



JUVENILE JUSTICE STATISTICS

NATIONAL REPORT SERIES BULLETIN

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June 2020

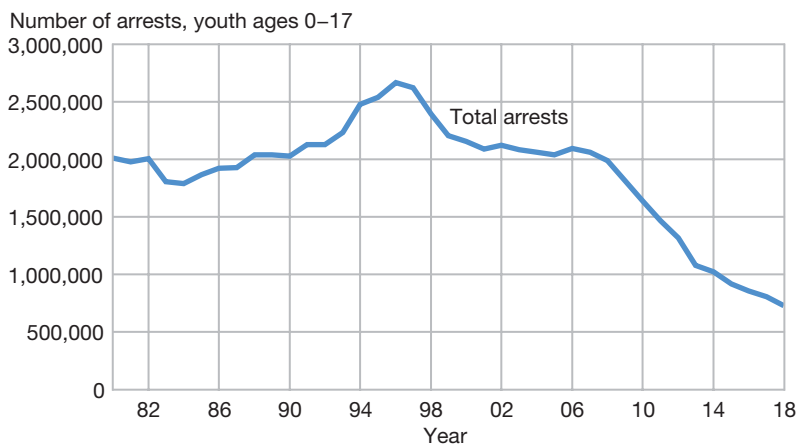
Juvenile Arrests, 2018

Charles Puzzanchera

Highlights

This bulletin documents the latest trends in arrests involving juveniles (youth younger than age 18) by drawing on arrest estimates developed by the Bureau of Justice Statistics and the National Center for Juvenile Justice based on analyses of data from the Federal Bureau of Investigation's Uniform Crime Reporting Program. Overall, juvenile arrests have been on the decline for more than a decade, but patterns vary by demographic group and offense.

In 2018, law enforcement agencies made an estimated 728,280 arrests of youth younger than 18—the fewest arrests of juveniles in nearly four decades



■ Arrests of juveniles (youth ages 0–17) peaked in 1996, at nearly 2.7 million. Arrests of juveniles have since declined—the number in 2018 was 73% below the 1996 peak. In comparison, arrests of adults fell 22% during the same period.

Data source: Analysis of arrest data from the Bureau of Justice Statistics and the National Center for Juvenile Justice. (See data source note on page 13 for details.)

- After increasing between 2012 and 2017, the juvenile arrest rate for murder held steady through 2018, while the rates for robbery and aggravated assault reached a new low in 2018.
- Juvenile arrest rates for property crimes have declined in recent years. By 2018, juvenile arrest rates for larceny-theft, burglary, and arson were at their lowest levels since at least 1980, while rates for motor vehicle theft increased annually since 2013.
- The violent crime arrest rate for older juveniles (ages 15–17) was lower than the rates for young adults (ages 18–20 and 21–24).
- Male and female juvenile arrest rates have declined in the last 10 years; however, the relative declines have been greater for males than for females across many offenses. As a result, the female share of juvenile arrests has grown since 1980.
- Juvenile arrest rates involving violent crimes (such as murder and robbery) tend to be much higher for black youth than for white youth. Conversely, arrest rates for liquor law violations were higher for American Indian and white youth than black youth.

A Message From OJJDP and NIJ

This bulletin summarizes recent trends in juvenile arrests in the United States based on data from the Federal Bureau of Investigation's Uniform Crime Reporting program. The cumulative data in this bulletin reveal recent and long-term shifts in juvenile arrests based on offense, gender, and race. It is a useful tool for juvenile justice practitioners, researchers, policymakers, and others who seek to prevent, intervene in, and respond to juvenile delinquency.

The number of arrests involving juveniles in 2018 was at its lowest level since at least 1980, and much of the decline has occurred in the past 10 years. Between 2009 and 2018, the number of juvenile arrests fell 60%. Among violent crimes, arrests for murder increased 21%, arrests for robbery declined 11%, and arrests for aggravated assault declined 8% between 2014 and 2018. In 2018, there were an estimated 125,030 juvenile arrests for simple assault. Nearly 4 in 10 (37%) of these arrests involved females, more than 4 in 10 (41%) involved youth younger than 15, and nearly 6 in 10 (59%) involved white youth.

Relative declines in arrests have been greater for boys than for girls across many offenses. As a result, the female share of juvenile arrests has grown since 1980.

OJJDP and NIJ remain committed to supporting research, programs, and initiatives to combat juvenile delinquency and to provide positive outcomes for youth, their families, and their communities.

Caren Harp
OJJDP Administrator

David B. Muhlhausen, Ph.D.
NIJ Director

The FBI's UCR Program provides data about juvenile arrests

What do arrest statistics count?

Findings in this bulletin are drawn from data that local law enforcement agencies across the country report to the Federal Bureau of Investigation's (FBI's) Uniform Crime Reporting (UCR) program. To properly interpret the material presented, the reader needs a clear understanding of what arrest statistics count. Arrest statistics report the number of arrests that law enforcement agencies made in a given year—not the number of individuals arrested nor the number of crimes committed. The number of arrests is not the same as the number of people arrested because an unknown number of individuals are arrested more than once during the year. Nor do arrest statistics represent the number of crimes that arrested individuals commit because a series of crimes that one person commits may culminate in a single arrest, and a single crime may result in the arrest of more than one person. This latter situation, where many arrests result from one crime, is relatively common in juvenile law-violating behavior because juveniles* are more likely than adults to commit crimes in groups. For this reason, one should not use arrest statistics to indicate the relative proportions of crime that juveniles and adults commit. Arrest statistics are most appropriately a measure of entry into the justice system.

Arrest statistics also are limited in measuring the volume of arrests for a particular offense. Under the UCR program, the FBI requires law enforcement agencies to classify only the most serious offense charged in an arrest. For example, the arrest of a youth charged with aggravated assault and possession of a weapon would be reported to the FBI as an arrest for aggravated assault. Therefore,

* In this bulletin, "juvenile" refers to persons younger than age 18. In 2018, this definition was at odds with the legal definition of juveniles in nine states—seven states where all 17-year-olds are defined as adults, and two states where all 16- and 17-year-olds are defined as adults.

when arrest statistics show that law enforcement agencies made an estimated 17,170 arrests of young people for weapons law violations in 2018, it means that a weapons law violation was the most serious charge in these arrests. An unknown number of additional arrests in 2018 included a weapons charge as a lesser offense.

Crime in the United States Reports Data on Murder Victims

Each *Crime in the United States* report, published by the FBI, presents estimates of the number of crimes reported to law enforcement agencies. Although many crimes are never reported, murder is one crime that is nearly always reported. An estimated 16,214 murders were reported to law enforcement agencies in 2018, or 5.0 murders for every 100,000 U.S. residents. The murder rate was essentially constant between 1999 and 2006 and then fell 22% through 2014, reaching its lowest level since at least 1980. The rate increased 19% through 2017 then fell 7% in the past year.

Of all murder victims in 2018, 92% (or 14,908 victims) were 18 years old or older. The other 1,306 murder victims were younger than age 18 (i.e., juveniles). The number of juvenile murder victims declined 33% between 2007 and 2013, reaching its lowest level since at least 1980. After reaching that historic low, the number of juvenile murder victims increased 16% through 2017 and then declined 6% in the past year. As a result, the number of juvenile murder victims in 2018 was 9% above the 2013 low point and 55% below the 1993 peak, when an estimated 2,880 juveniles were murdered.

Of all juveniles murdered in 2018, 35% were younger than age 5, 70% were male, 45% were white, and more than half (58%) were killed by a firearm.

In 2018, law enforcement agencies in the United States made 728,280 arrests of persons younger than 18

The number of arrests of juveniles in 2018 was 60% fewer than the number of arrests in 2009

Most serious offense	2018 estimated number of juvenile arrests	Percent of total juvenile arrests			Percent change		
		Female	Younger than 15	White	2009–2018	2014–2018	2017–2018
Total	728,280	30%	30%	62%	-60%	-29%	-10%
Violent Crime*	46,140	21	29	47	-44	-9	-5
Murder and nonnegligent manslaughter	920	11	10	40	-22	21	0
Rape*	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA
Robbery	17,290	11	20	34	-45	-11	-11
Aggravated assault	27,940	28	35	56	-44	-8	-1
Property Crime Index	131,500	32	29	55	-69	-44	-22
Burglary	22,250	13	30	55	-70	-45	-28
Larceny-theft	92,630	39	28	56	-71	-48	-22
Motor vehicle theft	14,780	18	25	45	-26	16	-9
Arson	1,850	17	58	68	-65	-41	-18
Nonindex							
Other (simple) assault	125,030	37	41	59	-43	-11	2
Forgery and counterfeiting	1,040	20	20	57	-51	-12	-15
Fraud	4,710	31	24	41	-23	10	-1
Embezzlement	580	40	5	53	-4	27	-9
Stolen property (buying, receiving, possessing)	9,320	16	21	37	-50	-10	-11
Vandalism	30,600	19	38	68	-66	-32	-17
Weapons (carrying, possessing, etc.)	17,170	11	29	54	-49	-17	-6
Prostitution and commercialized vice	260	61	21	59	-81	-65	-6
Sex offense (except rape and prostitution)*	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA
Drug abuse violation	90,670	25	17	73	-47	-20	-4
Gambling	180	7	17	22	-90	-69	-35
Offenses against the family and children	3,340	38	36	68	-25	-1	-11
Driving under the influence	5,450	25	3	88	-60	-22	-10
Liquor law violation	26,350	42	14	87	-76	-49	-21
Drunkenness	3,270	31	15	80	-76	-49	-24
Disorderly conduct	57,760	36	40	55	-66	-28	-8
Vagrancy	680	24	28	50	-75	-28	-7
All other offenses (except traffic)	140,500	29	27	67	-57	-25	-6
Curfew and loitering	22,030	30	31	56	-80	-59	-27

■ The number of arrests involving juveniles in 2018 was at its lowest level since at least 1980, and much of the decline has occurred in the past 10 years. Between 2009 and 2018, the number of juvenile arrests fell 60%.

■ Among violent crimes, arrests for robbery declined 11% and arrests for aggravated assault declined 8% between 2014 and 2018, while arrests for murder increased 21%.

■ In 2018, there were an estimated 125,030 juvenile arrests for simple assault. Nearly 4 in 10 (37%) of these arrests involved females, more than 4 in 10 (41%) involved youth younger than 15, and nearly 6 in 10 (59%) involved white youth.

*Beginning in 2013, the FBI broadened the definition of rape, removing the phrase “forcible” from the offense name and description. (See the Notes on page 13 for more detail.) Due to differences in agency reporting practices, national estimates for the offenses of “rape” and “sex offenses” are not available after 2012. The “violent crimes” category (which includes murder, robbery, and aggravated assault) replaces the Violent Crime Index (which included “forcible rape”), as the latter category is no longer compatible with prior years. In any given year prior to the change in the rape definition, these three offenses accounted for more than 95% of arrests for Violent Crime Index offenses.

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

Data source: Analysis of arrest data from the Bureau of Justice Statistics and the National Center for Juvenile Justice. (See data source note on page 13 for details.)

Juvenile arrests for violent crimes reached a historic low in 2018

Juvenile arrests for violent crimes decreased 5% in the past year

This bulletin uses a measure of violence that includes the offenses of murder, robbery, and aggravated assault.* Following 10 years of decline between 1994 and 2004, juvenile arrests for violent crimes increased through 2006 and then declined each year through 2015. Juvenile arrests for violent crimes increased each of the next 2 years then fell 5% by 2018, reaching its lowest level since at least 1980, and 68% less than the 1994 peak.

After falling 71% between 1993 and 2004, juvenile arrests for murder increased through 2007, then declined 46% through 2012 to reach the lowest level in three decades. However, the number of juvenile arrests for murder has increased each year since 2012. Juvenile arrests for robbery were cut in half between 1995 and 2002, increased through 2008, and then fell 47% through 2015. The

*See the Notes on page 13 for differences in the definition of rape that prohibit it from being included in the measure of violent crimes for trending purposes.

number of juvenile robbery arrests increased each of the next 2 years then declined 11% through 2018, reaching its lowest level since at least 1980. The number of juvenile arrests for aggravated assault, which account for 61% of all juvenile arrests for violent crime in 2018, fell 67% between 1994 and 2018 to the lowest level in the last 39 years.

Juvenile property crime arrests declined each year since 2008

Law enforcement agencies nationwide consistently report data on four offenses that form the Property Crime Index—burglary, larceny-theft, motor vehicle theft, and arson—to determine trends in the number of property crime arrests.

For the period 1980–1994, during which juvenile violent crime arrests increased substantially, juvenile property crime arrests remained relatively constant. After this long period of relative stability, juvenile property crime arrests began a two-decade decline. Between 1994 and 2018, the number of

juvenile Property Crime Index arrests fell 83% and reached its lowest level since at least 1980. Between 2009 and 2018, juvenile arrests declined for individual property offenses: burglary (70%), larceny-theft (71%), motor vehicle theft (26%), and arson (65%).

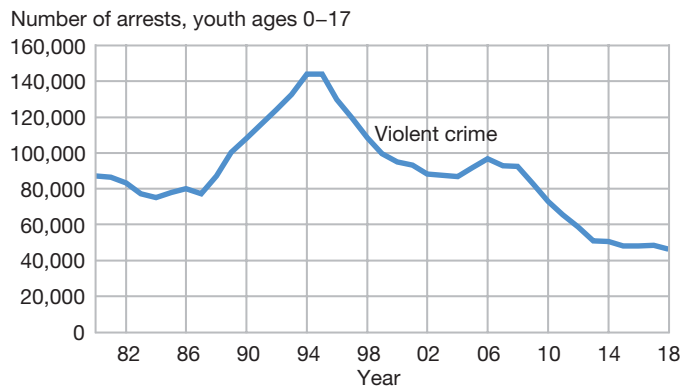
Percent change in juvenile arrests 2009–2018

Most serious offense	Juvenile	Adult
Violent crime*	-44%	-6%
Murder	-22	-2
Robbery	-45	-25
Aggravated assault	-44	-1
Property Crime Index	-69	-21
Burglary	-70	-30
Larceny-theft	-71	-22
Motor vehicle theft	-26	24
Arson	-65	10
Simple assault	-43	-15
Weapons law violations	-49	14
Drug abuse violations	-47	5

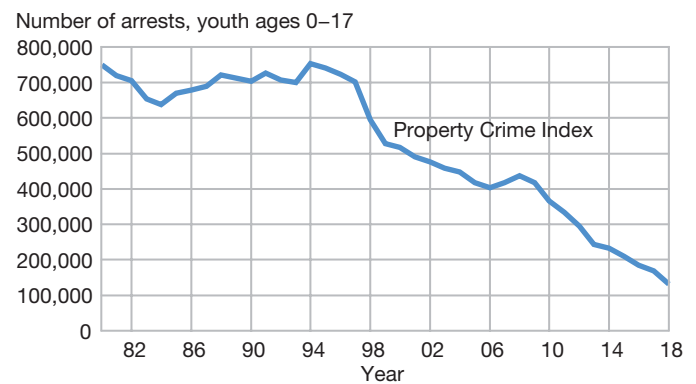
*Includes murder, robbery, and aggravated assault.

Data source: Analysis of arrest data from the Bureau of Justice Statistics and the National Center for Juvenile Justice. (See data source note on page 13 for details.)

Juvenile arrests for violent crimes and Property Crime Index offenses reached historically low levels in 2018



■ Following a 52% decline since 2006, juvenile arrests for violent crimes reached a new historic low in 2018.

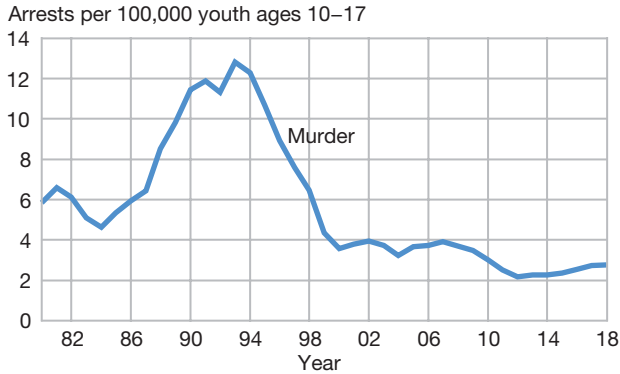


■ Arrests for Property Crime Index offenses have declined annually since 2008, falling 70% by 2018.

Data source: Analysis of arrest data from the Bureau of Justice Statistics and the National Center for Juvenile Justice. (See data source note on page 13 for details.)

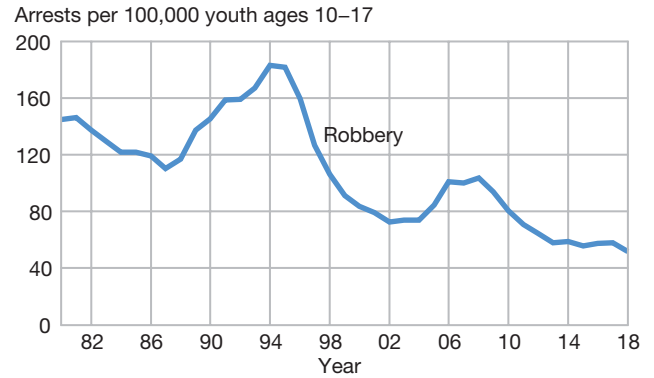
Juvenile arrest rates for murder continued to increase, while robbery and aggravated assault reached new lows

Murder rate



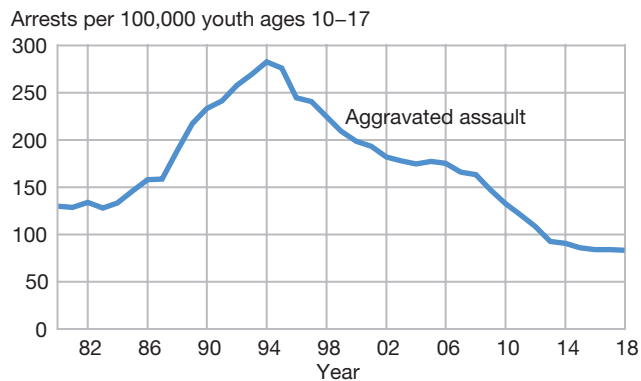
- The juvenile murder arrest rate fell 44% between 2007 and 2012, when it reached its lowest level since at least 1980. This decline was followed by a 27% increase through 2018.
- Although the juvenile murder arrest rate has increased annually since 2012, the rate in 2018 was 79% less than its 1993 peak.

Robbery rate



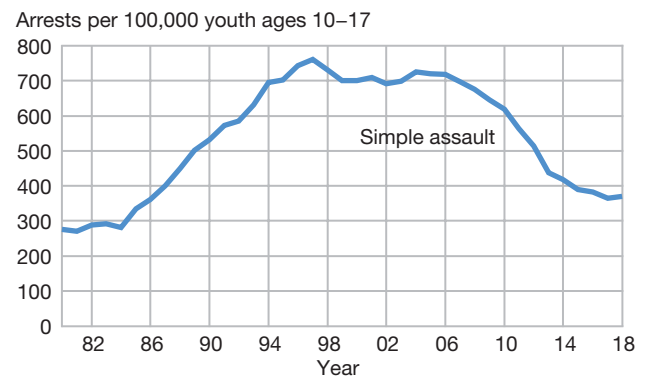
- The juvenile robbery arrest rate in 2015 reached its lowest level in more than three decades. The rate increased each of the next 2 years then fell 11%, reaching a new low in 2018. The rate in 2018 was half the 2008 rate and 72% below the 1994 peak.
- Juvenile robbery arrest rates declined for all gender and racial subgroups since 2008: 51% for males, 39% for females, 52% for Asians, 52% for blacks, 45% for whites, and 25% for American Indians.

Aggravated assault rate



- Unlike the pattern for robbery, the juvenile arrest rate for aggravated assault declined steadily for more than two decades. Following a 43% decline in the past 10 years, the rate in 2018 was at the lowest level since at least 1980 and 71% below the 1994 peak.
- The relative decline in juvenile arrest rates over the past 10 years was the same for aggravated assault and simple assault (43% each).

Simple assault rate



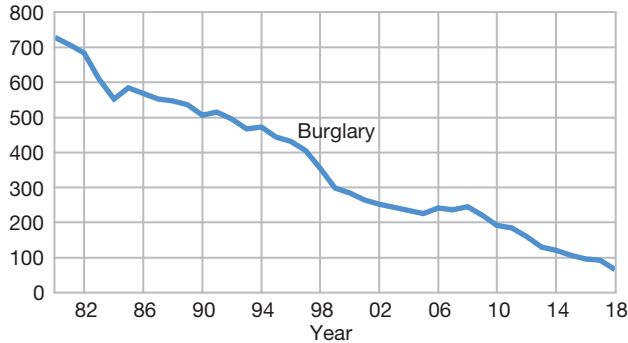
- The simple assault arrest rate fell 50% between 2004 and 2017, then increased slightly (2%) in 2018.
- Since 2004, the relative decline in the number of juvenile arrests for simple assault outpaced that of adults (50% vs. 9%). As a result, 12% of simple assault arrests in 2018 involved a juvenile, compared with 20% in 2004.

Data source: Analysis of arrest data from the Bureau of Justice Statistics and the National Center for Juvenile Justice and population data from the U.S. Census Bureau and the National Center for Health Statistics. (See data source note on page 13 for details.)

Juvenile arrest rates for burglary, larceny-theft, and arson reached historic lows in 2018

Burglary rate

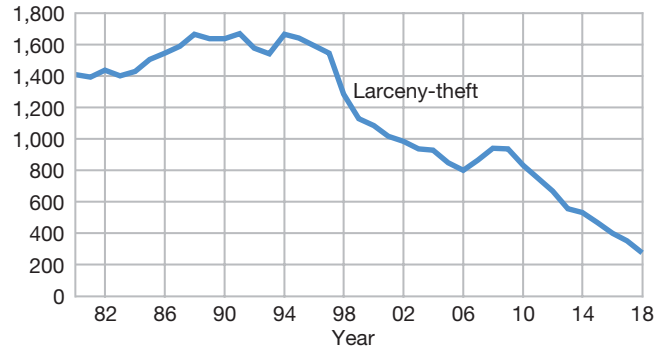
Arrests per 100,000 youth ages 10–17



- With few exceptions, the trend in the juvenile arrest rate for burglary was a steady decline since 1980. By 2018, the rate reached its lowest level since at least 1980, and was 70% below the rate 10 years earlier.
- The large decline in juvenile burglary arrests was not reflected in the adult statistics. For example, between 2009 and 2018, the number of juvenile burglary arrests fell 70%, while adult burglary arrests fell 30%. As a result of this decline, 12% of all burglary arrests in 2018 were juvenile arrests, compared with 25% in 2009.

Larceny-theft rate

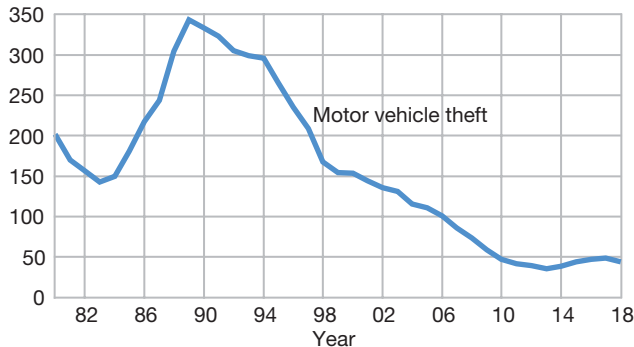
Arrests per 100,000 youth ages 10–17



- The juvenile larceny-theft arrest rate declined steadily from the mid-1990s through 2006. This decline was interrupted by 2 years of increase, and then followed by 10 consecutive years of decline. By 2018, the rate was 71% below the 2008 level and at its lowest level since at least 1980.
- Juvenile arrests for larceny-theft typically involve older juveniles (ages 15–17). Since 2008, older juveniles accounted for 70% or more of juvenile larceny-theft arrests.

Motor vehicle theft rate

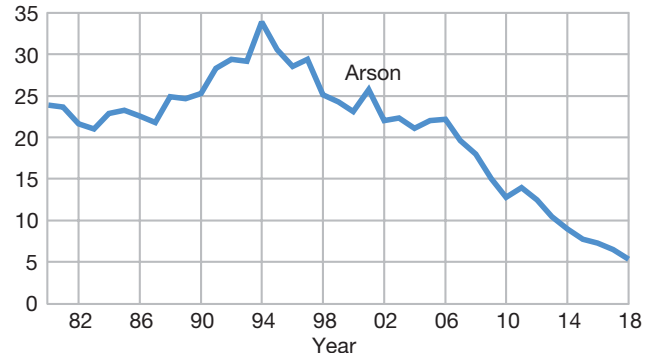
Arrests per 100,000 youth ages 10–17



- Like the larceny-theft pattern, the juvenile motor vehicle theft arrest rate declined considerably since the mid-1990s. However, unlike larceny-theft, the motor vehicle theft arrest rate reached its low point in 2013, then increased 39% through 2017. Despite a 9% decline in the past year, the rate in 2018 was 26% above the 2013 low point.
- While juvenile motor vehicle theft arrest rates increased for all demographic subgroups between 2013 and 2017, rates declined in the past year: 9% each for males and females, 24% for Asians, 11% for American Indians, 10% for whites, and 9% for blacks.

Arson rate

Arrests per 100,000 youth ages 10–17

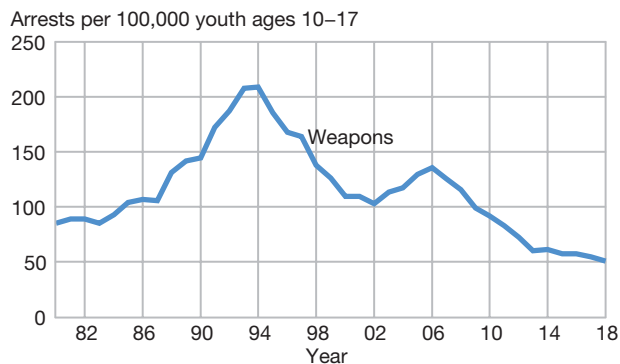


- With few exceptions, the juvenile arrest rate for arson has declined since the mid-1990s. Following 7 consecutive years of decline, the juvenile arson arrest rate in 2018 fell to its lowest level of the 1980–2018 period.
- Arson is the criminal act with the largest proportion of juvenile arrestees. In 2018, 20% of all arson arrests were arrests of juveniles, and most of these juvenile arrests (58%) involved youth younger than 15. In comparison, 10% of all larceny-theft arrests in 2018 involved juveniles, but only 28% of these juvenile arrests involved youth younger than 15.

Data source: Analysis of arrest data from the Bureau of Justice Statistics and the National Center for Juvenile Justice and population data from the U.S. Census Bureau and the National Center for Health Statistics. (See data source note on page 13 for details.)

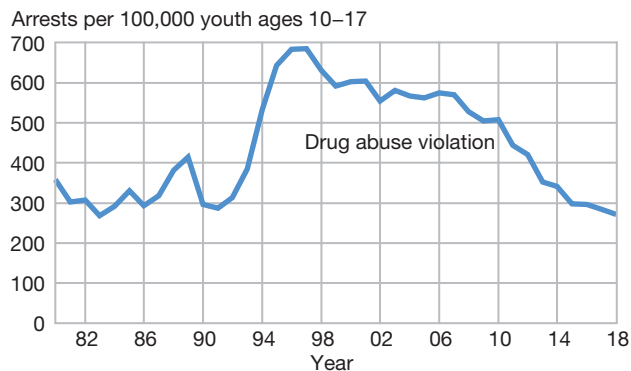
In 2018, juvenile arrest rates for weapons and vandalism reached new lows and drug abuse rates continued to decline

Weapons law violation rate



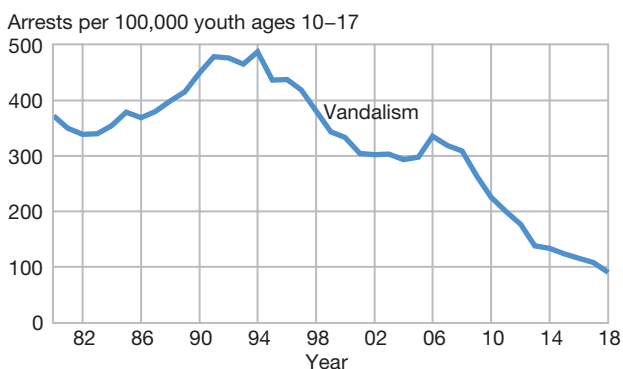
- Similar to robbery, the juvenile arrest rate for weapons law violations declined considerably since the mid-1990s. This decline was interrupted between 2002 and 2006, when the juvenile weapons law violation arrest rate increased 32%. The rate has since fallen 62%, bringing the 2018 rate to its lowest level since 1980.
- The relative decline in weapons law violation arrests was not replicated in the adult statistics. Since 2006, the number of juvenile weapons law violation arrests fell 63%, while the number of adult arrests declined through 2013 then increased 29% through 2018.

Drug abuse violation rate



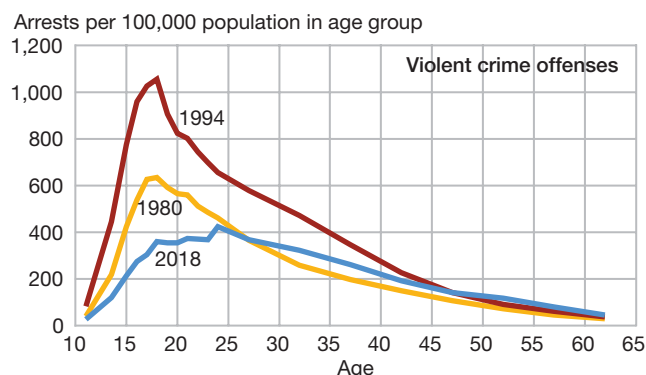
- Following a period of relative stability between 2000 and 2006, the juvenile drug abuse arrest rate declined 53% through 2018, reaching its lowest level since the early 1990s, and just 1% above the 1983 low point.
- The juvenile drug abuse arrest rate declined for most race groups in the last 10 years, falling 51% for black youth, 45% for white youth, and 38% for Asian youth; during this same period, the arrest rate for American Indian youth increased 9%.

Vandalism rate



- The juvenile arrest rate for vandalism has declined steadily since 2006. By 2018, the juvenile vandalism arrest rate fell to its lowest level since at least 1980 and 82% below the 1994 peak.
- Since 2006, the relative decline in the number of juvenile arrests for vandalism outpaced that of adults (74% vs. 19%). As a result, 17% of vandalism arrests in 2018 involved a juvenile, compared with 39% in 2006.

Violent crime age rate



- Regardless of age, the violent crime (murder, robbery, and aggravated assault) arrest rate grew substantially between 1980 and 1994. During this period, the relative increase was greater for juveniles than adults.
- By 2018, arrest rates for violent crimes fell substantially from the 1994 peak for every age group younger than 45. Juveniles showed the largest decline, falling more than 70% in each age group from 10 through 17. In comparison, the rates dropped an average of 59% for young adults ages 18–21, 44% for adults ages 22–24, 36% for ages 25–29, 28% for ages 30–39, and 15% for ages 40–44.

Data source: Analysis of arrest data from the Bureau of Justice Statistics and the National Center for Juvenile Justice and population data from the U.S. Census Bureau and the National Center for Health Statistics. (See data source note on page 13 for details.)

In 2018, one-fifth of juvenile violent crime arrests involved females and more than half involved minority youth

Females accounted for 30% of juvenile arrests in 2018

In 2018, law enforcement agencies made 216,090 arrests of females younger than age 18 and 512,180 arrests of males. Although males accounted for the majority (70%) of juvenile arrests overall in 2018, the female share was relatively high for certain offenses, including larceny-theft (39%), liquor law violations (42%), simple assault (37%), and disorderly conduct (36%). Females accounted for 21% of juvenile violent crime arrests and 28% of aggravated assault arrests in 2018.

From 2009 through 2018, arrests of juvenile females decreased less than male arrests in most offense categories (e.g., aggravated and simple assault, drug abuse violations, robbery, and burglary).

Percent change in juvenile arrests 2009–2018

Most serious offense	Female	Male
Violent crime*	-37%	-46%
Robbery	-38	-46
Aggravated assault	-37	-46
Simple assault	-38	-46
Property Crime Index	-73	-66
Burglary	-67	-71
Larceny-theft	-75	-67
Motor vehicle theft	-19	-27
Vandalism	-53	-68
Weapons	-46	-50
Drug abuse violation	-14	-53
Driving under influence	-59	-60
Liquor law violation	-74	-78
Disorderly conduct	-63	-67

*Includes murder, robbery, and aggravated assault.

Data source: Analysis of arrest data from the Bureau of Justice Statistics and the National Center for Juvenile Justice. (See data source note on page 13 for details.)

Gender differences also occurred in arrest trends for adults. For example, between 2009 and 2018, adult male arrests for aggravated assault fell 3% while adult female arrests increased 7%, and adult male arrests for

simple assault fell 19% while adult female arrests fell 3%. Therefore, the female proportion of arrests grew for both types of assault for adults, as it did for juveniles. The number of drug abuse violation arrests declined more for juvenile males (53%) than females (14%) between 2009 and 2018, while it declined 3% for adult males and increased 36% for adult females. Over the same time, the number of disorderly conduct arrests of juvenile females fell 63% while it fell 67% for juvenile males, and adult female arrests fell 36% while male arrests fell 47%.

Juvenile arrests disproportionately involved black youth

The racial composition of the U.S. juvenile population ages 10–17 in 2018 was 75% white, 16% black, 6% Asian/Pacific Islander, and 2% American Indian. Half (50%) of all juvenile arrests for violent crimes in 2018 involved black youth, 47% involved white youth, 2% involved Asian youth, and 1% involved American Indian youth. For Property

Crime Index arrests, the proportions were 55% white youth, 42% black youth, 2% Asian youth, and 2% American Indian youth. [Not all agencies provide ethnicity data through the Uniform Crime Reporting program; therefore, arrest estimates for juveniles of Hispanic ethnicity are not available.]

Proportion of juvenile arrests in 2018

Most serious offense	Black
Violent crime*	50%
Murder	58
Robbery	64
Aggravated assault	41
Simple assault	38
Property Crime Index	42
Burglary	42
Larceny-theft	40
Motor vehicle theft	52
Vandalism	29
Weapons	43
Drug abuse violation	23
Liquor law violation	6

*Includes murder, robbery, and aggravated assault.

Data source: Analysis of arrest data from the Bureau of Justice Statistics and the National Center for Juvenile Justice. (See data source note on page 13 for details.)

In 2018, juveniles were involved in about 1 in 13 arrests for murder and about 1 in 5 arrests for robbery and vandalism

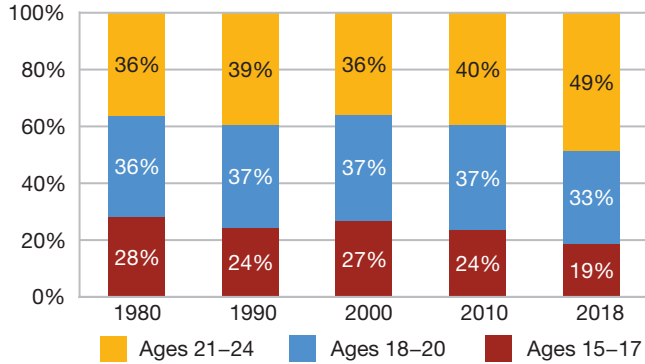
Most serious offense	Juvenile arrests as a percentage of total arrests						
	All	Male	Female	White	Black	Indian	Asian
Total	7%	7%	8%	6%	9%	6%	7%
Murder	8	8	7	7	8	6	5
Robbery	20	20	15	15	23	11	21
Aggravated assault	7	7	8	6	9	5	5
Burglary	12	14	8	10	18	18	12
Larceny-theft	10	11	10	9	14	10	14
Motor vehicle theft	16	17	13	11	26	18	12
Arson	20	21	15	19	23	19	16
Other (simple) assault	12	10	15	11	14	10	9
Vandalism	17	18	14	17	17	17	13
Weapon	10	10	12	10	10	12	13
Drug abuse violation	5	5	6	6	5	10	7
Liquor law violation	15	13	21	17	7	14	14
Disorderly conduct	18	16	21	15	24	9	14

Data source: Analysis of arrest data from the Bureau of Justice Statistics and the National Center for Juvenile Justice. (See data source note on page 13 for details.)

Arrest rates for older juveniles were lower than the rates for young adults

Age profile of older juveniles and young adults

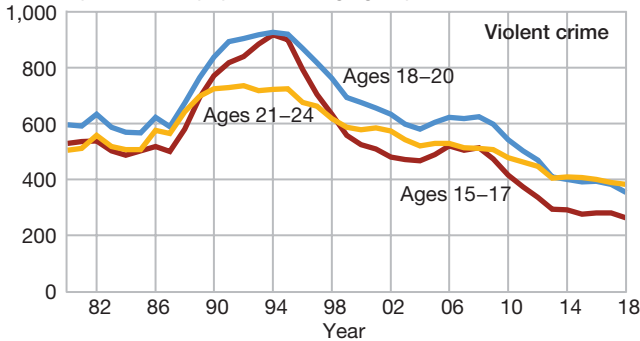
Percent of arrests of persons ages 15–24



- The relative decline in the number of arrests was greater for older juveniles (64%) than adults ages 18–20 (51%) and ages 21–24 (28%) between 1980 and 2018.
- As a result of this decline, older juveniles accounted for a smaller share of arrests of persons ages 15–24 (19%) in 2018 than in 1980 (28%).

Violent crime

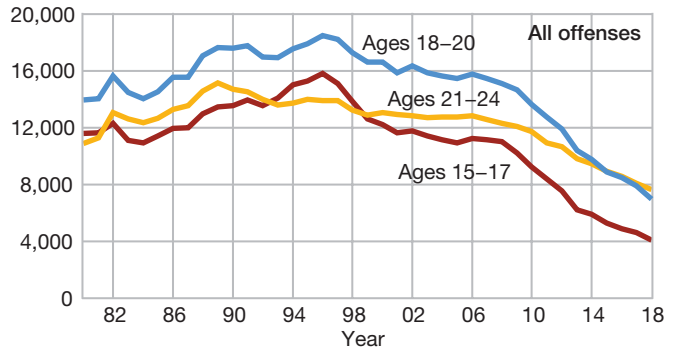
Arrests per 100,000 population in age group



- Violent crime arrest rates for older juveniles and young adults ages 18–20 followed a similar pattern between 1980 and 2018. Rates peaked for both age groups in 1994, then fell considerably (71% and 62%, respectively) through 2018.
- Comparatively, the violent crime arrest rate for adults ages 21–24 peaked in 1992, then declined 48% through 2018. Rates in 2018 for each age group reached their lowest level since 1980.

All offenses

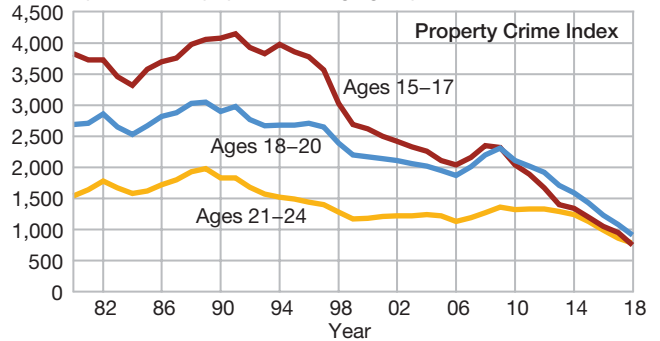
Arrests per 100,000 population in age group



- The overall arrest rate for older juveniles and young adults ages 18–20 followed a similar pattern. Rates peaked in 1996 for both groups, then declined (74% and 62%, respectively) to reach their lowest level in 2018.
- Comparatively, the arrest rate for adults ages 21–24 peaked earlier (1989), then declined 50% by 2018 to its lowest level since at least 1980.

Property Crime Index

Arrests per 100,000 population in age group

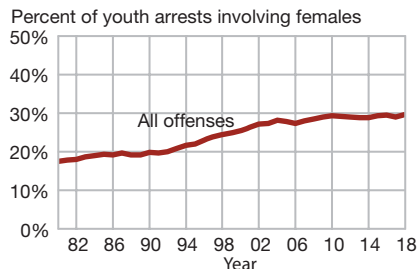
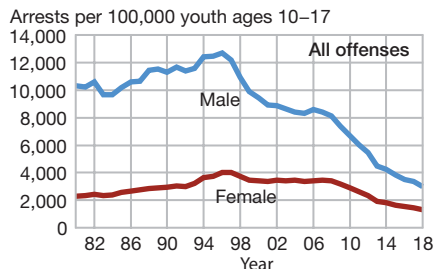


- Despite a brief interruption in the mid-2000s, Property Crime Index arrest rates declined steadily for older juveniles and young adults since the mid-1990s. In the last 10 years, rates declined 68% for older juveniles, 61% for young adults ages 18–20, and 43% for young adults ages 21–24; by 2018, Property Crime Index arrest rates for each age group were at their lowest level since at least 1980.

Data source: Analysis of arrest data from the Bureau of Justice Statistics and the National Center for Juvenile Justice and population data from the U.S. Census Bureau and the National Center for Health Statistics. (See data source note on page 13 for details.)

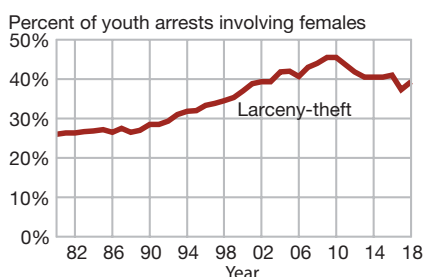
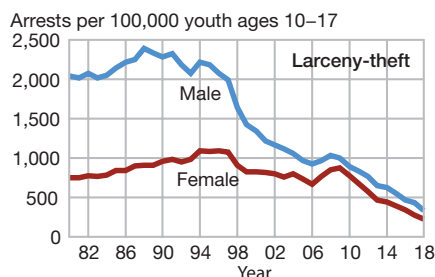
Females accounted for 3 of every 10 juvenile arrests in 2018

All offenses



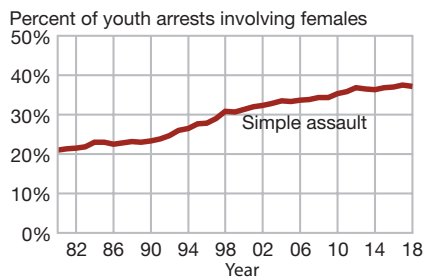
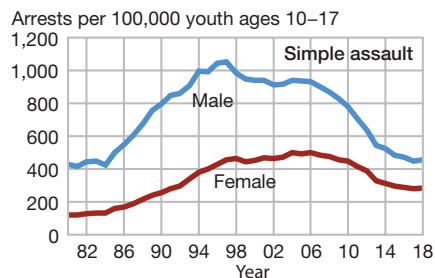
- The overall juvenile arrest rate declined in recent years and the relative decline was greater for males than for females. Since 2006, for example, the male arrest rate fell 65%, compared with 61% for females.
- The number of arrests of females increased more than males through the mid-1990s, and then decreased less through 2018. As a result, the female share of juvenile arrests has increased, from 18% in 1980 to 30% in 2018.

Larceny-theft



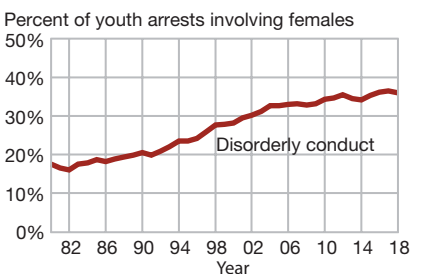
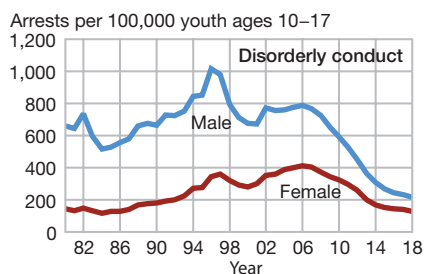
- Larceny-theft arrest rate trends were marked by two periods of substantial decline. From the mid-1990s through the mid-2000s, the decline in the male rate outpaced that of females (57% vs. 33%). In the more recent 10-year period, the female rate declined 75%, compared with 67% for males.
- The net result was that the female share of juvenile larceny-theft arrests increased from 26% in 1980 to 45% in 2009, then fell to 39% by 2018.

Simple assault



- The male juvenile arrest rate for simple assault peaked in 1997, while the female rate peaked 9 years later. Since their peaks, rates fell more for males (57%) than for females (43%).
- By 2018, females accounted for 37% of juvenile simple assault arrests.
- Across genders, the disorderly conduct arrest rate declined in recent years and the relative decline was greater for males than for females. Since 2006, the male arrest rate fell 73%, compared with 69% for females.
- Similar to the pattern for simple assault, the female share of disorderly conduct arrests increased steadily and reached 36% in 2018.

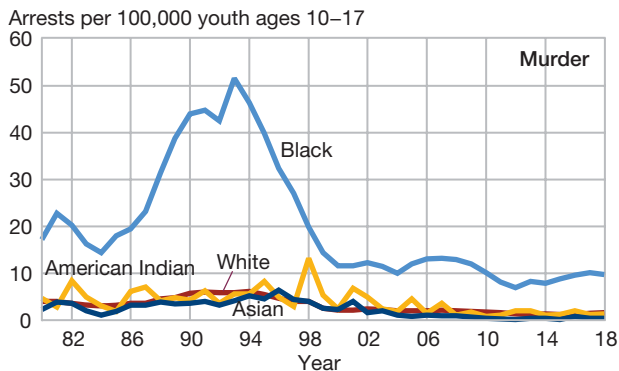
Disorderly conduct



Data source: Analysis of arrest data from the Bureau of Justice Statistics and the National Center for Juvenile Justice and population data from the U.S. Census Bureau and the National Center for Health Statistics. (See data source note on page 13 for details.)

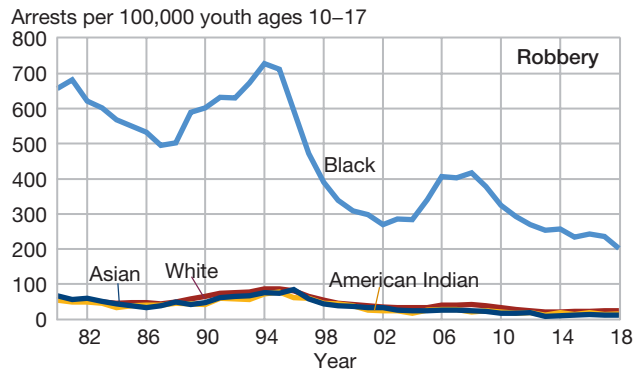
Arrest rates for murder and robbery were much higher for black youth than youth of other races

Murder



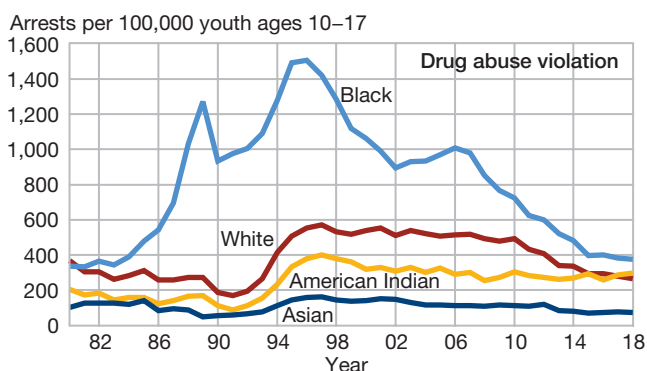
- The murder arrest rate for white juveniles reached a historic low in 2013, 82% below its 1994 peak, while the rate for black juveniles found its low point 1 year earlier, 87% below its 1993 peak. Since their respective low points, the rate for white youth increased 32% through 2018, while the rate for black youth increased 47% through 2017 then declined 4% through 2018.
- The disparity in black-to-white juvenile murder arrest rates peaked in 1993, when the black rate was nearly nine times the white rate. This ratio declined by 2018, when the black rate was nearly seven times the white rate.

Robbery



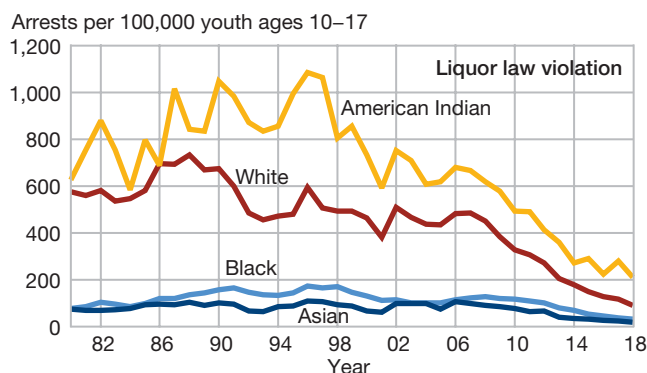
- Juvenile robbery arrest rates reached a historic low in 2013 for white, American Indian, and Asian youth, while the rate for black youth reached its low point in 2018. From their low points to 2018, rates have increased 13% for white youth, 24% for American Indian youth, and 40% for Asian youth.
- Similar to murder, the black arrest rate for robbery was higher than the rate for whites, but the difference in rates was far greater for robbery than for murder. In 2018, for example, the robbery arrest rate for black juveniles was nearly nine times the white rate.

Drug abuse violation



- In the last 10 years, the drug arrest rate declined 51% for black youth, 45% for white youth, and 38% for Asian youth, but increased 9% for American Indian youth.
- The black-to-white ratio in the drug abuse violation arrest rate has narrowed in recent years, largely influenced by the considerable decline in the black arrest rate since the mid-1990s (75% vs. 50% for the white arrest rate). The ratio peaked in 1991, at nearly 6 to 1; by 2018, the black arrest rate was 1.4 times the white rate.

Liquor law violation



- The liquor law arrest rate declined for all race groups in the last 10 years: 78% for Asians, 76% for whites, 74% for blacks, and 64% for American Indians. By 2018, the rate reached its lowest level since at least 1980 for all races.
- Liquor law violations are one of the few offenses for which rates are higher for American Indian juveniles than for other race groups. The American Indian rate in 2018 was more than twice the white rate, nearly 7 times the rate for black youth, and 11 times the rate for Asian youth.

Data source: Analysis of arrest data from the Bureau of Justice Statistics and the National Center for Juvenile Justice and population data from the U.S. Census Bureau and the National Center for Health Statistics. (See data source note on page 13 for details.)

Many factors can influence state variations in juvenile arrest rates

Although state data are available from the Uniform Crime Reporting program, comparisons should be made with caution because of variations in jurisdictional standards and reporting

State	2018 reporting population coverage	Arrests of juveniles under age 18 per 100,000 juveniles ages 10–17, 2018				State	2018 reporting population coverage	Arrests of juveniles under age 18 per 100,000 juveniles ages 10–17, 2018			
		Aggravated assault	Larceny-theft	Drug abuse	Weapons			Aggravated assault	Larceny-theft	Drug abuse	Weapons
U.S. total	82%	84	413	269	50	Missouri	88%	89	522	365	43
Alabama	63	48	306	41	28	Montana	94	61	688	370	15
Alaska	99	187	561	234	23	Nebraska	79	39	858	605	47
Arizona	92	95	476	467	36	Nevada	99	305	408	402	75
Arkansas	88	104	508	330	41	New Hampshire	97	29	288	284	3
California	100	97	185	73	68	New Jersey	88	56	229	349	59
Colorado	87	87	626	447	55	New Mexico	67	128	319	315	44
Connecticut	97	40	394	142	44	New York	49	62	392	298	33
Delaware	100	216	593	302	89	North Carolina	52	55	486	257	70
District of Columbia	0	NA	NA	NA	NA	North Dakota	100	86	592	584	31
Florida	100	95	659	280	41	Ohio	77	55	326	183	36
Georgia	64	71	424	276	52	Oklahoma	98	64	393	274	35
Hawaii	81	46	297	324	12	Oregon	89	58	490	471	28
Idaho	89	62	531	504	51	Pennsylvania	99	128	377	268	59
Illinois	22	59	633	281	209	Rhode Island	100	67	423	108	89
Indiana	60	96	412	267	47	South Carolina	87	69	529	445	94
Iowa	0	NA	NA	NA	NA	South Dakota	92	75	750	935	108
Kansas	45	19	73	141	2	Tennessee	94	133	595	368	65
Kentucky	78	19	193	72	7	Texas	93	73	326	318	29
Louisiana	85	204	891	362	106	Utah	84	56	710	636	39
Maine	100	19	568	256	5	Vermont	98	37	185	70	22
Maryland	97	128	629	347	104	Virginia	97	34	367	261	36
Massachusetts	85	66	113	24	13	Washington	85	71	364	168	34
Michigan	99	63	308	168	29	West Virginia	58	33	56	69	9
Minnesota	99	71	715	291	54	Wisconsin	99	91	792	540	76
Mississippi	39	32	441	149	54	Wyoming	88	93	729	1,082	30

NA = Arrest counts were not available for the District of Columbia and Iowa in the FBI's *Crime in the United States, 2018*.

Notes: Arrest rates for jurisdictions with less than complete reporting may not be representative of the entire state. Although juvenile arrest rates may largely reflect juvenile behavior, many other factors can affect the magnitude of these rates. Arrest rates are calculated by dividing the number of youth arrests made in the year by the number of youth living in the jurisdiction. Therefore, jurisdictions that arrest a relatively large number of nonresident juveniles would have a higher arrest rate than jurisdictions where resident youth behave similarly. Jurisdictions (especially small ones) that are vacation destinations or that are centers for economic activity in a region may have arrest rates that reflect the behavior of nonresident youth more than that of resident youth. Other factors that influence arrest rates in a given area include the attitudes of citizens toward crime, the policies of local law enforcement agencies, and the policies of other components of the justice system. In many areas, not all law enforcement agencies report their arrest data to the FBI. Rates for such areas are necessarily based on partial information and may not be accurate. Comparisons of juvenile arrest rates across jurisdictions can be informative. Because of factors noted, however, comparisons should be made with caution.

Data source: Analysis of arrest data from *Crime in the United States, 2018* (Washington, DC: Federal Bureau of Investigation, 2018) tables 3 and 22, and population data from the National Center for Health Statistics' *Vintage 2018 Postcensal Estimates of the Resident Population of the United States (April 1, 2010, July 1, 2010–July 1, 2018), by Year, County, Single-Year of Age (0, 1, 2, . . . , 85 Years and Over), Bridged Race, Hispanic Origin, and Sex* [machine-readable data files available online at www.cdc.gov/nchs/nvss/bridged_race.htm, as of June 25, 2019].

Notes

Data source

The Bureau of Justice Statistics developed arrest estimates for 1980–2014 using the Arrest Data Analysis Tool [available online at www.bjs.gov/index.cfm?ty=datool&url=/arrests/index.cfm, retrieved September 29, 2017]; the National Center for Juvenile Justice developed arrest estimates for 2015–2018 based on data published in the FBI’s *Crime in the United States* reports for the respective years; population data for 1980–1989 are from the U.S. Census Bureau, *U.S. Population Estimates by Age, Sex, Race, and Hispanic Origin: 1980 to 1999* [machine-readable data files available online, released April 11, 2000]; population data for 1990–1999 are from the National Center for Health Statistics (prepared by the U.S. Census Bureau with support from the National Cancer Institute), *Bridged-Race Intercensal Estimates of the July 1, 1990–July 1, 1999, United States Resident Population by County, Single-Year of Age, Sex, Race, and Hispanic Origin* [machine-readable data files available online at www.cdc.gov/nchs/nvss/bridged_race.htm, released July 26, 2004]; population data for 2000–2009 are from the National Center for Health Statistics (prepared under a collaborative arrangement with the U.S. Census Bureau), *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 files available online at www.cdc.gov/nchs/nvss/bridged_race.htm, as of October 26, 2012, following release by the U.S. Census Bureau of the revised unbridged intercensal estimates by 5-year age group on October 9, 2012]; and population data for 2010–2018 are from the National Center for Health Statistics (prepared under a collaborative arrangement with the U.S. Census Bureau), *Vintage 2018 Postcensal Estimates of the Resident Population of the United States (April 1, 2010, July 1, 2010–July 1, 2018), by Year, County, Single-Year of*

Age (0, 1, 2, . . . , 85 Years and Over), Bridged Race, Hispanic Origin, and Sex [machine-readable data files available online at www.cdc.gov/nchs/nvss/bridged_race.htm, as of June 25, 2019, following release by the U.S. Census Bureau of the unbridged vintage 2018 postcensal estimates by 5-year age group, retrieved on July 1, 2019].

Data coverage

FBI arrest data in this bulletin are counts of arrests detailed by age of arrestee and offense categories from all law enforcement agencies that reported complete data for the calendar year. (See *Crime in the United States, 2018* for offense definitions.) The proportion of the U.S. population covered by these reporting agencies ranged from 72% to 86% between 1980 and 2018, with 2018 coverage of 76%.

Estimates of the number of persons in each age group in the reporting agencies’ resident populations assume that the resident population age profiles are like the nation’s. Reporting agencies’ total populations were multiplied by the U.S. Census Bureau’s most current estimate of the proportion of the U.S. population for each age group.

The reporting coverage for the total United States (82%) in the table on page 12 includes all states reporting arrests of persons younger than age 18. This is greater than the coverage in the rest of the bulletin (76%) for various reasons. For example, a state may

provide arrest counts of persons younger than age 18 but not provide the age detail required to support other subpopulation estimates.

Changes in the definition of rape in the FBI data

Since 1927, forcible rape was defined by the FBI as “the carnal knowledge of a female, forcibly and against her will.” Beginning in 2013, the FBI adopted a broader definition of 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.” Unlike the definition in place for more than 80 years, the new definition does not require force and is gender neutral.

Under current reporting practices, law enforcement agencies may submit data on rape arrests based on either the new definition or the legacy definition. Due to differences in agency reporting practices, national estimates for the offenses of “rape” and “sex offenses” are not available after 2012. Additionally, estimates for the Violent Crime Index (which included “forcible rape”) are not shown as this category is no longer compatible with prior years. More information about these changes can be found on the FBI’s website [https://ucr.fbi.gov/crime-in-the-u.s/2013/crime-in-the-u.s.-2013/rape-addendum/rape_addendum_final].

Visit OJJDP’s Statistical Briefing Book for More Information on Juvenile Arrests

OJJDP’s online Statistical Briefing Book (SBB) offers access to a wealth of information about juvenile crime and victimization and about youth involved in the juvenile justice system. Visit the “Law Enforcement and Juvenile Crime” section of the SBB at ojjdp.gov/ojstatbb/crime/faqs.asp for more information about juvenile arrest rates. The SBB contains FAQs about juvenile arrests, displays arrest rate trends detailed by offense and youth demographics, and offers users access to national arrest data that support customizable annual and trend displays by offense and youth demographics.

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Office of Justice Programs
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NCJ 254499

Acknowledgments

This bulletin was written by Charles Puzzanchera, Senior Research Associate at the National Center for Juvenile Justice, with funds provided by OJJDP and managed by the National Institute of Justice to support the National Juvenile Justice Data Analysis Project.

This bulletin was prepared under grant number 2016-JF-FX-K001 from the Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention (OJJDP), U.S. Department of Justice.

To ensure the efficiency and coordination of all Office of Justice Programs research activities, the juvenile justice research, evaluation, and statistical data collection projects funded by OJJDP are managed by the National Institute of Justice (NIJ).

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The Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention is a component of the Office of Justice Programs, which also includes the Bureau of Justice Assistance; the Bureau of Justice Statistics; the National Institute of Justice; the Office for Victims of Crime; and the Office of Sex Offender Sentencing, Monitoring, Apprehending, Registering, and Tracking.