Between 2005 and 2015, the number of cases in which youth were adjudicated delinquent decreased 53%



- The annual number of delinquency cases in which youth were adjudicated delinquent steadily decreased from 553,900 in 2005 to its lowest level in 2015 (261,000).
- The number of adjudicated property offense cases was at its lowest level in 2015 (from 193,200 in 2005 to 86,300 in 2015).
- The number of adjudicated person offense cases decreased 48% from 139,600 cases in 2005 to 72,300 cases in 2015.
- The number of adjudicated cases decreased 57% for drug offense cases and 52% for public order cases between 2005 and 2015.

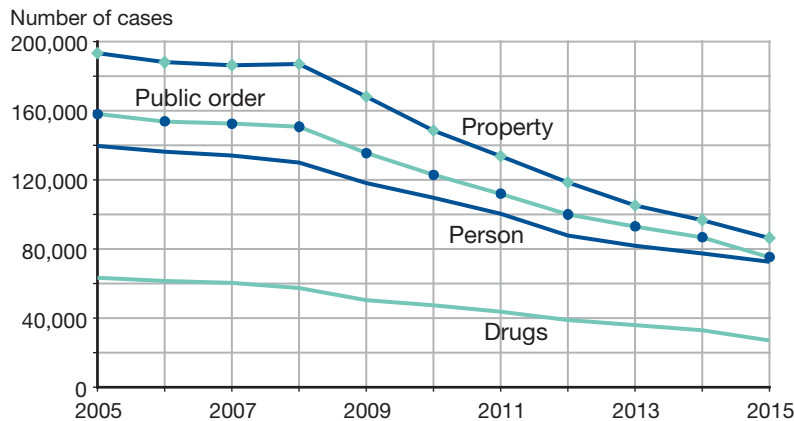
Offense profile of cases adjudicated delinquent:

Most serious offense	2005	2015
Person	25%	28%
Property	35	33
Drugs	11	10
Public order	29	29
Total	100%	100%
Cases adjudicated delinquent	553,900	261,000

Note: Detail may not total 100% because of rounding.

- Compared with 2005, the 2015 adjudicated delinquent caseload included a greater proportion of person offense cases, smaller proportions of property and drug offense cases, and an equal proportion of public order offense cases.

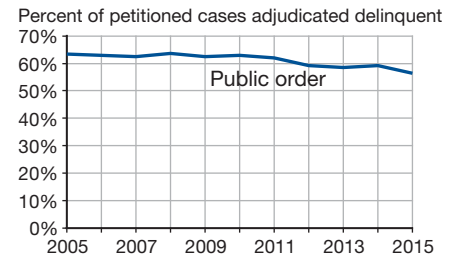
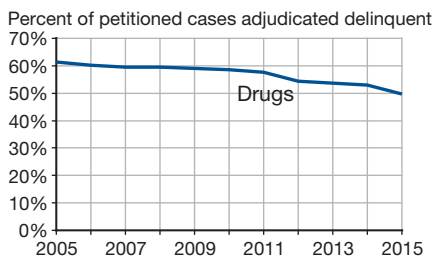
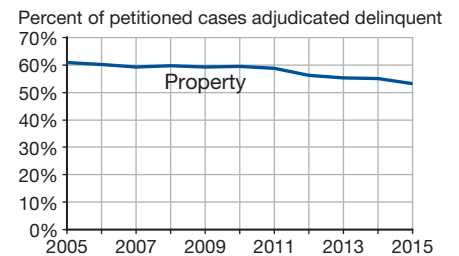
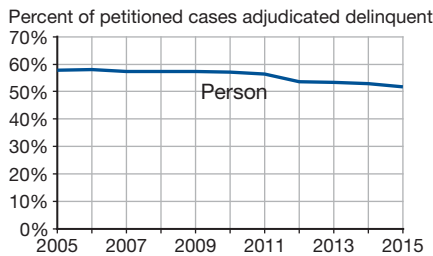
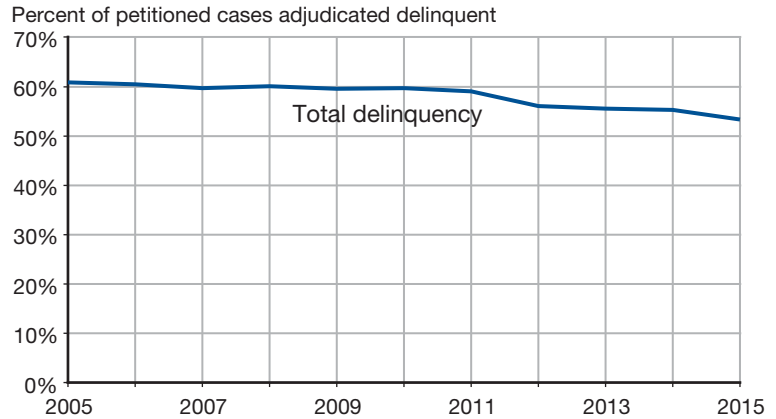
Since 2005, the number of cases adjudicated delinquent decreased for all general offense categories



Adjudication

- The likelihood of a delinquency adjudication was less in 2015 than in 2005 for all offense types (by 6 to 11 percentage points).
- The likelihood of adjudication among cases involving a property offense decreased from 61% to 53% between 2005 and 2015.
- The likelihood of adjudication among drug offense cases followed a similar pattern, decreasing from 61% to 50% between 2005 and 2015.
- Among public order cases, the likelihood of adjudication decreased from 63% to 56% between 2005 and 2015.
- Cases involving public order offenses were slightly more likely than any other offense to result in a delinquency adjudication each year between 2005 and 2015.

The likelihood of delinquency adjudication decreased from 61% of petitioned cases in 2005 to 53% in 2015



Adjudication

Cases involving younger juveniles were slightly more likely to be adjudicated delinquent than those involving older juveniles

Most serious offense	Percentage of petitioned cases adjudicated delinquent			
	Age 15 and younger	Age 16 and older	Male	Female
2015				
Delinquency	54%	53%	55%	49%
Person	52	51	53	47
Property	54	52	55	48
Drugs	54	48	50	48
Public order	55	57	57	53
2010				
Delinquency	61%	59%	61%	55%
Person	58	56	59	53
Property	60	58	61	53
Drugs	62	57	59	56
Public order	63	63	64	61
2005				
Delinquency	62%	60%	62%	58%
Person	59	56	60	53
Property	62	60	62	56
Drugs	64	60	61	62
Public order	63	63	64	62

Delinquency cases involving black youth were less likely to result in a delinquency adjudication than were cases involving youth of all other races

Most serious offense	Percentage of petitioned cases adjudicated delinquent				
	White	Black	Hispanic	American Indian	Asian
2015					
Delinquency	54%	50%	58%	61%	54%
Person	52	50	56	59	56
Property	55	51	56	62	52
Drugs	50	47	52	61	43
Public order	57	52	63	62	59
2010					
Delinquency	60%	57%	64%	68%	57%
Person	57	55	63	67	56
Property	60	58	62	67	54
Drugs	58	56	62	71	51
Public order	63	60	68	70	65
2005					
Delinquency	62%	57%	65%	68%	62%
Person	59	55	63	66	64
Property	62	58	63	68	58
Drugs	62	58	64	69	59
Public order	64	60	68	68	67

Age

- For youth age 15 and younger, person offense cases were less likely than other offense categories to be adjudicated delinquent for each year between 2005 and 2015.
- For drug offense cases involving juveniles age 16 and older, the likelihood of adjudication decreased from 60% to 48% between 2005 and 2015.

Gender

- Between 2005 and 2015, male cases generally were more likely to be adjudicated delinquent than were female cases.
- Petitioned drug offense cases involving females were nearly as likely as those involving males to result in a delinquency adjudication for all years between 2005 and 2015.
- Between 2005 and 2015, for females, the likelihood of a delinquency adjudication decreased for all offense types (between 6 and 14 percentage points).

Race

- Between 2005 and 2015, the likelihood of a delinquency adjudication decreased 8 percentage points for white youth, and 7 percentage points each for black youth and Hispanic youth.
- Cases involving American Indian juveniles were more likely to result in a delinquency adjudication than cases involving all other races.

Dispositions: Out-of-Home Placement

- The number of cases adjudicated delinquent that resulted in out-of-home placement decreased 53% from 2005 to its lowest level in 2015.
- Between 2005 and 2015, the number of cases involving the use of out-of-home placement decreased 68% for drug offense cases, 55% for property offense cases, 51% for public order offense cases, and 48% for person offense cases.
- Public order offense cases include escapes from institutions, weapons offenses, and probation and parole violations. This may help to explain the relatively high number of public order offense cases involving out-of-home placement.

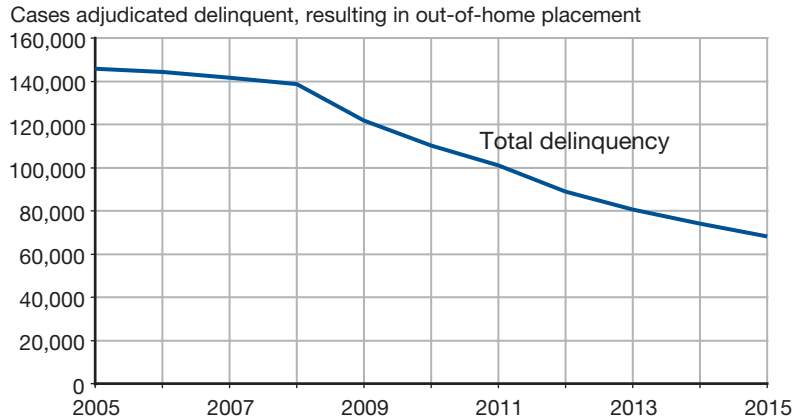
Offense profile of cases adjudicated delinquent, resulting in out-of-home placement:

Most serious offense	2005	2015
Person	27%	30%
Property	33	31
Drugs	9	6
Public order	31	32
Total	100%	100%
Cases resulting in out-of-home placement	145,800	68,200

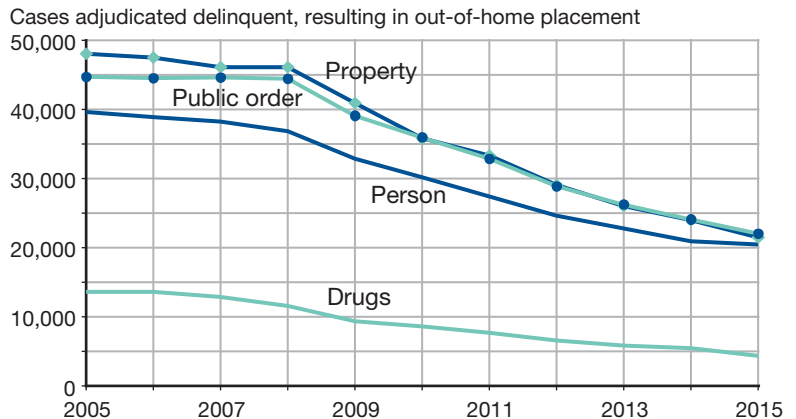
Note: Detail may not total 100% because of rounding.

- In 2015, public order offense cases accounted for the largest share of cases adjudicated delinquent that result in out-of-home placement; in 2005, property offense cases were the largest share.

The number of cases adjudicated delinquent that resulted in out-of-home placement decreased from 145,800 in 2005 to 68,200 in 2015

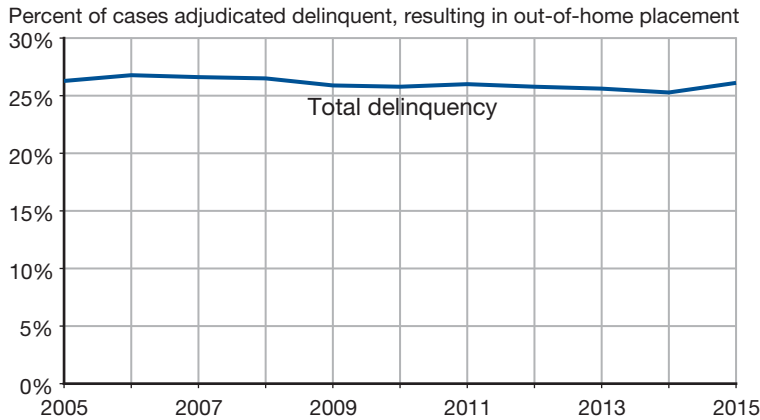


In 2015, the number of cases adjudicated delinquent that resulted in out-of-home place was at its lowest level in all four general offense categories

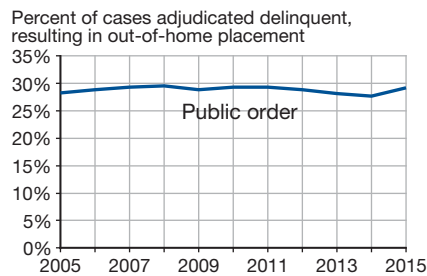
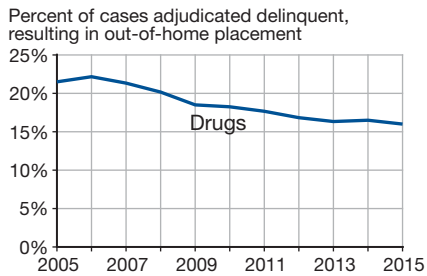
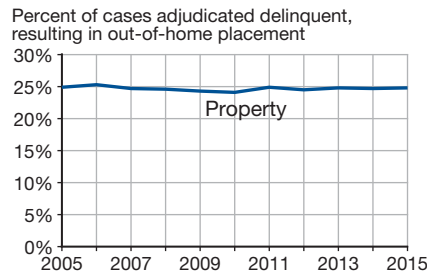
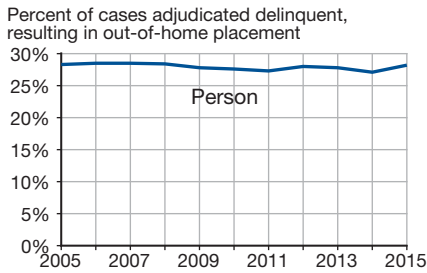


Dispositions: Out-of-Home Placement

The court ordered out-of-home placement in 26% of all cases adjudicated delinquent in 2015



- The proportion of adjudicated delinquency cases that resulted in out-of-home placement was very stable over the period 2005 to 2015, ranging from 27% to 25%.
- The likelihood that an adjudicated case would result in out-of-home placement was also very stable between 2005 and 2015 for person, property, and public order offense cases.
- The proportion of drug offense cases resulting in out-of-home placement declined from 22% in 2005 to 16% in 2015.



Dispositions: Out-of-Home Placement

Age

- In each year from 2005 through 2015, cases involving juveniles age 16 or older adjudicated delinquent were more likely to result in out-of-home placement than were cases involving youth age 15 or younger, regardless of offense.
- Between 2005 and 2015, the use of out-of-home placement for younger youth remained the same for public order offense cases, declined slightly for person and drug offense cases, and increased slightly for property offense cases. For older youth, the use of out-of-home placement declined for property and drug offense cases and increased slightly for person and public order cases.

Gender

- For males in 2015, person and public order offense cases adjudicated delinquent were most likely to result in out-of-home placement (30% and 31%, respectively), followed by property cases (27%), and cases involving drug offenses (16%).
- For females in 2015, adjudicated public order offense cases were most likely to result in out-of-home placement (25%), followed by person cases (22%), property cases (17%), and drug offense cases (14%).

Race

- After adjudication, the likelihood of out-of-home placement in 2015 was greater for Hispanic youth (31%) than for black (29%), American Indian (22%), white (21%), or Asian youth (20%).
- The proportion of cases adjudicated delinquent that resulted in out-of-home placement was smaller in 2015 than in 2005 for all but black and Hispanic youth, which were equal.

Between 2005 and 2015, the likelihood of out-of-home placement remained relatively stable

Most serious offense	Percentage of petitioned cases adjudicated delinquent, resulting in out-of-home placement			
	Age 15 and younger	Age 16 and older	Male	Female
2015				
Delinquency	24%	28%	28%	21%
Person	25	32	30	22
Property	24	26	27	17
Drugs	15	16	16	14
Public order	26	32	31	25
2010				
Delinquency	24%	28%	28%	19%
Person	25	31	30	20
Property	22	26	26	15
Drugs	17	19	19	13
Public order	26	32	31	24
2005				
Delinquency	25%	28%	28%	21%
Person	27	31	30	22
Property	23	27	27	18
Drugs	20	23	23	16
Public order	26	31	30	23

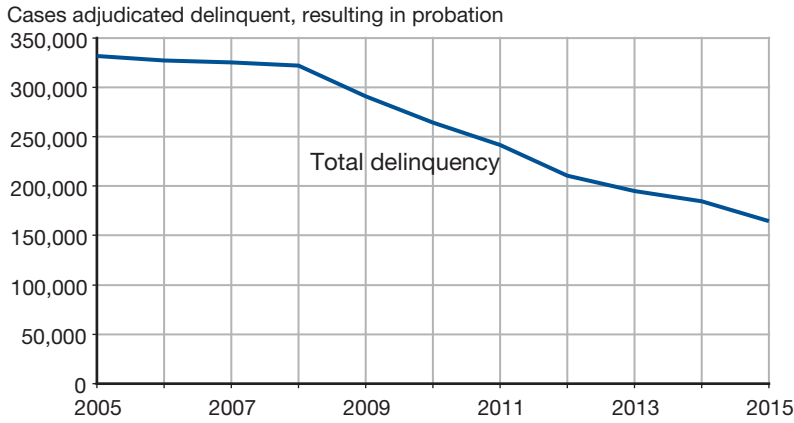
In 2015, adjudicated public order cases involving Hispanic youth were most likely to receive a disposition of out-of-home placement, across all offense and racial categories

Most serious offense	Percentage of petitioned cases adjudicated delinquent, resulting in out-of-home placement				
	White	Black	Hispanic	American Indian	Asian
2015					
Delinquency	21%	29%	31%	22%	20%
Person	24	30	32	28	22
Property	21	28	28	22	17
Drugs	13	21	19	14	NA
Public order	24	31	37	24	24
2010					
Delinquency	22%	29%	30%	24%	20%
Person	24	29	32	32	22
Property	21	28	26	22	15
Drugs	14	25	21	14	15
Public order	25	30	36	23	24
2005					
Delinquency	23%	29%	31%	25%	24%
Person	25	30	32	28	27
Property	22	28	29	24	23
Drugs	16	30	26	18	21
Public order	25	30	34	27	24

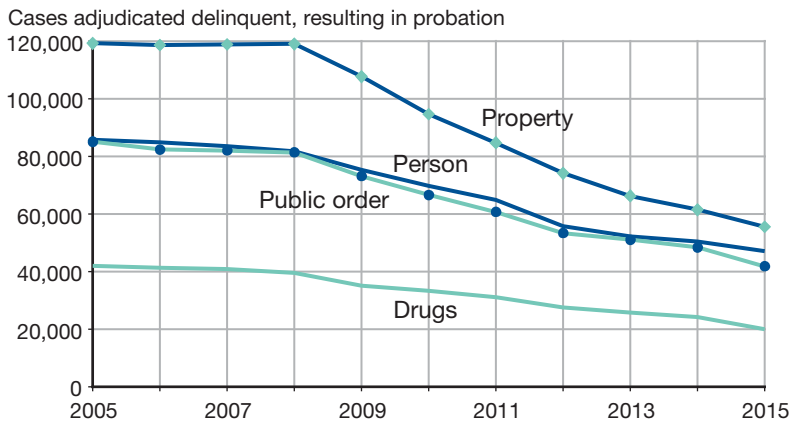
NA: Data are not presented because the small number of cases produces unstable estimates.

Dispositions: Probation

The number of cases adjudicated delinquent that resulted in probation declined 50% between 2005 and 2015



The number of adjudicated property offense cases resulting in an order of probation fell 53% since 2005



- Between 2005 and 2015, the number of cases adjudicated delinquent that resulted in an order of probation decreased 50%, compared with a 53% decrease in the number of cases that resulted in out-of-home placement.
- Between 2005 and 2015, the number of cases resulting in probation decreased at a similar pace for all offense groups: 53% for property offenses and drug offenses, 51% for public order offenses, and 45% for person offenses.

Dispositions: Probation

- Probation was the most restrictive disposition used in 63% (164,500) of the cases adjudicated delinquent in 2015, compared with 60% (332,000) of the adjudicated caseload in 2005.
- Between 2005 and 2015, the likelihood of probation for cases adjudicated delinquent was relatively stable for person, property, and public order offense cases, varying by 2 to 4 percentage points, compared with a 7 percentage point range for drug offense cases.

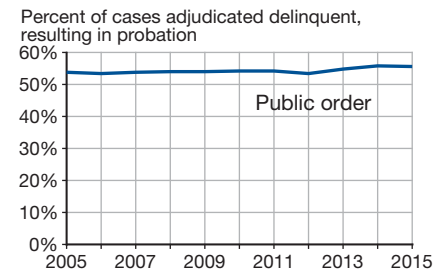
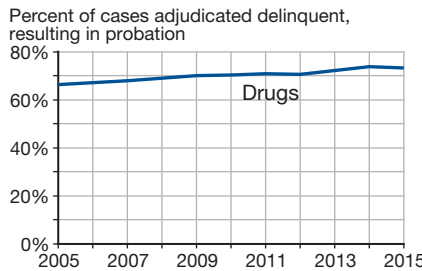
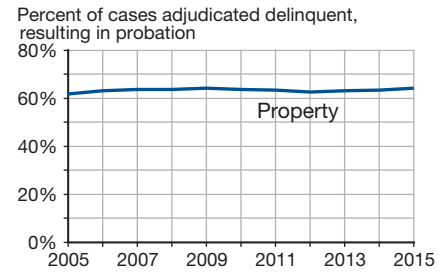
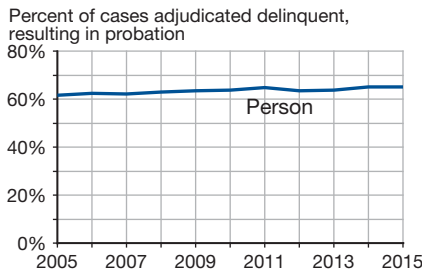
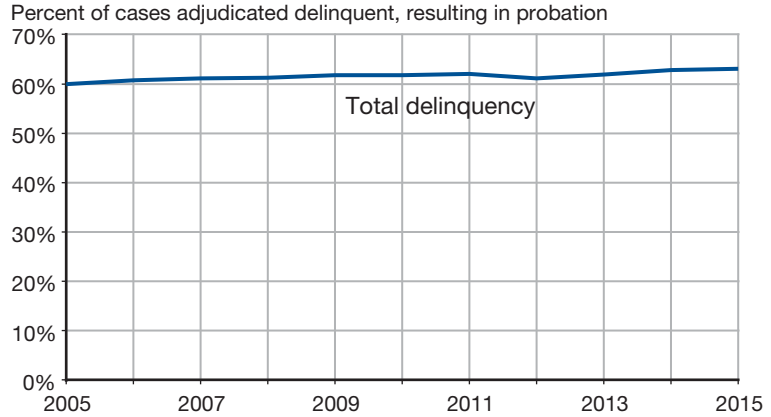
Offense profile of cases adjudicated delinquent, resulting in probation:

Most serious offense	2005	2015
Person	26%	29%
Property	36	34
Drugs	13	12
Public order	26	25
Total	100%	100%
Cases resulting in formal probation	332,000	164,500

Note: Detail may not total 100% because of rounding.

- In 2015, 34% of cases adjudicated delinquent that resulted in probation involved property offenses, while person cases and public order cases each accounted for approximately one quarter of these cases (29% and 25%, respectively).
- The offense characteristics of cases adjudicated delinquent that resulted in probation changed little between 2005 and 2015, with a slight increase in the proportion of cases involving person offenses and decreases in the proportion of cases involving drug, public order and property offenses.

Probation remains the most likely sanction imposed by juvenile courts



Dispositions: Probation

Cases involving youth age 15 or younger were generally more likely than cases involving older youth to be placed on formal probation following a delinquency adjudication

Most serious offense	Percentage of petitioned cases adjudicated delinquent, resulting in probation			
	Age 15 and younger	Age 16 and older	Male	Female
2015				
Delinquency	66%	60%	62%	66%
Person	68	62	64	69
Property	66	62	63	68
Drugs	76	72	73	75
Public order	59	53	55	58
2010				
Delinquency	64%	59%	61%	64%
Person	66	61	62	68
Property	66	62	63	67
Drugs	72	69	70	73
Public order	57	52	54	56
2005				
Delinquency	62%	57%	59%	62%
Person	64	58	60	65
Property	64	59	61	63
Drugs	69	64	66	70
Public order	56	51	53	55

Adjudicated cases involving white youth were more likely than cases involving black youth to be placed on probation

Most serious offense	Percentage of petitioned cases adjudicated delinquent, resulting in probation				
	White	Black	Hispanic	American Indian	Asian
2015					
Delinquency	65%	61%	63%	67%	73%
Person	69	63	63	67	73
Property	65	62	65	67	74
Drugs	75	69	74	77	NA
Public order	55	55	56	63	69
2010					
Delinquency	63%	58%	64%	65%	70%
Person	66	62	64	63	72
Property	65	60	67	67	71
Drugs	71	65	73	77	73
Public order	55	51	58	60	66
2005					
Delinquency	61%	57%	62%	61%	65%
Person	63	59	63	65	63
Property	62	59	64	64	66
Drugs	69	60	69	71	64
Public order	53	51	58	52	67

NA: Data are not presented because the small number of cases produces unstable estimates.

Age

- Among juveniles age 15 or younger, the overall likelihood of being placed on formal probation increased between 2005 and 2015 from 62% to 66%.
- Among youth age 16 or older, the overall likelihood of being placed on formal probation also increased between 2005 and 2015, from 57% to 60%.
- For both age groups in 2015, adjudicated cases involving drug offenses were more likely to result in probation than cases in other offense categories.

Gender

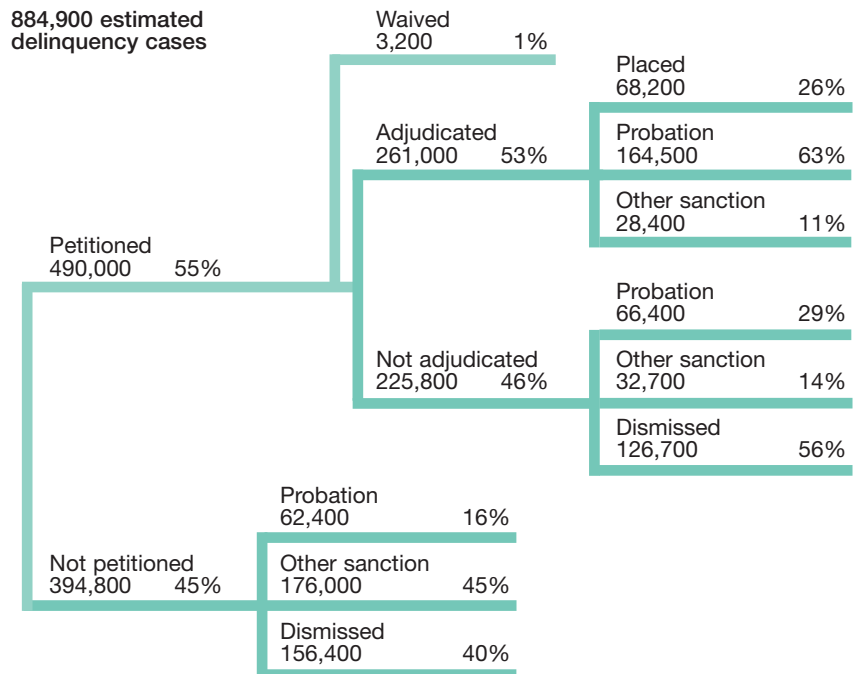
- The overall likelihood of being placed on formal probation increased for females between 2005 and 2015 (from 62% to 66%) and for males (from 59% to 62%).
- For females in 2015, drug offense cases adjudicated delinquent were most likely to be placed on probation (75%), followed by person (69%) and property offense cases (68%). Public order offense cases were least likely to result in formal probation (58%).

Race

- Between 2005 and 2015, the overall likelihood of being placed on formal probation increased for adjudicated cases for all races.
- In 2015, among white youth, drug offense cases that were adjudicated delinquent were most likely to be placed on formal probation (75%), followed by adjudicated person and property offense cases (69% and 65%, respectively) and public order offense cases (55%).

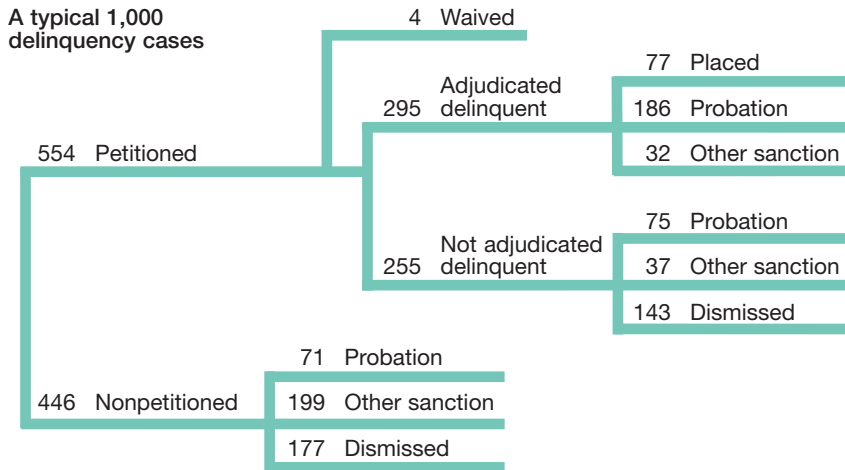
Case Processing Overview, 2015

- In 2015, 55% (490,000) of the estimated 884,900 juvenile court cases were handled formally (with the filing of a petition).
- In 2015, 1% (3,200) of all formally processed delinquency cases were judicially transferred to criminal court.
- In 2015, 53% (261,000) of the cases that were handled formally (with the filing of a petition) resulted in a delinquency adjudication.
- In 63% (164,500) of cases adjudicated delinquent in 2015, formal probation was the most severe sanction ordered by the court.
- In 2015, 26% (68,200) of cases adjudicated delinquent resulted in placement outside the home in a residential facility.
- In 11% (28,400) of cases adjudicated delinquent in 2015, the juvenile was ordered to pay restitution or a fine, to participate in some form of community service, or to enter a treatment or counseling program—dispositions with minimal continuing supervision by probation staff.
- In 46% (225,800) of all petitioned delinquency cases in 2015, the youth was not subsequently adjudicated delinquent. The court dismissed 56% of these cases, while 29% resulted in some form of informal probation and 14% in other voluntary dispositions.
- In 2015, the court dismissed 40% of the informally handled (i.e., nonpetitioned) delinquency cases, while 16% of the cases resulted in voluntary probation and 45% in other dispositions.



Notes: Cases are categorized by their most severe or restrictive sanction. Detail may not add to totals because of rounding. Annual case processing flow diagrams for 1985 through 2015 are available online at ojjdp.gov/ojstatbb/court/faqs.asp.

Case Processing Overview, 2015



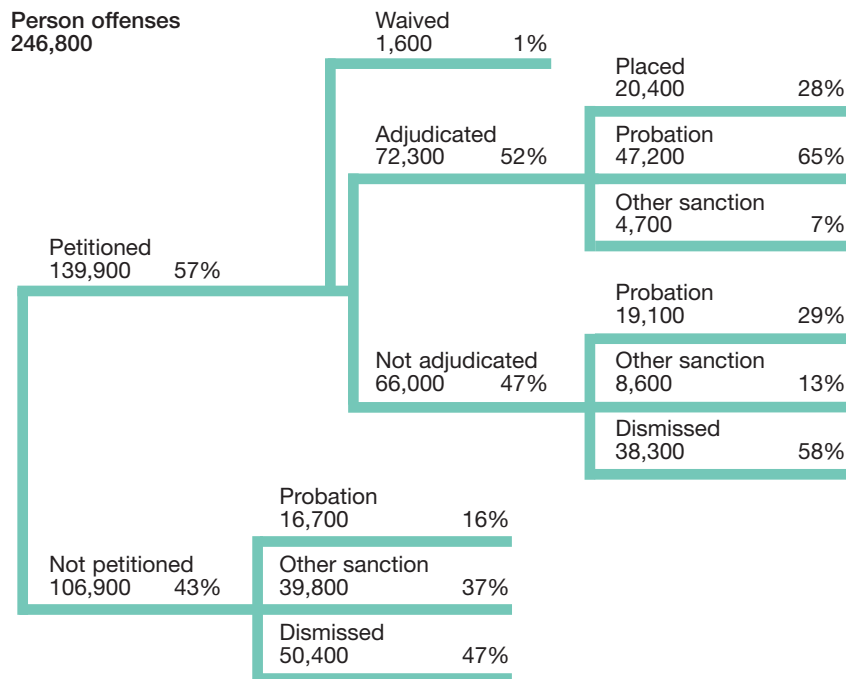
Notes: Cases are categorized by their most severe or restrictive sanction. Detail may not add to totals because of rounding.

- For every 1,000 delinquency cases processed in 2015, 554 were petitioned for formal processing and 446 were handled informally.
- Of the cases that were adjudicated delinquent, 63% (186 of 295) received a disposition of probation and 26% (77 of 295) were placed out of the home.
- In many petitioned delinquency cases that did not result in a delinquency adjudication, the youth agreed to informal services or sanctions (112 of 255), including informal probation and other dispositions such as restitution.
- Although juvenile courts in 2015 handled more than 4 in 10 delinquency cases without the filing of a formal petition, 60% of these cases received some form of court sanction, including probation or other dispositions such as restitution, community service, or referral to another agency.

Case Processing by Offense Category, 2015

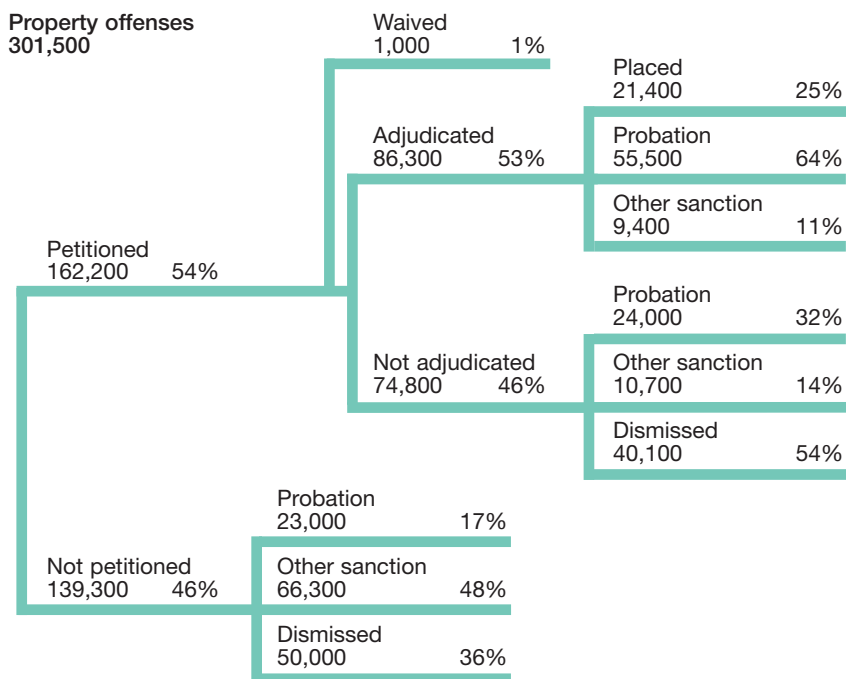
Person Offense Cases

- In 2015, 52% (72,300) of all formally processed person offense cases resulted in a delinquency adjudication.
- Formal probation was the most severe sanction ordered by the court in 65% (47,200) of the adjudicated person offense cases in 2015.
- Once adjudicated, person offense cases were almost as likely as public order offense cases to result in out-of-home placement (28% and 29%, respectively) and more likely than property offenses cases (25%) and drug offense cases (16%).
- In 2015, 16% of person offense cases that were handled informally resulted in probation; 47% were dismissed.
- Juvenile courts waived jurisdiction in 1% (1,600) of all petitioned person offense cases in 2015.



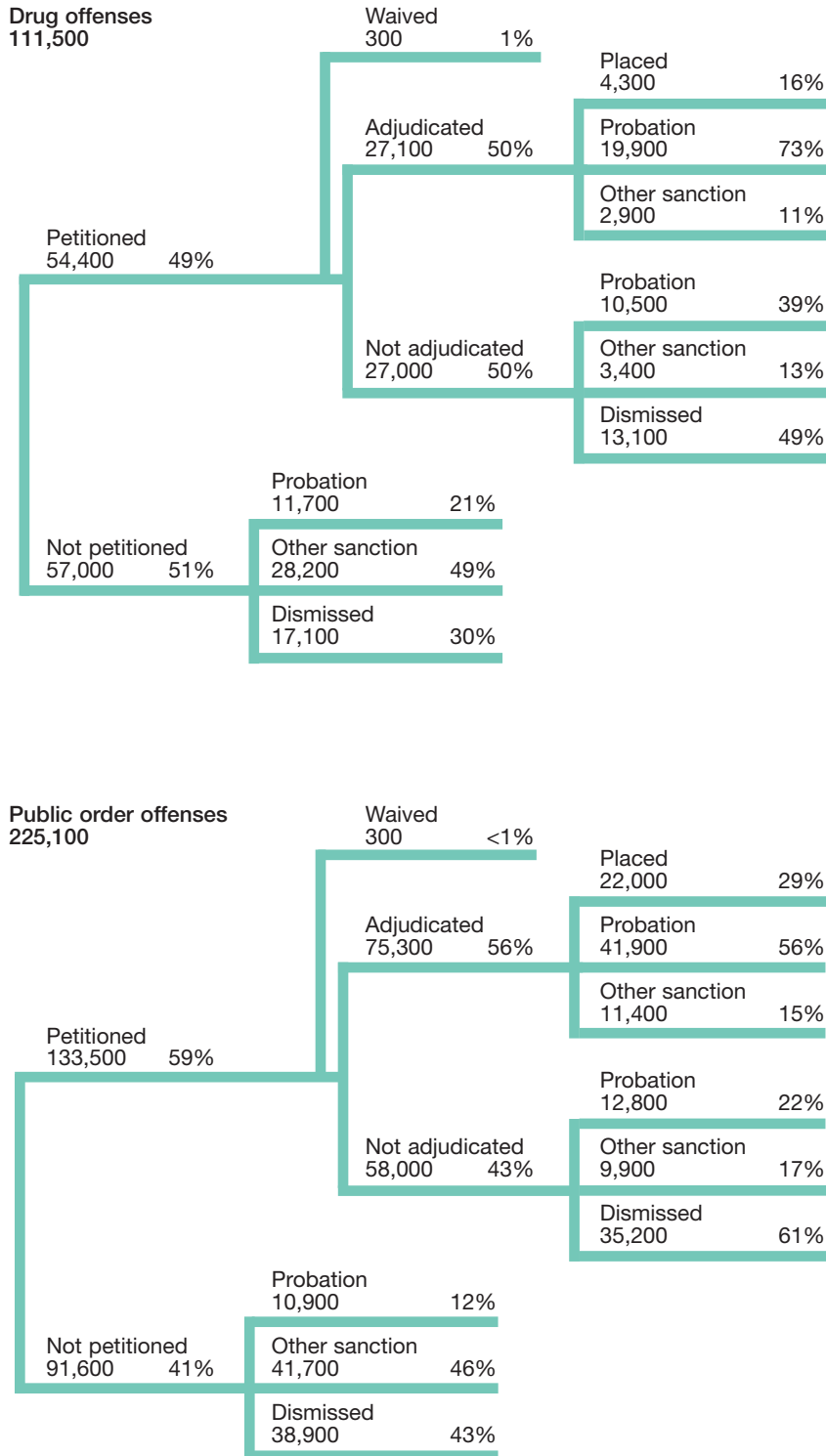
Property Offense Cases

- Juvenile courts handled more than half (54%) of all property offense cases formally in 2015. Of these formally handled cases, 53% (86,300 cases) were adjudicated delinquent.
- In 2015, 55,500 (64%) of the adjudicated property offense cases resulted in probation as the most severe sanction; another 25% (21,400) resulted in out-of-home placement. Other sanctions, such as restitution, community service, or referral to another agency, were ordered in 11% (9,400) of the petitioned property offense cases following adjudication.
- Property offense cases were less likely than person offense cases to be petitioned for formal processing. Once petitioned, however, property offense cases were slightly more likely to result in the youth being adjudicated delinquent than were cases involving person offenses.



Notes: Cases are categorized by their most severe or restrictive sanction. Detail may not add to totals because of rounding. Annual case processing flow diagrams for 1985 through 2015 are available online at ojjdp.gov/ojstatbb/court/faqs.asp.

Case Processing by Offense Category, 2015



Notes: Cases are categorized by their most severe or restrictive sanction. Detail may not add to totals because of rounding. Annual case processing flow diagrams for 1985 through 2015 are available online at ojdp.gov/ojstatbb/court/faqs.asp.

Drug Offense Cases

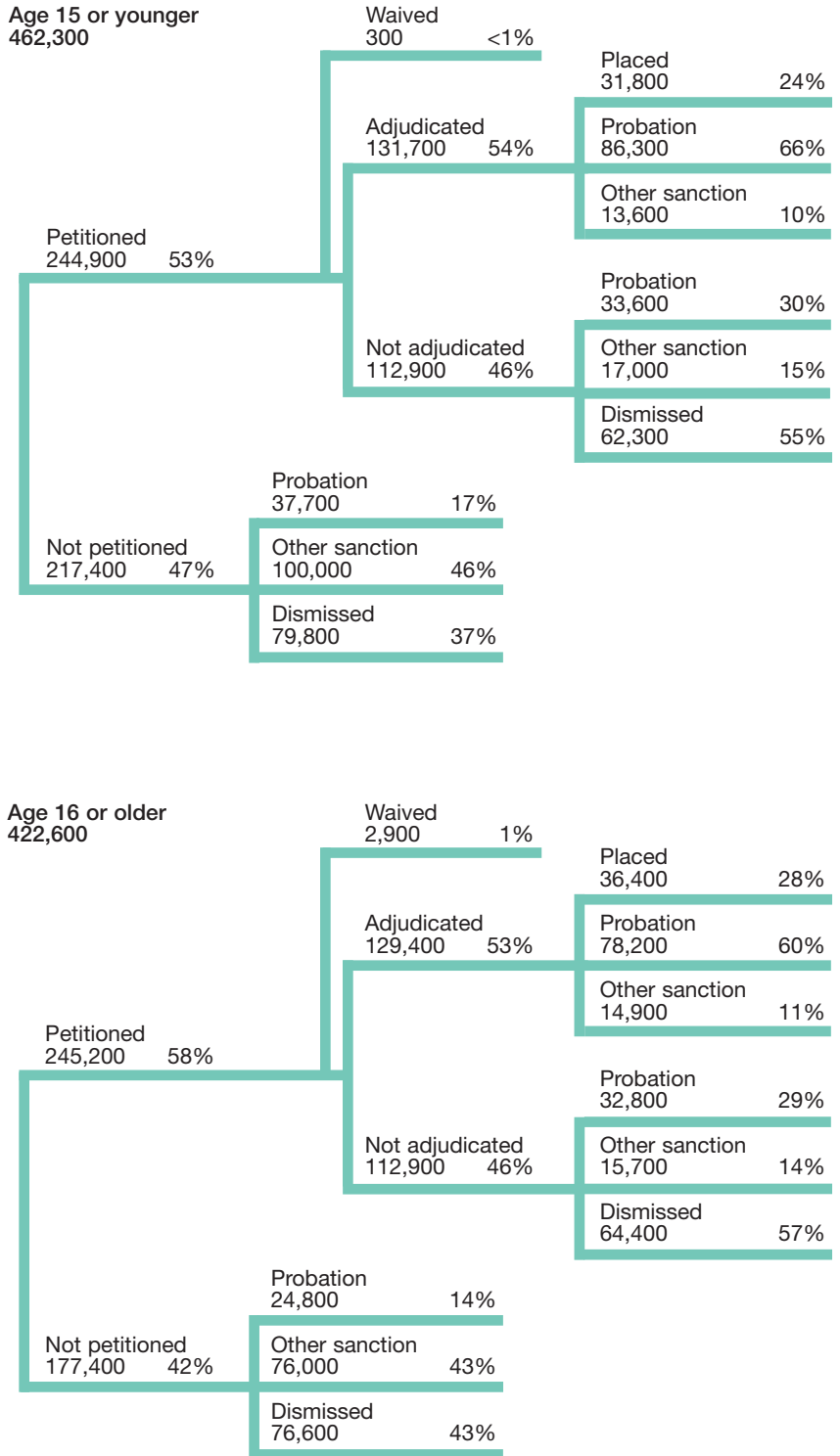
- In 2015, 50% (27,100) of all petitioned drug offense cases resulted in the youth being adjudicated delinquent; 73% (19,900) of these cases received probation as the most severe sanction, and another 16% (4,300) resulted in out-of-home placement.
- Other sanctions, such as restitution, community service, or referral to another agency, were ordered in 11% (2,900) of petitioned drug offense cases following adjudication in 2015.
- Juvenile courts waived jurisdiction in 1% (300) of all petitioned drug offense cases in 2015.
- More than half (51%) of drug offense cases were informally handled in 2015; 70% of the informally handled drug offense cases resulted in probation or some other sanction.

Public Order Offense Cases

- In 2015, the majority (59%) of all public order offense cases were handled formally, with the filing of a petition for adjudication.
- Once adjudicated delinquent, 56% of public order offense cases in 2015 resulted in probation as the most severe sanction, 29% were placed out of the home, and 15% resulted in other sanctions.
- In 2015, 41% of all public order offense cases were handled informally. Of the informal cases, 43% were dismissed, while the remaining cases resulted in some form of court sanction, including probation, restitution, community service, or referral to another agency.

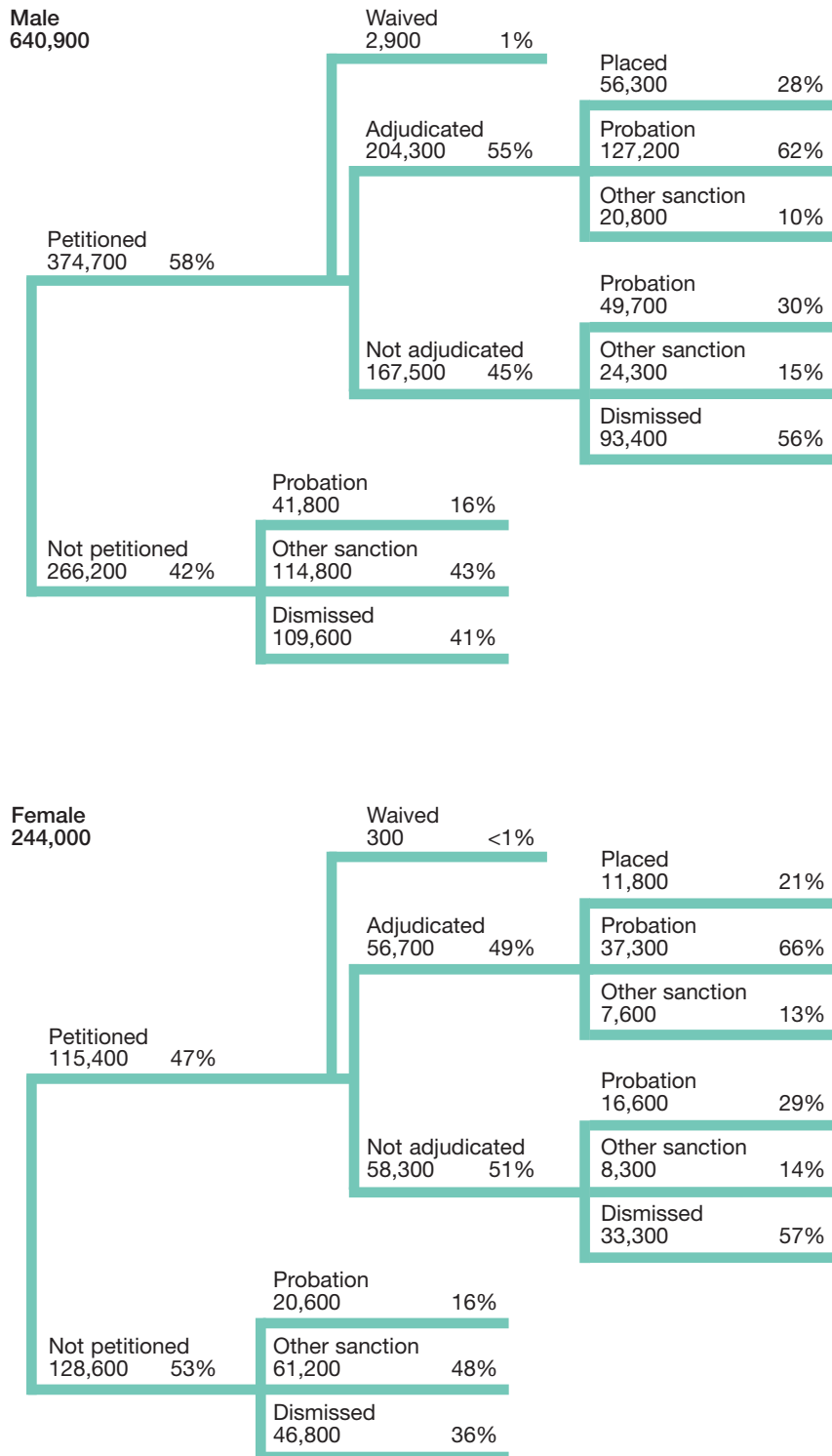
Case Processing by Age, 2015

- In 2015, 53% (244,900) of all delinquency cases involving youth age 15 or younger and 58% (245,200) of cases involving youth age 16 or older were handled formally with the filing of a petition.
- Cases involving youth age 15 or younger were adjudicated delinquent in 54% of all formally processed cases in 2015; cases involving youth age 16 or older were adjudicated delinquent in 53% of all such cases.
- The proportion of petitioned cases waived to criminal court in 2015 was less than 1% for youth age 15 or younger, compared with 1% for youth age 16 or older.
- In 2015, 24% of cases adjudicated delinquent involving youth age 15 or younger and 28% of such cases involving youth age 16 or older resulted in out-of-home placement.
- Probation was ordered as the most severe sanction in 2015 in 66% of the adjudicated cases involving youth age 15 or younger, compared with 60% of adjudicated cases involving youth 16 or older.
- Among cases formally adjudicated in 2015, 10% of cases involving youth age 15 or younger and 11% involving youth age 16 or older resulted in other sanctions.
- For youth age 15 or younger, 47% of all delinquency cases were handled informally in 2015; of these cases, 17% resulted in a disposition of probation and 37% were dismissed. Among older youth, 42% of all delinquency cases were handled without the filing of a petition for adjudication in 2015; 14% of these cases resulted in a disposition of probation and 43% were dismissed.



Notes: Cases are categorized by their most severe or restrictive sanction. Detail may not add to totals because of rounding. Annual case processing flow diagrams for 1985 through 2015 are available online at ojdp.gov/ojstatbb/court/faqs.asp.

Case Processing by Gender, 2015

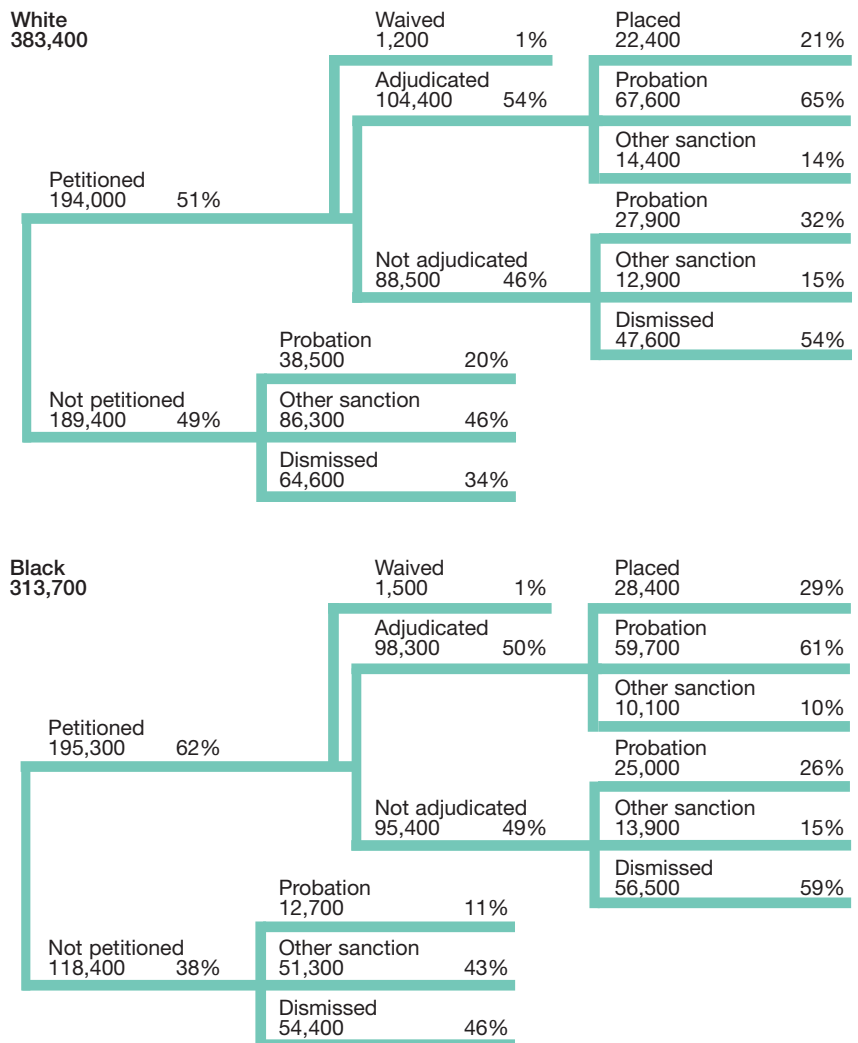


- In 2015, 58% of delinquency cases involving males were handled with the filing of a petition for adjudication, compared with 47% of those involving females.
- Once petitioned, cases involving males in 2015 were more likely to result in a delinquency adjudication than were cases involving females (55% vs. 49%).
- Delinquency cases involving females in 2015 were less likely to be waived to criminal court than those involving males.
- Once adjudicated delinquent, 28% of cases involving males in 2015 resulted in out-of-home placement, compared with 21% of those involving females.
- Of the adjudicated cases involving males, 62% received probation as the most severe sanction, and 10% resulted in other sanctions such as restitution or community service.
- Among adjudicated cases involving females in 2015, 66% received probation as the most severe sanction and 13% resulted in other sanctions.
- Informally handled delinquency cases involving males were equally as likely as those involving females to receive probation in 2015 (16% each); male cases were more likely than female cases to be dismissed (41% vs. 36%).
- In 2015, informally handled delinquency cases involving females were more likely to result in other sanctions than those involving males (48% vs. 43%).

Notes: Cases are categorized by their most severe or restrictive sanction. Detail may not add to totals because of rounding. Annual case processing flow diagrams for 1985 through 2015 are available online at ojdp.gov/ojstatbb/court/faqs.asp.

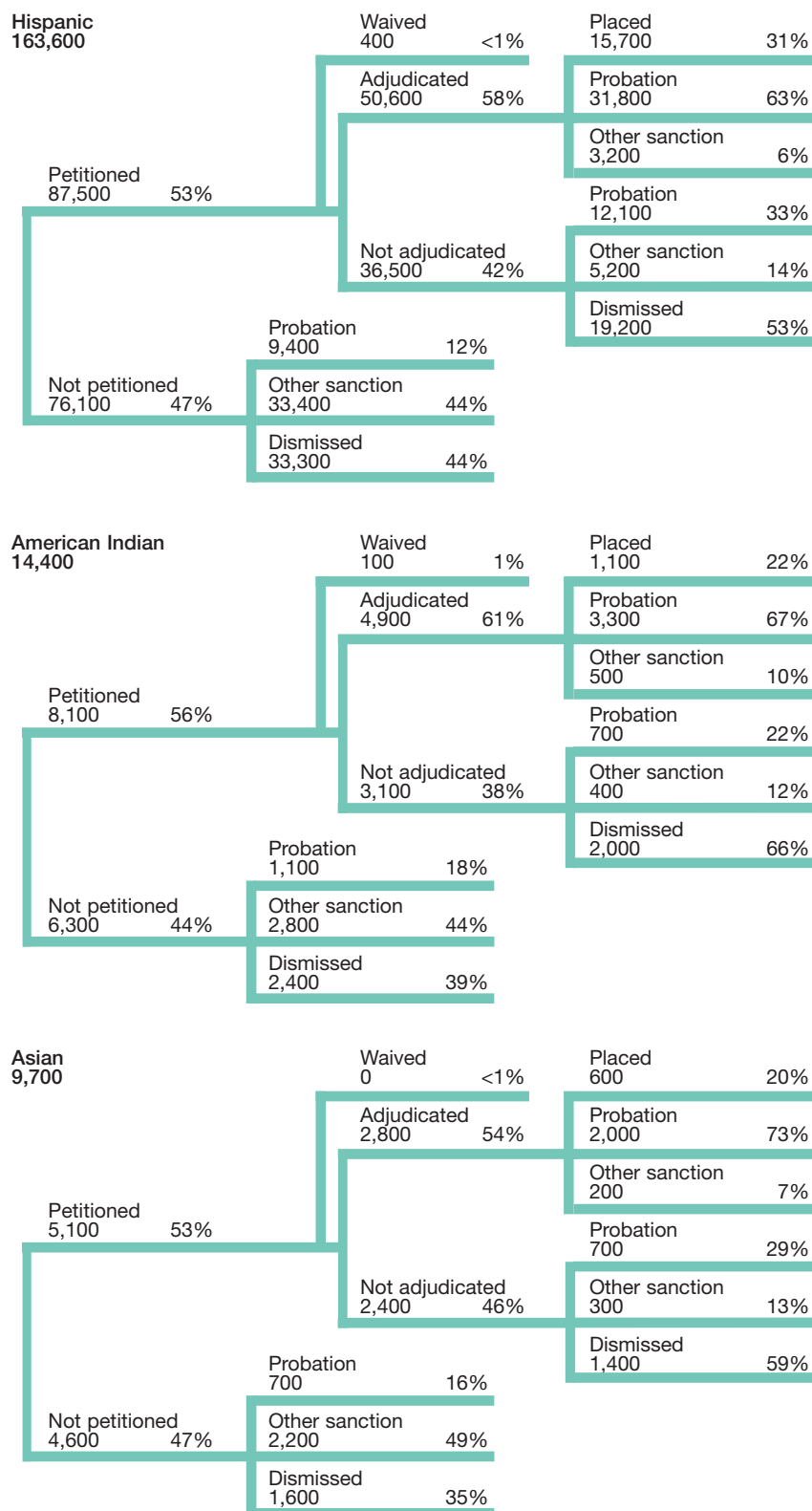
Case Processing by Race, 2015

- In 2015, delinquency cases involving white youth were less likely to be handled formally (51%) than those involving black youth (62%), Hispanic youth (53%), American Indian youth (56%), or Asian youth (53%).
- Once petitioned, cases in 2015 involving black youth (50%), white youth (54%), Asian youth (54%), and Hispanic youth (58%) were less likely to be adjudicated delinquent than were cases involving American Indian youth (61%).
- For all racial groups in 2015, about 1% or less of petitioned delinquency cases resulted in waiver to criminal court.
- In 2015, adjudicated delinquency cases involving Hispanic youth were more likely to result in out-of-home placement (31%) than cases involving all other races. Black youth were ordered to residential placement in 29% of adjudicated cases. White youth were slightly less likely than American Indian youth to be ordered to residential placement (21% and 22%, respectively). Asian youth were least likely to be ordered to residential placement (20%).
- For adjudicated cases involving black youth in 2015, probation was the most severe sanction ordered in 61% of the cases and 10% resulted in other sanctions.



Notes: Cases are categorized by their most severe or restrictive sanction. Detail may not add to totals because of rounding. Annual case processing flow diagrams for 1985 through 2015 are available online at ojjdp.gov/ojstatbb/court/faqs.asp.

Case Processing by Race, 2015



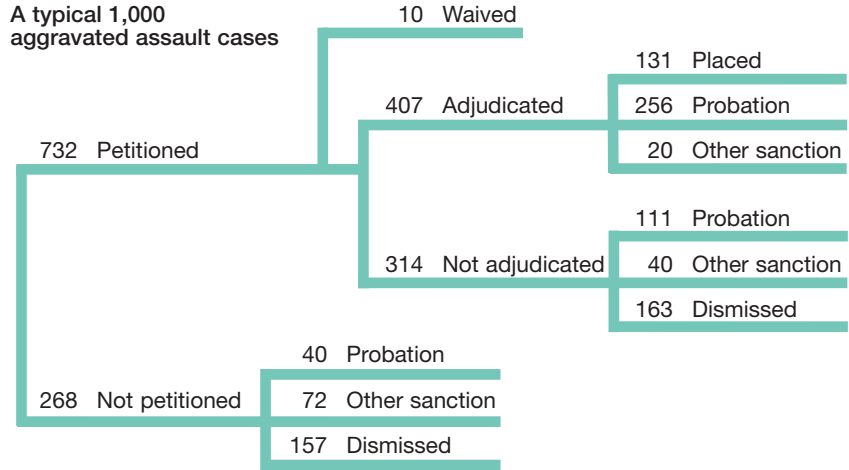
Notes: Cases are categorized by their most severe or restrictive sanction. Detail may not add to totals because of rounding. Annual case processing flow diagrams for 1985 through 2015 are available online at ojdp.gov/ojstatbb/court/faqs.asp.

- For adjudicated cases involving American Indian youth in 2015, probation was the most severe sanction ordered in 67% of the cases and 10% resulted in other sanctions.
- In 73% of the adjudicated cases involving Asian youth in 2015, probation was the most severe sanction; 7% resulted in other sanctions such as restitution or community service.
- In 2015, 49% of delinquency cases involving white youth were handled informally, compared with 38% of cases involving black youth, 47% of cases involving Hispanic youth, 44% of cases involving American Indian youth, and 47% of cases involving Asian juveniles.
- Informally handled delinquency cases involving black youth and Hispanic youth in 2015 were more likely to be dismissed (46% and 44%, respectively) than those involving American Indian youth (39%), Asian youth (35%), or white youth (34%).
- In 2015, informally handled delinquency cases involving Asian youth were most likely to result in other sanctions such as restitution, community service, or referral to another agency (49%), compared with cases involving white youth (46%), American Indian or Hispanic youth (44% each), or black youth (43%).

Case Processing by Selected Individual Offense, 2015

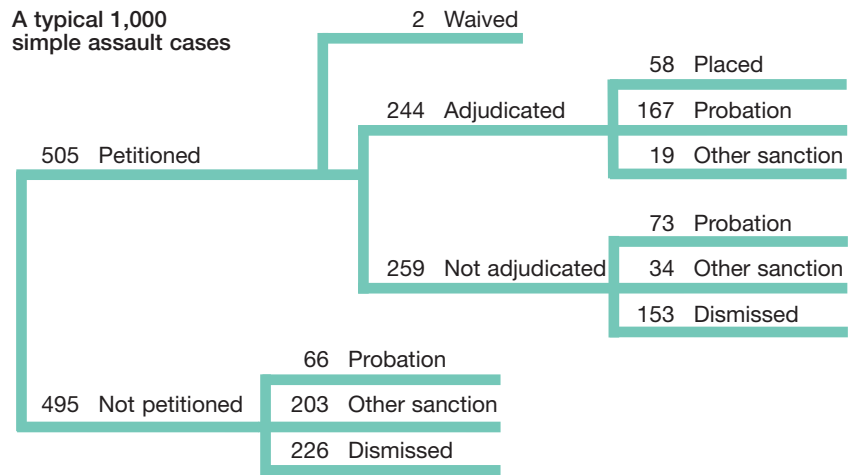
Aggravated Assault Cases

- Juvenile courts waived 10 of every 1,000 aggravated assault cases to criminal court in 2015, compared with 2 of every 1,000 simple assault cases.
- In 2015, 42% of aggravated assault cases received some formal sanction or were waived to criminal court (417 of 1,000).
- In 2015, 13% of aggravated assault cases received a formal sanction of out-of-home placement (131 of 1,000) and 26% were placed on formal probation (256 of 1,000).
- Of all aggravated assault cases referred to juvenile courts in 2015, 32% were eventually released or dismissed (320 of 1,000)—22% of the petitioned cases and 59% of those that were informally handled.



Simple Assault Cases

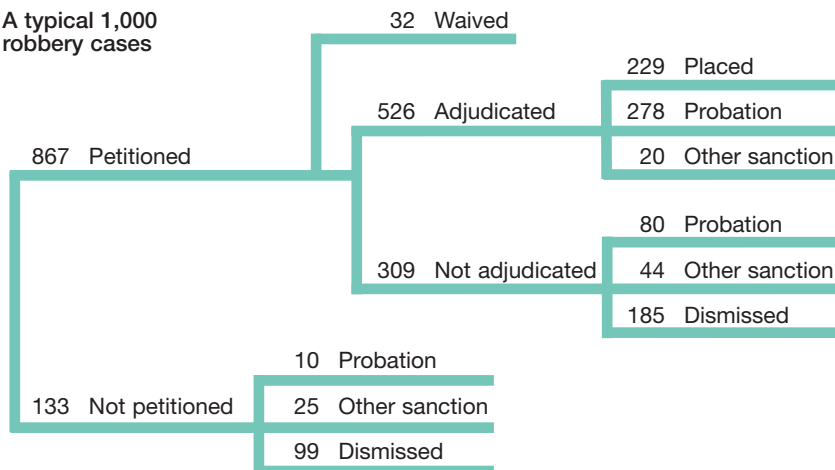
- Of every 1,000 simple assault cases handled in 2015, 246 received some formal sanction or were waived to criminal court.
- In 2015, 6% of simple assault cases resulted in the juvenile receiving a formal sanction of out-of-home placement (58 of 1,000) and 17% were placed on formal probation (167 of 1,000).
- Juveniles received informal sanctions in 38% of simple assault cases processed in 2015 (376 of 1,000).
- Of all simple assault cases referred to juvenile courts in 2015, 38% were eventually dismissed (378 of 1,000)—30% of the petitioned cases and 46% of those that were informally handled.



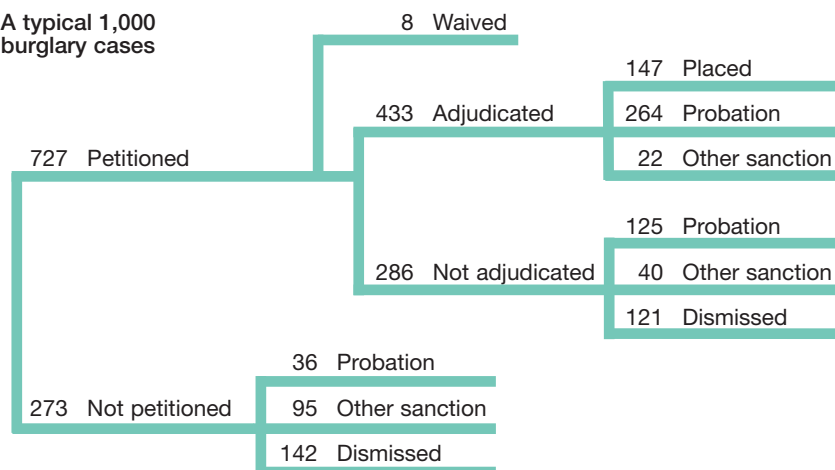
Notes: Cases are categorized by their most severe or restrictive sanction. Detail may not add to totals because of rounding. Annual case processing flow diagrams for 1985 through 2015 are available online at ojjdp.gov/ojstatbb/court/faqs.asp.

Case Processing by Selected Individual Offense, 2015

A typical 1,000 robbery cases



A typical 1,000 burglary cases



Notes: Cases are categorized by their most severe or restrictive sanction. Detail may not add to totals because of rounding. Annual case processing flow diagrams for 1985 through 2015 are available online at ojjdp.gov/ojstatbb/court/faqs.asp.

Robbery Cases

- Juvenile courts waived 32 of every 1,000 robbery cases to criminal court in 2015.
- In 2015, juvenile courts ordered formal sanctions or waived jurisdiction in 56% of all robbery cases (557 of 1,000).
- In 2015, 23% of robbery cases received a formal sanction of out-of-home placement (229 of 1,000) and 28% resulted in formal probation (278 of 1,000).
- Of all robbery cases referred to juvenile court in 2015, 13% were not petitioned; the majority (74%) of these cases were dismissed.

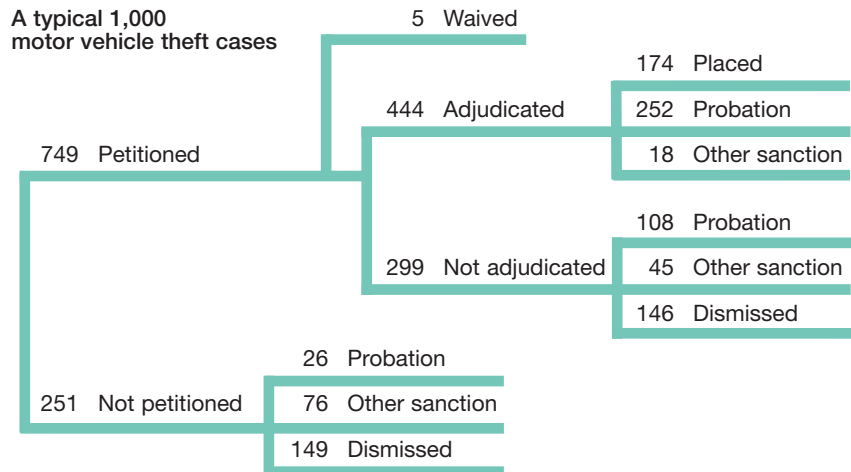
Burglary Cases

- Juvenile courts waived 8 of every 1,000 burglary cases to criminal court in 2015.
- In 2015, 60% (433 of 727) of all petitioned burglary cases resulted in the youth being adjudicated delinquent.
- Juvenile courts ordered formal sanctions or waived jurisdiction in 61% of all formally handled burglary cases in 2015 (441 of 727).
- In 2015, 147 of 1,000 burglary cases received a formal sanction of out-of-home placement and 264 of 1,000 resulted in formal probation.
- More than one-quarter (27%) of all burglary cases referred to juvenile courts in 2015 were handled informally and more than half of these cases (142 of 273) were dismissed.

Case Processing by Selected Individual Offense, 2015

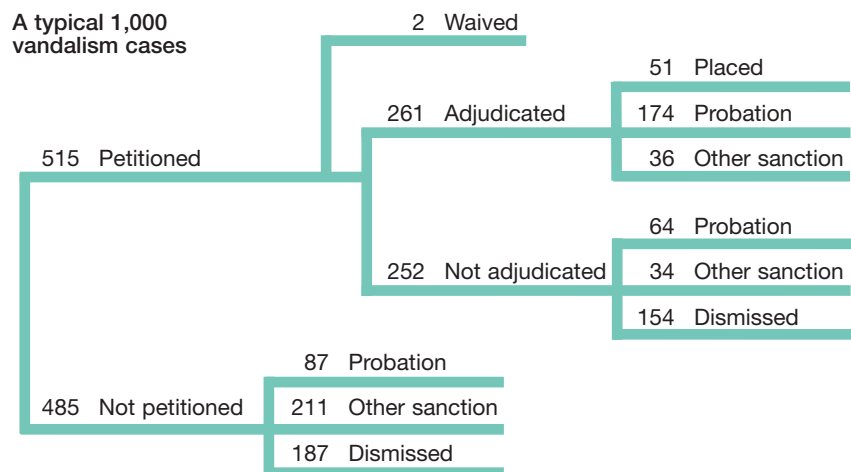
Motor Vehicle Theft Cases

- Juvenile courts waived less than 1% of motor vehicle theft cases to criminal court in 2015 (5 of every 1,000).
- In 2015, nearly half (45%) of motor vehicle theft cases referred to juvenile courts resulted in formal court sanctions or waiver to criminal court.
- About 40% of motor vehicle cases adjudicated delinquent in 2015 resulted in out-of-home placement (174 of 444).
- One-quarter of motor vehicle theft cases referred to juvenile courts in 2015 were handled without the filing of a petition (251 of 1,000).



Vandalism Cases

- Juvenile courts waived 2 of every 1,000 vandalism cases to criminal court in 2015.
- More than half of vandalism cases referred to juvenile courts in 2015 were handled formally (515 of 1,000). Of these cases, 51% were adjudicated delinquent (261 of 515).
- In 2015, 67% of petitioned vandalism cases adjudicated delinquent resulted in a court sanction of probation (174 of 261), and 20% resulted in out-of-home placement (51 of 261).
- Juvenile courts handled 485 of every 1,000 vandalism cases informally (without a petition) in 2015. Youth received informal sanctions in 61% of these nonpetitioned cases.



Notes: Cases are categorized by their most severe or restrictive sanction. Detail may not add to totals because of rounding. Annual case processing flow diagrams for 1985 through 2015 are available online at ojjdp.gov/ojstatbb/court/faqs.asp.

Chapter 4

National Estimates of Petitioned Status Offense Cases

Status offenses are acts that are illegal only because the persons committing them are of juvenile status. The five major status offense categories used in this report are running away, truancy, curfew law violations, ungovernability (also known as incorrigibility or being beyond the control of one's parents), and underage liquor law violations (e.g., a minor in possession of alcohol, underage drinking). A number of other behaviors, such as those involving tobacco offenses, may be considered status offenses. However, because of the heterogeneity of these miscellaneous offenses, they are not discussed independently in this report but are included in discussions and displays of petitioned status offense totals.

Agencies other than juvenile courts are responsible for processing status offense cases in many jurisdictions. In some communities, for example, family crisis units, county attorneys, and social service agencies have assumed this responsibility. When a juvenile charged with a status offense is referred to juvenile court, the court may divert the juvenile away from the formal justice system to other agencies for service or may decide

to process the juvenile formally with the filing of a petition. The analyses in this report are limited to petitioned cases.

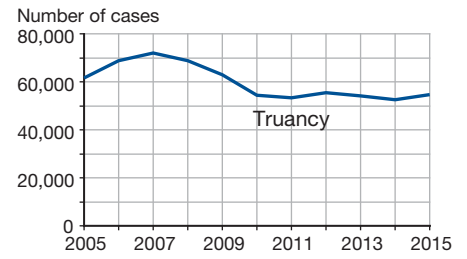
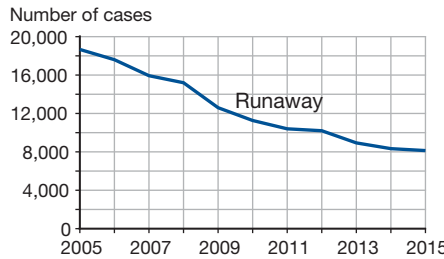
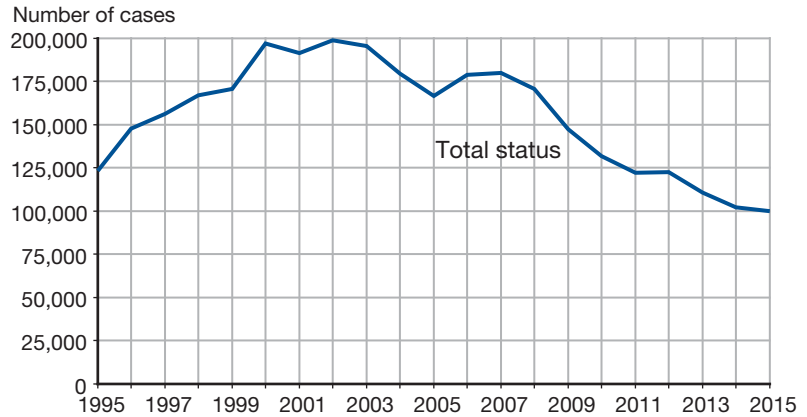
Juvenile courts may adjudicate petitioned status offense cases and may order sanctions such as probation or out-of-home placement. While their cases are being processed, juveniles charged with status offenses are sometimes held in secure detention. (Note that the Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention Act discourages secure detention of status offenders. States holding large numbers of status offenders in secure detention risk losing a significant portion of their juvenile justice block grant awards.)

This chapter presents national estimates of petitioned status offense cases disposed in 2015 and examines trends since 2005, including demographic characteristics of the juveniles involved, types of offenses charged, and the flow of cases as they moved through juvenile court processing. (See chapter 3 for a description of the stages of court processing.)

Counts and Trends

- In 2015, U.S. courts with juvenile jurisdiction petitioned and formally disposed an estimated 100,000 status offense cases.
- The number of petitioned status offense cases processed by juvenile courts decreased 40% between 2005 and 2015.
- The number of petitioned runaway cases processed by juvenile courts decreased 57% between 2005 and 2015 (from 18,700 to 8,100).
- The number of petitioned truancy cases processed by juvenile courts increased 17% between 2005 and 2007 and then declined 24% through 2015.
- Between 2005 and 2007, the number of petitioned curfew cases increased 17% and then declined 59% through 2015 (7,100).
- The number of petitioned ungovernability cases in 2015 (9,700) was 52% below the 2005 level (20,000).
- The number of petitioned liquor law violation cases increased 12% between 2005 and 2007 and then decreased 69% through 2015.

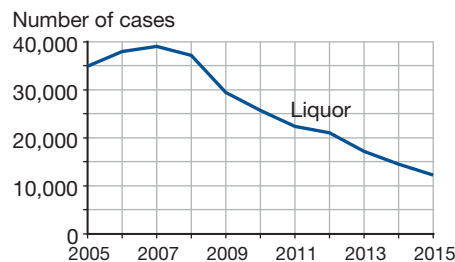
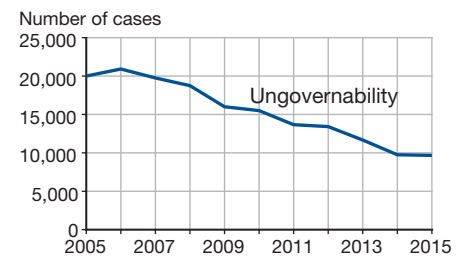
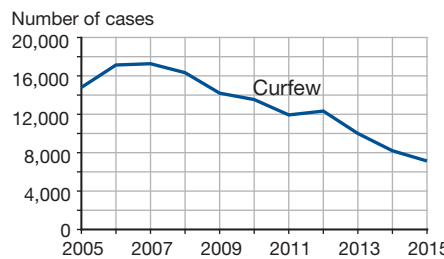
Between 1995 and 2002, the formally handled status offense caseload increased considerably (61%) and then declined 50% through 2015



Offense profile of petitioned status offense cases:

Most serious offense	2005	2015
Runaway	11%	8%
Truancy	37	55
Curfew	9	7
Ungovernability	12	10
Liquor	21	12
Miscellaneous	10	8
Total	100%	100%
Number of cases	166,600	100,000

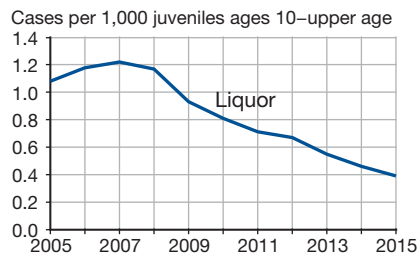
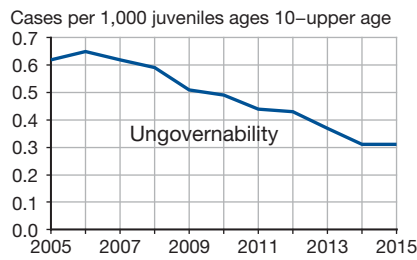
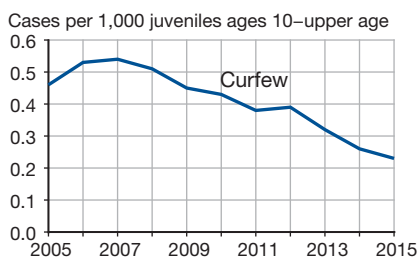
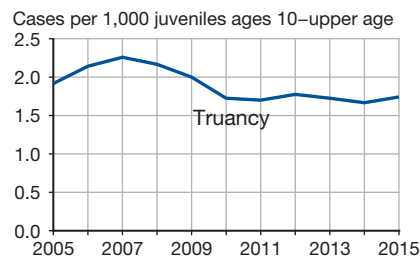
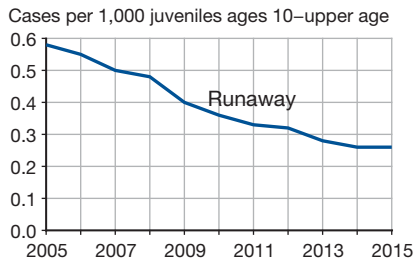
Note: Detail may not total 100% because of rounding.



- Compared with 2005, a larger proportion of the court's petitioned status offense caseload in 2015 involved truancy and smaller proportions of all other status offenses.

Case Rates

Petitioned status offense case rates decreased from 5.2 to 3.2 per 1,000 juveniles between 2005 and 2015



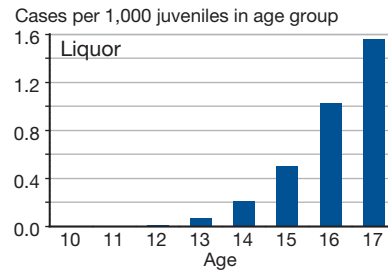
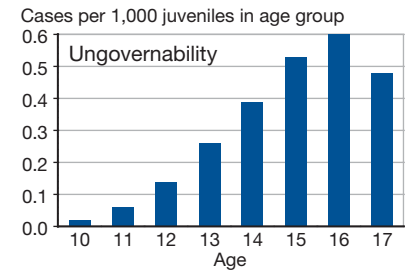
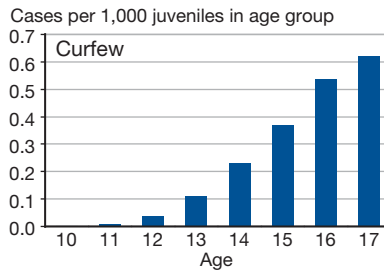
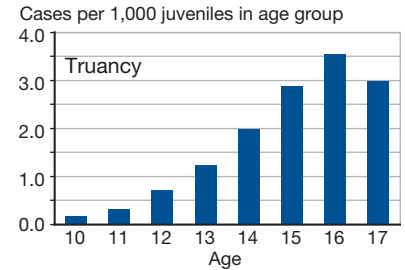
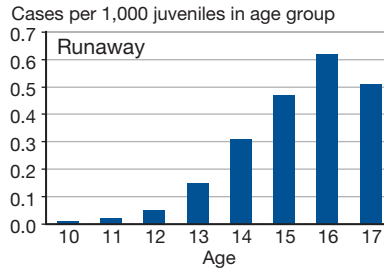
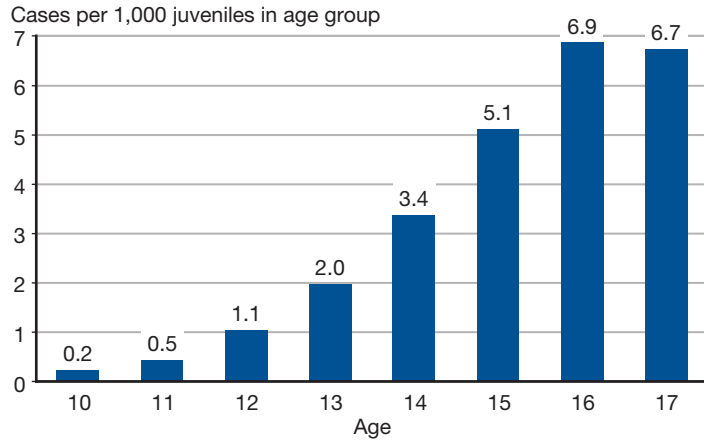
- In 2015, juvenile courts formally processed 3.2 status offense cases for every 1,000 juveniles in the population—those age 10 or older who were under the jurisdiction of a juvenile court.
- The total petitioned status offense case rate decreased 39% between 2005 and 2015.¹
- Between 2005 and 2015, the petitioned runaway case rate decreased 56%.
- The petitioned truancy case rate increased 18% between 2005 and 2007, and then declined 23% through 2015.
- Between 2005 and 2007, the petitioned curfew violation case rate increased 17% and then decreased 58% by 2015.
- The petitioned ungovernability case rate declined 51% between 2005 and 2015.
- The petitioned liquor law violation case rate increased 12% between 2005 and 2007, and then decreased 68% by 2015.

¹ The percent change in the number of cases disposed may not be equal to the percent change in case rates because of the changing size of the juvenile population.

Age at Referral

- In 2015, the petitioned status offense case rate for 16-year-olds was twice the rate for 14-year-olds, and the rate for 14-year-olds was more than 3 times the rate for 12-year-olds.
- The largest increase in case rates between age 13 and age 17 was for liquor law violations. The case rate for 17-year-old juveniles (1.6) was 21 times the rate for 13-year-olds (0.1).
- Curfew and liquor law violation rates increased continuously with the age of the juvenile. In contrast, rates for petitioned cases involving runaway, truancy, and ungovernability were higher for 16-year-old juveniles than for 17-year-olds.

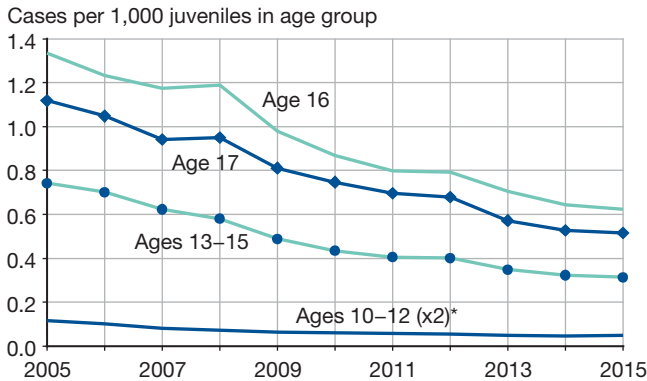
In 2015, status offense case rates increased with the age of the juvenile through age 16 and then decreased slightly for 17-year-olds



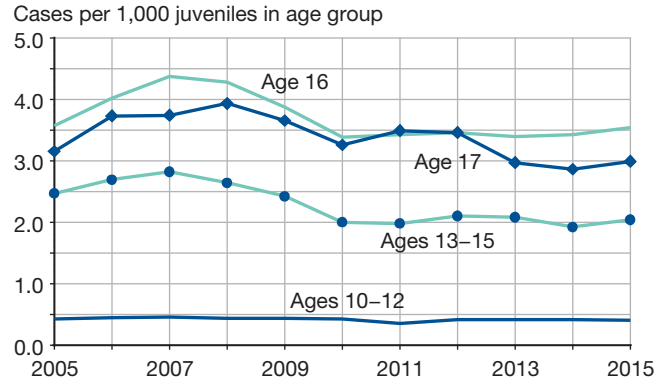
Age at Referral

Trends in case rates differed across age groups for each general status offense category

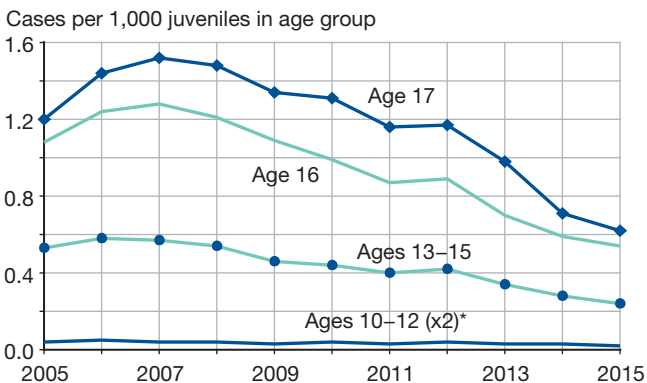
Runaway case rates



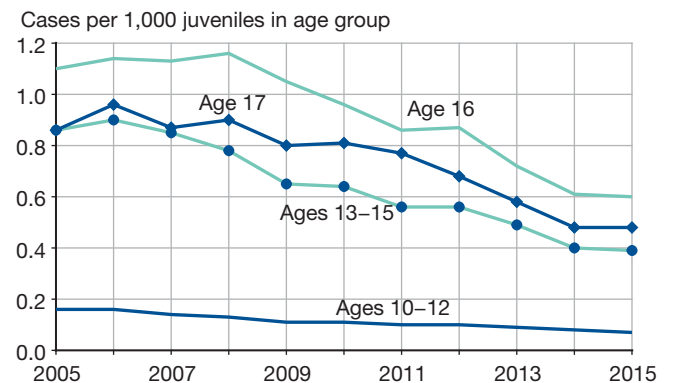
Truancy case rates



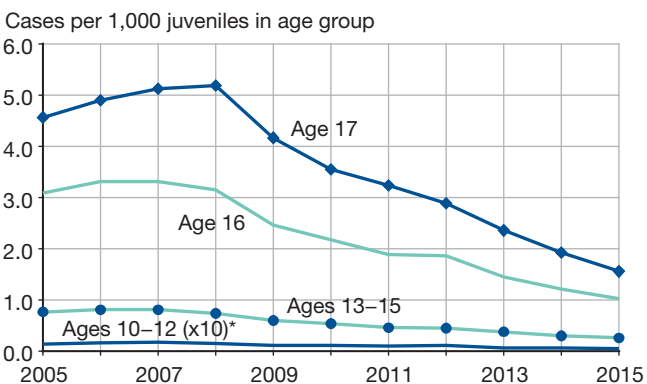
Curfew case rates



Ungovernability case rates



Liquor law violation case rates



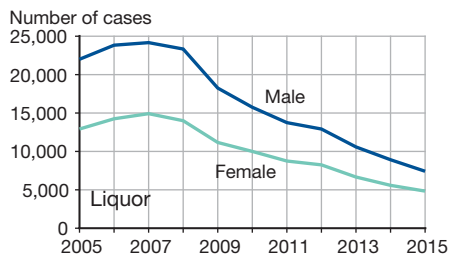
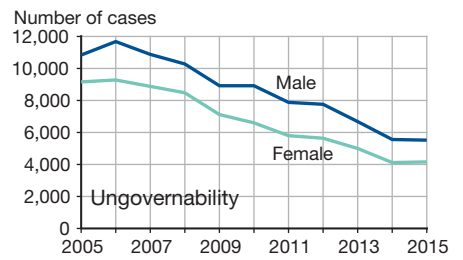
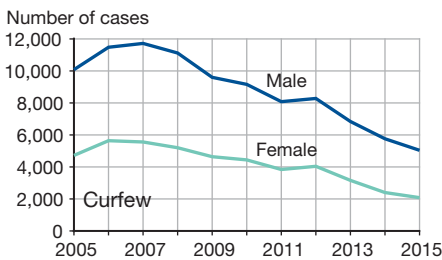
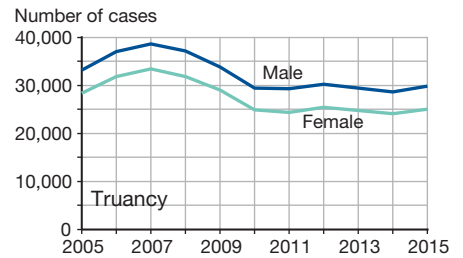
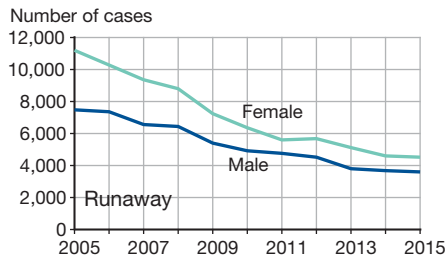
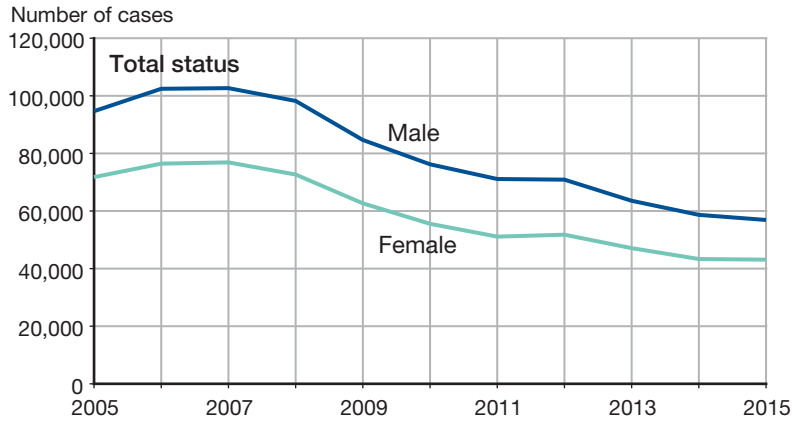
- Case rates for petitioned runaway cases decreased the most for youth ages 10–12 between 2005 and 2015.
- Despite relative stability in recent years, truancy case rates for youth ages 13 and older increased slightly between 2014 and 2015.
- Case rates for petitioned curfew cases increased between 9% and 27% for all youth age 13 and older between 2005 and 2007, before declining through 2015.
- The decrease in case rates between 2005 and 2015 for petitioned ungovernability cases was greater for younger youth than older youth.
- Depending on age, case rates for petitioned liquor law violation cases grew between 2005 and either 2007 or 2008, before decreasing through 2015.

* Because of the relatively low volume of cases involving youth ages 10–12 for runaway, curfew, and liquor law violations, their case rates are inflated by a factor specified in the graph to display the trend over time.

Gender

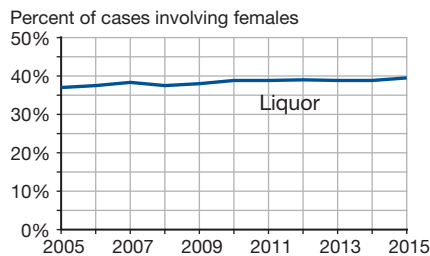
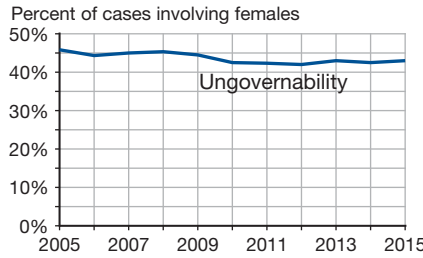
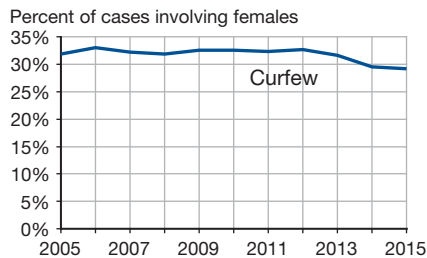
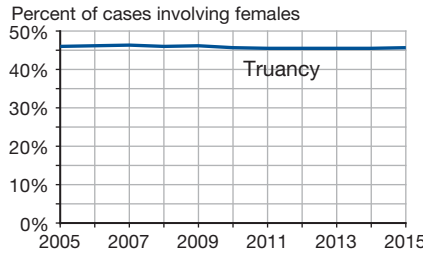
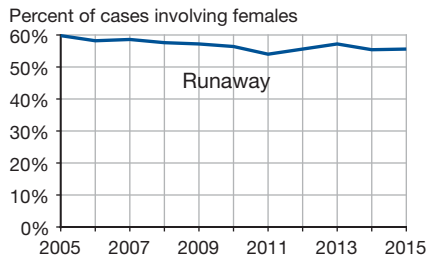
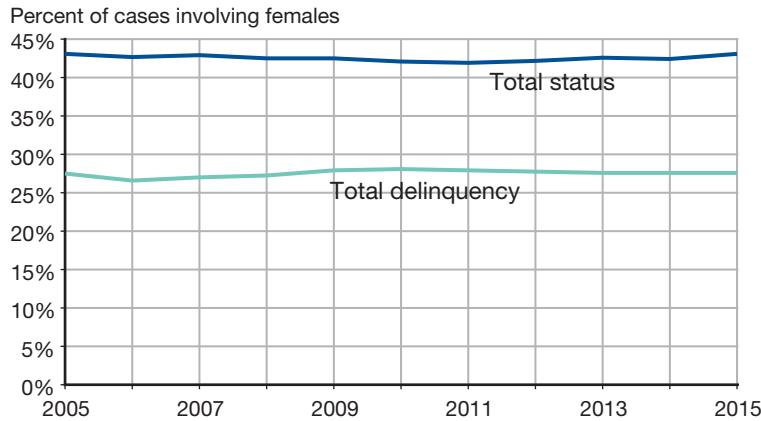
- Overall, the relative decrease in petitioned status offense cases between 2005 and 2015 was equal for males and females (40% each).
- Between 2005 and 2015, the petitioned runaway caseload decreased 52% for males and 60% for females.
- Between 2005 and 2007, the number of petitioned truancy cases increased 17% for males and 18% for females, then decreased through 2015 (23% for males and 25% for females).
- Between 2005 and 2015, the number of petitioned truancy cases outnumbered all other status offense cases for both males and females.

Trends in petitioned status offense caseloads revealed similar patterns for males and females



Gender

Compared with the delinquency caseload, females accounted for a substantially larger proportion of petitioned status offenses



- Males accounted for 57% of the total petitioned status offense caseload in 2015.
- In 2015, males accounted for the majority of curfew (71%), liquor law violation (61%), ungovernability (57%), and truancy (54%) cases.
- Females accounted for 56% of petitioned runaway cases in 2015, the only status offense category in which females represented a larger proportion of the caseload than males.

Offense profile of petitioned status offense cases by gender:

Most serious offense	Male	Female
2015		
Runaway	6%	10%
Truancy	52	58
Curfew	9	5
Ungovernability	10	10
Liquor	13	11
Miscellaneous	10	6
Total	100%	100%
2005		
Runaway	8%	16%
Truancy	35	40
Curfew	11	7
Ungovernability	11	13
Liquor	23	18
Miscellaneous	12	8
Total	100%	100%

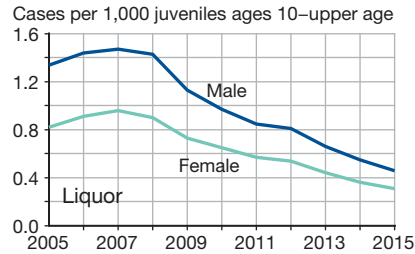
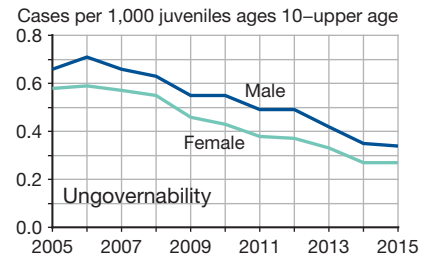
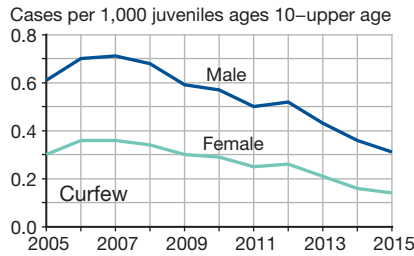
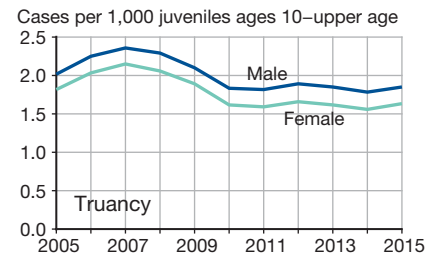
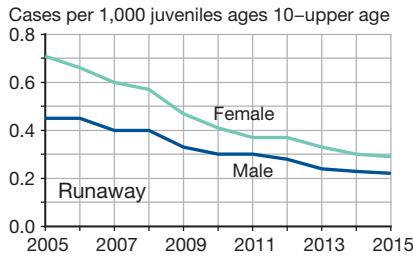
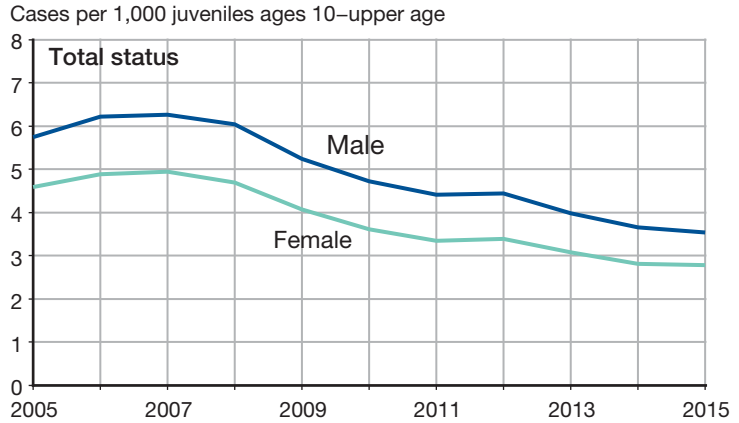
Note: Detail may not total 100% because of rounding.

- Truancy cases accounted for over half of the petitioned status offense caseload for both males and females in 2015.

Gender

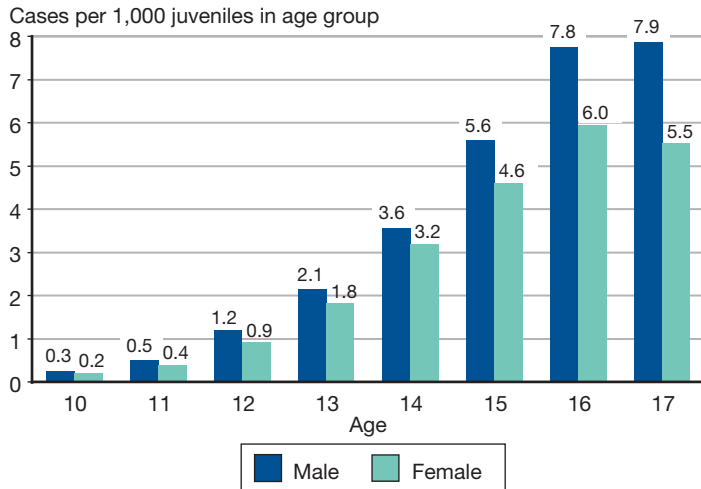
- The petitioned status offense case rate decreased for both males and females between 2005 and 2015 (39% each).
- Runaway case rates declined between 2005 and 2015 for both males (51%) and females (59%).
- Between 2005 and 2015, the truancy case rate for both males and females was greater than the rate of any other status offense category.
- For both males and females, the case rates for truancy cases increased between 2005 and 2007 (17% and 18%, respectively) before declining through 2015 (22% and 24%, respectively). A similar pattern occurred for curfew cases: male case rates increased 17% and female case rates increased 18% between 2005 and 2007, before declining through 2015 (56% and 62%, respectively).
- Between 2005 and 2015, case rates for ungovernability declined 48% for males and 54% for females.

The petitioned status offense case rates followed similar patterns for males and females between 2005 and 2015

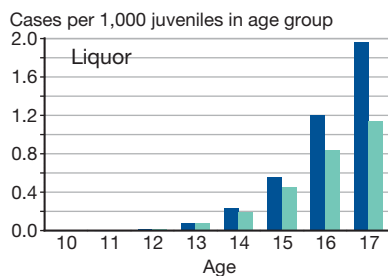
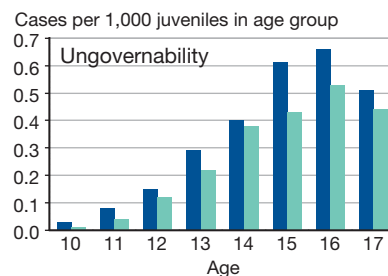
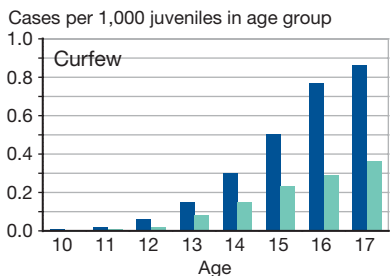
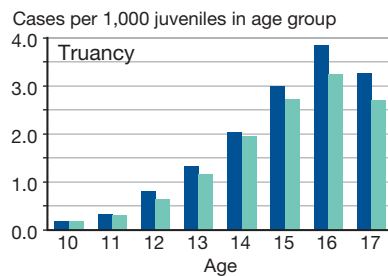
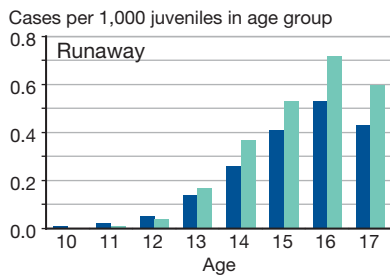


Gender

In 2015, the status offense case rate for males increased through age 17; for females the rate increased through age 16 and dropped for 17-year-olds



- After age 12, case rates for running away were higher for females than for males in 2015.
- In 2015, petitioned case rates for running away, truancy, and ungovernability peaked at age 16 for both males and females.
- For both males and females, petitioned status offense case rates increased continuously with age for curfew and liquor law violations in 2015.
- In 2015, curfew case rates for males were at least double curfew case rates for females, regardless of age.
- The largest disparity in the ungovernability case rate between males and females was among youth ages 10 and 11. The case rate for males ages 10 and 11 was more than double the case rate for females of the same age.



Race

- The petitioned status offense caseload decreased the most for white youth (44%) between 2005 and 2015, followed by Asian youth (42%), and American Indian youth (40%).
- Between 2005 and 2015, across racial groups and offenses, the number of cases decreased with the exception of truancy cases involving Hispanic youth.
- In 2015, truancy cases made up the greatest proportion of the caseloads for youth of all race groups.

Racial profile of petitioned status offense cases:

Race	2005	2015
White	68%	64%
Black	20	22
Hispanic ²	3	3
American Indian ³	2	2
Asian ⁴	8	10
Total	100%	100%

Note: Detail may not total 100% because of rounding.

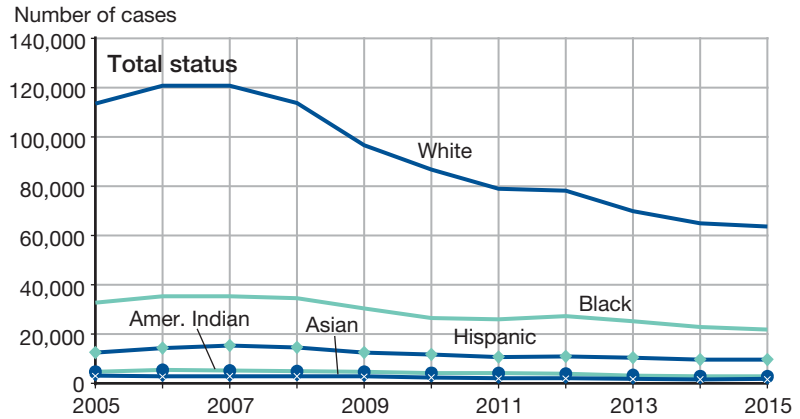
- White youth made up 55% of the population under juvenile court jurisdiction and 64% of the petitioned status offense caseload in 2015.
- Between 2005 and 2015, the proportion of petitioned status offense cases involving white youth decreased and the proportion involving black youth and Asian youth increased.

² Persons of Hispanic ethnicity are treated as a distinct race group and are excluded from the other four race groups, with one important exception. Data provided to the Archive from many jurisdictions did not include any means to determine the ethnicity of American Indian youth. Rather than assume ethnicity for these youth, they are classified solely on their racial classification; as such, the American Indian group includes an unknown proportion of Hispanic youth.

³ The racial classification American Indian (usually abbreviated as Amer. Indian) includes American Indian and Alaskan Native.

⁴ The racial classification Asian includes Asian, Native Hawaiian, and Other Pacific Islander.

The petitioned status offense caseload decreased for all racial groups between 2005 and 2015



The number of petitioned status offense cases decreased more for white youth (44%) than youth of any other race

Most serious offense	Percent change in number of cases, 2005–2015				
	White	Black	Hispanic	American Indian	Asian
Status	-44%	-33%	-23%	-40%	-42%
Runaway	-59	-52	-53	-72	-79
Truancy	-15	-9	17	-4	-13
Curfew	-60	-31	-62	-40	-72
Ungovernability	-51	-54	-46	-62	-29
Liquor law	-67	-46	-52	-63	-64

The proportion of truancy cases increased across all racial groups between 2005 and 2015

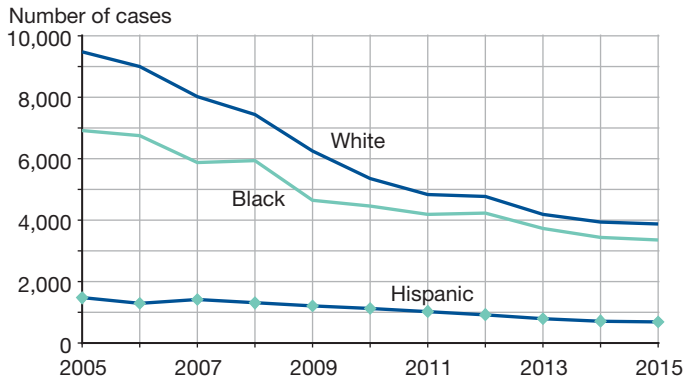
Most serious offense	Offense profile of status offense cases				
	White	Black	Hispanic	Amer. Indian	Asian
2015					
Runaway	6%	15%	7%	3%	6%
Truancy	55%	49%	67%	55%	74%
Curfew	5%	12%	5%	12%	4%
Ungovernability	10%	14%	4%	2%	3%
Liquor law	15%	4%	13%	23%	9%
Miscellaneous	10	6	4	5	4
Total	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%
2005					
Runaway	8%	21%	12%	6%	17%
Truancy	36%	36%	44%	34%	49%
Curfew	8%	12%	11%	12%	8%
Ungovernability	11%	20%	6%	3%	3%
Liquor law	25%	5%	20%	37%	15%
Miscellaneous	12	6	7	9	8
Total	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%

Note: Detail may not total 100% because of rounding.

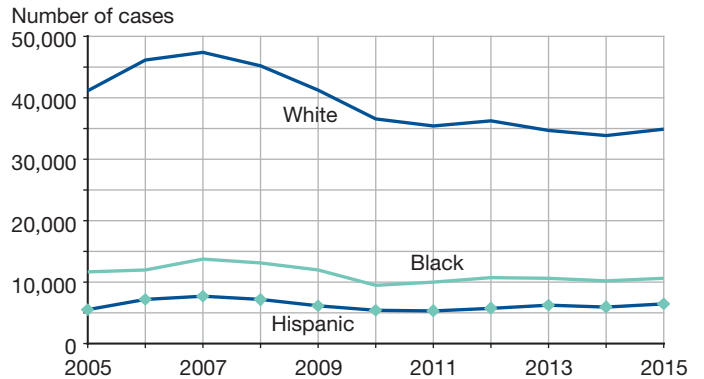
Race

Between 2005 and 2015, the petitioned status offense caseload declined the most for liquor law violation cases involving white youth (67%)

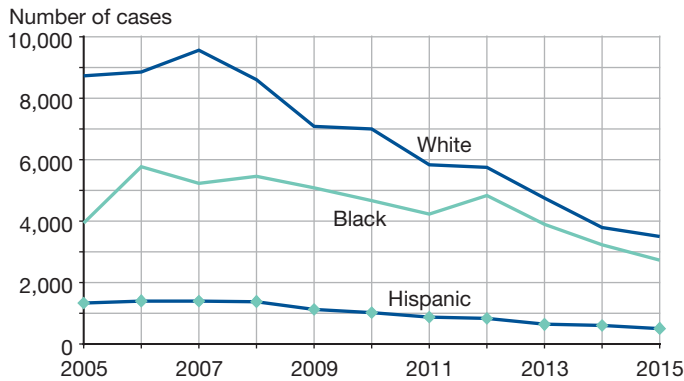
Runaway



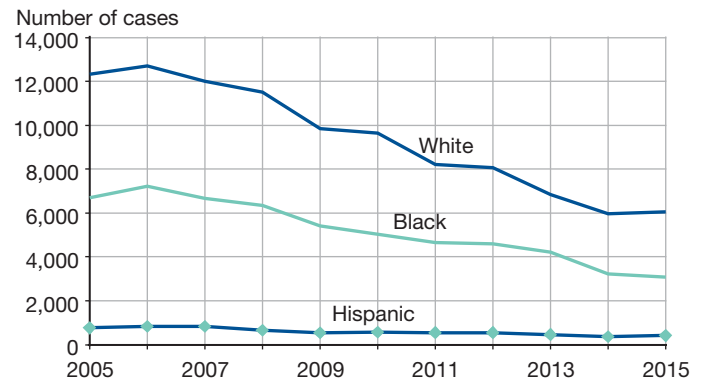
Truancy



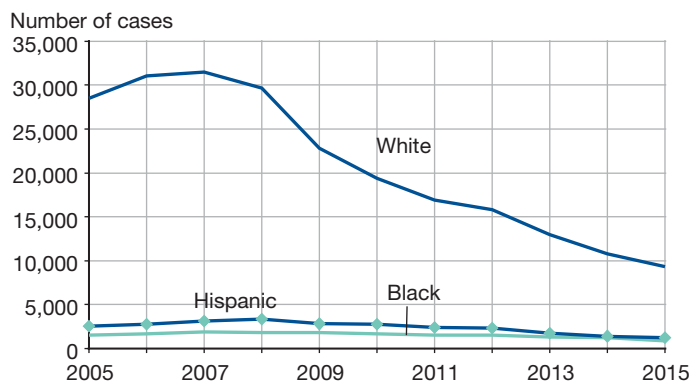
Curfew



Ungovernability



Liquor law violation



- The number of petitioned runaway cases decreased by at least half for all three race groups between 2005 and 2015.
- The number of truancy cases increased for Hispanic youth (17%) and decreased for white youth and black youth (15% and 9%, respectively) between 2005 and 2015.
- The decrease in the curfew caseload between 2005 and 2015 was greater for white youth (60%) and Hispanic youth (62%), and smaller for black youth (31%).
- Between 2005 and 2015, the number of ungovernability cases decreased by more than half for white youth and black youth (51% and 54%, respectively) and by 46% for Hispanic youth.

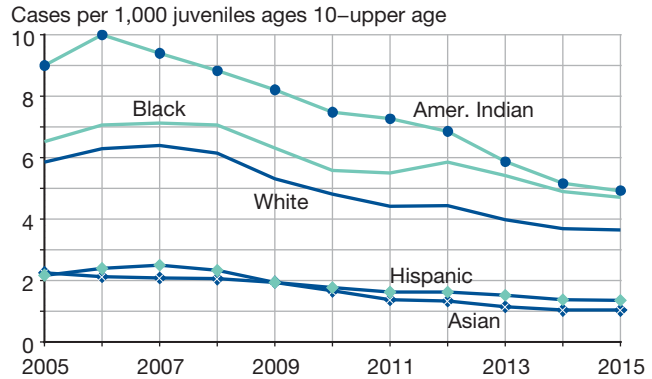
Note: Case counts for American Indian and Asian youth are not shown in the offense graphs above because their numbers are too small for display.

Race

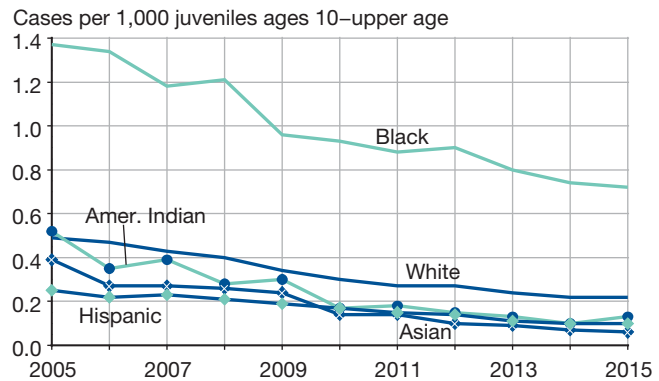
- Between 2005 and 2015, petitioned status offense case rates decreased 54% for Asian youth, 45% for American Indian youth, 37% each for Hispanic youth and white youth, and 28% for black youth.
- For all years between 2005 and 2014, the total petitioned status offense case rate for American Indian youth was higher than that for juveniles of all other racial categories. However, in 2015, the petitioned status offense case rate for black youth was similar to the case rate for American Indian youth, and higher than the case rates for all other racial categories.
- Between 2005 and 2015, the runaway case rate decreased 47% for black youth, 54% for white youth, and 62% for Hispanic youth. Despite declines for all racial groups, the runaway case rate for black youth in 2015 was more than 3 times the rate for white youth and more than 5 times the rates for Hispanic youth, American Indian youth, and Asian youth.
- Compared with all other status offense types, truancy case rates decreased the least for all race groups between 2005 and 2015, down 31% for Asian youth, 11% for American Indian youth, 6% each for Hispanic youth and white youth, and 1% for black youth.

Between 2005 and 2015, petitioned status offense case rates decreased for all race groups

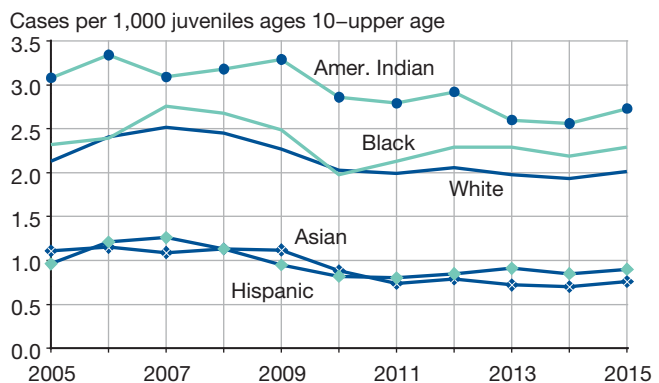
Total status offense case rates



Runaway case rates



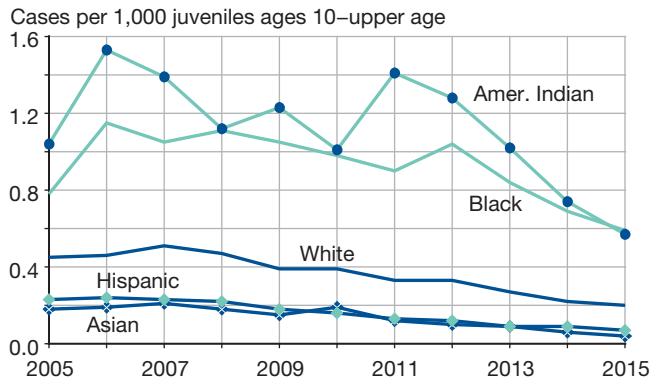
Truancy case rates



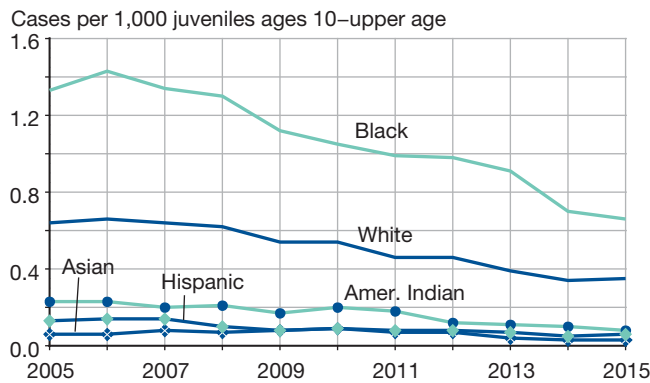
Race

Case rates varied by racial group and offense between 2005 and 2015

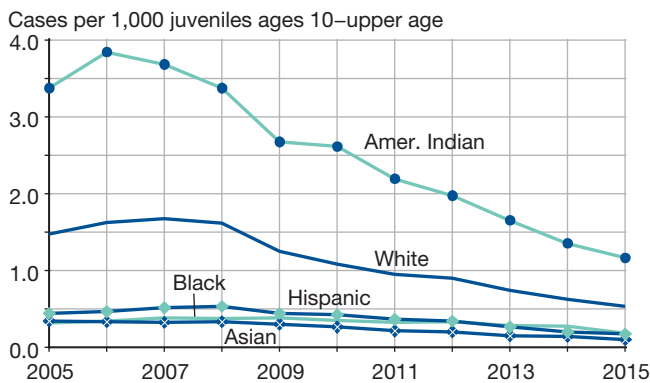
Curfew case rates



Ungovernability case rates



Liquor law violation case rates



- Curfew case rates decreased more for white, Hispanic, and Asian youth (down at least 54% each) than for black or American Indian youth (25% and 45%, respectively) between 2005 and 2015.
- In 2015, the ungovernability case rate for black juveniles was nearly twice the white rate.
- American Indian juveniles had the highest case rate for liquor law violations in each year between 2005 and 2015. In 2015, the liquor law violation case rate for American Indian youth was twice the rate for white youth, and more than 6 times the rates for black youth, Hispanic youth, and Asian youth.

Source of Referral

- Status offense cases can be referred to court intake by a number of sources, including law enforcement agencies, schools, relatives, social service agencies, and probation officers.

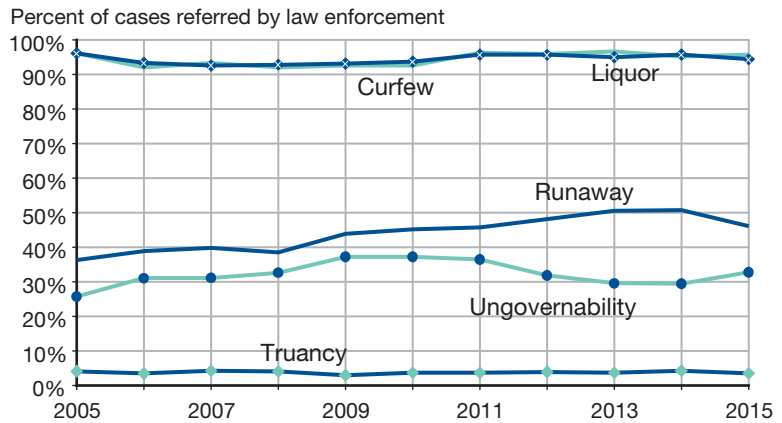
Percentage of petitioned status offense cases referred by law enforcement:

Most serious offense	2005	2015
Total status	34%	24%
Runaway	36	46
Truancy ⁵	4	4
Curfew	96	96
Ungovernability	26	33
Liquor law	96	94

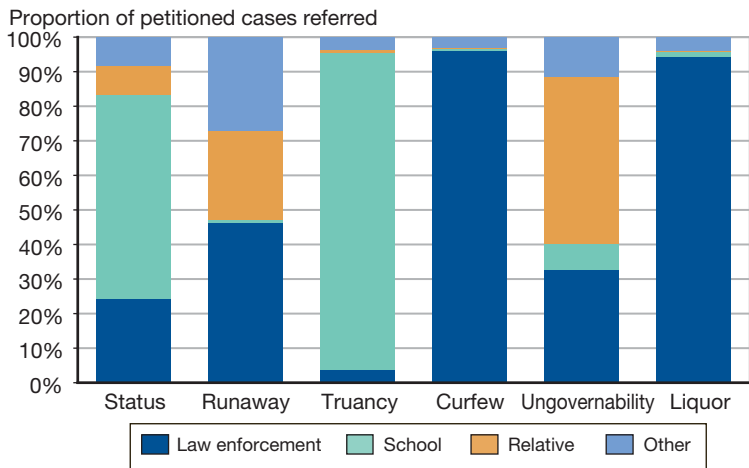
- In 2015, law enforcement agencies referred one-quarter (24%) of the petitioned status offense cases disposed by juvenile courts.
- Compared with 2005, law enforcement referred larger proportions of runaway and ungovernability offense cases in 2015.
- Schools referred 92% of the petitioned truancy cases in 2015.
- Relatives referred 48% of the petitioned ungovernability cases in 2015.

⁵ During the processing of the 2015 data, an error was discovered with the imputation procedure that impacted the percentage of petitioned truancy cases referred by law enforcement and a corresponding decline in the overall percentage of status offense cases referred by law enforcement.

Law enforcement agencies are the primary source of referrals to juvenile court for curfew and liquor law violation cases

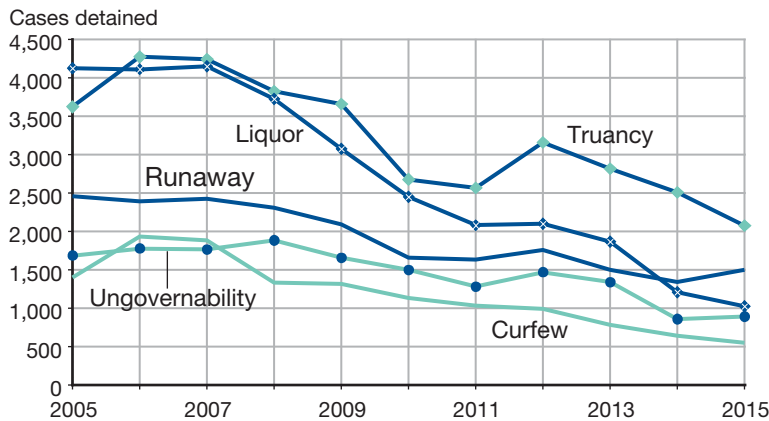


The source of referral in 2015 for petitioned status offense cases varied with the nature of the offense

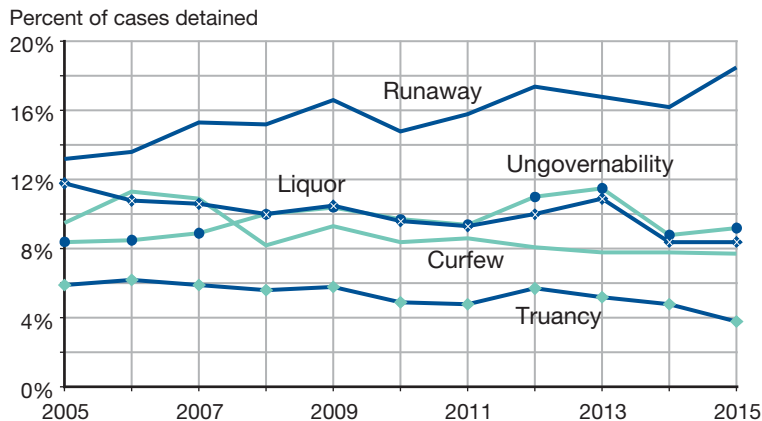


Detention

The number of cases involving detention decreased substantially between 2005 and 2015 for all case types



Between 2005 and 2015, truancy cases were least likely to involve detention, and runaway cases were the most likely



- The number of petitioned status offense cases involving detention decreased 56% between 2005 and 2015 (from 15,000 to 6,600).⁶
- Despite the decline in the volume of petitioned status offense cases involving detention, the proportion of cases detained was about the same in 2015 (9%) as in 2005 (7%).
- Between 2006 (a peak year for several offense types) and 2015, the number of petitioned cases involving detention decreased: 75% for liquor law violation cases, 72% for curfew cases, 51% for truancy cases, 50% for ungovernability cases, and 37% for runaway cases.
- Between 2005 and 2015, runaway cases were more likely to be detained than any other status offense type.

Offense profile of detained status offense cases:

Most serious offense	2005	2015
Runaway	16%	23%
Truancy	24%	31%
Curfew	9%	8%
Ungovernability	11%	13%
Liquor law	28%	15%
Miscellaneous	11%	9%
Total	100%	100%
Number of cases	15,000	6,600

Note: Detail may not total 100% because of rounding.

- Compared with 2005, the offense characteristics of the 2015 status offense detention caseload involved a greater proportion of runaway, truancy, and ungovernability cases, and a smaller proportion of curfew and liquor law violation cases.

⁶ Coverage of detention data used to generate national estimates was improved in *JCS 2015* (see p. 4). Readers familiar with this data will notice an increase in the likelihood of detention for petitioned status offense cases as a result of the improvement.

Adjudication

- Between 2005 and 2015, the number of status offense cases in which the youth was adjudicated a status offender decreased from 88,500 to 41,300.
- Between 2005 and 2015, the number of cases in which the youth was adjudicated a status offender decreased for all offense types: liquor law violation (73%), curfew (62%), runaway (61%), ungovernability (54%), and truancy (24%).

Offense profile of cases adjudicated a status offender:

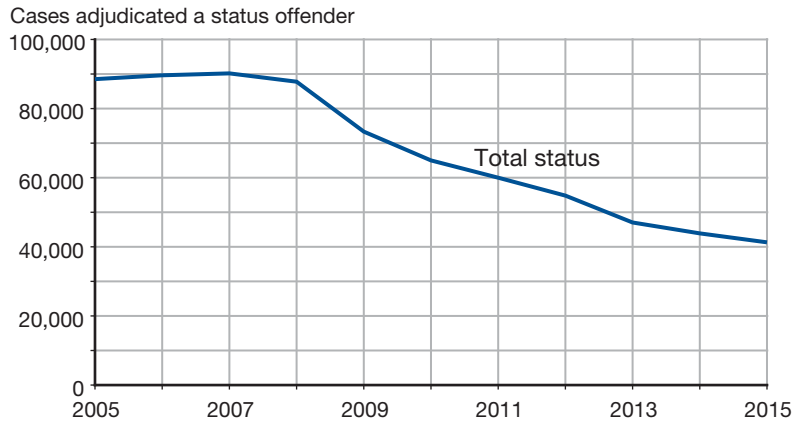
Most serious offense	2005	2015
Runaway	9%	8%
Truancy	28	46
Curfew	11	9
Ungovernability	12	12
Liquor law	27	16
Miscellaneous	13	10
Total	100%	100%

Cases adjudicated a status offender 88,500 41,300

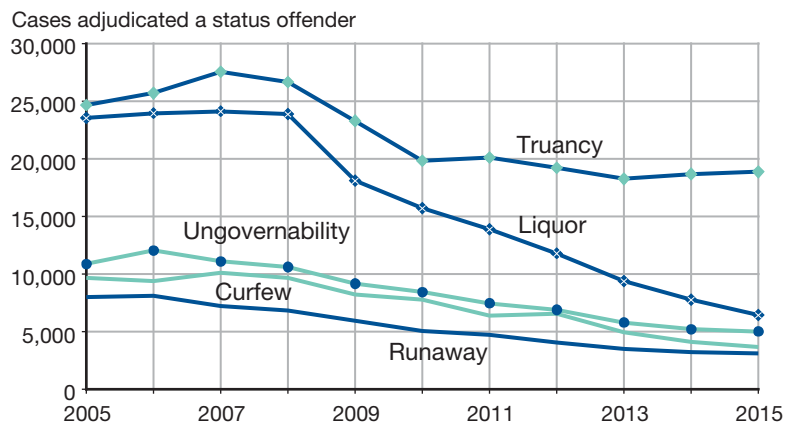
Note: Detail may not total 100% because of rounding.

- The adjudicated status offense case-loads for 2005 and 2015 were similar. For both years, cases involving truancy and liquor law violations made up the largest proportions of the adjudicated caseload.

Between 2005 and 2008, the number of cases in which the youth was adjudicated a status offender remained stable and then declined 53% through 2015

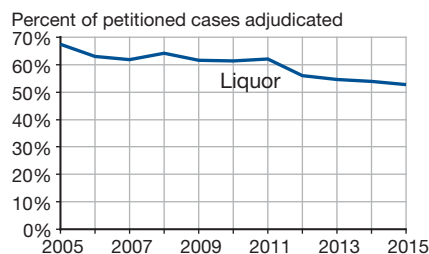
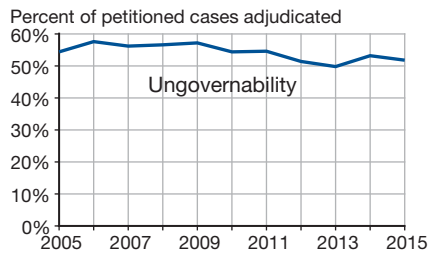
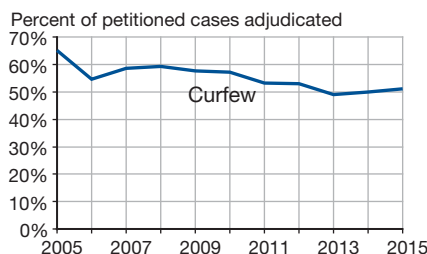
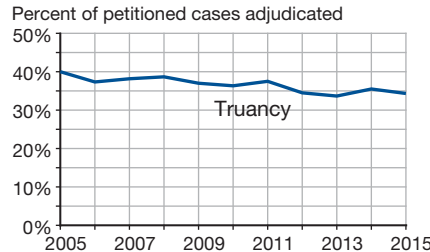
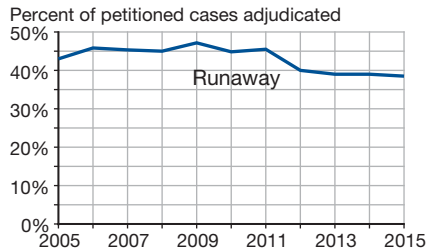
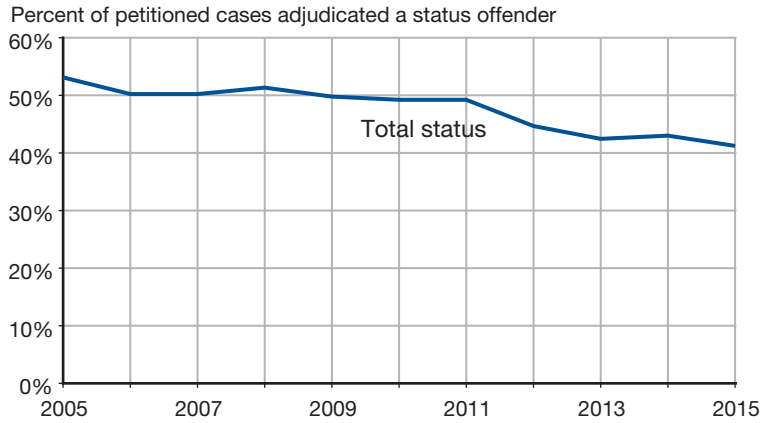


Between 2005 and 2015, the number of cases in which the youth was adjudicated a status offender decreased for all status offense categories



Adjudication

The likelihood of adjudication for petitioned status offense cases decreased from 53% in 2005 to 41% in 2015



- Among status offense categories in 2015, adjudication was least likely in petitioned truancy cases (34%) and most likely in cases involving ungovernability and liquor law violations (52% and 53%, respectively).
- The likelihood of petitioned runaway cases resulting in adjudication decreased from 43% in 2005 to 39% in 2015.
- Between 2005 and 2015, the likelihood of adjudication among petitioned curfew cases decreased from 65% to 51%.
- The likelihood of adjudication among petitioned liquor law violation cases decreased from 68% in 2005 to 53% in 2015.

Percentage of petitioned status offense cases adjudicated, 2015:

Most serious offense	15 or younger	16 or older	Male	Female
Total status	39%	44%	43%	39%
Runaway	41	36	38	39
Truancy	33	36	36	33
Curfew	47	54	51	52
Ungovern.	51	52	52	51
Liquor law	55	52	53	52

Most serious offense	White	Black	Hisp.	Other
Total status	44%	36%	34%	38%
Runaway	44	31	44	NA
Truancy	36	36	26	32
Curfew	64	34	55	NA
Ungovern.	56	44	56	NA
Liquor law	53	46	53	57

NA: Too few cases to obtain a reliable percentage.

Dispositions: Out-of-Home Placement

The number of petitioned status offense cases in which youth were adjudicated a status offender and ordered to out-of-home placement declined from 6,900 in 2005 to 2,600 in 2015.

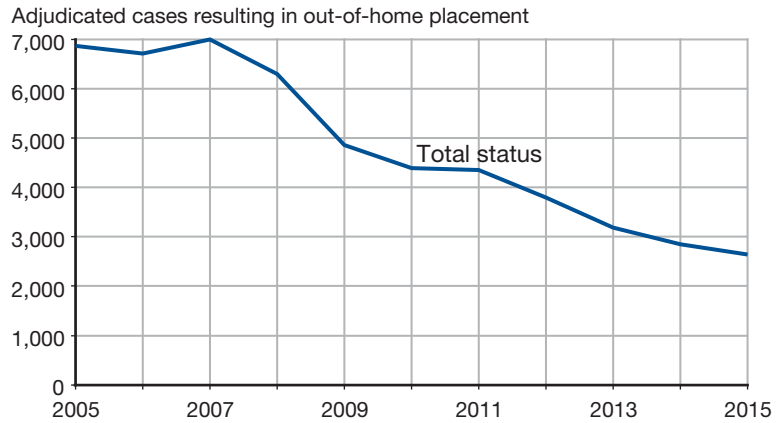
Offense profile of adjudicated status offense cases resulting in out-of-home placement:

Most serious offense	2005	2015
Runaway	20%	25%
Truancy	20	24
Curfew	3	3
Ungovernability	26	24
Liquor law	19	11
Miscellaneous	13	14
Total	100%	100%
Cases resulting in out-of-home placement	6,900	2,600

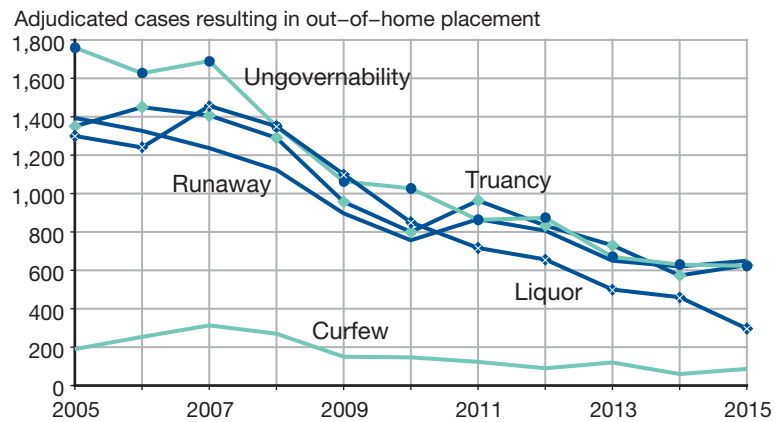
Note: Detail may not total 100% because of rounding.

In 2005, ungovernability cases accounted for the largest share of adjudicated status offense cases that resulted in out-of-home placement; in 2015, runaway (25%), truancy (24%), and ungovernability cases (24%) accounted for the largest shares.

The number of adjudicated status offense cases resulting in out-of-home placement declined 61% between 2005 and 2015

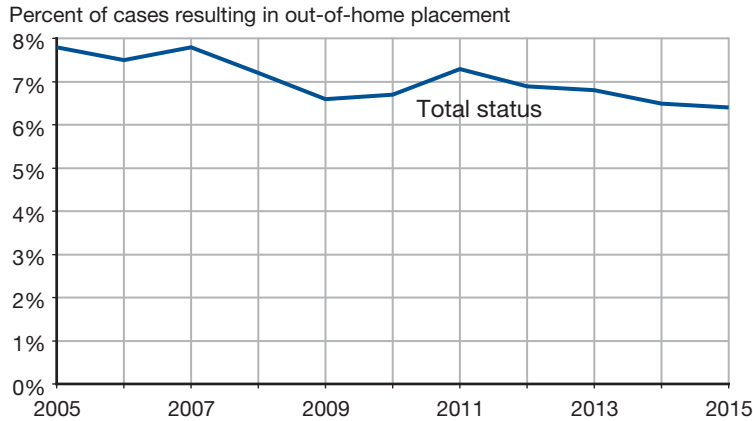


The number of adjudicated status offense cases that resulted in out-of-home placement declined between 2005 and 2015 for all offense types



Dispositions: Out-of-Home Placement

The court ordered out-of-home placement in 6% of all adjudicated status offense cases in 2015



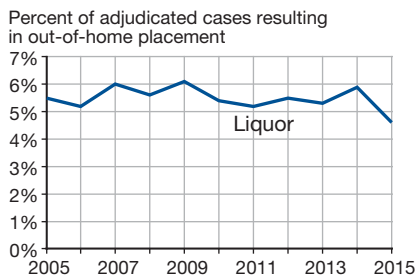
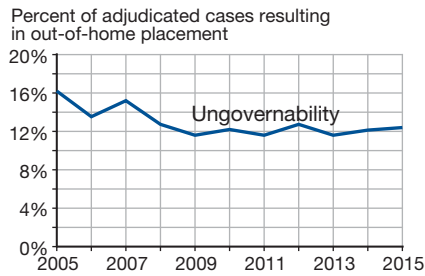
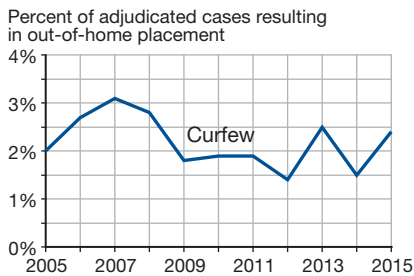
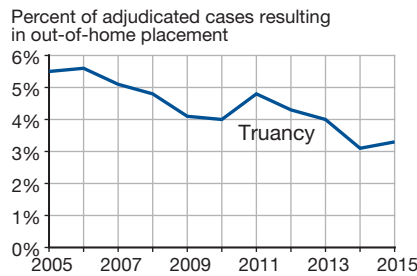
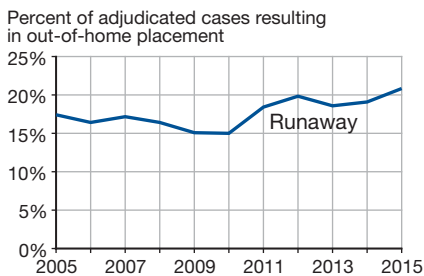
- The likelihood that an adjudicated status offense case would result in out-of-home placement decreased between 2005 and 2015 for all status offense categories except runaway, which increased 3 percentage points, and curfew cases, which remained the same.
- Between 2005 and 2015, the largest decline in the proportion of adjudicated status offense cases resulting in out-of-home placement was seen in cases involving ungovernability (down 4 percentage points). In contrast, the proportion of runaway cases increased 4 percentage points during the time period.

Percentage of adjudicated status offense cases resulting in out-of-home placement, 2015:

Most serious offense	15 or younger	16 or older	Male	Female
Total status	7%	6%	7%	6%
Runaway	19	23	24	19
Truancy	3	3	4	3
Curfew	3	2	3	1
Ungovern.	13	12	13	12
Liquor law	4	5	6	3

Most serious offense	White	Black	Hisp.	Other
Total status	7%	7%	6%	4%
Runaway	23	18	16	NA
Truancy	4	3	3	1
Curfew	1	5	1	NA
Ungovern.	14	9	8	NA
Liquor law	4	4	8	NA

NA: Too few cases to obtain a reliable percentage.



Dispositions: Probation

- Between 2005 and 2015, the number of adjudicated status offense cases resulting in an order of probation decreased 48%, compared with a 61% decrease in the number of cases resulting in out-of-home placement.
- Between 2005 and 2015, the number of adjudicated status offense cases receiving probation decreased for all offense types: liquor law violation (69%), runaway (57%), ungovernability (54%), curfew (47%), and truancy (20%).

Offense profile of adjudicated status offense cases resulting in probation:

Most serious offense	2005	2015
Runaway	10%	9%
Truancy	32	48
Curfew	5	5
Ungovernability	17	15
Liquor law	28	17
Miscellaneous	8	7
Total	100%	100%
Cases resulting in formal probation	45,100	23,600

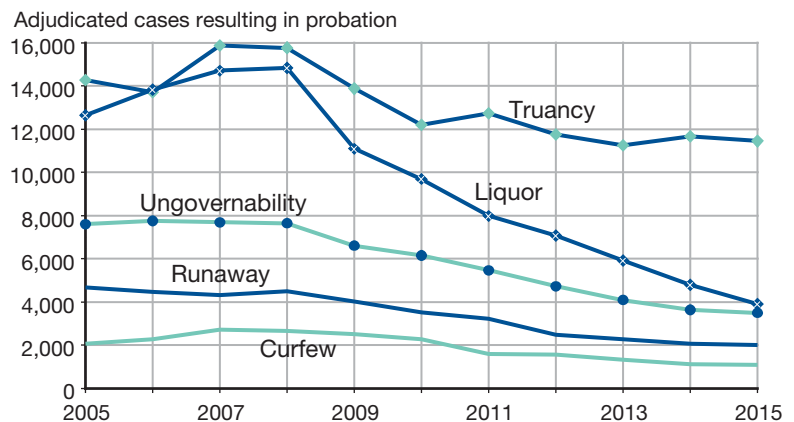
Note: Detail may not total 100% because of rounding.

- In 2015, most adjudicated status offense cases that resulted in probation involved truancy offenses (48%), followed by liquor law violations (17%) and ungovernability cases (15%).

Between 2005 and 2008, the number of adjudicated status offense cases that resulted in probation increased 9% and then declined 52% by 2015

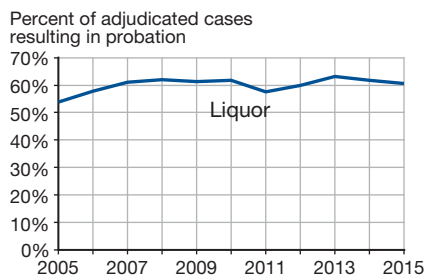
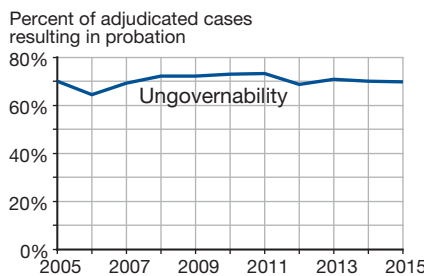
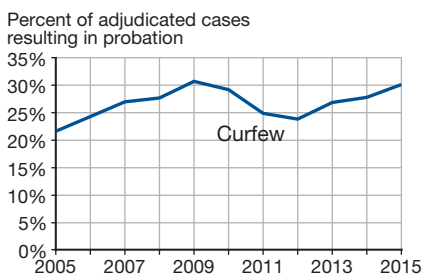
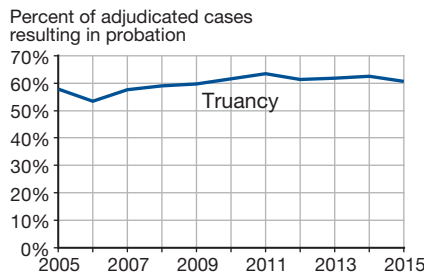
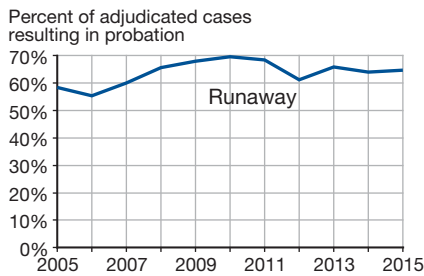
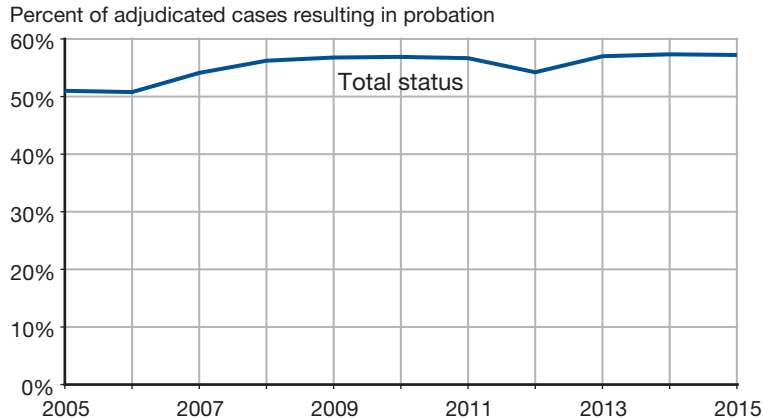


Between 2005 and 2015, the number of adjudicated status offense cases that resulted in probation decreased in all major status offense categories



Dispositions: Probation

The use of probation as the most restrictive disposition in adjudicated status offense cases increased for all offenses except ungovernability, which remained the same



■ Probation was the most restrictive disposition used in 57% of the adjudicated status offense cases in 2015, compared with 51% of the adjudicated caseload in 2005.

■ In 2015, probation was ordered in 65% of adjudicated runaway cases, 61% of truancy cases, 30% of curfew violations, 70% of ungovernability cases, and 61% of cases involving liquor law violations.

Percentage of adjudicated status offense cases resulting in probation, 2015:

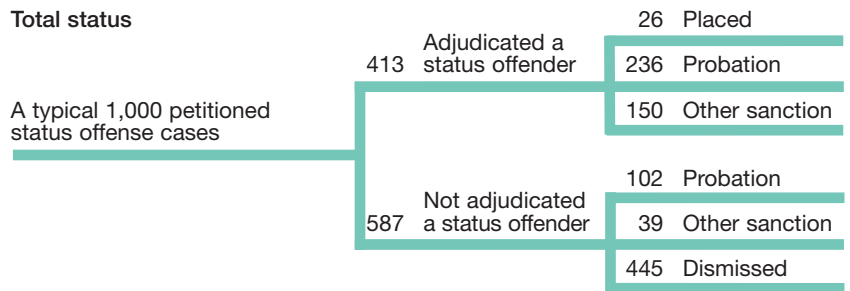
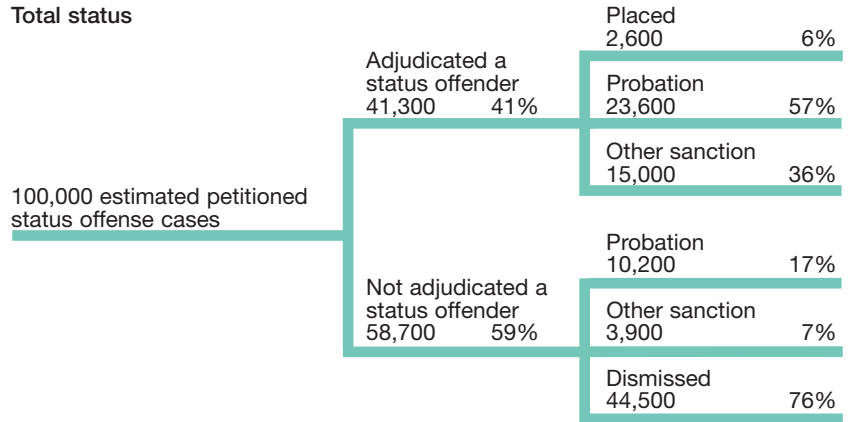
Most serious offense	15 or younger	16 or older	Male	Female
Total status	61%	54%	56%	59%
Runaway	66	63	61	68
Truancy	65	55	61	60
Curfew	29	31	31	28
Ungovern.	73	66	69	71
Liquor law	60	61	61	61

Most serious offense	White	Black	Hisp.	Other
Total status	51%	74%	62%	75%
Runaway	64	63	67	NA
Truancy	60	61	61	67
Curfew	24	40	41	NA
Ungovern.	68	72	77	NA
Liquor law	59	60	70	NA

NA: Too few cases to obtain a reliable percentage.

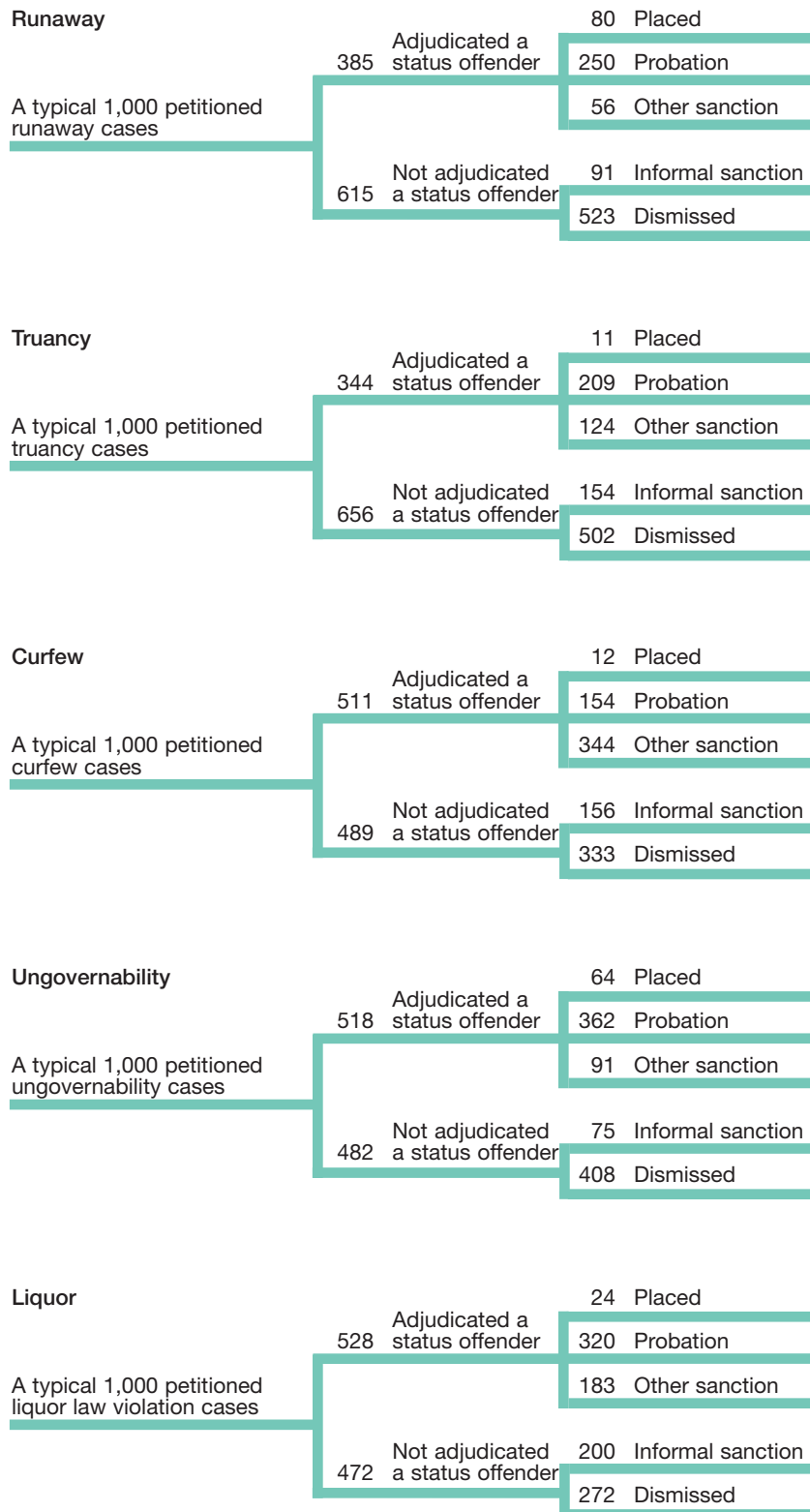
Case Processing Overview, 2015

- In 2015, 41% of petitioned status offense cases resulted in adjudication.
- In 57% of adjudicated status offense cases, formal probation was the most restrictive sanction ordered by the court.
- In 2015, 6% of adjudicated status offense cases resulted in out-of-home placement.
- Dispositions with minimal continuing supervision by probation staff were ordered in 36% of status offense cases adjudicated in 2015—the juvenile was ordered to enter a treatment or counseling program, to pay restitution or a fine, or to participate in some form of community service.
- In 59% of formally handled status offense cases in 2015, the juvenile was not adjudicated a status offender. The court dismissed 76% of these cases, while 17% resulted in some form of informal probation and 7% in other voluntary dispositions.
- For every 1,000 status offense cases formally processed by juvenile courts in 2015, 236 resulted in formal probation and 26 were placed out of the home.



Notes: Cases are categorized by their most severe or restrictive sanction. Detail may not add to totals because of rounding.

Case Processing by Offense Category, 2015



Notes: Cases are categorized by their most severe or restrictive sanction. Detail may not add to totals because of rounding.

Runaway Cases

- Among the five major status offense categories, juvenile courts were most likely to order youth to out-of-home placement following adjudication in runaway cases (80 of 385 cases), but formal probation was a more likely outcome (250 of 385).
- Among petitioned runaway cases in 2015, youth were not adjudicated a status offender in 615 of a typical 1,000 cases. Of these 615 cases, 85% (523) were dismissed.

Truancy Cases

- In 2015, of a typical 1,000 formal truancy cases, 209 resulted in formal probation and 11 were placed out of the home.

Curfew Violation Cases

- In 2015, for every 1,000 petitioned curfew violation cases, 154 resulted in formal probation and 12 were placed out of the home.
- Among petitioned cases involving curfew violations in 2015, youth were not adjudicated a status offender in 489 of a typical 1,000 cases. Of these 489 cases, 68% (333) were dismissed.

Ungovernability Cases

- For every 1,000 petitioned ungovernability cases in 2015, 362 resulted in formal probation following adjudication and 64 were placed out of the home.

Liquor Law Violation Cases

- Among petitioned liquor law violation cases in 2015, the most likely outcome was formal probation (320 of 1,000); out-of-home placement was ordered in 24 of a typical 1,000 cases.
- In 2015, among petitioned liquor law violation cases, youth were not adjudicated as status offenders in 472 of a typical 1,000 cases.

Appendix A

Methods

The *Juvenile Court Statistics (JCS)* series uses data provided to the National Juvenile Court Data Archive (the Archive) by state and county agencies responsible for collecting and/or disseminating information on the processing of youth in juvenile courts. These data are not the result of a uniform data collection effort. They are not derived from a complete census of juvenile courts or obtained from a probability sample of courts. The national estimates presented in this report are developed by using compatible information from all courts that are able to provide data to the Archive.

Sources of Data

The Archive uses data in two forms: detailed case-level data and court-level aggregate statistics. Case-level data are usually generated by automated client-tracking systems or case-reporting systems managed by juvenile courts or other juvenile justice agencies. These systems provide detailed data on the characteristics of each delinquency and status offense case handled by courts, generally including the age, gender, and race of the youth referred; the date and source of referral; the offenses charged; detention and petitioning decisions; and the date and type of disposition.

The structure of each case-level data set contributed to the Archive is unique, having been designed to meet the information needs of a particular jurisdiction. Archive staff study the structure and content of each data set in order to design an automated restructuring procedure that will transform each jurisdiction's data into a common case-level format.

Court-level aggregate statistics either are abstracted from the annual reports of state and local courts or are contributed directly to the Archive. Court-level statistics typically provide counts of the delinquency and status offense cases handled by courts in a defined time period (calendar or fiscal year).

Each year, many juvenile courts contribute either detailed data or aggregate statistics to the Archive. However, not all of this information can be used to generate the national estimates contained in *JCS*. To be used in the development of national estimates, the data must be in a compatible unit of count (i.e., case disposed), the data source must demonstrate a pattern of consistent reporting over time (at least 2 years), and the data file contributed to the Archive must represent a complete count of delinquency and/or status offense cases disposed in a jurisdiction during a given year.

Table A-1: 2015 Stratum Profiles for Delinquency Data

Stratum	County population ages 10–17	Counties in stratum	Counties reporting compatible data				
			Number of counties			Percentage of counties	Percentage of juvenile population
			Case-level	Court-level	Total*		
1	Fewer than 13,928	2,667	1,991	126	2,077	78%	79%
2	13,928–49,000	331	263	18	269	81	82
3	49,001–122,000	109	89	7	91	83	85
4	More than 122,000	35	34	6	34	97	98
Total		3,142	2,377	157	2,471	79	86

* Some counties reported both case-level and court-level data; therefore, the total number of counties reporting delinquency data is not equal to the number of counties reporting case-level data plus the number of counties reporting court-level data.

Table A-2: 2015 Stratum Profiles for Status Offense Data

Stratum	County population ages 10–17	Counties in stratum	Counties reporting compatible data				
			Number of counties			Percentage of counties	Percentage of juvenile population
			Case-level	Court-level	Total		
1	Fewer than 13,928	2,667	1,883	86	1,969	74%	75%
2	13,928–49,000	331	241	6	247	75	75
3	49,001–122,000	109	77	2	79	72	75
4	More than 122,000	35	33	0	33	94	96
Total		3,142	2,234	94	2,328	74	80

The aggregation of the JCS-compatible standardized case-level data files constitutes the Archive's national case-level database. The compiled data from jurisdictions that contribute only court-level JCS-compatible statistics constitute the national court-level database. Together, these two multijurisdictional databases (case-level and court-level) are used to generate the Archive's national estimates of delinquency and status offense cases.

In 2015, case-level data describing 664,931 delinquency cases handled by 2,377 jurisdictions in 42 states met the Archive's criteria for inclusion in the development of national delinquency estimates. Compatible data were available from Alabama, Alaska, Arizona, Arkansas, California, Colorado, Connecticut, District of Columbia, Florida, Georgia, Hawaii, Illinois, Indiana, Iowa, Kentucky, Maryland, Michigan, Minnesota, Mississippi, Missouri, Montana, Nebraska, Nevada, New Jersey, New Mexico, New York, North

Carolina, Ohio, Oklahoma, Oregon, Pennsylvania, Rhode Island, South Carolina, South Dakota, Tennessee, Texas, Utah, Vermont, Virginia, Washington, West Virginia, and Wisconsin. These courts had jurisdiction over 84% of the nation's juvenile population in 2015. Compatible court-level aggregate statistics on an additional 25,329 delinquency cases from 157 jurisdictions were used from Illinois, Indiana, New York, and Wyoming. In all, the Archive collected compatible case-level data and court-level statistics on delinquency cases from 2,471 jurisdictions containing 86% of the nation's juvenile population in 2015 (table A-1).

Case-level data describing 68,775 formally handled status offense cases from 2,234 jurisdictions in 40 states met the criteria for inclusion in the sample for 2015. The states included Alabama, Alaska, Arizona, Arkansas, California, Connecticut, District of Columbia, Florida, Georgia, Hawaii, Illinois, Indiana, Iowa, Kentucky,

Maryland, Michigan, Minnesota, Mississippi, Missouri, Montana, Nebraska, Nevada, New Jersey, New Mexico, New York, North Carolina, Ohio, Oklahoma, Oregon, Rhode Island, South Carolina, South Dakota, Tennessee, Texas, Utah, Vermont, Virginia, Washington, West Virginia, and Wisconsin. These courts had jurisdiction over 78% of the juvenile population. An additional 94 jurisdictions in Indiana and Wyoming had compatible court-level aggregate statistics on 4,857 petitioned status offense cases. Altogether, compatible case-level and court-level data on petitioned status offense cases were available from 2,328 jurisdictions containing 80% of the U.S. juvenile population in 2015 (table A-2).

A list of states contributing case-level data (either delinquency or petitioned status offense data), the variables each reports, and the percentage of cases containing each variable are presented in table A-3. More information about the reporting sample for

Table A-3: Content of Case-Level Data Sources, 2015

Data source	Age at referral	Gender	Race	Referral source	Referral reason	Secure detention	Manner of handling	Adjudication	Disposition
Alabama	AL	AL	AL	AL	AL	AL	AL	AL	AL
Alaska	AK	AK	AK	AK	AK	AK	AK	AK	AK
Arizona	AZ	AZ	AZ	AZ	AZ	–	AZ	AZ	AZ
Arkansas	AR	AR	AR	–	AR	–	AR	AR	–
California	CA	CA	CA	CA	CA	CA	CA	CA	CA
Colorado	–	–	CO	–	CO	–	CO	–	–
Connecticut	CT	CT	CT	CT	CT	CT	CT	CT	CT
District of Columbia	DC	DC	DC	–	DC	DC	DC	DC	DC
Florida	FL	FL	FL	FL	FL	FL	FL	FL	FL
Georgia	GA	GA	GA	–	GA	–	GA	GA	GA
Hawaii	HI	HI	HI	HI	HI	–	HI	HI	HI
Illinois ¹	IL	IL	–	–	IL	IL	IL	IL	IL
Indiana	IN	IN	IN	IN	IN	IN	IN	IN	–
Iowa	IA	IA	IA	–	IA	–	IA	IA	IA
Kentucky	KY	KY	KY	–	KY	–	KY	KY	–
Maryland	MD	MD	MD	MD	MD	–	MD	MD	MD
Michigan	MI	MI	MI	MI	MI	MI	MI	MI	MI
Minnesota	MN	MN	MN	–	MN	–	MN	MN	MN
Mississippi	MS	MS	MS	MS	MS	MS	MS	MS	MS
Missouri	MO	MO	MO	MO	MO	MO	MO	MO	MO
Montana	MT	MT	MT	MT	MT	MT	MT	MT	–
Nebraska	NE	NE	NE	–	NE	–	NE	NE	NE
Nevada	NV	NV	NV	–	NV	NV	NV	NV	NV
New Jersey	NJ	NJ	NJ	–	NJ	–	NJ	NJ	NJ
New Mexico	NM	NM	NM	NM	NM	–	NM	NM	NM
New York	NY	NY	NY	–	NY	–	NY	NY	NY
North Carolina	NC	NC	NC	–	NC	–	NC	NC	NC
Ohio ²	OH	OH	OH	OH	OH	OH	OH	OH	OH
Oklahoma	OK	OK	OK	OK	OK	OK	OK	OK	OK
Oregon	OR	OR	OR	OR	OR	OR	OR	OR	OR
Pennsylvania	PA	PA	PA	PA	PA	–	PA	PA	PA
Rhode Island	RI	RI	–	RI	RI	RI	RI	RI	RI
South Carolina	SC	SC	SC	SC	SC	SC	SC	SC	SC
South Dakota	SD	SD	SD	–	SD	SD	SD	SD	SD
Tennessee	TN	TN	TN	TN	TN	–	TN	TN	TN
Texas	TX	TX	TX	TX	TX	TX	TX	TX	TX
Utah	UT	UT	UT	UT	UT	UT	UT	UT	UT
Vermont	VT	VT	VT	–	VT	VT	VT	VT	VT
Virginia	VA	VA	VA	VA	VA	–	VA	VA	–
Washington	WA	WA	WA	WA	WA	WA	WA	WA	WA
West Virginia	WV	WV	WV	WV	WV	WV	WV	WV	WV
Wisconsin	WI	WI	WI	–	WI	–	WI	WI	WI
Percentage of estimation sample	98%	97%	94%	72%	97%	54%	100%	97%	86%

Note: The symbol “–” indicates that compatible data for this variable are not reported by this state.

¹ Data from Cook and DuPage counties only.

² Data from Cuyahoga, Franklin, Hamilton, and Lucas counties only.

the current data year and previous years since 1985 is available online at [ojstatbb/ezajcs/pdf/JCSSample.pdf](http://ojstatbb.ezajcs/pdf/JCSSample.pdf).

Juvenile Population

The volume and characteristics of juvenile court caseloads are partly a function of the size and demographic composition of a jurisdiction's population. Therefore, a critical element in the Archive's development of national estimates is the population of youth that generates the juvenile court referrals in each jurisdiction—i.e., the “juvenile” population of every U.S. county.

A survey of the Archive's case-level data shows that very few delinquency or status offense cases involve youth younger than 10. Therefore, the lower age limit of the juvenile population is set at 10 years for all jurisdictions. On the other hand, the upper age limit varies by state. Every state defines an upper age limit for youth who will come under the original jurisdiction of the juvenile court if they commit an illegal act. (See “Upper age of jurisdiction” in the “Glossary of Terms” section.) Most states set this age to be 17 years; other states have set the age at 15 or 16. States often enact exceptions to this simple age criterion (e.g., offense-specific youthful offender legislation and concurrent jurisdiction or extended jurisdiction provisions). In general, however, juvenile courts have responsibility for all law violations committed by youth whose age does not exceed the upper age of original jurisdiction.

For the purposes of this report, therefore, the juvenile population is defined as the number of youth living in a jurisdiction who are at least 10 years old but who are not older than the upper age of original juvenile court jurisdiction. For example, in New York, where the upper age of original juvenile court jurisdiction is 15 in 2015, the juvenile population is the number of youth residing in a

county who have had their 10th birthday but are not older than 15 (e.g., they have not yet reached their 16th birthday).

The juvenile population estimates used in this report were developed with data from the Census Bureau.¹ The estimates, separated into single-year age groups, reflect the number of white, black, Hispanic,² American Indian/Alaskan Native, and Asian (including Native Hawaiian and Pacific Islander) youth ages 10 through the upper age of juvenile court jurisdiction who reside in each county in the nation.

Estimation Procedure

National estimates are developed using the national case-level data-

¹ County-level intercensal estimates were obtained for the years 2005–2015. The following data files were used:

National Center for Health Statistics. 2012. *Intercensal Estimates of the Resident Population of the United States for July 1, 2000–July 1, 2009, by Year, County, Single-year of Age (0, 1, 2, ..., 85 Years and Over), Bridged Race, Hispanic Origin, and Sex* [machine-readable data file]. Prepared under a collaborative arrangement with the U.S. Census Bureau. Available online: cdc.gov/nchs/nvss/bridged_race.htm [Released 10/26/12, following release by the U.S. Census Bureau of the unbridged intercensal estimates by 5-year age group on 10/9/12].

National Center for Health Statistics. 2017. *Vintage 2016 Postcensal Estimates of the Resident Population of the United States (April 1, 2010, July 1, 2010–July 1, 2016), by Year, County, Single-year of Age (0, 1, 2, ..., 85 Years and Over), Bridged Race, Hispanic Origin, and Sex* [machine-readable data file]. Prepared under a collaborative arrangement with the U.S. Census Bureau. Available online: cdc.gov/nchs/nvss/bridged_race.htm [released on 6/26/17, following release by the U.S. Census Bureau of the unbridged Vintage 2016 postcensal estimates by 5-year age groups].

² In this report, Hispanic ethnicity is handled as a race category. All other racial categories exclude youth of Hispanic ethnicity.

base, the national court-level database, and the Archive's juvenile population estimates for every U.S. county. “County” was selected as the unit of aggregation because (1) most juvenile court jurisdictions in the United States are concurrent with county boundaries, (2) most data contributed by juvenile courts identify the county in which the case was handled, and (3) youth population estimates can be developed at the county level.

The Archive's national estimates are generated using data obtained from its nonprobability sample of juvenile courts. There are two major components of the estimation procedure. First, missing values on individual records of the national case-level database are imputed using hot deck procedures. Then the records of the national case-level database are weighted to represent the total number of cases handled by juvenile courts nationwide. Each stage of the estimation procedure will be described separately.

Record-level imputation. The first step in the estimation procedure is to place all U.S. counties into one of four strata based on their youth population ages 10 through 17. The lower and upper population limits of the four strata are defined each year so that each stratum contains one-quarter of the national population of youth ages 10 through 17.

This information is added onto each record in the national case-level database. As a result, each record in the national case-level database contains 11 variables of interest to the *JCS* report: county strata, year of disposition, intake decision, youth's age, youth's gender, youth's race, referral offense, source of referral, case detention, case adjudication, and case disposition.

By definition, the first three of these variables (i.e., county strata, year of

disposition, and intake decision) are known for every case in the database. Each of the other variables may be missing for some records and given a missing value code. The estimation procedure for the *JCS* report employs a multistage process to impute information for each missing value on each case record in the national case-level database.

Within a county's set of records in the database there can be two types of missing information: record-level missing and format-level missing. For many counties, a small proportion of their case-level records are missing valid codes in data elements that are valid for most of the other records from that county. For example, the gender of a youth may not have been reported on a few records while it is known for all the other youth in the county's database. This type of missing value is "record-level missing." There are also counties in which every record in the database has a missing value code for a specific variable. For example, some court data collection systems do not capture information on a youth's pre-disposition detention. Therefore, the variable "case detention" in the national case-level data has a missing value code on each record from that county. This type of missing value is "format-level missing." (Table A-3 indicates the standardized data elements that were not available, i.e., format-missing, from each jurisdiction's 2015 data set.) The imputation process handles the two types of missing values separately.

The imputation of record-level missing values uses a hot deck procedure with a donor pool of records from the same county. First, all the records for a specific county are sorted by disposition date. Then the file is read again, one record at a time. When the imputation software identifies a record with a record-level missing value (i.e., the target record), it imputes a valid code for this target

data field. This is accomplished by locating the next record in the county file that matches the target record on all of its nonmissing values and has a nonmissing code in the target data field; this record is called the donor record. The imputation software copies the valid code from the donor record and replaces the missing value code on the target record with this nonmissing value.

Once a donor record is used in the process for a given variable, it is not used again for that variable unless no other matches can be found for another target record. There are a small number of instances in which no donor record can be found in the county file. When this occurs, the imputation software relaxes its record matching criteria. That is, instead of trying to find a donor record with identical codes on variables other than the target field, the software ignores one nonmissing variable and attempts to find a match on all of the others. In the small number of cases where this does not lead to the identification of a donor record, a second variable is ignored and the file is reread looking for a donor. Although theoretically (and programmatically) this process can be repeated until all variables but county, year of disposition, and intake decision are ignored to find a donor, this never occurred. The order in which variables are removed from the matching criteria are source of referral, detention, offense, adjudication, race, gender, and age.

Format-level imputation. After all the record-level missing values have been imputed, the process turns to format-missing information, or information that is missing from a case record because that court's information system does not report this information on their cases. The process for imputing format-missing information is similar to that used in the record-missing imputation process with the needed difference that the donor pool is

expanded. Since all records in a county are missing the target data, the donor pool for format-missing records is defined as the records from all counties in the target record's stratum with the same year of disposition and intake decision.

Using this expanded donor pool, the imputation process follows the steps described above where a target record (i.e., one with missing data) is identified and the donor pool is scanned for a match. Once a match is found, the missing information on the target record is overwritten and the donor record is flagged as having been used for that variable so it will not be reused for that variable unless all other donors are used. If a donor record cannot be found in the first pass through the donor pool, matching criteria are relaxed until a donor is found.

There is one major exception to this process of imputing format-level missing information. This exception involves the process of imputing missing race for those counties that do not report this data element to the Archive. The racial composition of a court's caseload is strongly related to the racial composition of the resident juvenile population. Creating a donor pool that ignores this relationship would reduce the validity of the imputation process. So for those few data files that did not include race, donor pools were developed that restricted the pool to counties with racial compositions similar to that of the target record's county.

This was accomplished by dividing the counties in the U.S. into four groups defined by the percentage of white juveniles in their age 10–17 populations. This classification was then added to each case record and used as a matching criterion for finding a donor record within the set of potential donor records defined by stratum, year of disposition, and intake decision.

Weighting to produce national estimates. The Archive employs an elaborate multivariate procedure that assigns a weight to each record in the national case-level database that, when used in analysis, yields national estimates of juvenile court activity. The weights incorporate a number of factors related to the size and characteristics of juvenile court case-loads: the size of a community, the age and race composition of its juvenile population, the age and race profile of the youth involved in juvenile court cases, the courts' responses to the cases (intake decision, detention, adjudication, and disposition), and the nature of each court's jurisdictional responsibilities (i.e., upper age of original jurisdiction).

The basic assumption underlying the weighting procedure is that similar legal and demographic factors shape the volume and characteristics of cases in reporting and nonreporting counties of comparable size and features. The weighting procedure develops independent estimates for the number of petitioned delinquency cases, nonpetitioned delinquency cases, and petitioned status offense cases handled by juvenile courts nationwide. Identical statistical procedures are used to develop all case estimates.

As noted earlier, all U.S. counties are placed into one of four strata based on the size of their youth population ages 10 through 17. In the first step to develop the weights, the Archive divides the youth 10–17 population for each stratum into three age groups: 10- through 15-year-olds, 16-year-olds, and 17-year-olds. The three age groups are further subdivided into five racial groups: white, black, Hispanic, American Indian (including Alaskan Native), and Asian (including Native Hawaiian and Other Pacific Islander). Thus, juvenile resident population estimates are developed for 15 age/race categories in each stratum of counties.

The next step is to identify within each stratum the jurisdictions that contributed to the Archive case-level data consistent with *JCS* reporting requirements. The populations of these case-level reporting jurisdictions within each stratum are then developed for each of the 15 age/race categories. The national case-level database is summarized to determine within each stratum the number of court cases that involved youth in each of the 15 age/race population groups. Case rates (number of cases per 1,000 juveniles in the population) are then developed for the 15 age/race groups within each of the four strata.

For example, assume that a total of 3,054,000 white youth ages 10–15 resided in those stratum 2 counties that reported *JCS*-compatible case-level data to the Archive. If the Archive's case-level database shows that the juvenile courts in these counties handled 22,226 petitioned delinquency cases involving white youth ages 10 through 15, the number of cases per 1,000 white youth ages 10–15 for stratum 2 would be 7.3, or:

$$(22,226 / 3,054,000) \times 1,000 = 7.3$$

Comparable analyses are then used to establish the stratum 2 case rates for black youth, Hispanic youth, American Indian youth, and Asian youth in the same age group (35.4, 10.4, 9.8, and 2.3 respectively).

Next, information contained in the national court-level database is introduced, and stratum-level case rates are adjusted accordingly. First, each court-level statistic is disaggregated into the 15 age/race groups. This separation is accomplished by assuming that, for each jurisdiction, the relationships among the stratum's 15 age/race case rates (developed from the case-level data) are paralleled in the court-level data.

For example, assume that a jurisdiction in stratum 2 with an upper age of original juvenile court jurisdiction of 15 reported it processed 500 cases during the year. Also assume that this jurisdiction had a juvenile population of 12,000 white youth, 3,000 black youth, 4,000 Hispanic youth, 200 American Indian youth, and 800 Asian youth. The stratum 2 case rates for each racial group in the 10–15 age group would be multiplied by the corresponding population to develop estimates of the proportion of the court's case-load that came from each age/race group, as follows:

White:

$$(7.3 \times 12,000) / [(7.3 \times 12,000) + (35.4 \times 3,000) + (10.4 \times 4,000)] + (9.8 \times 200) + (2.3 \times 800) = 36.6\%$$

Black:

$$(35.4 \times 3,000) / [(7.3 \times 12,000) + (35.4 \times 3,000) + (10.4 \times 4,000)] + (9.8 \times 200) + (2.3 \times 800) = 44.4\%$$

Hispanic:

$$(10.4 \times 4,000) / [(7.3 \times 12,000) + (35.4 \times 3,000) + (10.4 \times 4,000)] + (9.8 \times 200) + (2.3 \times 800) = 17.4\%$$

American Indian:

$$(9.8 \times 200) / [(7.3 \times 12,000) + (35.4 \times 3,000) + (10.4 \times 4,000)] + (9.8 \times 200) + (2.3 \times 800) = 0.8\%$$

Asian:

$$(2.3 \times 800) / [(7.3 \times 12,000) + (35.4 \times 3,000) + (10.4 \times 4,000)] + (9.8 \times 200) + (2.3 \times 800) = 0.8\%$$

The jurisdiction's total caseload of 500 would then be allocated based on these proportions. In this example, it would be estimated that 36.6% of all cases reported in the jurisdiction's aggregate statistics involved white youth, 44.4% involved black youth, 17.4% involved Hispanic youth, 0.8% involved American Indian youth, and the remaining 0.8% involved Asian youth. When these proportions are applied to a reported court-level caseload statistic of 500 cases, this

jurisdiction is estimated to have handled 183 cases involving white youth, 222 cases involving black youth, 87 cases involving Hispanic youth, 4 cases involving American Indian youth, and 4 cases involving Asian youth age 15 or younger.

The same method is used to disaggregate the case counts reported by those jurisdictions that could only report aggregate court-level statistics for jurisdictions with an upper age of 16 (10 age/race groups) and an upper age of 17 (15 age/race groups). The disaggregated court-level counts are then added to the counts developed from case-level data to produce an estimate of the number of cases involving each of the 15 age/race groups handled by reporting courts (i.e., both case-level and court-level reporters) in each of the four strata.

The juvenile population figures for the entire reporting sample are also compiled. Together, these new

stratum-specific case counts and juvenile populations for the reporting counties are used to generate a revised set of case rates for each of the 15 age/race groups within each of the four strata.

Stratum estimates for the total number of cases involving each age/race group are then calculated by multiplying the revised case rate for each of the 15 age/race groups in a stratum by the corresponding juvenile population in all counties belonging to that stratum (both reporting and nonreporting).

After the stratum estimates for the total number of cases in each age/race group in each stratum has been calculated, the next step is to weight the records in the national case-level database. This weight is equal to the estimated number of cases in one of the stratum's 15 age/race groups divided by the actual number of such records in the national case-level

database. For example, assume that the Archive generates a national estimate of 15,312 petitioned delinquency cases involving white 16-year-olds from stratum 2 counties. Assume also that the national case-level database for that year contained 11,642 petitioned delinquency cases involving white 16-year-olds from stratum 2 counties. In the Archive's national estimation database, each stratum 2 petitioned delinquency case that involved a white 16-year-old would be weighted by 1.32, because:

$$15,312 / 11,642 = 1.32$$

Finally, by incorporating the weights into all analyses of the national case-level database, national estimates of case volumes and case characteristics can be produced. More detailed information about the Archive's national estimation methodology is available on request from the National Center for Juvenile Justice.

Appendix B

Glossary of Terms

Adjudication: Judicial determination (judgment) that a juvenile is or is not responsible for the delinquency or status offense charged in a petition.

Age: Age at the time of referral to juvenile court.

Case rate: Number of cases disposed per 1,000 juveniles in the population. The population base used to calculate the case rate varies. For example, the population base for the male case rate is the total number of male youth age 10 or older under the jurisdiction of the juvenile courts. (See “juvenile population.”)

Delinquency: Acts or conduct in violation of criminal law. (See “reason for referral.”)

Delinquent act: An act committed by a juvenile which, if committed by an adult, would be a criminal act. The juvenile court has jurisdiction over delinquent acts. Delinquent acts include crimes against persons, crimes against property, drug offenses, and crimes against public order.

Dependency case: Those cases involving neglect or inadequate care on the part of parents or guardians, such as abandonment or desertion; abuse or cruel treatment; improper or inadequate conditions in the home; and insufficient care or support

resulting from death, absence, or physical or mental incapacity of parents/guardians.

Detention: The placement of a youth in a secure facility under court authority at some point between the time of referral to court intake and case disposition. This report does not include detention decisions made by law enforcement officials prior to court referral or those occurring after the disposition of a case.

Disposition: Sanction ordered or treatment plan decided on or initiated in a particular case. Case dispositions are coded into the following categories:

- **Waived to criminal court**—Cases that were transferred to criminal court as the result of a judicial waiver hearing in juvenile court.
- **Placement**—Cases in which youth were placed in a residential facility for delinquents or status offenders, or cases in which youth were otherwise removed from their homes and placed elsewhere.
- **Probation**—Cases in which youth were placed on informal/voluntary or formal/court-ordered supervision.
- **Dismissed/released**—Cases dismissed or otherwise released (including those warned and counseled) with no further sanction or

consequence anticipated. Among cases handled informally (see “manner of handling”), some cases may be dismissed by the juvenile court because the matter is being handled in another court or agency.

- **Other**—Miscellaneous dispositions not included above. These dispositions include fines, restitution, community service, referrals outside the court for services or treatment programs with minimal or no further court involvement anticipated, and dispositions coded as “other” in a jurisdiction’s original data.

Formal handling: See “intake decision.”

Informal handling: See “intake decision.”

Intake decision: The decision made by juvenile court intake that results in the case either being handled informally at the intake level or being petitioned and scheduled for an adjudicatory or judicial waiver hearing.

- **Nonpetitioned (informally handled)**—Cases in which duly authorized court personnel, having screened the case, decide not to file a formal petition. Such personnel include judges, referees, probation officers, other officers of the court, and/or agencies statutorily designated to conduct petition screening for the juvenile court.
- **Petitioned (formally handled)**—Cases that appear on the official court calendar in response to the filing of a petition, complaint, or other legal instrument requesting the court to adjudicate a youth as a delinquent, status offender, or dependent child or to waive jurisdiction and transfer a youth to criminal court for processing as a criminal offender.

Judicial decision: The decision made in response to a petition that asks the

court to adjudicate or judicially waive the youth to criminal court for prosecution as an adult. This decision is generally made by a juvenile court judge or referee.

Judicial disposition: The disposition rendered in a case after the judicial decision has been made.

Juvenile: Youth at or below the upper age of original juvenile court jurisdiction. (See “juvenile population” and “upper age of jurisdiction.”)

Juvenile court: Any court that has jurisdiction over matters involving juveniles.

Juvenile population: For delinquency and status offense matters, the juvenile population is defined as the number of children between the age of 10 and the upper age of jurisdiction. For dependency matters, it is defined as the number of children at or below the upper age of jurisdiction. In all states, the upper age of jurisdiction is defined by statute. Thus, when the upper age of jurisdiction is 17, the delinquency and status offense juvenile population is equal to the number of children ages 10 through 17 living within the geographical area serviced by the court. (See “upper age of jurisdiction.”)

Nonpetitioned case: See “intake decision.”

Petition: A document filed in juvenile court alleging that a juvenile is a delinquent or a status offender and asking that the court assume jurisdiction over the juvenile or that an alleged delinquent be judicially waived to criminal court for prosecution as an adult.

Petitioned case: See “intake decision.”

Race: The race of the youth referred, as determined by the youth or by court personnel. In this report,

Hispanic ethnicity is considered a separate race. Each of the other racial categories exclude persons of Hispanic ethnicity. An important exception must be noted. Data provided to the Archive did not always allow for identification of Hispanic ethnicity for cases involving American Indian youth. Specifically, data from many jurisdictions did not include any means to determine the ethnicity of American Indian youth. Rather than assume ethnicity for these youth, they are classified solely on their racial classification; as such, the American Indian group includes an unknown proportion of Hispanic youth.

- **White**—A person having origins in any of the indigenous peoples of Europe, North Africa, or the Middle East.
- **Black**—A person having origins in any of the black racial groups of Africa.
- **Hispanic**—A person of Cuban, Mexican, Puerto Rican, South or Central American, or other Spanish culture or origin regardless of race.
- **American Indian**—A person having origins in any of the indigenous peoples of North America, including Alaskan Natives.
- **Asian**—A person having origins in any of the original peoples of the Far East, Southeast Asia, the Indian Subcontinent, Hawaii, or any of the other Pacific Islands.

Reason for referral: The most serious offense for which the youth is referred to court intake. Attempts to commit an offense are included under that offense, except attempted murder, which is included in the aggravated assault category.

- **Crimes against persons**—Includes criminal homicide, rape, robbery, aggravated assault, simple assault, other violent sex acts, and other offenses against persons as defined below.

- ◆ **Criminal homicide**—Causing the death of another person without legal justification or excuse. Criminal homicide is a summary category, not a single codified offense. In law, the term embraces all homicides in which the perpetrator intentionally kills someone without legal justification or accidentally kills someone as a consequence of reckless or grossly negligent conduct. It includes all conduct encompassed by the terms murder, nonnegligent (voluntary) manslaughter, negligent (involuntary) manslaughter, and vehicular manslaughter. The term is broader than the category used in the Federal Bureau of Investigation’s (FBI’s) Uniform Crime Reporting Program (UCR), in which murder/nonnegligent manslaughter does not include negligent manslaughter or vehicular manslaughter.
- ◆ **Rape**—Penetration, no matter how slight, of the vagina or anus with any body part or object, or oral penetration by a sex organ of another person, without the consent of the victim. This includes certain statutory rape offenses where the victim is presumed incapable of giving consent. This definition includes the offenses of rape, sodomy, and sexual assault with an object. Unlike the prior definition for “forcible rape,” the current definition of rape is gender neutral and does not require force. The term is used in the same sense as the FBI’s revised rape definition (implemented in 2013) in the UCR.
- ◆ **Robbery**—Unlawful taking or attempted taking of property that is in the immediate possession of another by force or threat of force. The term is used in the same sense as in the UCR and includes forcible purse snatching.
- ◆ **Assault**—Unlawful intentional infliction, or attempted or threatened infliction, of injury upon the person of another.
 - ❖ **Aggravated assault**—Unlawful intentional infliction of serious bodily injury or unlawful threat or attempt to inflict bodily injury or death by means of a deadly or dangerous weapon with or without actual infliction of any injury. The term is used in the same sense as in the UCR. It includes conduct encompassed under the statutory names: aggravated assault and battery, aggravated battery, assault with intent to kill, assault with intent to commit murder or manslaughter, atrocious assault, attempted murder, felonious assault, and assault with a deadly weapon.
 - ❖ **Simple assault**—Unlawful intentional infliction or attempted or threatened infliction of less than serious bodily injury without a deadly or dangerous weapon. The term is used in the same sense as in UCR reporting. Simple assault is not often distinctly named in statutes because it encompasses all assaults not explicitly named and defined as serious. Unspecified assaults are classified as “other offenses against persons.”
- ◆ **Other violent sex offenses**—Includes unlawful sexual acts or contact, other than rape, between members of the same sex or different sexes against the will of the victim which can involve the use or threatened use of force or attempting such act(s). Includes incest where the victim is presumed to be incapable of giving consent.
- ◆ **Other offenses against persons**—Includes kidnapping, custody interference, unlawful restraint, false imprisonment, reckless endangerment, harassment, and attempts to commit any such acts.
- **Crimes against property**—Includes burglary, larceny, motor vehicle theft, arson, vandalism, stolen property offenses, trespassing, and other property offenses as defined below.
 - ◆ **Burglary**—Unlawful entry or attempted entry of any fixed structure, vehicle, or vessel used for regular residence, industry, or business, with or without force, with intent to commit a felony or larceny. The term is used in the same sense as in the UCR.
 - ◆ **Larceny**—Unlawful taking or attempted taking of property (other than a motor vehicle) from the possession of another by stealth, without force and without deceit, with intent to permanently deprive the owner of the property. This term is used in the same sense as in the UCR. It includes shoplifting and purse snatching without force.
 - ◆ **Motor vehicle theft**—Unlawful taking or attempted taking of a self-propelled road vehicle owned by another with the intent to deprive the owner of it permanently or temporarily. The term is used in the same sense as in the UCR. It includes joyriding or unauthorized use of a motor vehicle as well as grand theft auto.
 - ◆ **Arson**—Intentional damage or destruction by means of fire or explosion of the property of another without the owner’s

consent or of any property with intent to defraud, or attempting the above acts. The term is used in the same sense as in the UCR.

- ◆ **Vandalism**—Destroying, damaging, or attempting to destroy or damage public property or the property of another without the owner’s consent, except by fire or explosion.
 - ◆ **Stolen property offenses**—Unlawfully and knowingly receiving, buying, distributing, selling, transporting, concealing, or possessing stolen property, or attempting any of the above. The term is used in the same sense as the UCR category “stolen property: buying, receiving, possessing.”
 - ◆ **Trespassing**—Unlawful entry or attempted entry of the property of another with the intent to commit a misdemeanor other than larceny or without intent to commit a crime.
 - ◆ **Other property offenses**—Includes extortion and all fraud offenses, such as forgery, counterfeiting, embezzlement, check or credit card fraud, and attempts to commit any such offenses.
 - **Drug law violations**—Includes unlawful sale, purchase, distribution, manufacture, cultivation, transport, possession, or use of a controlled or prohibited substance or drug or drug paraphernalia, or attempt to commit these acts. Sniffing of glue, paint, gasoline, and other inhalants is also included. Hence, the term is broader than the UCR category “drug abuse violations.”
 - **Offenses against public order**—Includes weapons offenses; nonviolent sex offenses; liquor law violations, not status offenses;
- disorderly conduct; obstruction of justice; and other offenses against public order as defined below.
- ◆ **Weapons offenses**—Unlawful sale, distribution, manufacture, alteration, transportation, possession, or use of a deadly or dangerous weapon or accessory, or attempt to commit any of these acts. The term is used in the same sense as the UCR category “weapons: carrying, possessing, etc.”
 - ◆ **Nonviolent sex offenses**—All offenses having a sexual element not involving violence. The term combines the meaning of the UCR categories “prostitution and commercialized vice” and “sex offenses.” It includes offenses such as statutory rape, indecent exposure, prostitution, solicitation, pimping, lewdness, fornication, and adultery.
 - ◆ **Liquor law violations, not status offenses**—Being in a public place while intoxicated through consumption of alcohol. It includes public intoxication, drunkenness, and other liquor law violations. It does not include driving under the influence. The term is used in the same sense as the UCR category of the same name. Some states treat public drunkenness of juveniles as a status offense rather than delinquency. Hence, some of these offenses may appear under the status offense code “status liquor law violations.” (When a person who is publicly intoxicated performs acts that cause a disturbance, he or she may be charged with disorderly conduct.)
 - ◆ **Disorderly conduct**—Unlawful interruption of the peace, quiet, or order of a community, including offenses called dis-
- turbing the peace, vagrancy, loitering, unlawful assembly, and riot.
- ◆ **Obstruction of justice**—Intentionally obstructing court or law enforcement efforts in the administration of justice, acting in a way calculated to lessen the authority or dignity of the court, failing to obey the lawful order of a court, escaping from confinement, and violating probation or parole. This term includes contempt, perjury, bribery of witnesses, failure to report a crime, and nonviolent resistance of arrest.
 - ◆ **Other offenses against public order**—Other offenses against government administration or regulation, such as bribery; violations of laws pertaining to fish and game, gambling, health, hitchhiking, and immigration; and false fire alarms.
 - **Status offenses**—Includes acts or types of conduct that are offenses only when committed or engaged in by a juvenile and that can be adjudicated only by a juvenile court. Although state statutes defining status offenses vary and some states may classify cases involving these offenses as dependency cases, for the purposes of this report the following types of offenses are classified as status offenses:
 - ◆ **Runaway**—Leaving the custody and home of parents, guardians, or custodians without permission and failing to return within a reasonable length of time, in violation of a statute regulating the conduct of youth.
 - ◆ **Truancy**—Violation of a compulsory school attendance law.
 - ◆ **Curfew violations**—Being found in a public place after a

specified hour of the evening, usually established in a local ordinance applying only to persons under a specified age.

- ◆ **Ungovernability**—Being beyond the control of parents, guardians, or custodians or being disobedient of parental authority. This classification is referred to in various juvenile codes as unruly, unmanageable, and incorrigible.
- ◆ **Status liquor law violations**—Violation of laws regulating the possession, purchase, or consumption of liquor by minors. Some states treat consumption of alcohol and public drunkenness of juveniles as status offenses rather than delinquency. Hence, some of these offenses may appear under this status offense code.
- ◆ **Miscellaneous status offenses**—Numerous status offenses not included above (e.g., tobacco violation and violation of a court order in a status offense proceeding) and those offenses coded as “other” in a jurisdiction’s original data.
- **Dependency offenses**—Includes actions that come to the attention of a juvenile court involving neglect or inadequate care of minors on the part of the parents or guardians, such as abandonment or desertion; abuse or cruel treatment; improper or inadequate conditions in the home; and insufficient care or support resulting from death, absence, or physical or mental incapacity of the parents or guardians.

Source of referral: The agency or individual filing a complaint with intake that initiates court processing.

- **Law enforcement agency**—Includes metropolitan police, state police, park police, sheriffs, constables, police assigned to the juvenile court for special duty, and all others performing a police function, with the exception of probation officers and officers of the court.
- **School**—Includes counselors, teachers, principals, attendance officers, and school resource officers.
- **Relatives**—Includes the youth’s own parents, foster parents, adoptive parents, stepparents, grandparents, aunts, uncles, and other legal guardians.
- **Other**—Includes social agencies, district attorneys, probation officers, victims, other private citizens, and miscellaneous sources of referral often only defined by the code “other” in the original data.

Status offense: Behavior that is considered an offense only when committed by a juvenile (e.g., running away from home). (See “reason for referral.”)

Unit of count: A case disposed by a court with juvenile jurisdiction during the calendar year. Each case represents a youth referred to the juvenile court for a new referral for one or more offenses. (See “reason for referral.”) The term disposed means that

during the year some definite action was taken or some treatment plan was decided on or initiated. (See “disposition.”) Under this definition, a youth could be involved in more than one case during a calendar year.

Upper age of jurisdiction: The oldest age at which a juvenile court has original jurisdiction over an individual for law-violating behavior. For the time period covered by this report, the upper age of jurisdiction was 15 in 2 states (New York and North Carolina) and 16 in 7 states (Georgia, Louisiana, Michigan, Missouri, South Carolina, Texas, and Wisconsin). In the remaining 41 states and the District of Columbia, the upper age of jurisdiction was 17. It must be noted that within most states, there are exceptions in which youth at or below the state’s upper age of jurisdiction can be placed under the original jurisdiction of the adult criminal court. For example, in most states, if a youth of a certain age is charged with an offense from a defined list of “excluded offenses,” the case must originate in the adult criminal court. In addition, in a number of states, the district attorney is given the discretion of filing certain cases in either the juvenile court or the criminal court. Therefore, while the upper age of jurisdiction is commonly recognized in all states, there are numerous exceptions to this age criterion.

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