Racial and Ethnic Disparities in the Processing of Delinquency Cases, 2020

Data from OJJDP’s National Juvenile Court Data Archive can be used to assess variations in case processing.

Except for drug cases, referral rates for cases involving Black youth exceeded the rates for all other groups.

Across offenses, cases involving white youth were more likely to involve detention than cases involving youth of color.

Regardless of offense, cases involving youth of color were more likely to involve detention than cases involving white youth.

Cases placed per 100 cases adjudicated, 2020

Across offenses, cases involving white youth were less likely to result in placement than cases involving Black or Hispanic youth.

It is important to note that 2020 was the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic, which may have impacted policies, procedures, and data collection activities regarding referrals to and processing of youth by juvenile courts. Additionally, stay-at-home orders and school closures likely impacted the volume and type of law-violating behavior by youth referred to juvenile court in 2020.