



# Juvenile Court Statistics



# 2018



# Online resources

## National Center for Juvenile Justice

[ncjj.org](http://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](http://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 47 million delinquency cases processed by the nation's juvenile courts between 1985 and 2018. Preformatted tables describe the demographic characteristics of youth involved in the juvenile justice system and how juvenile courts process these cases. Users can also create their own analyses beginning with 2005 data to explore relationships among a youth's demographics and referral offenses, and the court's detention, adjudication, and disposition decisions. 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](http://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 2005 to present for more than 25 offense categories, and include separate presentations by gender, age, and race.

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Sarah Hockenberry  
Charles Puzzanchera

April 2020

National Center for Juvenile Justice

This report was prepared by the National Center for Juvenile Justice, the research division of the National Council of Juvenile and Family Court Judges, and was supported by grant number 2018–JX–FX–0002 funded by the Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention and managed by the National Institute of Justice, Office of Justice Programs, U.S. Department of Justice. The opinions, findings, and conclusions or recommendations expressed in this publication are those of the authors and do not necessarily reflect those of the Department of Justice.

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Suggested citation: Hockenberry, Sarah, and Puzanchera, Charles. 2020. *Juvenile Court Statistics 2018*. Pittsburgh, PA: National Center for Juvenile Justice.

# Acknowledgments

This report is a product of the National Juvenile Court Data Archive (Archive), which is funded by a grant to the National Center for Juvenile Justice (NCJJ), the research division of the National Council of Juvenile and Family Court Judges, from the Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention (OJJDP) and managed by the National Institute of Justice (NIJ), U.S. Department of Justice. Benjamin Adams and Barbara Kelley are the NIJ Social Science Analysts for the project.

The report authors are Sarah Hockenberry, Project Manager, and Charles Puzzanchera, Senior Research Associate. Melissa Sickmund is the Project Director of the National Juvenile Court Data Archive. In addition, the following Archive staff are acknowledged for their contributions to the collection and processing of the data presented in this report.

Jeremy Bilfield, Research Assistant

Greg Chamberlin, Computer Programmer

Zoe Livengood, Research Assistant

Anthony Sladky, Senior Computer Programmer

Jason Smith, Computer Programmer

Moriah Taylor, Research Assistant

Nancy Tierney, Program Manager

*Juvenile Court Statistics* would not be possible were it not for the state and local agencies that take the time each year to honor our requests for data and documentation. The following agencies contributed case-level data or court-level aggregate statistics for this report:

**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**—Council of Juvenile Court Judges of Georgia.

**Hawaii**—Department of the Attorney General.

**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 Supreme Courts, Administrative Office of the Court.

**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.

**Washington**—Administrative Office of 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 2018* describes delinquency cases and petitioned status offense cases handled between 2005 and 2018 by U.S. courts with juvenile jurisdiction. National estimates of juvenile court delinquency caseloads in 2018 were based on analyses of 539,646 automated case records and court-level statistics summarizing an additional 55,566 cases. Estimates of status offense cases formally processed by juvenile courts in 2018 were based on analyses of 67,347 automated case-level records and court-level summary statistics on an additional 4,686 cases. The data used in the analyses were contributed to the National Juvenile Court Data Archive (the Archive) by more than 2,500 courts with jurisdiction over 87% of the juvenile population in 2018.

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*











































































































































































































































