




JUVENILE JUSTICE STATISTICS

NATIONAL REPORT SERIES BULLETIN

Caren Harp, Administrator

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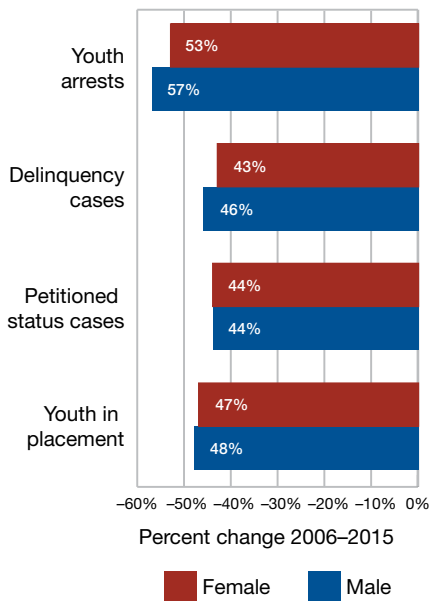
Girls in the Juvenile Justice System

Samantha Ehrmann, Nina Hyland, and Charles Puzzanchera

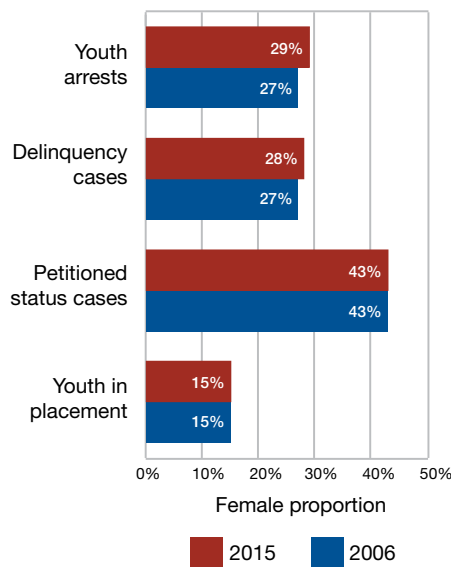
Highlights

This bulletin presents statistics on girls in the juvenile justice system from three national data collections, covering their involvement from arrest through residential placement. It also provides an analysis of trends and case processing in addition to characteristics of the youth studied and their offenses.

In recent years, the involvement of girls in the juvenile justice system declined at a rate similar to that for boys



As a result, the proportion of females at various stages of the juvenile justice system has changed very little since the mid-2000s



- Arrests involving girls decreased by more than half (53%) between 2006 and 2015, reaching their lowest point in three decades.
- Delinquency cases and petitioned status cases involving girls also reached their lowest points since the early 1990s, decreasing 43% and 44%, respectively, from 2006 through 2015.
- After falling 47% since 2006, the number of females in placement in 2015 was at its lowest level since at least 1997.
- Since 2006, the proportion of females remained relatively constant for arrests, delinquency cases, petitioned status cases, and youth in placement.
- Larceny-theft, simple assault, and disorderly conduct accounted for 50% of arrests and 56% of delinquency cases involving girls in 2015. Truancy offenses accounted for more than half (55%) of petitioned status offense cases involving females.
- In 2015, delinquency cases involving girls were less likely to be petitioned, adjudicated, or result in out-of-home placement than cases involving boys.



A Message From OJJDP

The Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention (OJJDP) supported the statistical analyses reported in this bulletin to help the field better understand the nature of girls' offending and how the justice system handles cases involving girls. The authors drew upon three national data collections—the Federal Bureau of Investigation's Uniform Crime Reporting Program and OJJDP's National Juvenile Court Data Archive and Census of Juveniles in Residential Placement—to create a statistical portrait of girls in the juvenile justice system, including trends in the demographics of this population, the offenses they committed, and how they move through the system.

Both genders' involvement in the juvenile justice system has declined at similar rates over the past decade. However, focusing on the overall trend may obscure important details. For example, although girls accounted for less than one-third of youth arrests in 2015, they made up a relatively large share for certain types of offenses, such as larceny-theft and liquor law violations. Additionally, 2015 data reveal that the offense profiles of petitioned status offense and delinquency cases involving younger girls differ from those of older girls.

The examination of these types of trends and characteristics of girls in the juvenile justice system is critical to assessing needs, identifying potential service gaps, and directing interventions for this population. OJJDP prepared this bulletin to help states, communities, and tribal jurisdictions understand the national trends and consider how they may use their own data to identify and target effective and cost-efficient strategies for girls.

Caren Harp
Administrator

The latest data highlight trends and characteristics of girls in the juvenile justice system and the system's response to them

Boys have always accounted for the majority of youth involved in the juvenile justice system. Consequently, advancements in policy and practice tended to focus on males. As the number of female youth entering the juvenile justice system grew throughout the 1990s, policymakers and researchers shifted their attention to girls to better understand the reasons behind this increase.¹

In 2004, the Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention (OJJDP) established the Girls Study Group to examine what influences delinquent behavior among girls and how the juvenile justice system should respond. The group disseminated knowledge acquired from literature

¹Zahn, M.A., Hawkins, S.R., Chiancone, J., and Whitworth, A. 2008. *The Girls Study Group—Charting the Way to Delinquency Prevention for Girls*. Girls Study Group series. Washington, DC: U.S. Department of Justice, Office of Justice Programs, Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention. Available at www.ncjrs.gov/pdffiles1/ojjdp/223434.pdf.

reviews, studies, and assessments through its bulletin series *Understanding and Responding to Girls' Delinquency*. Today, OJJDP provides funds to support comprehensive, community-based services for girls in an effort to reduce violence and victimization and to promote public safety.

Research has revealed the various adversities many girls face as well as their unique responses to trauma that place them at risk for entering the system. This statistical bulletin presents a national portrait of girls involved with the juvenile justice system as assessed through three national data collections: the Federal Bureau of Investigation's (FBI's) Uniform Crime Reporting (UCR) Program, OJJDP's National Juvenile Court Data Archive, and OJJDP's Census of Juveniles in Residential Placement. The bulletin examines recent trends of girls involved in the system and addresses their demographics, the offenses that led to their involvement, and how they move through the system.



Arrests of girls accounted for less than one-third of all youth arrests

In 2015, law enforcement agencies in the United States made an estimated 921,600 arrests of persons younger than age 18. Girls accounted for 269,900 of those arrests, or less than one-third; however, their involvement varied by offense.

Females accounted for a relatively large share of youth arrests² involving larceny-theft (40%), liquor law violations (40%), simple assault (37%), and disorderly conduct (35%). In comparison, females accounted for a small share of murder (6%) and robbery (11%) arrests. While the male proportion of youth arrests exceeded the female proportion across most offenses, arrests for prostitution-related offenses were an exception. Of the 600 estimated youth arrests for prostitution-related offenses, more than three-fourths (76%) involved girls.

²In the arrest section of this bulletin (pages 3–5), “youth” refers to persons younger than age 18. In 2015, this definition was at odds with the legal definition of youth involved in the justice system where 16- and 17-year-olds in some states are defined as adults.

About the data

Findings in the arrest section of this bulletin are 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. These statistics report the number of arrests that law enforcement agencies made in a given year—not the number of youth arrested nor the number of crimes committed. Under the UCR Program, the FBI requires law enforcement agencies to classify an arrest by the most serious offense charged in that arrest. More information on arrest data is available in the “Data Sources” section of this bulletin (p. 23).

Females accounted for a small proportion of youth arrests for violent offenses in 2015

Most serious offense	Female youth arrests, 2015	Female proportion	Percent change 2006–2015
Total*	269,900	29%	–53%
Violent Crime Index†	–	–	–
Murder	100	6	–30
Rape†	–	–	–
Robbery	2,000	11	–40
Aggravated assault	7,300	26	–48
Property Crime Index	70,700	34	–45
Burglary	4,800	13	–48
Larceny-theft	63,000	40	–44
Motor vehicle theft	2,600	18	–55
Arson	400	16	–61
Simple assault	48,200	37	–42
Fraud	1,500	33	–41
Stolen property	1,700	16	–45
Vandalism	7,000	17	–55
Weapons violations	2,100	11	–56
Prostitution and commercialized vice	400	76	–61
Sex offenses†	–	–	–
Drug abuse violations	21,100	21	–33
Offenses against child and family	1,300	37	–39
Driving under the influence	1,600	25	–65
Liquor law violations	17,200	40	–66
Drunkenness	1,600	29	–62
Disorderly conduct	25,100	35	–64
All other offenses except traffic	46,200	28	–55
Curfew	12,700	28	–73
Runaway	NA	NA	NA

■ Females accounted for 26% of youth arrests for aggravated assault and 40% of arrests for larceny-theft.

■ Across offenses, arrests involving females declined 30% or more since 2006.

*Includes offenses not shown.

†Beginning in 2013, the FBI broadened the definition of rape, removing the phrase “forcible” from the offense name and description. Law enforcement agencies may submit data on rape arrests based on either the new or legacy definition of rape. Due to differences in agency reporting practices, national estimates for the offenses of “rape” and “sex offenses” are no longer available. Additionally, estimates for the Violent Crime Index (which included “forcible rape”) are not shown.

NA = National estimates for runaway arrests are no longer available.

In 2015, arrests involving girls reached the lowest level since at least 1980

Half of arrests involving girls in 2015 were for larceny-theft, simple assault, or disorderly conduct offenses

Among arrests involving girls, larceny-theft was the most common offense, accounting for about one-fourth (23%) of their arrests in 2015. Simple assault accounted for nearly one-fifth (18%) of arrests involving girls, while disorderly conduct accounted for 9%. In contrast, more serious violent offenses (murder, robbery, and aggravated assault) accounted for 3% of arrests of girls.

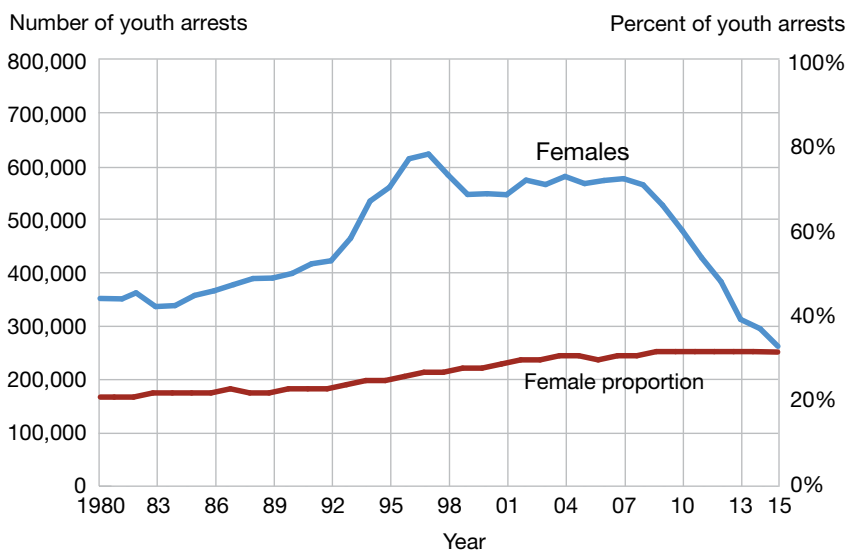
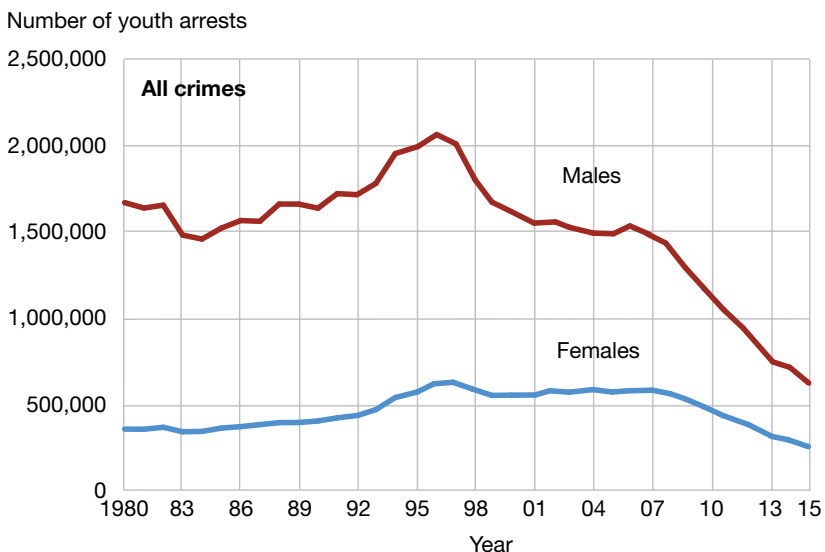
In comparison, larceny-theft (14%), drug abuse violations (12%), and simple assault (13%) were the most common offenses for arrests involving boys. While these offenses accounted for 39% of arrests involving boys, the three most common offenses for girls accounted for half of their arrests. Across most other offenses, the offense profiles for females and males were about the same. For example, stolen property offenses, driving under the influence, and drunkenness each accounted for 1% of arrests for boys and girls, and aggravated assault accounted for 3% for both.

Arrests involving girls declined more than 50% since 2006

Overall, arrests involving youth peaked in 1996 at nearly 2.7 million. By 2015, the number of arrests involving youth reached its lowest point in three decades, 65% less than the 1996 peak. Between 1996 and 2015, arrests declined substantially for males (68%) and females (56%), but the patterns of decline were different.

Arrests of male youth decreased gradually from their peak through the mid-2000s and then fell more sharply through 2015 (down

Arrest trends differed between girls and boys



57% since 2006). In contrast, arrests of female youth peaked in 1997, declined from their peak through 1999, and then increased slightly through the late 2000s. As a result of the decline in male arrests, coupled with an increase in female arrests through the late 2000s, the female proportion of youth arrests increased from 23% in 1996 to 29% in 2009.

More recently, from 2009 through 2015, the relative decline in arrests for boys and girls was the same (down 49%). As a result, the female proportion of youth arrests remained stable at 29% each year since 2009.

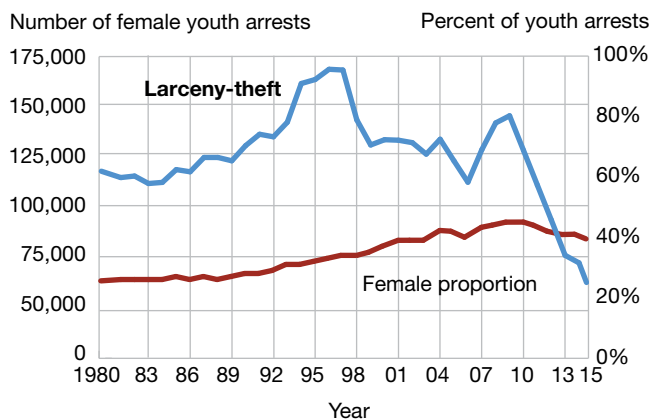
Select offenses influenced changes in female arrest patterns

Larceny-theft, simple assault, and disorderly conduct accounted for half of all arrests involving girls. Combined, these offenses

accounted for 42% of the decline in arrests of females in the past 10 years (2006–15). As a result, changes in the volume of these

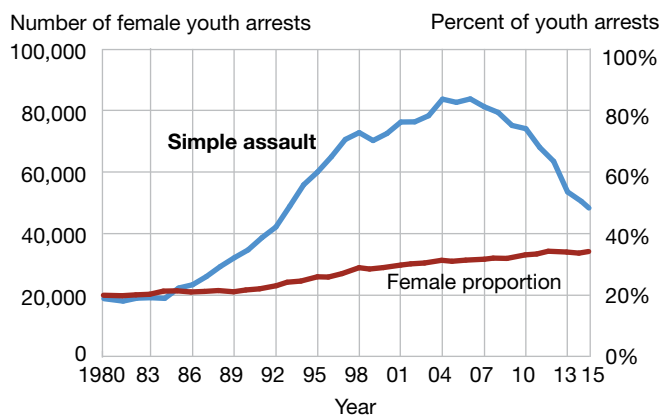
offenses have influenced the overall trend of arrests involving females.

Larceny-theft



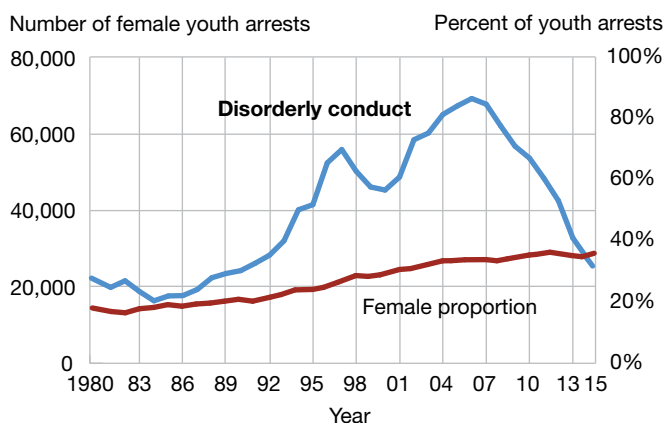
- Larceny-theft arrests involving girls decreased 33% from 1996 to 2006 before rising through 2009. After 6 years of steady decline (56% since 2009), the number of arrests of females in 2015 was at its lowest level in more than three decades.
- From 1996 through 2006, arrests for larceny-theft involving female youth did not fall as sharply as those involving male youth. As a result, the female proportion grew from 33% to 40%. Given the larger relative decline in female arrests than male arrests since 2009 (down 56% and 46%, respectively), the female share fell from 45% to 40%.

Simple assault



- Arrests for simple assault offenses involving female youth more than quadrupled between 1980 and 2006. In comparison, arrests of males for simple assault more than doubled (increasing 140%) during the same period, leading to an increase in the female share of arrests from 21% in 1980 to 34% in 2006.
- Since the 2006 peak, arrests of girls for simple assault decreased 42%, compared with a 50% decrease for boys. Given the larger relative decline in male arrests, the female share grew, averaging 36% in the past 5 years.

Disorderly conduct



- After declining from 1997 through 2000, arrests for disorderly conduct involving female youth peaked in 2006. Since 2006, arrests of females fell 64%, reaching their lowest level since the early 1990s.
- While male arrests for disorderly conduct followed a similar pattern as female arrests, they increased relatively less and decreased relatively more than female arrests. As a result, the female proportion of arrests gradually increased from 26% in 1997 to 35% in 2015.

The female delinquency caseload in 2015 was at its lowest level since the early 1990s

Overall, delinquency cases referred to juvenile court grew substantially from 1985 to 1997, when the caseload peaked at an estimated 1.9 million cases. Since 1997, the number of delinquency cases fell 53% through 2015 and dropped below 900,000 for the first time since the mid-1970s.

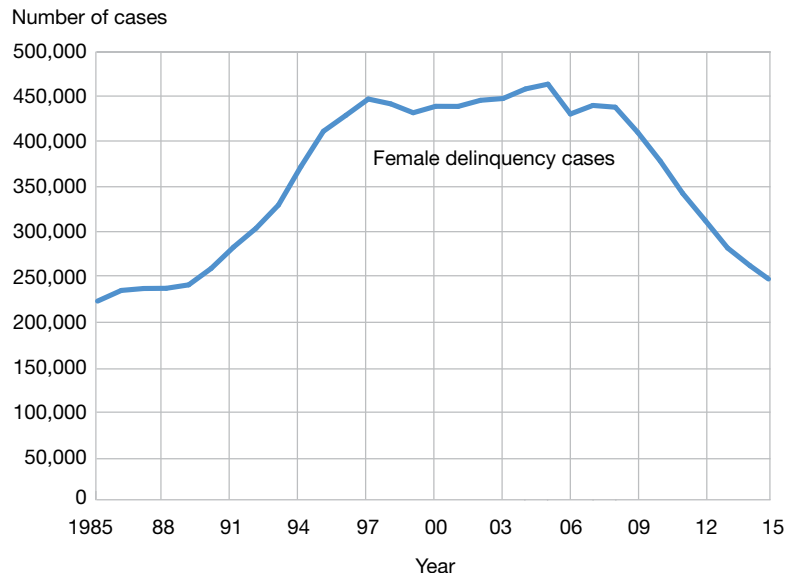
The caseload for females also increased between 1985 and 1997, but the increase outpaced the overall caseload. In a little more than a decade, the female caseload doubled (up 99%), while the overall caseload increased 62%. Consequently, the female share of the delinquency caseload increased from 19% in 1985 to 24% in 1997.

After 1997, the female caseload increased slightly, peaking in 2005 (up 4%). Since the peak, the female caseload declined through 2015 (down 47%), reaching its lowest level since the late 1980s. In comparison, the male caseload declined slightly between 1997 and 2005 before also declining 47% through 2015, reaching its lowest level since at least 1985. As a result of the similar trends, the female proportion of the delinquency caseload remained fairly stable at 27% to 28%.

About the data

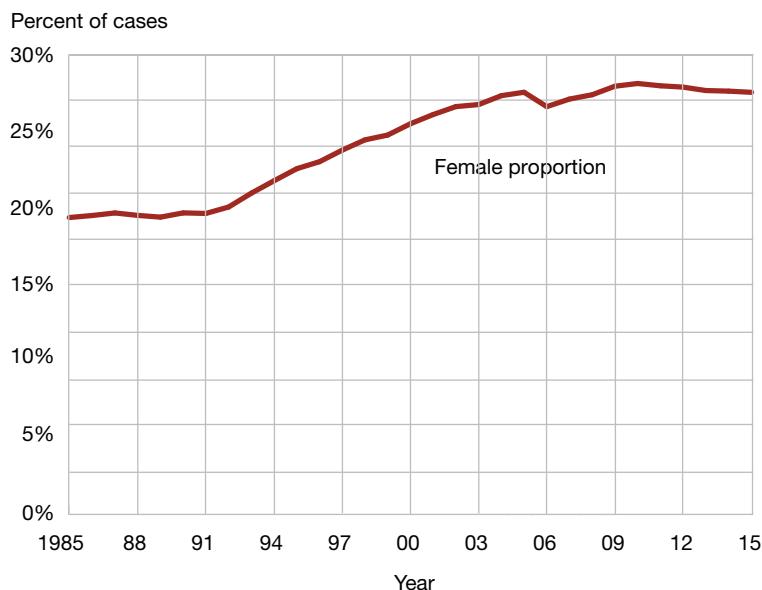
Findings in this section are based on national estimates of delinquency cases and petitioned status offense cases handled in juvenile court developed by the National Juvenile Court Data Archive project, which is funded by the Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention. Each case represents the initial disposition of a new referral to juvenile court for one or more offenses. As with the arrest data, if a case has more than one offense, the most serious offense is selected. Similarly, cases with multiple dispositions are categorized by their most severe or restrictive disposition. More information on juvenile court data is available in the "Data Sources" section of this bulletin (p. 23).

In 2015, juvenile courts handled 244,000 cases involving girls, 9% more than in 1985



■ Between 2010 and 2015, the female caseload decreased an average of 8% per year.

From 1985 to 2009, the female share of delinquency cases grew from 19% to 28% and remained stable through 2015



Many delinquency cases involving girls were for nonviolent offenses

Less than one-third of delinquency cases involved girls in 2015

Of the estimated 884,900 delinquency cases that juvenile courts handled in 2015, 28% involved girls. Among the general offense categories, females accounted for 31% of all person offense cases, 28% of public order offense cases, 27% of property offense cases, and 22% of drug offense cases.

Girls accounted for a relatively large share of certain offenses in 2015. For example, they accounted for more than one-third of all cases involving larceny-theft (39%), simple assault (36%), and disorderly conduct (37%) offenses. In comparison, the female

proportion of violent offenses was relatively small—in 2015, girls accounted for less than one-fifth (16%) of all Violent Crime Index offense cases (i.e., criminal homicide, rape, robbery, and aggravated assault).

Overall, the caseload involving females fell 43% between 2006 and 2015. Public order offense cases had the largest relative decline since 2006, largely influenced by reductions in disorderly conduct (a 51% decrease) and obstruction of justice (a 44% decrease) cases. Property offenses closely followed, driven by a 44% decrease in larceny-theft cases. The declines in larceny-theft, disorderly conduct, and obstruction of justice cases accounted for nearly half of the decrease in the female caseload between 2006 and 2015.

Nearly half of the female delinquency caseload in 2015 involved simple assault or larceny-theft offenses

The majority of female cases involved nonviolent offenses. In 2015, less than one-third of female delinquency cases involved person offenses, with simple assault accounting for 24% and Violent Crime Index offenses accounting for 4% overall. Property offenses accounted for the largest share of the female caseload (33%), with larceny-theft contributing to nearly one-fourth (23%) of the overall volume.

Across offenses, girls accounted for fewer than 4 of every 10 delinquency cases in 2015

Most serious offense	Female cases, 2015	Female proportion	Percent change 2006–2015
Total delinquency*	244,000	28%	-43%
Person offenses	75,400	31	-39
Violent Crime Index	8,600	16	-44
Criminal homicide	100	16	NA
Rape	300	4	NA
Robbery	2,200	11	-29
Aggravated assault	6,000	23	-49
Simple assault	59,100	36	-35
Property offenses	81,200	27	-47
Property Crime Index	64,800	30	-45
Burglary	5,800	11	-45
Larceny-theft	55,800	39	-44
Motor vehicle theft	2,800	21	-56
Arson	500	15	-54
Vandalism	7,600	17	-54
Trespassing	5,500	21	-45
Stolen property offenses	1,400	16	-56
Drug law violations	24,600	22	-27
Public order offenses	62,700	28	-48
Obstruction of justice	30,800	27	-44
Disorderly conduct	21,400	37	-51
Weapons offenses	2,100	11	-59
Liquor law violations	2,000	32	-64
Nonviolent sex offenses	2,400	21	-4

■ Girls accounted for a smaller share of cases involving aggravated assault (23%) than simple assault (36%).

■ Female cases involving motor vehicle theft, arson, vandalism, stolen property, disorderly conduct, weapons offenses, and liquor law violations fell by at least 50% since 2005.

*Includes offenses not shown.

NA = Too few cases to develop a reliable estimate.

Offense profile of female delinquency cases, 2015

Most serious offense	Percent
Total delinquency	100%
Person offenses	31
Violent Crime Index	4
Criminal homicide	<1
Rape	<1
Robbery	1
Aggravated assault	2
Simple assault	24
Other violent sex offenses	<1
Other person offenses	3
Property offenses	33
Property Crime Index	27
Burglary	2
Larceny-theft	23
Motor vehicle theft	1
Arson	<1
Vandalism	3
Trespassing	2
Stolen property offenses	1
Other property offenses	1
Drug law violations	10
Public order offenses	26
Obstruction of justice	13
Disorderly conduct	9
Weapons offenses	1
Liquor law violations	1
Nonviolent sex offenses	1
Other public order offenses	2

The typical female delinquency case involved an older girl and over half involved black or Hispanic youth

Most female delinquency cases involved youth age 15 or older

Two-thirds (67%) of the female caseload in 2015 involved girls age 15 or older at the time of referral. Older girls accounted for at least 60% of all cases across the four major offense categories. For example, females age 15 or older accounted for 76% of all female drug offense cases and 71% of all female property offense cases.

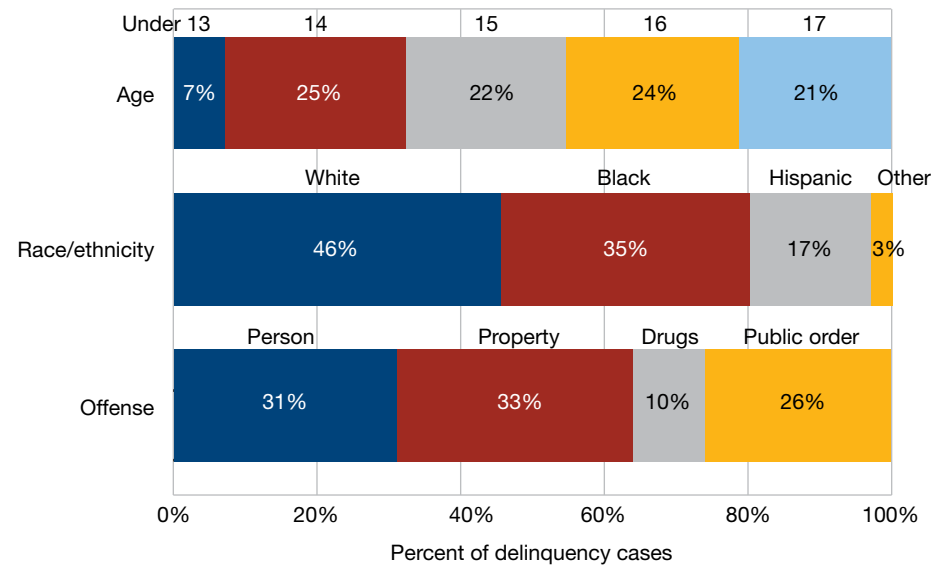
The offense profile of cases involving younger girls differed from that of older girls. Cases involving younger girls, those younger than age 15, included a larger proportion of person offenses (38%) compared with older youth (28%). Conversely, cases involving older females involved a larger proportion of property offenses (35% vs. 29%) and drug offenses (11% vs. 7%) than cases involving younger females.

More than half of all female delinquency cases involved black or Hispanic youth

Fifty-four percent of female cases handled in 2015 involved minority youth (i.e., black, Hispanic, American Indian, and Asian).³ Cases involving black girls accounted for more than one-third of all female delinquency cases (35%), while cases involving Hispanic girls accounted for another 17%.

³Throughout this bulletin, the racial classification American Indian includes American Indian and Alaska Native. The racial classification Asian includes Asian, Native Hawaiian, and Other Pacific Islander.

About one-third of female delinquency cases involved youth younger than 15 and 1 in 10 involved a drug offense



■ Other race includes American Indian, Asian, and youth of unknown race.

Offense profiles varied by race in 2015. Overall, property offense cases accounted for the largest share of the 2015 female caseload (33%). White female and Hispanic female caseloads followed this general pattern; however, the caseload involving black females differed. Person offenses accounted for a larger share of the black female caseload (37%) than did property offenses (31%). The black female caseload was also unique in terms of the relatively small proportion of drug offense cases (3%) compared with the Hispanic (12%) and white (14%) female caseloads.

Offense profile of female delinquency cases, by race/ethnicity, 2015

Offense	White*	Black*	Hispanic
Total	100%	100%	100%
Person	27	37	30
Property	35	31	32
Drugs	14	3	12
Public order	24	28	26

*Excludes persons of Hispanic ethnicity.

In 2015, three of every four delinquency cases involving girls did not receive formal sanctions

An intake department first screens cases referred to juvenile court to determine if the matter will be handled formally, with the filing of a petition, or informally. Of the estimated 244,000 delinquency cases involving girls in 2015, more than half (53%) were handled informally without the filing of a petition.

If the intake department decides that a case should be handled formally, a petition is filed and the case is placed on the court calendar (or docket) for an adjudicatory or waiver hearing. Half of all formally handled delinquency cases involving females did not result in a delinquency adjudication, and less than half of 1% were judicially waived to criminal court.

At the disposition hearing, the juvenile court judge determines the most appropriate sanction, generally after reviewing a predisposition report. One-fifth (21%) of

adjudicated delinquency cases involving girls resulted in out-of-home placement and two-thirds (66%) resulted in formal probation.

Case dispositions can be grouped into three general categories: dismissed, informal sanctions, and formal sanctions. Formal sanctions include cases judicially waived to criminal court and dispositions of adjudicated cases. Informal sanctions include all remaining outcomes except for dismissals. Overall, 33% of delinquency cases involving females were dismissed, 44% received informal sanctions, and 23% were adjudicated delinquent and received formal sanctions.

Few female delinquency cases involved detention

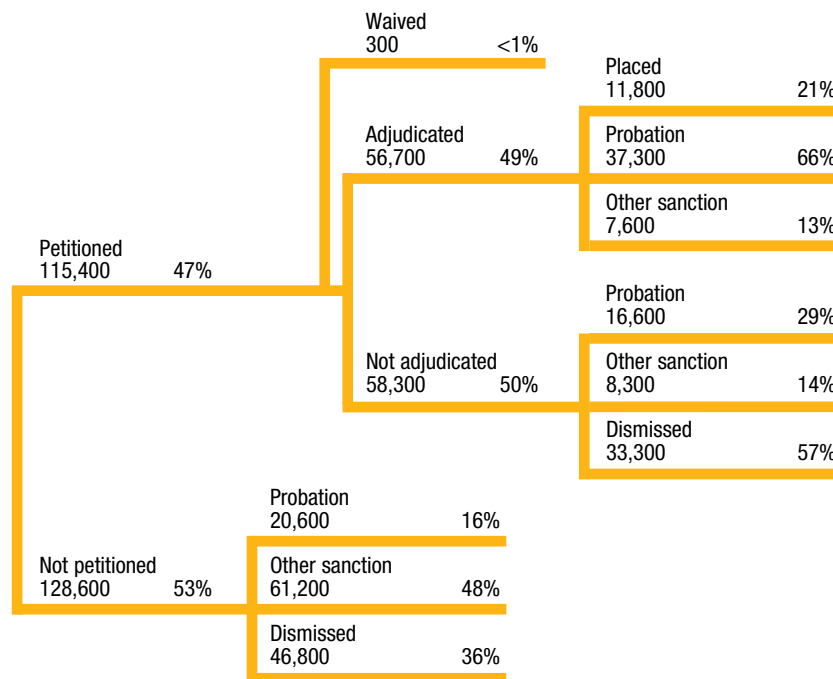
Juvenile courts may hold youth charged with an offense in a secure juvenile detention

facility if it is in the best interest of the community and/or the youth. A youth may be detained at different points as a case proceeds through the juvenile justice system. In this section, “detention” refers to being placed in a restrictive facility under court authority at some point after referral to court and prior to disposition.

Overall, one-fourth (24%) of all delinquency cases handled in 2015 involved the youth being securely detained. Courts detained a smaller proportion (20%) of cases involving females. For females, person (27%) and public order (23%) offense cases were most likely to result in detention in 2015. Across the four general offense categories, cases involving girls were less likely to be detained than cases involving boys.

Many delinquency cases involving girls were redirected away from deeper involvement in the juvenile justice system

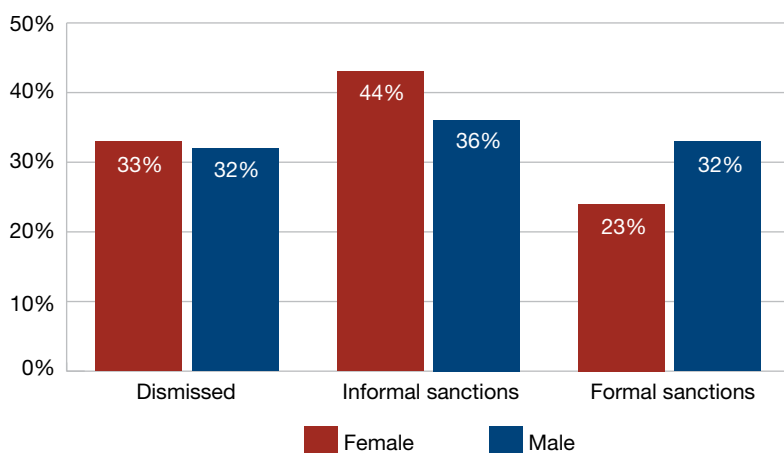
Female delinquency cases, 2015
244,000



Note: Detail may not sum to total due to rounding.

In 2015, delinquency cases involving girls were less likely to receive formal sanctions than cases involving boys

Percent of delinquency cases



Overall, courts dismissed a similar proportion of female and male delinquency cases.

Percent of cases detained, by offense and gender, 2015

	Female	Male
Total	20%	26%
Person	27	32
Property	14	22
Drugs	14	18
Public order	23	30

More than half of female delinquency cases were handled informally

When a case is referred to court, decisionmakers first determine if sufficient evidence exists to prove the allegation brought against the youth. If evidence does not exist, an intake officer or prosecutor dismisses the case; otherwise, intake officials decide if the case should be handled formally. Decisionmakers may consider informal case handling if they believe that accountability and rehabilitation can be achieved without formal court intervention.

In 2015, more than half (53%) of all delinquency cases involving girls were

handled informally, compared with 42% of cases involving boys. Informal handling was more likely for less serious offenses among cases involving girls. For example, 58% of all property offense cases involving females were handled informally, compared with 50% of person offense cases involving females. Similarly, a greater proportion (53%) of simple assault cases involving females were handled informally than were aggravated assault (29%) cases.

More than one-third of nonpetitioned delinquency cases involving females were dismissed

Most nonpetitioned cases received some type of informal sanction in 2015. In some instances, the youth agreed to informal probation, restitution, school attendance, drug counseling, or community service, or the court referred them to another agency for services. These informal sanctions generally involve little or no continuing supervision. Although specific information about diversion decisions is not available,

In 2015, cases involving females were more likely to be handled informally than those involving males

	Percent of cases not petitioned	
	Female	Male
Total delinquency	53%	42%
Person offenses	50	40
Violent Crime Index	25	21
Criminal homicide	NA	24
Forcible rape	NA	25
Robbery	14	13
Aggravated assault	29	26
Simple assault	53	48
Property offenses	58	42
Property Crime Index	60	39
Burglary	43	25
Larceny-theft	63	49
Motor vehicle theft	31	24
Arson	35	30
Vandalism	49	48
Trespassing	63	54
Drug law violations	58	49
Public order offenses	46	38
Obstruction of justice	30	26
Disorderly conduct	61	55
Weapons offenses	52	39

For some offenses, the likelihood of informal handling was similar between female and male cases. For example, 49% of female cases involving vandalism were handled informally, as were 48% of male cases.

NA = Too few cases to develop a reliable estimate.

the data on informal handling mentioned above provide a rough gauge of how often officials use diversion-like sanctions.

In 2015, 64% of all nonpetitioned delinquency cases involving females received an informal sanction or were otherwise diverted, compared with 59% of nonpetitioned cases involving males. Conversely, nonpetitioned

cases involving boys were more likely to be dismissed at intake than were nonpetitioned cases involving girls (41% vs. 36%).

Courts refrained from adjudicating half of the petitioned cases involving girls

Formal case handling involves filing a petition requesting that the court hold an adjudicatory or waiver hearing. At the adjudicatory hearing, the judge, or in some instances a jury, determines if a youth is responsible for the offense(s) and may adjudicate (i.e., judge, similar to a conviction in criminal court) the youth a delinquent or status offender.

In 2015, courts adjudicated half (49%) of the 115,400 petitioned delinquency cases that involved females. The likelihood of adjudication varied slightly across the general offense categories, ranging from 47% of person offenses to 53% of public order offenses. Courts judicially waived to criminal court an estimated 300 cases involving girls, or less than half of 1% of petitioned cases.

One-fifth of all petitioned delinquency cases involving females received an informal sanction

Overall, more than one-fourth (29%) of petitioned delinquency cases involving girls were dismissed and one-fifth (22%) received an informal sanction. Informal sanctions are associated with cases that did not result in a finding of delinquency (i.e., not adjudicated) and can include a

range of disposition options, such as informal probation, community service, and restitution. If the youth complies with the informal sanctions, the case may be dismissed, preventing an adjudication on the youth's record. Formally handled cases involving girls were somewhat more likely than cases involving boys to receive informal sanctions (22% vs 20%); however, female cases were less likely to receive formal sanctions (49%) than male cases (55%).

Outcome of formally handled (petitioned) delinquency cases, by gender, 2015

Result	Female	Male
Total	100%	100%
Dismissed	29	25
Informal sanction	22	20
Formal sanction	49	55

Note: Detail may not sum to total due to rounding.

Formal sanctions include out-of-home placement and probation as well as other sanctions. Placement options vary, ranging from commitment to a secure institution (prison-like environment) to placement in a less secure, home-like setting, such as a group home or treatment foster care home. The majority (66%) of adjudicated cases involving females were ordered to probation and one-fifth (21%) received a placement disposition. In comparison, 62% of adjudicated cases involving males received probation and 28% were placed.

Adjudicated public order offenses involving females were more likely to result in placement (25%) than cases adjudicated for other general offense categories. The majority of those public order cases (83%) involved obstruction of justice offenses, such as violating probation and escaping from custody.



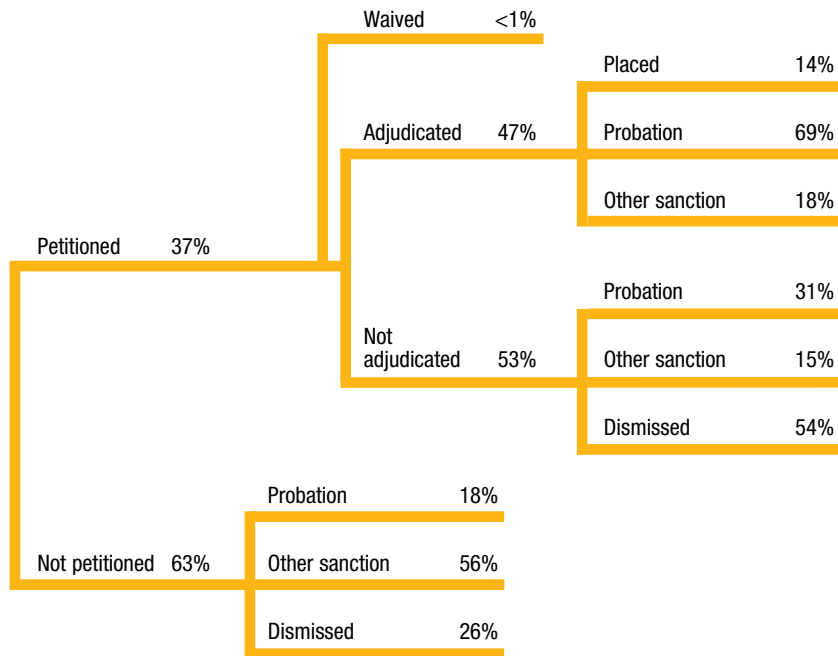
Case processing for females varied by offense in 2015

Cases proceed through the juvenile court system contingent on a variety of factors, including legal factors such as the seriousness

of the offense and prior offending. This section looks more closely at case processing for two high-volume offenses, larceny-theft and

simple assault, which combined to account for nearly half of all delinquency cases involving females in 2015.

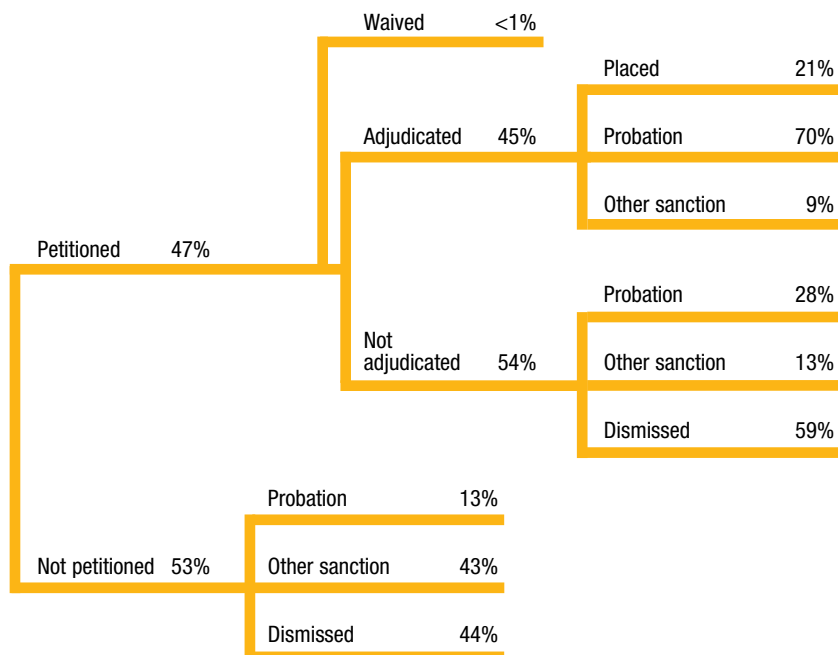
Larceny-theft cases involving females, 2015 55,800



- Almost two-thirds (63%) of larceny-theft cases involving females were handled informally, with 74% of these cases receiving informal sanctions.
- More than half (53%) of petitioned larceny-theft cases did not result in an adjudication of delinquency.
- Of the larceny-theft cases that resulted in adjudication, the majority (86%) received a disposition other than placement.
- Of the estimated 55,800 larceny-theft cases involving females in 2015, 27% were dismissed, 56% received informal sanctions, and 17% received formal sanctions.

Note: Detail may not sum to total due to rounding.

Simple assault cases involving females, 2015 59,100



- More than half (53%) of the simple assault cases involving females were handled informally and 44% of these cases were dismissed.
- Most (54%) petitioned simple assault cases involving girls were not adjudicated, and 59% of these cases were dismissed.
- More than two-thirds of adjudicated simple assault cases involving females received formal probation (70%) and 21% received a placement sanction.
- Of the estimated 59,100 simple assault cases involving girls in 2015, 39% were dismissed, 40% received informal sanctions, and 22% received formal sanctions.

Note: Detail may not sum to total due to rounding.

Case processing differences occurred in juvenile court cases involving females of different races

Black girls accounted for a large share of delinquency cases

In 2015, black females accounted for 15% of the female youth population, but their share of the female delinquency caseload was higher (35%). The proportion of female delinquency cases involving black girls ranged from 12% of drug law violations to 42% of person offenses. Conversely, white, Hispanic, and Asian female youth each accounted for a smaller share of the female delinquency caseload than their share of the general population.

Race profile of the female youth population and delinquency caseload, 2015

Race/ethnicity	Population	Delinquency caseload
Total	100%	100%
White*	55	46
Black*	15	35
Hispanic	23	17
American Indian	2	2
Asian*	6	1

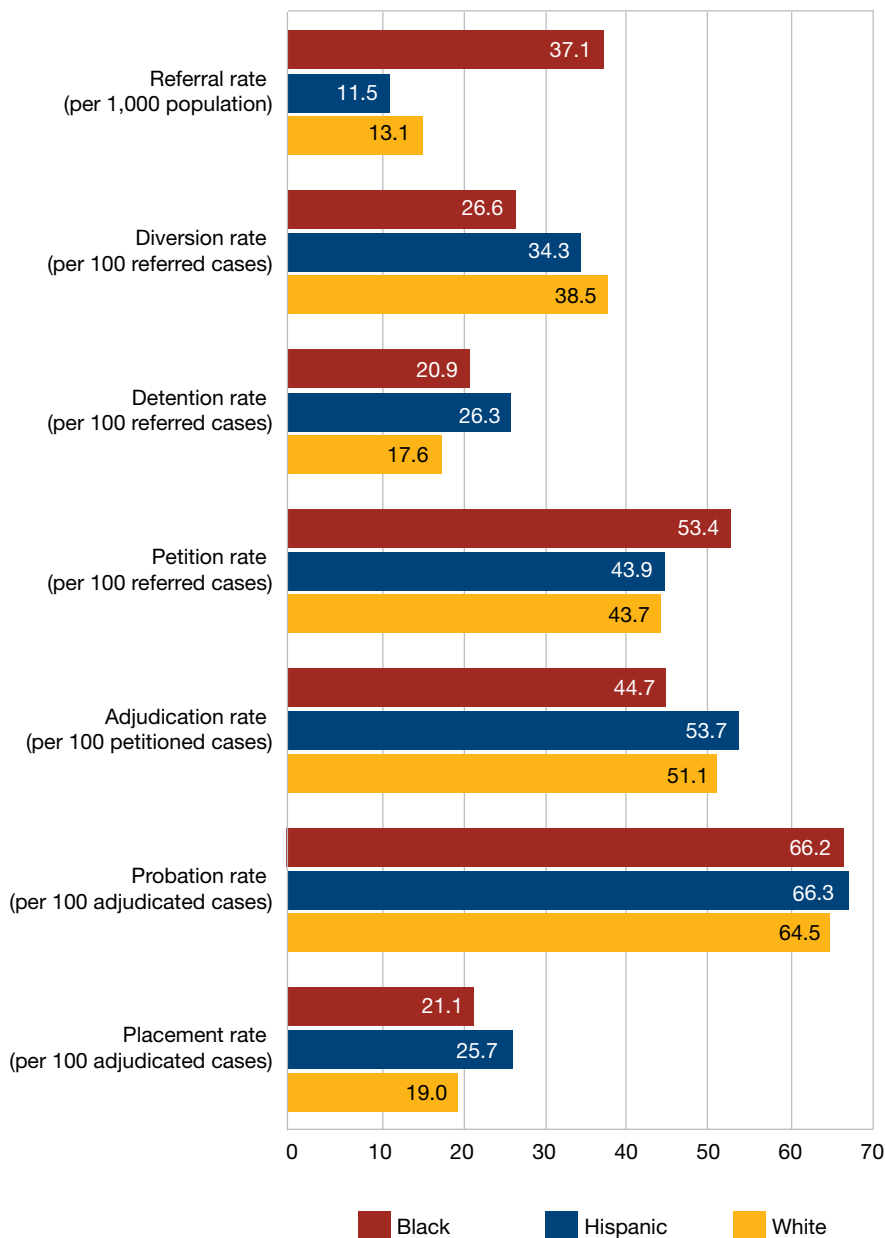
*Excludes persons of Hispanic ethnicity.
Note: Detail may not sum to 100% due to rounding.

Case processing differences can occur at various decision points among races

Delinquency cases involving black girls in 2015 were about three times more likely to be referred to juvenile court than cases involving their white and Hispanic peers. Once referred, more than half of delinquency cases involving black girls were petitioned for formal processing, compared with about 44% of cases involving either white or Hispanic girls. Conversely, petitioned cases involving black girls were less likely to result in an adjudication of delinquency than were cases involving white or Hispanic girls.

Detention rates for delinquency cases involving black girls and Hispanic girls were higher than the rate for cases involving white girls

Case processing rate, 2015



- Diversion rates were higher for cases involving white girls and Hispanic girls than for cases involving black girls.
- Adjudicated cases involving Hispanic girls were more likely to result in a disposition of placement than cases involving white girls or black girls.

The 2015 petitioned status offense caseload involving females was at its lowest level since 1995

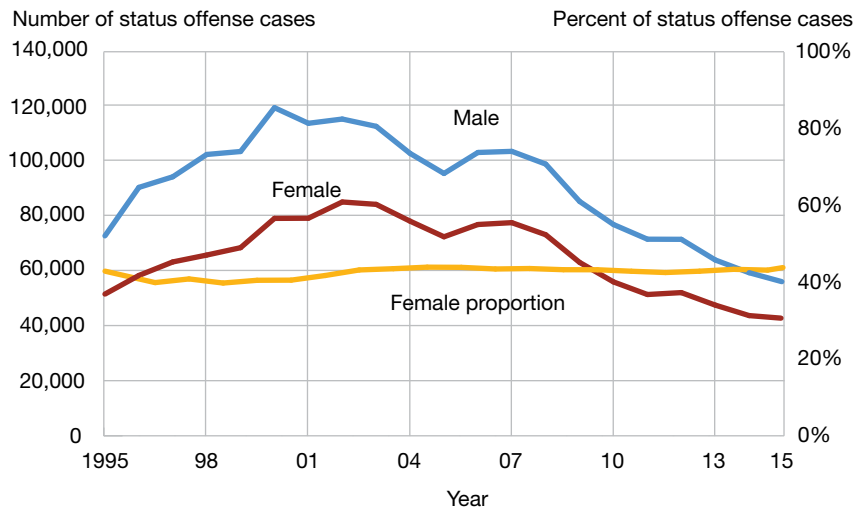
Status offenses are acts that are illegal only when juveniles commit them (see sidebar, “What are status offenses?”). Overall, the number of petitioned status offense cases handled in juvenile courts increased steadily between 1995 and 2002. In less than a decade, the caseload increased 61%, reaching its peak at nearly 199,900 cases. Since 2002, the caseload has declined 50%, reaching its lowest level in 2015 since at least 1995.

Trends in the petitioned status offense caseload were similar for girls and boys. Both caseloads peaked in the early 2000s—2000 for boys and 2002 for girls. Between 1995 and the peak in 2000, the male caseload increased 64%. Between 1995 and the peak in 2002, the female caseload grew 65%. Over the past 10 years, the relative decline for boys and girls was the same (each down 44%).

Given the similar trends for girls and boys, the female share of the status offense caseload has remained fairly constant. Since 1995, the female share varied from a low of 39% in 1996 to a high of 43% in 2003. Between 2003 and 2015, the proportion averaged 43%.

Among status offenses in 2015, girls had the largest relative share of runaway cases (56%) followed by truancy cases (46%). Liquor offense cases had the largest relative decline from 2006 through 2015 (66%), while truancy decreased 21%. In comparison, cases involving runaway offenses declined 56%.

After peaking in 2002, the female petitioned status offense caseload declined 49% through 2015



- Declines in truancy and liquor law violations accounted for 45% of the overall decrease in female cases since 2002.
- Females accounted for a larger proportion of the status offense caseload (43%) than the delinquency caseload (28%) in 2015.

Females were involved in 4 of 10 petitioned status offense cases in 2015

	Female cases, 2015	Female proportion	Percent change 2006–2015
All status	43,100	43%	–44%
Runaway	4,500	56	–56
Truancy	25,100	46	–21
Curfew	2,100	29	–63
Ungovernability	4,200	43	–55
Liquor	4,800	40	–66

- Less than one-third of all petitioned curfew cases involved females.
- The relative decline in truancy offenses since 2005 was less than the decline for other offenses.

Note: Detail may not sum to total due to rounding.

What are status offenses?

Status offenses are acts that are illegal only because the persons committing them are juveniles. These include events such as running away, truancy, curfew law violations, ungovernability (i.e., beyond the control of one’s parents), and underage liquor law violations.

In many jurisdictions, agencies other than juvenile courts (e.g., family crisis units, county attorneys, and social service agencies) process these cases. In others, youth charged with a status offense are referred to juvenile court. These cases may be diverted away from

the formal justice system or may be handled formally with the filing of a petition. The analyses in this section are limited to petitioned cases. For ease of reading, the terms “petitioned status offense” and “status offense” are used interchangeably in this section.

Status offense profiles vary across age and race groups

In 2015, juvenile courts handled an estimated 43,100 petitioned status offense cases involving girls. The majority of these cases involved truancy offenses (58%). Runaway cases accounted for 10%, while curfew violations accounted for the smallest share (5%) of the caseload. Compared with males, the status offense caseload for females included larger proportions of truancy and runaway offenses, and fewer curfew offenses.

Offense profile of petitioned status offense cases, by gender, 2015

	Female	Male
All status	100%	100%
Runaway	10	6
Truancy	58	52
Curfew	5	9
Ungovernability	10	10
Liquor	11	13
Other status	6	10

Similar to the delinquency caseload, most female status offense cases involve youth age 15 and older

In 2015, two-thirds (67%) of all female petitioned status offense cases involved youth age 15 and older. This proportion was identical to the proportion of the female delinquency caseload (67%). Older girls, those age 15 or older, accounted for more than half of all cases across the five status offense categories: liquor law violations (88%), curfew (75%), runaway (73%), truancy (62%), and ungovernability (61%).

The offense profile of cases involving younger girls differed from that of older girls. Cases involving younger girls, those younger than age 15, included a larger proportion of truancy offenses (66%) compared with older girls (54%). Conversely, cases involving older females involved a larger proportion of liquor law violations (15%) than cases involving younger females (4%).

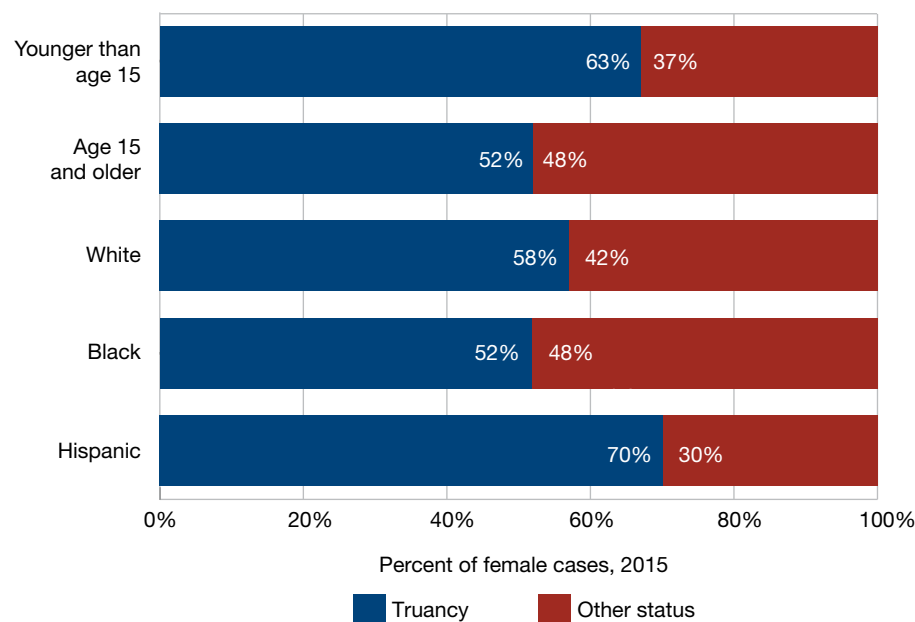
Minority youth accounted for a small share of the female status offense caseload

Compared with the delinquency caseload, minority youth accounted for a smaller proportion of the petitioned status offense

caseload involving females in 2015 (54% vs. 36%). Cases involving black girls accounted for 22% of all female status offense cases, and cases involving Hispanic girls accounted for 9%. Combined, cases involving American Indian and Asian girls made up 5% of the caseload.

Truancy offenses accounted for the largest share of the status caseload for each race/ethnicity group. Liquor law violations accounted for 14% of the caseload for white females, but 3% of the caseload for black females. Running away was the second most common offense for black females (19%), yet this accounted for 8% for white females. In comparison, runaway and liquor law violations accounted for 9% and 10%, respectively, of the caseload involving Hispanic females.

Truancy offenses accounted for more than half of the status caseload across demographics



Courts dismissed or ordered informal sanctions for three-fifths of petitioned status offense cases involving females

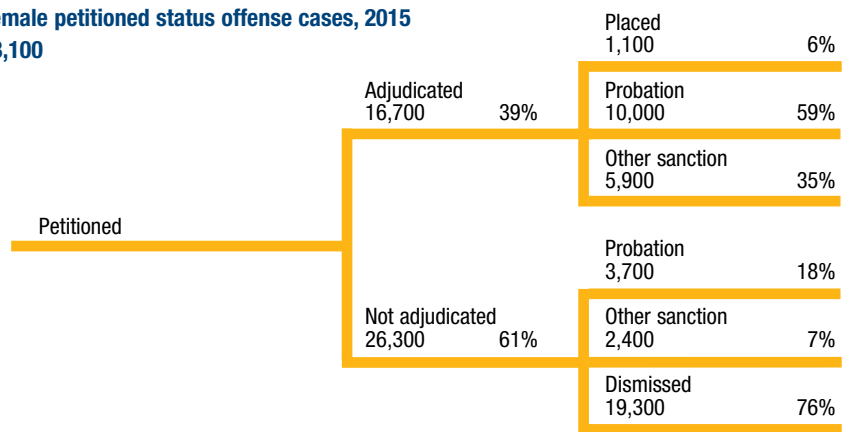
In 2015, 39% of all petitioned status cases involving females resulted in an adjudication. Compared with the female delinquency caseload, status cases were less likely to be adjudicated (49% vs. 39%). The likelihood of adjudication varied by offense, ranging from 33% of truancy cases to 52% of curfew and liquor law violation cases.

Once adjudicated, more than half (59%) of the status cases involving females received a probation disposition and 35% resulted in other sanctions, such as fines, community service, restitution, or referrals to other agencies for services. Courts ordered out-of-home placement for the remaining 6% of cases. Of the cases that were not adjudicated, 76% were dismissed and a smaller proportion received informal probation (18%) or other informal sanctions (7%). The disposition pattern for status offense cases involving males aligned with the pattern for females.

As with delinquency cases, dispositions for status cases can be grouped into three general categories: dismissed, formal sanctions, and informal sanctions. Overall, almost half (46%) of petitioned status offense cases involving girls were dismissed and 15% received an informal sanction.

Less than half of all female petitioned status offense cases resulted in an adjudication and few subsequently resulted in placement

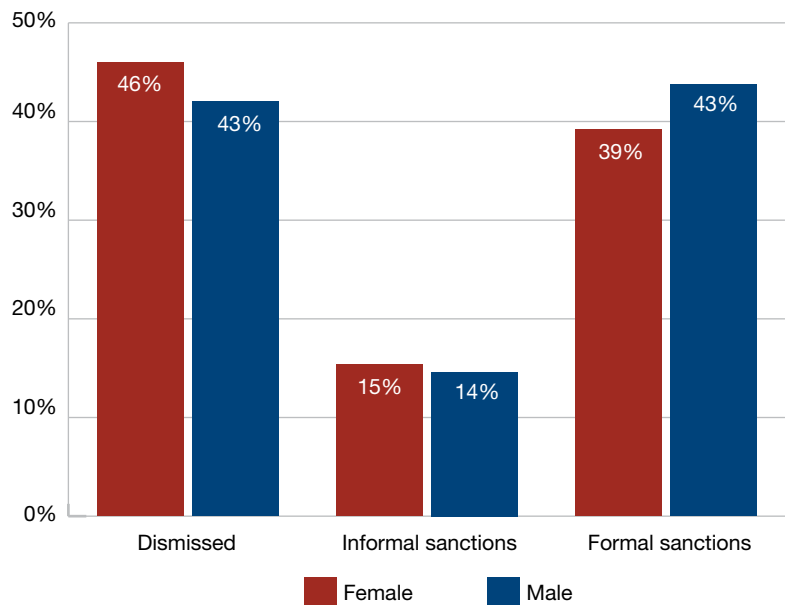
Female petitioned status offense cases, 2015
43,100



Note: Detail may not sum to total due to rounding.

In 2015, courts ordered informal sanctions for a similar share of petitioned status offense cases involving girls as for those involving boys

Percent of petitioned status offense cases by gender, 2015



■ Cases involving females were more likely to be dismissed and less likely to receive formal sanctions than cases involving males.

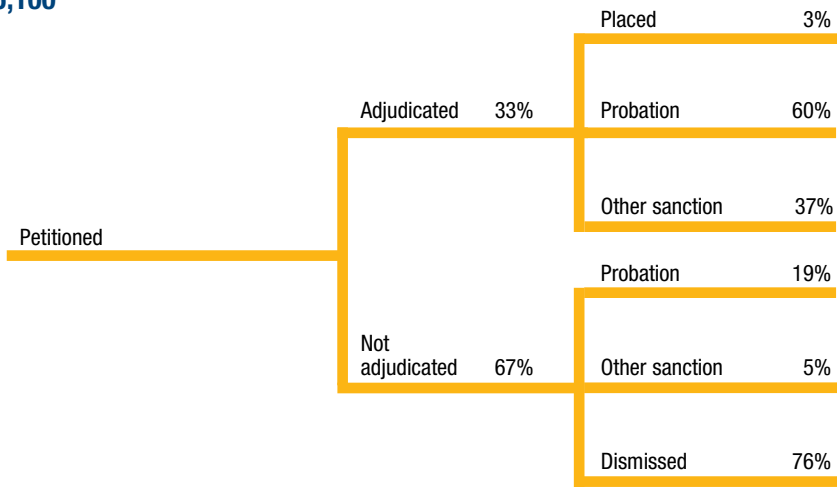
Overall, more than half of petitioned truancy and runaway cases were dismissed

In 2015, the highest volume of status offense cases for females involved truancy offenses. Of all offenses (both delinquency and status),

running away was the offense with the greatest proportion of females. This section

looks more closely at case processing for these two offenses.

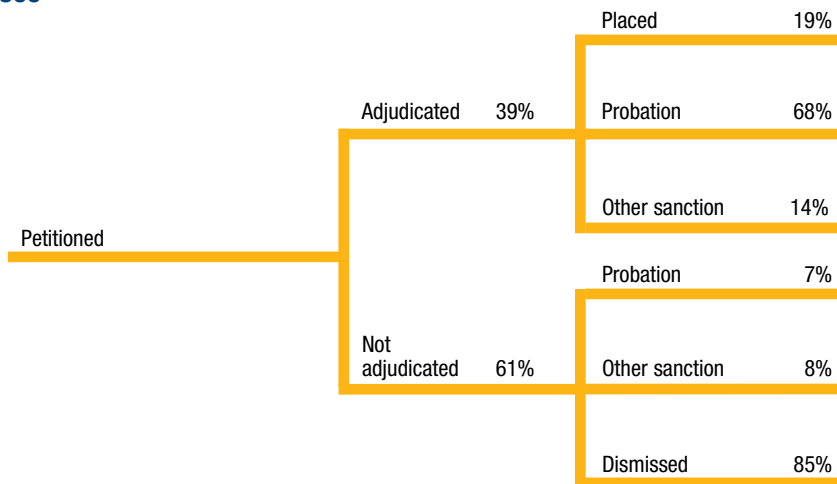
Truancy cases involving females, 2015 25,100



- Two-thirds (67%) of truancy cases involving girls did not result in an adjudication.
- Three-fourths (76%) of the cases not adjudicated were dismissed.
- Formal probation was the most severe disposition for 60% of adjudicated truancy cases.
- Overall, more than half of the petitioned truancy cases were dismissed (52%), a small share received informal sanctions (16%), and one-third (33%) received formal sanctions.

Note: Detail may not sum to total due to rounding.

Runaway cases involving females, 2015 4,500



- The majority (61%) of runaway cases involving females did not result in adjudication.
- More than 8 of every 10 (85%) cases not adjudicated were dismissed without further sanction.
- The majority of runaway cases involving girls who were adjudicated received probation (68%).
- Compared to other status offenses, a higher proportion of adjudicated runaway cases received placement (19%) and a smaller proportion received other sanctions (14%).
- Overall, 51% of petitioned runaway cases were dismissed, 9% received informal sanctions, and 39% received formal sanctions.

Note: Detail may not sum to total due to rounding.

Girls accounted for a small share of youth in residential placement

CJRP provides detailed data on girls in placement

Juvenile residential facilities held approximately 48,000 youth offenders on October 28, 2015, the reference date for the 2015 OJJDP Census of Juveniles in Residential Placement (CJRP). Girls accounted for 15% of those youth. Since the first CJRP in 1997, the proportion of female youth in placement stayed within a narrow range (between 13% and 15%). Since 2006, the number of girls and boys in residential placement has declined at similar rates, 47% and 48%, respectively.

In general, males outnumbered females in most offense categories in 2015. However, females in placement accounted for larger proportions of the less serious offenses, particularly status offenses. Girls accounted for 14% of youth held for delinquency offenses, but 38% of those held for status offenses. Specifically, females accounted for 52% of youth held for running away, 38% for ungovernability, 35% for truancy, and 25% for liquor law violations. However, females constituted relatively smaller proportions of youth held for serious offenses, such as criminal homicide (13%), sexual assault (1%), and robbery (8%).

The majority of females were held for a nonviolent offense in 2015

While person offenses accounted for the largest share (34%) of the female offense

Females accounted for more than one-third of youth held for status offenses in 2015

Most serious offense	Females in placement, 2015	Female proportion	Percent change 2006–2015
Total*	7,293	15%	–47%
Delinquency	6,415	14	–46
Person	2,445	13	–38
Violent Crime Index	1,090	8	–36
Criminal homicide	96	13	–1
Sexual assault	45	1	–57
Robbery	380	8	0
Aggravated assault	569	15	–49
Simple assault	1,125	29	–39
Property	1,250	12	–53
Burglary	242	6	–53
Theft	412	18	–52
Auto theft	276	15	–58
Drugs	447	17	–55
Possession	300	17	–59
Other drug	147	17	–42
Public order	547	9	–56
Weapons	74	3	–60
Technical violations	1,726	20	–41
Status offense	878	38	–54
Ungovernable	286	38	–62
Running away	237	52	–50
Truancy	222	35	–40
Liquor law	65	25	–65

- Among delinquency offenses, females accounted for a relatively large share of youth held for simple assault (29%).
- Across most offenses, the number of females in placement fell 36% or more between 2006 and 2015.

*Includes offenses not shown.

About the data

The Census of Juveniles in Residential Placement (CJRP) is a 1-day population count of youth held in residential placement facilities on the census date. This count is substantially different from annual admission and release data, which measure the flow of a facility's

population. The CJRP 1-day count encompasses both status offenses and delinquency offenses, and includes youth who are either temporarily *detained* while the court processes their case or *committed* by the court after adjudication. In addition, a small

proportion of youth may be admitted voluntarily in lieu of adjudication as part of a *diversion* agreement. CJRP does not capture data from adult prisons or jails. More information on CJRP data is available in the “Data sources” section of this bulletin (p. 23).

profile, the majority of females in placement were held for nonviolent offenses. Status offenses (12%) and technical violations (24%) made up more than one-third of these placements. In comparison, person, property, and public order offenses accounted for larger shares of the male offense profile, while status offenses constituted a much smaller share.

Offense profile of youth in placement, by gender, 2015

Offense	Female	Male
Total	100%	100%
Person	34	38
Property	17	22
Drugs	6	5
Public order	8	13
Technical violation	24	17
Status offense	12	4

Note: Detail may not sum to 100% due to rounding.

Most females in placement were age 15 or older

In 2015, less than one-fifth (17%) of females in residential placement were younger than age 15 at the time of admission. More than half (52%) of females in placement were age 16 or 17. Age profiles differed among girls and boys. Compared with males (30%), a larger proportion of females were younger than age 16 (37%) and a smaller proportion of females were age 18 or older (11% for females and 15% for males).

Offense profiles of younger (under age 15) and older (age 15 and older) girls were similar. For both age groups, person offenses accounted for the largest share, followed by technical violations. However, person offenses accounted for a larger share among girls younger than age 15 (37%) than older girls (33%), and technical violations accounted for a smaller share (21% and 24%, respectively).

More than half of girls in placement were minority youth

Similar to the delinquency caseload, most females in placement were minority youth. In 2015, more than 6 of every 10 females in residential placement were minority youth, a pattern that held for each general offense category except drug (45%) and status (47%) offenses. More than three-fourths (81%) of females held for Violent Crime Index offenses were minority youth.

Together, black (34%) and Hispanic (22%) youth accounted for more than half of females in placement. Black females accounted for 55% of the female minority caseload and Hispanic females accounted for 35%.

Race profile of females in placement, 2015

Total	100%
White	37
Minority	63
Black	34
Hispanic	22
American Indian	3
Asian	1
Two or more	3

Most females were in placement as the result of a court-ordered disposition

More than half (61%) of females in placement were committed by court adjudication, 37% were detained while awaiting court processing, and a small proportion were held as part of a diversion agreement (2%). In general, the offense profiles for committed and detained girls were similar. However, compared with the profile for detained girls, the profile for committed girls included a larger proportion of females held for status offenses and a smaller proportion held for delinquency offenses, most notably technical violations.

Offense profile of females in placement, by commitment status, 2015

	Committed	Detained
Total	100%	100%
Person	34	32
Property	18	17
Drugs	6	5
Public order	7	9
Technical violation	20	30
Status offense	14	7

Note: Detail may not sum to 100% due to rounding.

Nearly half of all juvenile females committed were held in private facilities

State or local government agencies operate public facilities. Private facilities include nonprofit and for-profit corporations and organizations. In general, private facilities are smaller than public facilities and tend to hold youth with less serious offenses. Therefore, private facilities house slightly different populations than public facilities.

Nearly half (46%) of committed females were placed in a private facility as part of their court-ordered disposition in 2015. More than one-fifth (21%) of girls were held in a local facility as part of their commitment, and one-third (33%) were placed in a state-operated facility. Compared with girls, a smaller proportion of boys were held in a private facility (40%), while a greater proportion were held in a state-operated facility (40%).

Youth in placement can be held in various settings, including but not limited to long-term secure facilities, detention centers, treatment centers, group homes, and shelters. Overall, more than one-third (37%) of girls committed were held in a residential treatment center, 31% were held in a long-term secure facility, 15% were in a detention

center, and 10% were placed in a group home. A relatively small proportion of committed females were in shelters (4%).

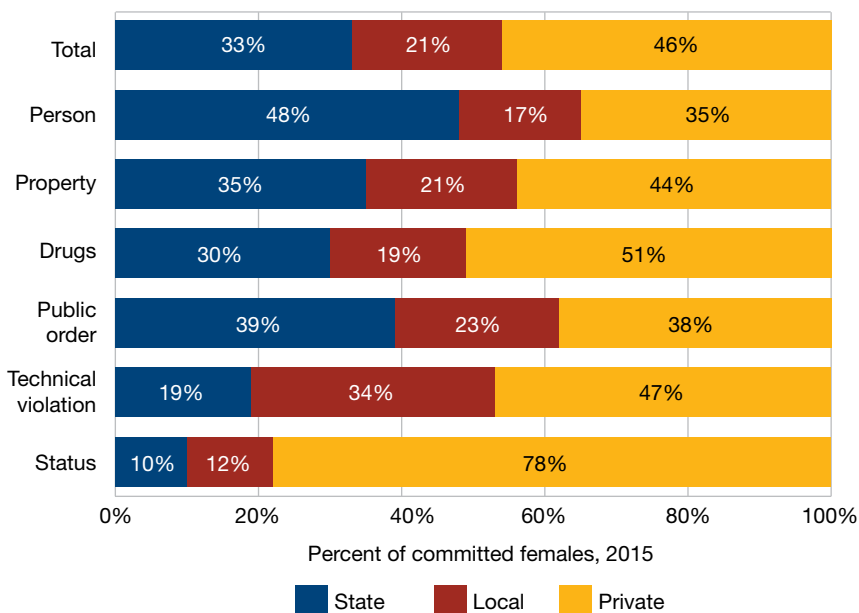
Private facilities held the overwhelming majority of girls committed for a status offense (78%) in 2015. In fact, residential treatment centers, group homes, or shelters housed 90% of these females. Private facilities also held a relatively large proportion of females committed for a drug offense (51%). Conversely, females committed for a person offense—a group of offenses generally more serious than drug or status offenses—were more likely to be held in a state-operated facility. Of the girls committed to a state-operated facility for a person offense, 84% were in a long-term secure facility.

Females were held in smaller facilities

Facilities report the number of residents held in their facility on the census date. The total number of residents indicates the facility's size and how many residents it can accommodate.

Overall, small facilities (50 or fewer residents) held more than half (54%) of committed females in 2015, and large facilities (more than 150 residents) housed 15%. As noted previously, private facilities held slightly less than half of all committed females in 2015. The majority (62%) of these private commitments were in facilities that housed 50 or fewer residents. In comparison, the majority (61%) of females committed to a state-operated facility were held in facilities housing more than 50 residents.

In 2015, at least 50% of committed girls (across most offenses) were placed in state or local facilities



■ Placements in private facilities were most common for girls committed for status offenses and least likely for those committed for person offenses.

Most committed females in placement were in small or medium facilities in 2015

Facility size	Facility size profile for committed females, 2015			
	Total	State	Local	Private
Total	100%	100%	100%	100%
Small (50 or fewer residents)	54	40	59	62
Medium (51 to 150 residents)	31	31	32	31
Large (more than 150 residents)	15	30	9	8

Note: Detail may not sum to 100% due to rounding.

Overall, time in placement was shorter for females than for males

More than three-fourths of committed females had been in placement for at least 1 month

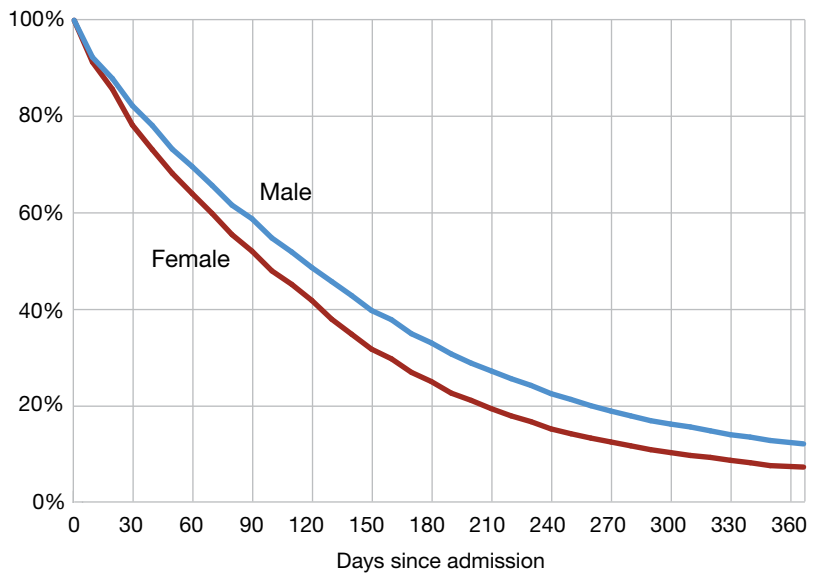
CJRP captures the number of days each youth had spent in placement from admission to the census referral date. Among committed youth in 2015, the majority (78%) of females had been in placement for at least 1 month, almost two-thirds (64%) for at least 2 months, and more than half (52%) for at least 3 months. After a year, fewer than 1 in 10 committed females (7%) remained in placement. Females were in placement for a shorter time than males, with the median time in placement for committed males (117 days) exceeding that for females (93 days).

Time in placement varied by offense

Females held for more serious offenses remained in placement longer than those held for less serious offenses. Committed females held for person offenses were held the longest: 81% had been in placement for at least 1 month, 59% for at least 3 months, and 12% remained after 1 year. In contrast, females committed for less serious offenses were in placement for a shorter time. For example, 74% of females held for a status offense or technical violation had been in placement for at least 1 month. After 3 months, one-half (50%) of females committed for a status offense remained in placement, as did 45% of females held for a technical violation. The median time in placement for females committed for a person offense (113 days) exceeded that for females held for a status offense (89 days) and for a technical violation (77 days).

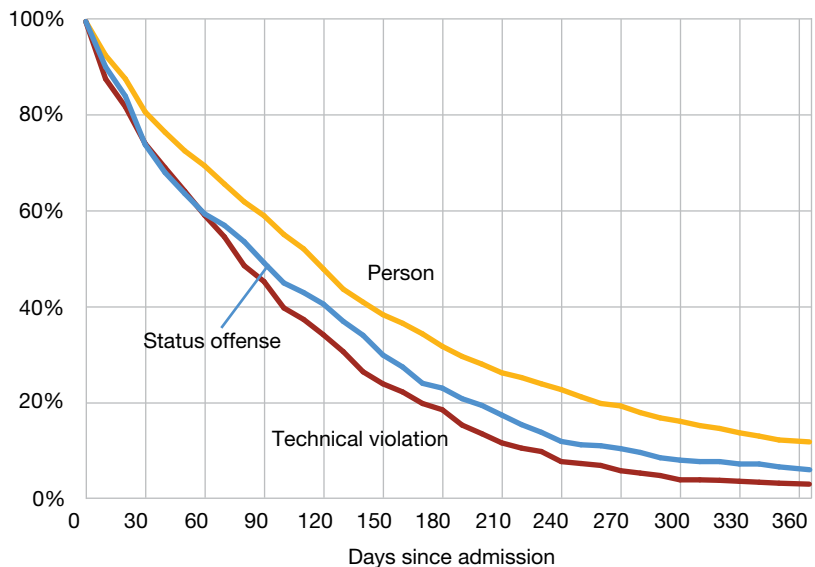
In 2015, committed females remained in placement for a shorter time than males

Percent of committed residents remaining in placement by gender, 2015



In 2015, females committed for a person offense remained in placement longer than females committed for other offenses

Percent of committed females remaining in placement, 2015



Understanding how the juvenile justice system responds to girls can improve policy and practice

Most girls enter the juvenile justice system for a nonviolent offense and, typically, the system response aligns with the nature of the offense. Three-fourths of nonviolent delinquency cases involving females were either dismissed or received informal sanctions, such as probation or referral for service.

The data show that the number of girls at various stages of the juvenile justice system has declined considerably. Female arrests are at two-fifths of their 1997 peak, and delinquency cases are half of their 2005 peak. Similarly, the petitioned status caseload for females and the number of girls in residential placement are half of what they were in the early 2000s. In the past 10 years, the relative decline across the system (arrests, delinquency and petitioned status cases, and youth in residential placement) has been about the same for girls and boys. As a result, the female proportion at each stage of the system has changed little during this period.

The national data presented in this bulletin provide an example of how states, local communities, and tribal jurisdictions can examine trends and characteristics of girls in their juvenile justice systems. These data can help identify how girls move through the

system and, when linked to other information sources, assess girls' needs, uncover gaps in services and treatment, and inform strategies to address offending behavior in an effective and cost-efficient manner.



Data sources

National arrest estimates for 1980–2014 were developed by the Bureau of Justice Statistics and are available from the Arrest Data Analysis Tool (www.bjs.gov/index.cfm?ty=datool&surl=/arrests/index.cfm). The National Center for Juvenile Justice developed the national arrest estimates for 2015 based on data published in the FBI's *Crime in the United States 2015* report (www.ojjdp.gov/ojstatbb/crime/faqs.asp). More information on arrest data is available in the OJJDP bulletin *Juvenile Arrests 2012* (www.ojjdp.gov/pubs/248513.pdf).

The National Center for Juvenile Justice developed national estimates of juvenile court caseloads for OJJDP's National Juvenile Court Data Archive. More information on juvenile court data is available in the *Juvenile Court Statistics 2015* report (www.ncjj.org/pdf/jcsreports/jcs2015report.pdf). The information about delinquency cases presented in this bulletin is available from Easy Access to Juvenile Court Statistics (www.ojjdp.gov/ojstatbb/ezajcs) and the National Disproportionate Minority Contact Databook (www.ojjdp.gov/ojstatbb/dmcdcb).

Data about youth in residential placement are from OJJDP's Census of Juveniles in Residential Placement. More information on these data is available in the OJJDP bulletin *Juveniles in Residential Placement, 2015* and from Easy Access to the Census of Juveniles in Residential Placement (www.ojjdp.gov/ojstatbb/ezacjrp).

Visit OJJDP's Statistical Briefing Book for more information on girls in the juvenile justice system

OJJDP's online Statistical Briefing Book (SBB), available at www.ojjdp.gov/ojstatbb, is a comprehensive online resource that describes various topics related to juveniles and the justice system, including the latest information on juvenile victims of crime, juvenile arrests, juvenile court cases, and youth in residential placement facilities. SBB also includes several data analysis and dissemination tools that give users quick and easy access to statistics on a variety of juvenile justice topics, including population, arrests, homicide victims and offenders, delinquency cases handled in juvenile court, youth in residential placement, and disproportionate minority contact.

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.

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