

## General Juvenile Justice Facts & Figures

### Indigent Defense

- **In some jurisdictions, as many as 80 to 90 percent of youth waive their right to counsel.**
  - Source; Judith B. Jones, *Access to Counsel*, *OJJDP Juvenile Justice Bulletin* (June 2004), available online at: <http://www.ncjrs.org/pdffiles1/ojjdp/204063.pdf>.
- **Only eighteen states have a state public defender system** providing trial level representation statewide in felonies, misdemeanors, and juvenile delinquency cases.
  - Source: *Statewide Indigent Defense Systems*, The Spangenberg Group (2004, updated 2005), available online at: <http://www.abanet.org/legalservices/downloads/sclaid/indigentdefense/stateindefsystems2005.pdf>.
- The National Advisory Commission on Criminal Justice Standards and Goals has set the following **caseload limits for full-time public defenders**: 150 felonies, 400 misdemeanors, **200 juvenile cases**, 200 mental health cases, or 25 appeals.
  - Source: *Keeping Defender Workloads Manageable*, Bureau of Justice Assistance (January 2001), available at: <http://www.ncjrs.org/pdffiles1/bja/185632.pdf>.
- While caseloads vary widely from jurisdiction to jurisdiction, situations in which public defenders are handling **1400 juvenile cases a year** – seven times the recommended maximum – have been documented (e.g. Clark County, Nevada). Some Washington juvenile defenders estimated a caseload of 400 cases a year, twice the recommended maximum.
  - Sources: *No Exceptions: A Campaign to Guarantee a Fair system of Justice for All, Vol. 2: The Caseload Crisis*, American Bar Association et al. (June 2003); and Washington: An Assessment of Access to Counsel and Quality of Representation in Juvenile Offender Matters (2003), available online at: <http://www.njdc.info/assessments.php>.

### Juvenile Arrests

- **The 2.1 million arrests of juveniles in 2005 was 24% fewer than the number of arrests in 1996.**
  - Source: *OJJDP Statistical Briefing Book*, available online at: <http://ojjdp.ncjrs.gov/ojstatbb/crime/qa05101.asp?qaDate=2005>.
- Between 1996 and 2005, **the annual number of juvenile arrests declined in nearly all offense categories**, with some of the larger declines in arrests for motor vehicle theft, murder, burglary, runaway, larceny-theft, and robbery.
  - Source: *OJJDP Statistical Briefing Book*, available online at: <http://ojjdp.ncjrs.gov/ojstatbb/crime/qa05101.asp?qaDate=2005>.
- **In 2005, juveniles were involved in 1 in 11 arrests for murder (9%), 1 in 10 arrests for drug abuse violation (10%), 1 in 7 arrests for aggravated assault (14%) and forcible rape (15%), and 1 in 4 arrests for weapons violation, robbery, motor vehicle theft, larceny-theft, and burglary (26%).**
  - Source: *OJJDP Statistical Briefing Book*, available online at: <http://ojjdp.ncjrs.gov/ojstatbb/crime/qa05102.asp?qaDate=2005>.

- One-quarter (25%) of all persons arrested for robbery in 2005 were under age 18, substantially above the juvenile proportion of arrests in other violent offenses: forcible rape (15%), aggravated assault (14%), and murder (9%).
  - Source: *OJJDP Statistical Briefing Book*, available online at: <http://ojjdp.ncjrs.gov/ojstatbb/crime/qa05102.asp?qaDate=2005>.

## Juvenile Arrest Rate Trends

- The juvenile arrest rate for all offenses reached its highest level in the last two decades in 1996, and then declined 33% by 2005. **The overall juvenile arrest rate was lower in 2005 than in 1980.**
  - Source: *OJJDP Statistical Briefing Book*, available online at: [http://ojjdp.ncjrs.org/ojstatbb/crime/JAR\\_Display.asp?ID=qa05200](http://ojjdp.ncjrs.org/ojstatbb/crime/JAR_Display.asp?ID=qa05200).
- In 2005, there were 6,350 arrests for every 100,000 youths age 10 through 17 in the United States.
  - Source: *OJJDP Statistical Briefing Book*, available online at: [http://ojjdp.ncjrs.org/ojstatbb/crime/JAR\\_Display.asp?ID=qa05200](http://ojjdp.ncjrs.org/ojstatbb/crime/JAR_Display.asp?ID=qa05200).

## Disproportionate Minority Contact

- **In each racial group, the juvenile arrest rate for all offenses combined generally increased from the early 1980s through the mid-1990s and then declined in recent years.**
  - Source: *OJJDP Statistical Briefing Book*, available online at: [http://ojjdp.ncjrs.org/ojstatbb/crime/JAR\\_Display.asp?ID=qa05260](http://ojjdp.ncjrs.org/ojstatbb/crime/JAR_Display.asp?ID=qa05260).
- **Between 1980 and 2005, the total juvenile arrest rate decreased 45% for Asians, 21% for American Indians, 20% for whites, and 1% for black juveniles.**
  - Source: *OJJDP Statistical Briefing Book*, available online at: [http://ojjdp.ncjrs.org/ojstatbb/crime/JAR\\_Display.asp?ID=qa05260](http://ojjdp.ncjrs.org/ojstatbb/crime/JAR_Display.asp?ID=qa05260).
- In 2005, there were about 5,533 arrests of white juveniles for every 100,000 white persons ages 10-17 in the population. In comparison, the Asian juvenile rate was about one-third (34%) the white rate, the American Indian rate was slightly higher (6%) than the white rate and **the black rate was more than twice the white rate.**
  - Source: *OJJDP Statistical Briefing Book*, available online at: [http://ojjdp.ncjrs.org/ojstatbb/crime/JAR\\_Display.asp?ID=qa05260](http://ojjdp.ncjrs.org/ojstatbb/crime/JAR_Display.asp?ID=qa05260).
- At disposition, **African American youth are overrepresented in out of home placements while white youth are underrepresented.** While making up 30% of the juveniles adjudicated delinquent, African Americans make up 35% of the out-of-home placement dispositions- the most severe. Conversely, white youth make up 67% of the youth adjudicated delinquent, but only 61% of the out-of-home placement dispositions.
  - Source: *National Council on Crime and Delinquency, And Justice for Some: Differential Treatment of Youth of Color in the Justice System*, available online at: [http://www.nccd-crc.org/nccd/pubs/2007jan\\_justice\\_for\\_some.pdf](http://www.nccd-crc.org/nccd/pubs/2007jan_justice_for_some.pdf).

## Juvenile Court Cases

- In 2004 courts with juvenile jurisdiction disposed of more than **1.66 million delinquency cases**.
  - Source: *OJJDP Statistical Briefing Book*, available online at:  
<http://ojjdp.ncjrs.gov/ojstatbb/court/qa06201.asp?qaDate=2004>.
- **On any given day in 2004, juvenile courts handled 4,500 delinquency cases.** In comparison, in 1960, approximately 1,100 delinquency cases were processed daily.
  - Source: *OJJDP Statistical Briefing Book*, available online at:  
<http://ojjdp.ncjrs.gov/ojstatbb/court/qa06201.asp?qaDate=2004>.
- The increase in case rates between age 13 and age 17 was sharpest for drug offenses. **In 2004, the drug offense case rate for 17-year-olds was nearly eight times the rate for 13-year-olds.**
  - Source: *OJJDP Statistical Briefing Book*, available online at:  
<http://ojjdp.ncjrs.gov/ojstatbb/court/qa06202.asp?qaDate=2004>.
- **In 2004, girls accounted for one-fourth (27%) of the more than 1.6 million delinquency cases handled by juvenile courts,** youth under age 16 accounted for 57% of all cases, white youth accounted for 66% of all cases, and minority youth accounted for one-third (34%) of all cases.
  - Source: *OJJDP Statistical Briefing Book*, available online at:  
<http://ojjdp.ncjrs.gov/ojstatbb/court/qa06206.asp?qaDate=2004>.

## Transfer

- **In 13 states, youth are automatically tried and sentenced as adults no matter how minor their offense.** Twenty-three states have no minimum age for transferring a youth to adult court. In 38 states, certain cases must be transferred to adult court regardless of circumstances. Fifteen states allow “direct filing,” which means the prosecutor decides which youth are tried as adults.
  - Source: *Campaign for Youth Justice*, available online at:  
[http://www.campaignforyouthjustice.org/national\\_statistics.html](http://www.campaignforyouthjustice.org/national_statistics.html).
- **At least 250,000 juveniles are transferred to adult court annually.**
  - Source: *Coalition for Juvenile Justice (2005), Childhood on trial: The Failure of Trying & Sentencing Youth in Adult Criminal Court*, available online at:  
[http://www.juvjustice.org/media/resources/resource\\_115.pdf](http://www.juvjustice.org/media/resources/resource_115.pdf).
- Teenagers in adult institutions are **five times more likely to be sexually assaulted** than those held in a juvenile facility, three times more likely to be beaten by prison staff than youth in a juvenile facility, and 50 percent more likely to be assaulted with a weapon than youth confined to a juveniles-only institution. In addition, **the suicide rate for youth incarcerated with adults is five times higher than the rate of the general adult inmate population and eight times the rate for adolescents held in juvenile facilities.**
  - Source: *Coalition for Juvenile Justice (2005), Childhood on trial: The Failure of Trying & Sentencing Youth in Adult Criminal Court*, available online at:  
[http://www.juvjustice.org/media/resources/resource\\_115.pdf](http://www.juvjustice.org/media/resources/resource_115.pdf).
- In 2002, an estimated 2,225 youth were serving life without parole sentences. Most of these youth serve their time in adult prisons.
  - Source: *National Council on Crime and Delinquency Factsheet: Youth Under Age 18 in the Adult Criminal Justice System*, available online at:  
[http://www.nccd-crc.org/nccd/pubs/2006may\\_factsheet\\_youthadult.pdf](http://www.nccd-crc.org/nccd/pubs/2006may_factsheet_youthadult.pdf).

## Overuse of Detention

- **In 2003, there were an estimated 331,779 youth held in detention.** While only making up 30% of youth referrals, African American youth made up 37% of detentions.
  - Source: *National Council on Crime and Delinquency, And Justice for Some: Differential Treatment of Youth of Color in the Justice System*, available online at:  
[http://www.nccd-crc.org/nccd/pubs/2007jan\\_justice\\_for\\_some.pdf](http://www.nccd-crc.org/nccd/pubs/2007jan_justice_for_some.pdf).
- **In 1 in 5 delinquency cases, youth are held in detention between referral to court and case disposition.**
  - Source: *OJJDP Juvenile Offenders and Victims: 2006 National Report*, available online at:  
<http://ojjdp.ncjrs.org/ojstatbb/nr2006/index.html>.
- **Detention has a large economic impact on communities.** It is both more expensive than alternatives to detention and less cost effective than alternatives to detention. Studies have found detention to cost as much as 15 times more than alternative programs. Further studies have found that detention yields as little as \$1.98 in benefits in terms of reduced crime rates and cost of crime for every dollar spent, as opposed to \$13 in benefits per dollar for alternative programs.
  - Source: *Justice Policy Institute, The Dangers of Detention: The Impact of Incarcerating Youth in Detention and Other Secure Facilities*, available online at:  
[http://www.justicepolicy.org/reports\\_jl/11-28-06\\_dangers/dangers\\_of\\_detention\\_report.pdf](http://www.justicepolicy.org/reports_jl/11-28-06_dangers/dangers_of_detention_report.pdf).