



Youth and the Juvenile Justice System: 2022 National Report

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Chapter 5

Law enforcement and youth

Law enforcement is the doorway for most youth who enter the juvenile justice system. Once a juvenile is apprehended for a law violation, it is the police officer who first determines if the juvenile will move deeper into the justice system or will be diverted.

Law enforcement agencies track the volume and characteristics of crimes reported to them and use this information to monitor the changing levels of crime in their communities. Not all crimes are reported to law enforcement, and many of those that are reported remain unsolved. Law enforcement's incident-based reporting systems include characteristics of the person(s) who committed the crime as reported by the victim. For these crimes, even when there is no arrest, law enforcement records can be used to develop an understanding of juvenile offending. For all other types of crimes, an understanding of juvenile involvement comes through the study of arrest statistics. Arrest statistics can monitor the flow of juveniles and adults into the justice system and are the most frequently cited source of information on juvenile crime trends.

This chapter describes the volume and characteristics of juvenile crime from law enforcement's perspective. It presents information on the number and offense characteristics of juvenile arrests in 2019 and historical trends in juvenile arrests. This chapter also examines arrests and arrest trends for females and youth under age 13 and compares arrest trends for males and females and different racial groups. It includes arrest rate trends for many specific offenses, including murder and other violent crimes, property crimes, and drug and weapons offenses. The majority of data presented in this chapter were originally compiled by the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) as part of its Uniform Crime Reporting Program, which includes the Supplementary Homicide Reports and the National Incident-Based Reporting System. Arrest estimates for 1980–2014 were developed by the Bureau of Justice Statistics and arrest estimates for 2015–2019 were developed by the National Center for Juvenile Justice based on data published in the FBI's *Crime in the United States* reports for the respective years.

The FBI's Uniform Crime Reporting Program monitors law enforcement's response to juvenile crime

Police agencies have reported to the UCR Program since the 1930s

Annually, thousands of police agencies voluntarily report the following data to the Federal Bureau of Investigation's (FBI's) Uniform Crime Reporting (UCR) Program:

- Number of Index crimes (i.e., murder, rape, robbery, aggravated assault, burglary, larceny-theft, motor vehicle theft, and arson) reported to law enforcement.
- Number of arrests and the most serious charge involved in each arrest.
- Age, sex, and race of persons arrested.
- Proportion of reported Index crimes cleared by arrest, and the proportion of these Index crimes cleared by the arrest of persons younger than 18.
- Police dispositions of juvenile arrests.
- Detailed victim, offender, and circumstance information in murder incidents.

What arrest data tell us about kids and crime

The UCR arrest data provide a sample-based portrait of the volume and characteristics of arrests in the United States. Detailed national estimates developed by the Bureau of Justice Statistics (BJS) for 1980–2014 and the National Center for Juvenile Justice (NCJJ) for 2015–2019 are based on these sample data. The estimates include detailed juvenile age groups as well as details by sex, race, and specific offenses. The data can be used to analyze the number and rates of juvenile arrests within offense categories and demographic subgroups and to track changes over various periods. They can also be used to compare the relative number of juvenile and adult arrests by offense categories and demographics and to monitor the proportion of crimes cleared by arrests of juveniles.

What do arrest statistics count?

To interpret the material in this chapter properly, the reader needs a clear understanding of what these 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 have limitations in measuring the volume of arrests for a particular offense. Under the UCR Program, the FBI requires law enforcement agencies to classify an arrest by the most serious offense charged in that 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, when ar-

The official definition of rape has changed and impacts the Violent Crime Index

Since 1927, the FBI had defined forcible rape 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 or 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.

Changes to the definition of rape impact the Violent Crime Index. For

many years, the primary means of assessing trends in violent crime was to monitor four offenses that law enforcement agencies nationwide consistently report. These four crimes—murder and nonnegligent manslaughter, forcible rape, robbery, and aggravated assault—formed the Violent Crime Index. Due to changes in the official definition of rape, tracking violence through the Violent Crime Index is no longer tenable, as the meaning of the included offenses is no longer consistent before and after 2013. In this chapter, we use a modified measure of violence that includes the offenses of murder, robbery, and aggravated assault. In any given year prior to the rape definition change, these three offenses accounted for more than 95% of arrests for Violent Crime Index offenses. Note that these changes do not impact the Property Crime Index, which includes the offenses of burglary, larceny-theft, motor vehicle theft, and arson.

rest statistics show that law enforcement agencies made an estimated 16,080 arrests of young people for weapons law violations in 2019, it means that a weapons law violation was the most serious charge in these 16,080 arrests. An unknown number of additional arrests in 2019 included a weapons charge as a lesser offense.

What do clearance statistics count?

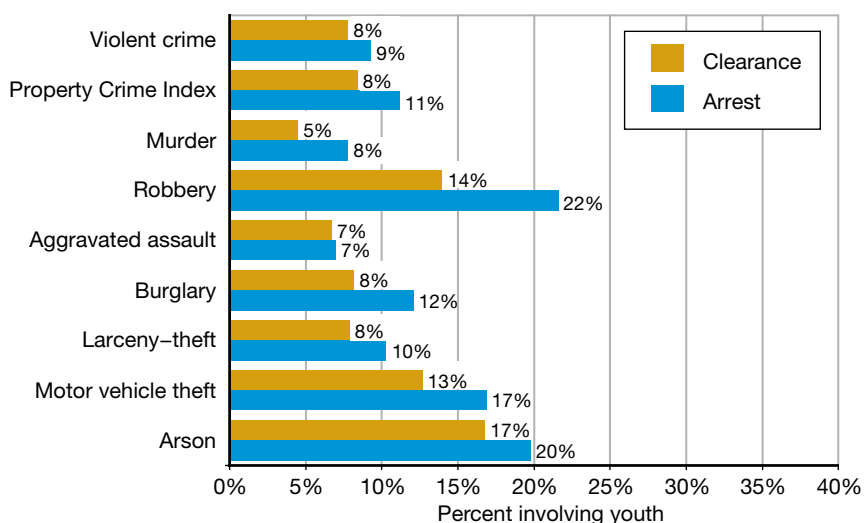
Clearance statistics measure the proportion of reported crimes that were cleared (or “closed”) by either arrest or other, exceptional means (such as the death of the offender or unwillingness of the victim to cooperate). A single arrest may result in many clearances. For example, 1 arrest could clear 10 burglaries if the person was charged with committing all 10 crimes. Or multiple arrests may result in a single clearance if a group of people committed the crime.

For those interested in juvenile justice issues, the FBI also reports the proportion of clearances that involved arrests of only persons younger than age 18.

This statistic is a better indicator of the proportion of crime that this age group commits than is the proportion of arrests, although there are some concerns that even the clearance statistic overestimates the proportion of crimes that juveniles commit. Research has shown that juvenile offenders are more easily apprehended than adult offenders; thus, the juvenile proportion of clearances probably overestimates juveniles’ responsibility for crime.

To add to the difficulty in interpreting clearance statistics, the FBI’s current reporting guidelines require that clearances involving both juveniles and adults be classified as clearances for crimes that adults commit. Because the juvenile clearance proportions include only those clearances in which no adults were involved, they underestimate juvenile involvement in crime. Although these data do not present a definitive picture of juvenile involvement in crime, they are the closest measure generally available of the proportion of crime known to law enforcement that is attributed to persons younger than age 18.

The juvenile proportion of arrests exceeded the juvenile proportion of crimes cleared by arrest in each offense category



Source: Author’s analysis of the FBI’s Crime in the United States, 2019.

Incident-based data collection replaces summary reporting

Since the 1930s, law enforcement agencies across the U.S. have voluntarily reported aggregate level crime and arrest data to the FBI’s Uniform Crime Reporting Program’s Summary Reporting System (SRS). Out of necessity, details about crime and arrests captured through the UCR program were confined to aggregate counts, thereby limiting a complete understanding of crime incidents. The National Incident-Based Reporting System (NIBRS) was developed to overcome these and other limitations.

Created in the 1980s, the purpose of NIBRS is to provide statistics about crime that would lead to better decisionmaking. By capturing detailed information about crime incidents, such as information about multiple offenses within the same incident, information about victims and persons known to have committed the offense(s) and the relationships between them, as well as the time of day and location(s) of crime incidents, NIBRS is a much more effective tool for policymakers, analysts, and the general public to truly understand crime and make informed decisions about how to address the problem. Put simply, NIBRS captures the complexity of crime incidents that cannot be achieved by a system based on aggregate counts.

In 2016, the FBI approved the transition of all federal, state, county, local, and tribal law enforcement agencies from SRS to NIBRS. The target date for the transition was January 2021. The FBI expects 75% of all U.S. law enforcement agencies to report their crime data through NIBRS by the effective date, representing 80% of the U.S. population. Based on the FBI’s normal release schedule, data for calendar year 2021—the first year of NIBRS-based estimates—would be available sometime in the fall of 2022.

Law enforcement agencies in the U.S. made 696,620 arrests of persons under age 18 in 2019

Females accounted for 31% of all juvenile arrests in 2019, youth ages 16–17 accounted for 48%, and White youth accounted for 63%

Most serious offense	2019 estimated number of juvenile arrests	Percent of total juvenile arrests, 2019					
		Female	Ages 16–17	White	Black	American Indian	Asian
Total	696,620	31%	48%	63%	34%	2%	1%
Violent crime	44,010	21	50	49	48	2	2
Murder and nonnegligent manslaughter	860	11	70	47	50	3	0
Rape	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA
Robbery	16,080	12	56	36	62	1	2
Aggravated assault	27,070	26	46	56	40	2	1
Property Crime Index	119,790	33	49	55	42	2	2
Burglary	20,700	14	46	57	40	2	2
Larceny-theft	83,690	40	50	55	41	2	2
Motor vehicle theft	13,610	20	48	47	50	2	1
Arson	1,800	15	27	69	27	2	1
Nonindex							
Other (simple) assault	126,130	38	37	59	38	2	1
Forgery and counterfeiting	850	23	69	62	36	1	2
Fraud	3,690	33	58	50	46	2	1
Embezzlement	540	46	87	47	50	0	3
Stolen property (buying, receiving, possessing)	8,940	18	58	35	62	1	2
Vandalism	31,950	20	38	70	27	2	1
Weapons (carrying, possessing, etc.)	16,080	10	53	56	41	1	2
Prostitution and commercialized vice	290	71	74	47	51	0	2
Sex offense (except rape and prostitution)	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA
Drug abuse violation	81,320	26	63	75	21	2	2
Gambling	190	29	63	58	38	0	3
Offenses against the family and children	3,060	41	43	67	23	10	0
Driving under the influence	5,570	26	93	89	6	3	2
Liquor laws	26,650	42	68	86	7	6	1
Drunkenness	3,470	33	70	77	12	10	1
Disorderly conduct	53,990	37	36	55	42	3	1
Vagrancy	350	25	45	72	25	2	1
All other offenses (except traffic)	144,160	30	50	67	29	2	1
Curfew and loitering	14,650	34	44	66	30	3	2
U.S. population ages 10–17:	33,266,572	49%	25%	75%	17%	2%	6%

- Larceny-theft, simple assault, drug abuse violations, and disorderly conduct offenses accounted for half of all juvenile arrests in 2019.
- In 2019, females accounted for 40% of all juvenile arrests for larceny-theft, 38% of all juvenile arrests for simple assault, and 37% of juvenile arrests for disorderly conduct.
- Youth ages 16–17 accounted for half (50%) of all juvenile arrests for violent crime in 2019, and an even larger proportion of juvenile arrests for murder (70%).
- Black youth, who accounted for 17% of the juvenile population in 2019, were involved in 62% of juvenile arrests for robbery and stolen property offenses, and 50% of arrests for murder and motor vehicle theft.

NA: Data for rape and sex offenses are not available because of the change in the definition for reporting rape (see sidebar on page 3).

Notes: UCR data do not distinguish the ethnic group Hispanic; Hispanics may be of any race. In 2019, 88% of Hispanics ages 10–17 were classified racially as White. Detail may not add to totals because of rounding.

Source: Authors' analysis of arrest data from the National Center for Juvenile Justice.

In 2019, 6% of male arrests and 8% of female arrests involved a person younger than age 18

In 2019, juveniles were involved in about 1 in 5 arrests for robbery and arson, and 1 in 10 arrests for larceny-theft, stolen property offenses, and weapons law violations

Most serious offense	Juvenile arrests as a percentage of total arrests, 2019						
	All persons	Male	Female	White	Black	American Indian	Asian
Total	7%	6%	8%	6%	9%	6%	6%
Violent crime	9	9	9	8	12	7	6
Murder and nonnegligent manslaughter	8	8	7	8	8	13	1
Rape							
Robbery	22	23	16	17	25	11	24
Aggravated assault	7	7	8	6	8	6	4
Property Crime Index	11	12	10	9	16	11	13
Burglary	12	13	8	10	17	18	13
Larceny-theft	10	11	10	9	14	9	13
Motor vehicle theft	17	18	15	12	29	19	10
Arson	20	21	14	19	22	20	9
Nonindex							
Other (simple) assault	12	11	16	11	15	10	9
Forgery and counterfeiting	2	2	1	2	2	1	2
Fraud	3	3	3	2	5	4	2
Embezzlement	4	4	4	3	5	1	6
Stolen property (buying, receiving, possessing)	10	11	8	6	18	8	9
Vandalism	18	19	15	18	18	16	11
Weapons (carrying, possessing, etc.)	10	10	11	11	10	13	12
Prostitution and commercialized vice	1	1	1	1	1	0	0
Sex offense (except rape and prostitution)							
Drug abuse violation	5	5	5	5	4	9	6
Gambling	8	8	8	8	10	0	2
Offenses against the family and children	4	3	5	4	3	7	2
Driving under the influence	1	1	1	1	0	1	0
Liquor laws	15	13	21	17	7	18	13
Drunkenness	1	1	2	1	1	1	1
Disorderly conduct	17	15	22	15	24	10	14
Vagrancy	2	2	2	2	1	1	1
All other offenses (except traffic)	4	4	5	4	5	4	4

- Juvenile females accounted for about 1 in 6 simple assault arrests involving females in 2019, while male juveniles accounted for about 1 in 10 simple assault arrests involving males.
- In 2019, juveniles accounted for 9% of violent crime arrests and 11% of Property Crime Index arrests. On average, juveniles accounted for 11% of all violent crime arrests during the 2010s, compared with 16% during the 2000s, and they accounted for 16% of all Property Crime Index arrests in the 2010s, compared with 28% in the 2000s.
- Overall, in 2019, 6% of arrests of Whites and 9% of arrests of Blacks involved a person younger than age 18. This pattern of juveniles being involved in a greater proportion of arrests of Blacks than of Whites was found across nearly all offenses. However, for liquor law violations, the reverse was true.

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

Source: Authors' analysis of arrest data from the National Center for Juvenile Justice.

Across most offenses, juvenile arrests fell proportionately more than adult arrests between 2010 and 2019

The number of arrests of juveniles in 2019 was 58% fewer than the number of arrests in 2010, while adult arrests fell 18% during the same period

Most serious offense	Percent change in arrests, 2010–2019								
	All persons			Juveniles			Adults		
	All	Male	Female	All	Male	Female	All	Male	Female
Total	-23%	-25%	-17%	-58%	-58%	-56%	-18%	-21%	-10%
Violent crime	-10	-12	-3	-36	-37	-33	-6	-8	2
Murder and nonnegligent manslaughter	-1	-2	8	-15	-15	-11	0	-1	10
Rape									
Robbery	-34	-36	-14	-41	-42	-29	-31	-34	-11
Aggravated assault	-6	-7	-2	-40	-41	-36	-1	-3	3
Property Crime Index	-35	-35	-34	-67	-65	-71	-25	-26	-23
Burglary	-41	-45	-19	-68	-69	-61	-33	-37	-11
Larceny-theft	-36	-35	-37	-70	-67	-74	-26	-26	-27
Motor vehicle theft	13	5	49	-14	-18	8	20	12	60
Arson	-20	-24	1	-61	-61	-55	8	4	25
Nonindex									
Other (simple) assault	-21	-23	-13	-40	-42	-36	-17	-20	-7
Forgery and counterfeiting	-42	-38	-49	-50	-47	-57	-42	-38	-49
Fraud	-40	-34	-48	-36	-35	-37	-40	-34	-48
Embezzlement	-19	-18	-19	22	13	36	-20	-19	-20
Stolen property (buying, receiving, possessing)	-7	-10	6	-39	-40	-34	-1	-4	12
Vandalism	-29	-32	-13	-59	-61	-45	-15	-19	-3
Weapons (carrying, possessing, etc.)	-4	-5	9	-49	-48	-52	7	5	29
Prostitution and commercialized vice	-57	-49	-61	-73	-55	-76	-57	-49	-61
Sex offense (except rape and prostitution)									
Drug abuse violation	-5	-12	26	-52	-58	-24	1	-7	31
Gambling	-75	-81	-24	-86	-89	29	-74	-79	-27
Offenses against the family and children	-23	-28	-6	-19	-27	-4	-23	-28	-7
Driving under the influence	-27	-30	-21	-54	-54	-53	-27	-29	-20
Liquor laws	-66	-67	-64	-72	-74	-69	-64	-65	-62
Drunkenness	-44	-46	-31	-73	-75	-66	-43	-46	-30
Disorderly conduct	-50	-51	-46	-65	-67	-62	-44	-46	-39
Vagrancy	-32	-34	-21	-84	-84	-82	-28	-31	-16
All other offenses (except traffic)	-11	-14	0	-51	-54	-45	-7	-11	4
Curfew and loitering	-85	-85	-82	-85	-85	-82	NA	NA	NA

- The overall decline in juvenile arrests was comparable for males (58%) and females (56%) between 2010 and 2019. Across most offenses, however, the relative decline was greater for juvenile males than juvenile females (e.g., robbery, burglary, simple assault, and vandalism).
- Arrests declined for juveniles and adults between 2010 and 2019, and for most offenses, the relative decline in juvenile arrests outpaced that of adults, regardless of gender. For example, arrests for robbery, aggravated assault, simple assault, and disorderly conduct declined more for juvenile than adult males, a pattern that was replicated in arrests of females. Somewhat less common, however, was a decline in juvenile arrests coupled with an increase for adults. For example, juvenile arrests for weapons law violations for males and females decreased between 2010 and 2019 but increased for their adult counterparts.

NA = Curfew and loitering offenses are status offenses that only apply to juveniles.

Source: Authors' analysis of arrest data from the Bureau of Justice Statistics and the National Center for Juvenile Justice.

The proportion of juvenile arrests involving females has grown

Females accounted for 31% of juvenile arrests in 2019

In 2019, law enforcement agencies made an estimated 696,620 arrests of persons younger than age 18. Females accounted for 212,650 of those arrests, or less than one-third (31%) of all arrests in that year. Although males accounted for the majority (69%) of juvenile arrests in 2019, the female share was relatively high for certain offenses, including liquor law violations (42%), larceny-theft (40%), simple assault (38%), and disorderly conduct (37%). In comparison, females accounted for a smaller share of murder (11%), robbery (12%), and burglary (14%) arrests.

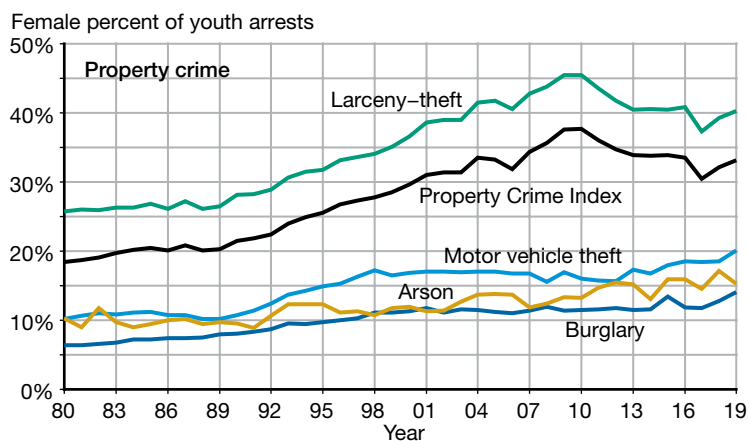
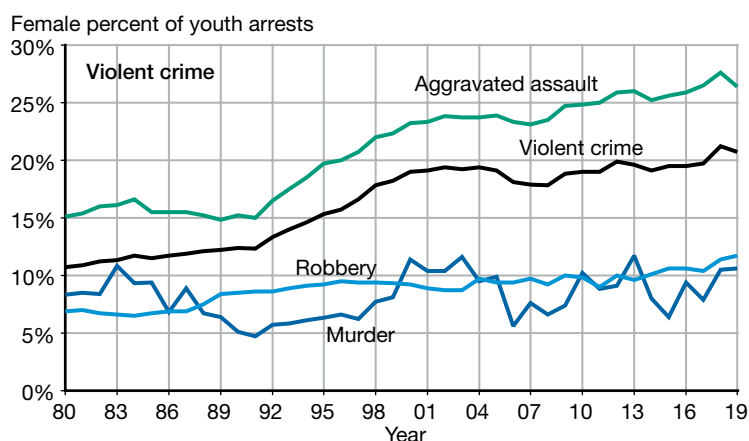
The female share of juvenile arrests has grown

Overall, juvenile arrests have declined considerably in the last two decades. For example, between 2000 and 2019, juvenile arrests fell 68%. During the same period, the number of juvenile arrests involving males fell 70% while the number of female juvenile arrests fell 61%. In fact, from 2000 through 2019, arrests of juvenile females decreased less than male arrests in most offense categories (e.g., robbery, aggravated and simple assault, burglary, and drug abuse violations).

Percent change, 2000-2019:

Most serious offense	Male	Female
All offenses	-70%	-61%
Violent crime	-55	-49
Robbery	-43	-25
Aggravated assault	-61	-53
Property Crime Index	-78	-74
Burglary	-79	-73
Larceny-theft	-78	-75
Motor vehicle theft	-74	-68
Simple assault	-51	-35
Vandalism	-74	-56
Drug abuse violation	-64	-26
Driving under the influence	-76	-61
Liquor laws	-83	-72
Drunkenness	-87	-73
Disorderly conduct	-71	-56
Curfew	-91	-90

The increases in the female proportion of violent crime and property crime arrests since 1980 were tied to changes in arrests for aggravated assault and larceny-theft



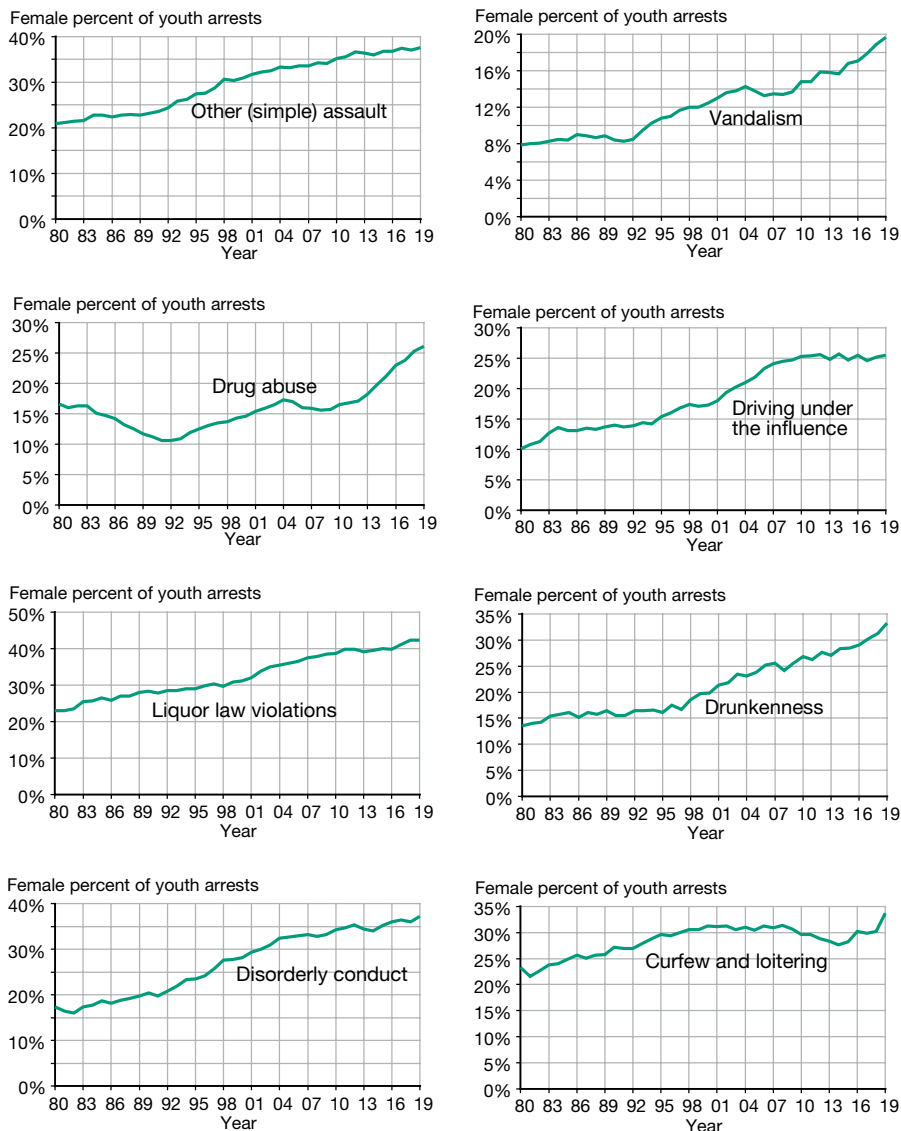
Juvenile arrests for both aggravated assault and larceny-theft have been on the decline since 2000, but the declines have been greater for males than females—61% and 78%, respectively, for males, compared with 53% and 75% for females. Following this disproportionate decrease in arrests, the female share of aggravated assault and larceny-theft arrests has grown, from 23% in 2000 to 26% in 2019 for aggravated assault, and from 37% to 40% for larceny-theft.

Source: Authors' analysis of arrest data from the Bureau of Justice Statistics and the National Center for Juvenile Justice.

As a result of the relatively larger decline in juvenile male arrests, females accounted for a larger proportion of juvenile arrests in 2019 than they did 20 years prior. In 2019, females accounted for 31% of all juvenile arrests, up from 25% in 2000. Between 2000 and 2019, the number of simple assault arrests declined more for juvenile males (51%) than females (35%). As a result, the female share of simple assault arrests increased from 31% to 38%. Likewise, female juvenile arrests for larceny-theft fell 75% in the last 20 years, while arrests of males fell 78%. The net result was that females accounted for 40% of such arrests in 2019, compared with 37% in 2000.

Gender differences also occurred in arrest trends for adults. For example, between 2000 and 2019, adult male arrests for simple assault fell 24% while adult female arrests increased 11%. As a result, adult females accounted for a larger share of simple assault arrests in 2019 (28%) than in 2000 (21%). Similarly, adult male arrests for larceny-theft fell 20% while adult female arrests increased 10%. Therefore, the female proportion of arrests grew for each offense for adults, as it did for juveniles.

Between 1980 and 2019, the female proportion of juvenile arrests increased substantially for simple assault, vandalism, liquor law violations, drunkenness, and disorderly conduct



- The growth in the female proportion of arrests for the offenses shown above over the last 10 years is largely attributable to disproportionate changes in arrests of male and female youth. Specifically, across these offenses, arrests of males and females have been on the decline since 2010, but the relative decline in male arrests outpaced the decline for females. For example, drug arrests involving males fell 58% between 2010 and 2019, compared with a 24% decline for females. The result of such disproportionate declines is that the female share of youth arrests for each offense has grown.

Source: Authors' analysis of arrest data from the Bureau of Justice Statistics and the National Center for Juvenile Justice.

Youth under age 13 account for a small proportion of juvenile arrests

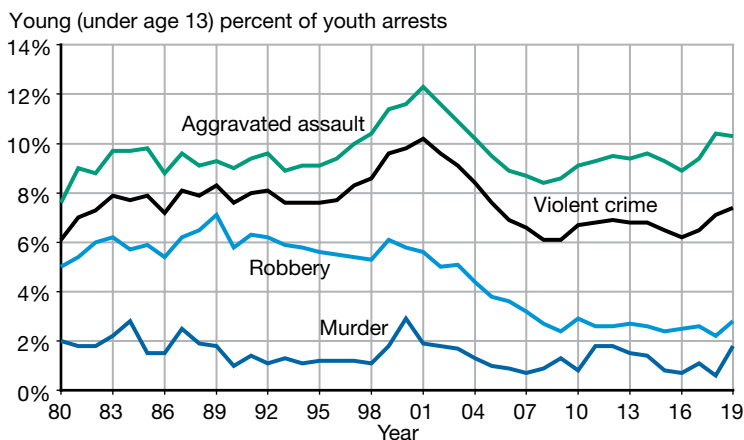
Arrest rates for very young juveniles declined in the last two decades

In 1980, there were an estimated 1,259 arrests of persons ages 10–12 for every 100,000 persons in this age group in the U.S. population. Following a 39% increase through 1994, the rate declined steadily. By 2019, the arrest rate had fallen to 421, a decline of 74% from the 1994 peak, and 4% above the 2018 low point.

The proportion of juvenile arrests involving the very young alternated between periods of growth and decline. In 1980, 9% of all juvenile arrests were arrests of persons under age 13. The proportion reached a peak in 1989 at 11%, declined to a low of 6% in 2009, and then reached 8% in 2019. Part of the increase since 2009 can be attributed to the fact that, while arrests for all juveniles have been on the decline, the relative decline for older juveniles outpaced that of younger juveniles. Since 2009, arrests of juveniles under age 13 fell 50% while arrests of juveniles ages 13–17 fell 62%.

Across most offenses, arrest rates for young juveniles in 2019 were at or near historically low levels. However, for some offenses, arrests of young juveniles have been on the rise in recent years, and the types of youth entering the juvenile justice system has changed. For example, since the late 1980s, arrest rates for larceny-theft and burglary for younger juveniles fell more than 90% by 2019. Similarly, following an 86% decline since 1994, the robbery arrest rate for young juveniles reached a new low in 2019. The same cannot be said, however, for arrests of young juveniles for aggravated and simple assault, both of which have been on the rise in recent years. Since 2015, the aggravated assault arrest rate for young juveniles increased 8% and the rate for simple assault increased 20%. As a result, even though the overall arrest rate declined, the number of young juvenile

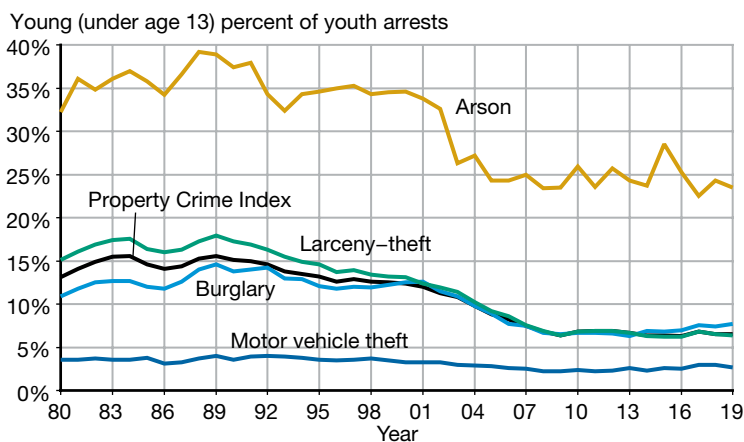
In 2019, 7% of juvenile violent crime arrests involved youth younger than age 13, down from a high of 10% in the early 2000s



- Aggravated assault is by far the most common violent crime involving youth younger than age 13. Since 1998, arrests for aggravated assault accounted for 80% or more of violent crime arrests involving youth younger than age 13.

Source: Authors' analysis of arrest data from the Bureau of Justice Statistics and the National Center for Juvenile Justice.

The proportion of juvenile Property Crime Index arrests involving youth younger than age 13 declined from 16% in the late 1980s to 6% in 2019



- Compared to other Property Crime Index offenses, the proportion of arson arrests involving youth younger than age 13 is high; since 2005, one-fourth of all juvenile arson arrests involved a youth younger than age 13.

Source: Authors' analysis of arrest data from the Bureau of Justice Statistics and the National Center for Juvenile Justice.

niles entering the juvenile justice system charged with assaults has grown in recent years. This implies there were: (1) different factors influencing the volume and/or nature of law-violating behavior by young juveniles over this time period, and/or (2) differential responses by law enforcement to these behaviors.

Arrest rates of young males declined more than those of young females in recent years

Since 2010, the overall arrest rate for youth ages 10–12 fell 29%, but the relative decline in the male rate (48%) was greater than that of the female rate (41%). In fact, across most offenses, the arrest rate for young females declined less than that of their young male peers. For drug offenses, the female rate actually increased 24% while the male rate declined 47%. As a result, a greater number and proportion of the young juvenile arrestees in 2019 were female than in 2010.

Percent change in young juvenile (ages 10–12) arrest rate, 2010–2019:

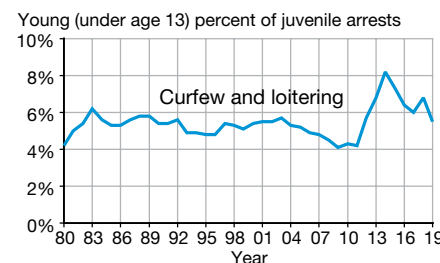
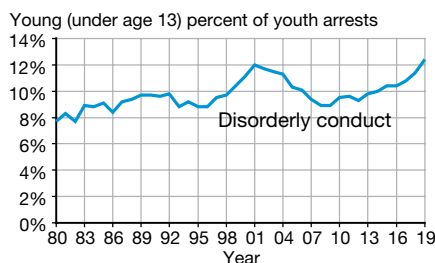
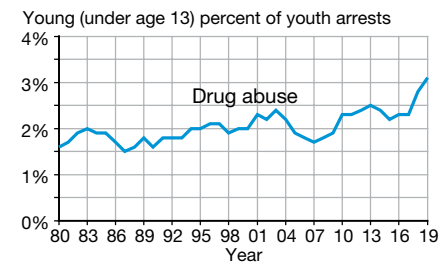
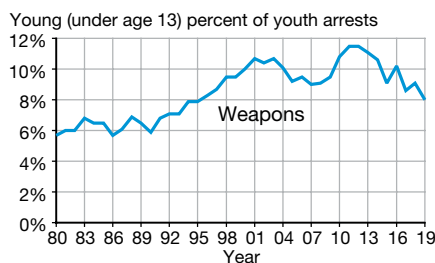
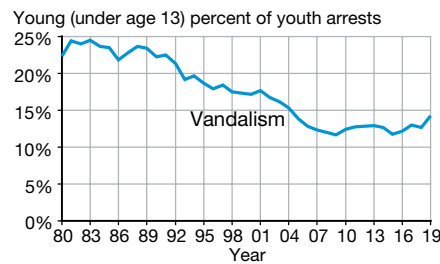
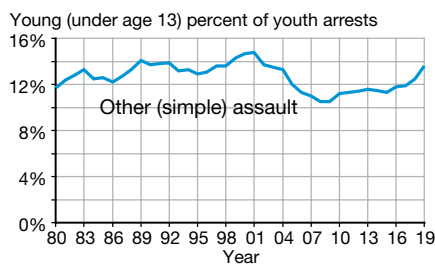
Most serious offense	Male	Female
All offenses	-48%	-41%
Violent crime	-36	-14
Aggravated assault	-35	-13
Property Crime Index	-65	-73
Burglary	-63	-56
Larceny-theft	-68	-76
Simple assault	-30	-13
Stolen property	-71	-58
Vandalism	-51	-45
Weapons law violation	-60	-42
Drug abuse violation	-47	24
Liquor law violations	-33	-24
Disorderly conduct	-57	-50
Curfew	-80	-77

Source: Analysis of arrest data from the Bureau of Justice Statistics and the National Center for Juvenile Justice.

Analysis of race-specific arrest rate trends for very young juveniles is not possible

The FBI’s UCR Program captures information on the gender of arrestees

Between 1980 and 2019, the proportion of juvenile arrests involving youth younger than 13 declined for vandalism but increased for disorderly conduct



- In 1980, 22% of juvenile vandalism arrests involved youth younger than 13; by 2019, 14% of such arrests involved youth younger than 13.
- The proportion of juvenile arrests for disorderly conduct involving youth younger than 13 increased from 8% in 1980 to 12% in 2019.
- Despite an increase since 2007, a small proportion (3% in 2019) of juvenile drug arrests involve youth younger than 13.

Source: Authors’ analysis of arrest data from the Bureau of Justice Statistics and the National Center for Juvenile Justice.

subdivided into a large set of detailed age groups (e.g., under 10, 10–12, 13–14, 15, 16, and 17). It also captures information on the race of arrestees, but the only age breakdown asso-

ciated with these counts is “under 18” and “18 and above.” Therefore, age-specific arrest trends for racial groups, including trends for young juveniles, cannot be analyzed with UCR data.



The juvenile arrest rate for violent crimes reached a new low in 2019

Violent crime arrest rates declined substantially after 1994

The juvenile arrest rate (i.e., the number of arrests per 100,000 juveniles in the population) for violent crimes was relatively stable between 1980 and 1987. This period of stability was followed by substantial growth, as the violent crime arrest rate increased 73% through 1994. This rapid growth led to speculation about changes in the nature of juvenile offenders—concerns that spurred state legislators to pass laws that facilitated an increase in the flow of youth into the adult justice system. Since the 1994 peak, the juvenile arrest rate for violent crime declined annually through 2004, increased each of the next two years, then declined again through 2013. After a few years of stability, the rate fell 4% in the last year, reaching its lowest level (131.7) since at least 1980, and 72% below the 1994 peak.

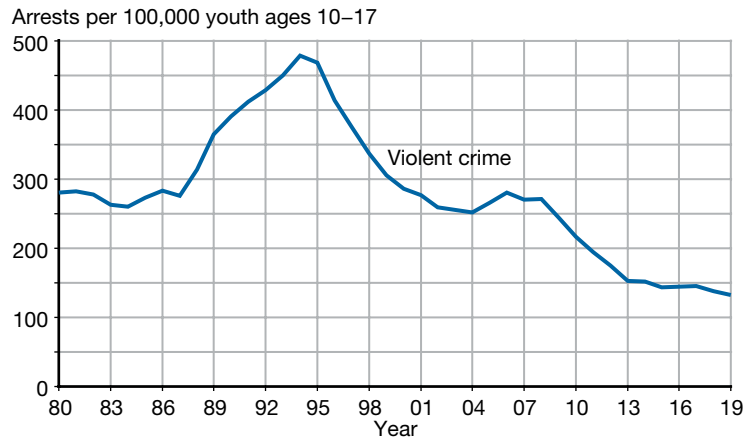
Violent crime arrest rates declined more for males than females

In 1980, the juvenile male violent crime arrest rate was 8 times greater than the female rate. By 2019, the male rate was 3.7 times greater. This convergence of male and female arrest rates is due to the large relative increase in the female rate through the mid-1990s and the larger relative decrease in the male rate through 2019. Between 1980 and 1994, the male rate increased 62%, while the female rate increased 133%. Since 1994, the male rate fell 74%, while the female rate fell 61% through 2019.

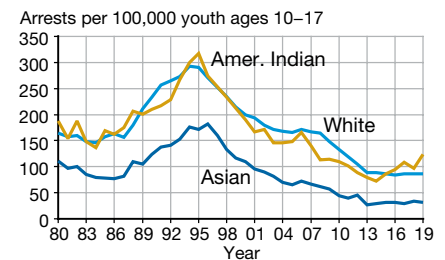
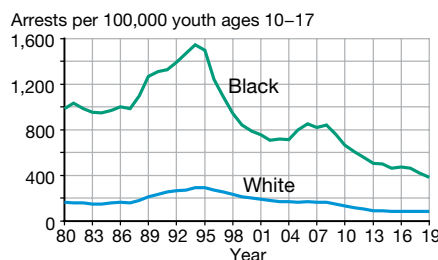
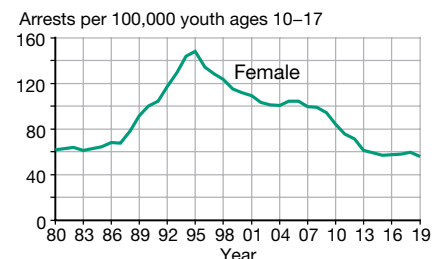
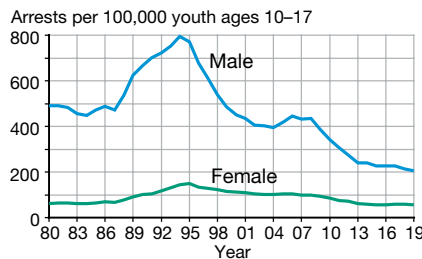
Arrest rates declined for all racial groups since the mid-1990s

Violent crime arrest rates declined for all race groups since their mid-1990s peak. For White and Asian youth, the rate fell through 2013, then remained relatively stable through 2019, while the rate for American Indian youth fell through 2014, then increased through

The juvenile arrest rate for violent crime was cut in half between 2006 and 2019



Violent crime arrest rate trends by gender and race



- The violent crime arrest rate in 2019 for Black juveniles was more than 4 times the rate for White juveniles, 3 times the rate for American Indian juveniles, and 12 times the rate for Asian juveniles.

Source: Authors' analysis of arrest data from the Bureau of Justice Statistics and the National Center for Juvenile Justice, and population data from the U.S. Bureau of the Census. (See arrest rate data source note at the end of this chapter for details.)

2019. The rate for Black youth declined from 1996 through 2002, increased through 2006, and then de-

clined through 2019 to reach its lowest level since at least 1980.

After 6 years of increase, the juvenile arrest rate for murder declined in the last year

The 2019 murder arrest rate was 19% above the 2012 lowpoint

Between the mid-1980s and the peak in 1993, the juvenile arrest rate for murder more than doubled. Since the 1993 peak, however, the rate fell substantially through 2000, remained relatively stable through 2007, and then declined to its lowest level in 2012. This trend reversed, however, as the rate increased through 2018, then declined in the last year. Compared with the period from 1984 through 2000, the juvenile murder arrest rate between 2010 and 2019 has been historically low and relatively stable. In fact, the number of juvenile arrests for murder in the 4-year period from 1992 through 1995 exceeded the total number of such arrests since 2010.

Male arrests drove murder arrest rate trends

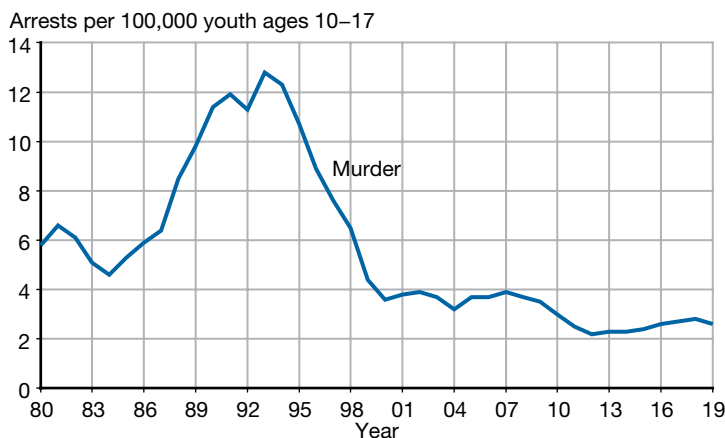
During the 1980s and 1990s, the juvenile male arrest rate for murder was, on average, about 13 times greater than the female rate. Both displayed generally similar trends.

The female murder arrest rate peaked in 1994 at 63% above its 1980 level, whereas the male rate peaked in 1993 at 123% above the 1980 rate. Since reaching their peaks, the rates for both fell substantially. The male rate reached a lowpoint in 2012, 84% below the 1993 peak, while the female rate reached its lowpoint in 2015, 80% below the 1994 peak. Despite recent increases, rates for both in 2019 were near their historical lowpoints.

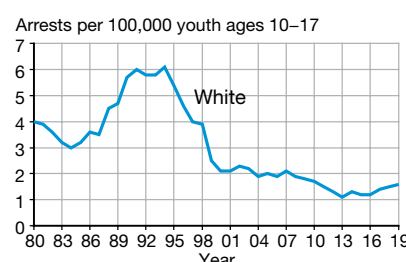
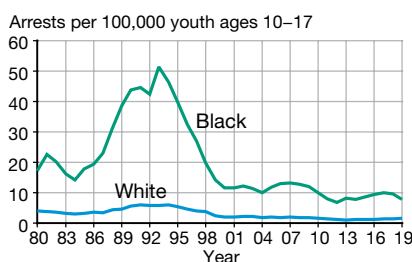
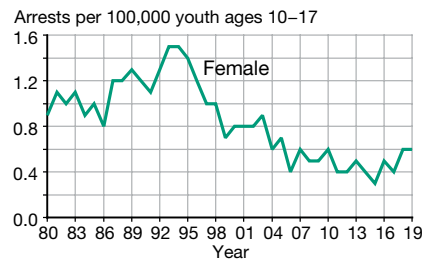
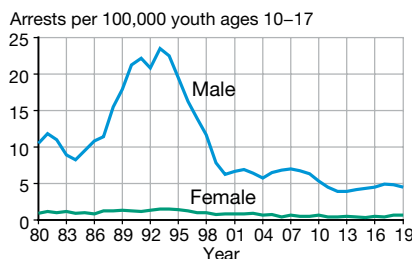
The juvenile murder arrest rate pattern was linked to the arrests of Black juveniles

The Black-to-White ratio of juvenile arrest rates for murder grew from about 4-to-1 in 1980 to nearly 9-to-1 in 1993, reflecting the greater increase in the Black rate over this period—the White rate increased 47% while the

Despite the increase between 2012 and 2018, the juvenile murder rate in 2019 was 80% less than its 1993 peak



Murder arrest rate trends by gender and race



Note: Murder arrest rates for American Indian youth and Asian youth are not presented because the small number of arrests and small population sizes produce unstable rate trends.

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. Bureau of the Census. (See arrest rate data source note at the end of this chapter for details.)

Black rate tripled. Since 1993, both rates fell through 2004, with the Black rate falling considerably more (81% vs. 67%). More recently, the White rate has increased since 2013, while the rate

for Black youth has declined since 2017. As a result, the Black-to-White ratio of juvenile arrest rates for murder in 2019 was less than 5-to-1.

The juvenile arrest rate for robbery reached a historic low point in 2019

The juvenile arrest rate for robbery was cut in half between 2008 and 2019

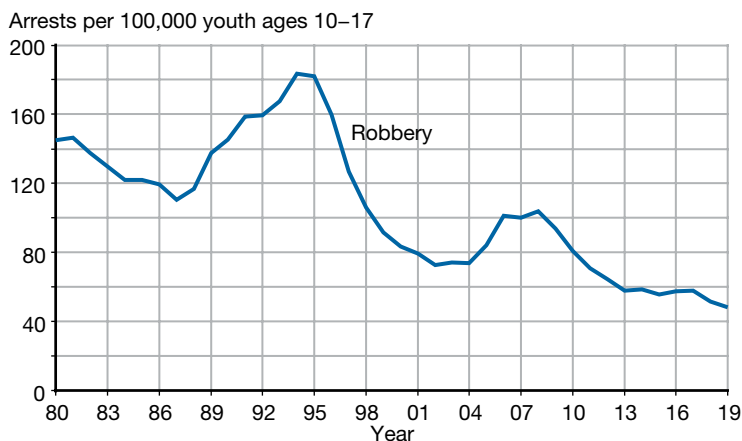
The juvenile arrest rate trend for robbery is marked by alternating periods of growth and decline. The rate declined for most of the 1980s, increased steadily to reach a peak in 1994, and then declined 60% by 2002. Following an increase through 2008, the rate fell once again through 2013, held relatively stable through 2017, and then declined 16% in the last two years. By 2019, the rate reached a new lowpoint, and was 53% below the 2008 level.

Arrest rate trends by gender and race parallel the overall robbery arrest rate pattern

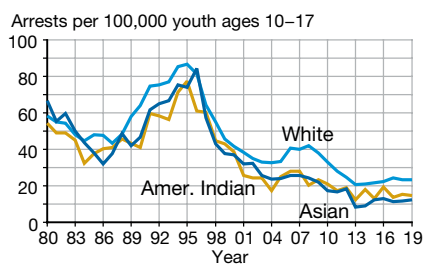
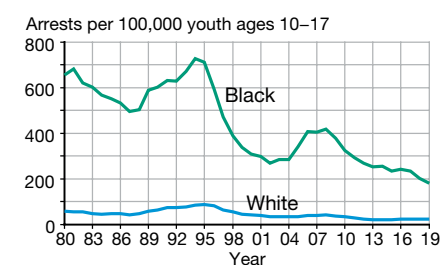
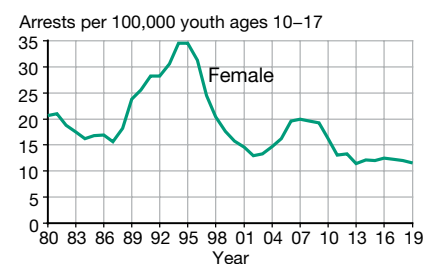
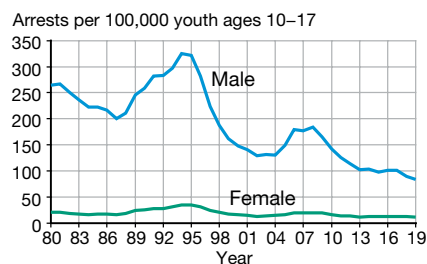
Across gender and race subgroups, robbery arrest rates decreased through the late 1980s and climbed to a peak in the mid-1990s. By 2002, the rates for males and females had fallen 60% and 62%, respectively, from their 1995 peak. Following these declines, the rates for both increased through 2008. More recently, the male rate declined 18% since 2017, while the female rate declined 7% since 2016. By 2019, the male rate was at its lowest level since at least 1980 and the female rate was 2% above the 2013 lowpoint.

The trends in arrest rates within racial groups were similar over the past three decades. For each racial group, the juvenile robbery arrest rate fell by 60% or more between the mid-1990s and the early 2000s, then alternated between periods of growth and decline. Juvenile robbery arrest rates reached a historic low in 2013 for White, American Indian, and Asian youth. From their low points to 2019, rates increased 13% for White youth, 19% for American Indian youth, and 49% for Asian youth. Unlike the pattern for other race groups, the robbery arrest rate for Black youth declined steadily between 2008 and 2019—falling 57% to reach its lowest level since at least 1980.

The juvenile arrest rate for robbery reached a historically low level in 2019, 74% below the 1994 peak



Robbery arrest rate trends by gender and race



- Despite the large relative decline in the robbery arrest rate for Black youth, racial differences in juvenile arrest rates for robbery remained high in 2019. Specifically, the rate for Black youth was about 8 times the rate for White youth, 12 times the rate for American Indian youth, and 14 times the rate for Asian youth.

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. Bureau of the Census. (See arrest rate data source note at the end of this chapter for details.)

Similar to robbery, the juvenile arrest rate for aggravated assault reached a new low in 2019

The juvenile aggravated assault arrest rate declined steadily since the 1994 peak

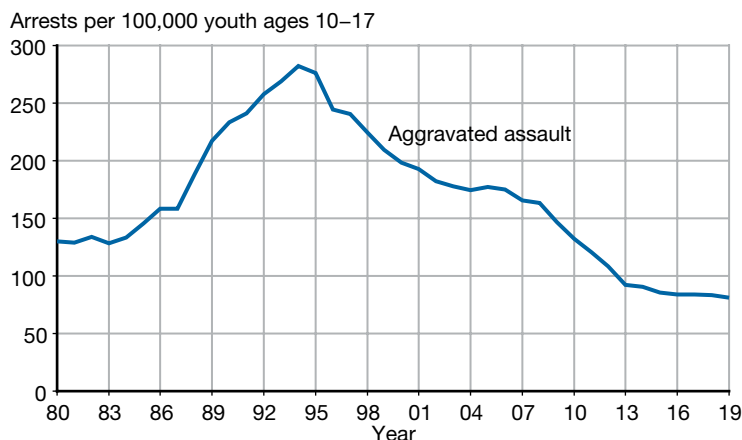
The juvenile arrest rate for aggravated assault more than doubled between 1980 and 1994 and then fell substantially and consistently. In fact, with the exception of 2005, the rate declined each year between 1994 and 2019. By 2019, the rate had fallen 71% from the 1994 peak, and, like robbery, reached its lowest level since at least 1980.

The rate for females increased more and declined less than the male rate

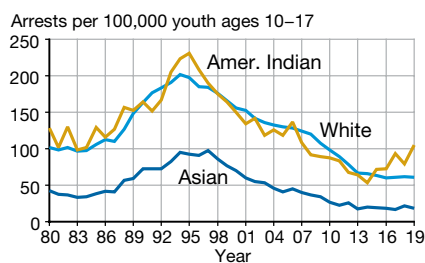
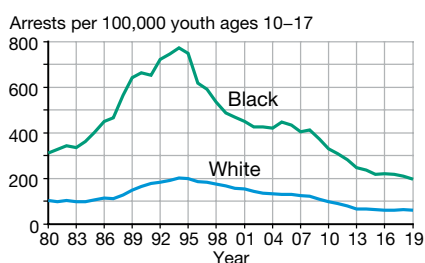
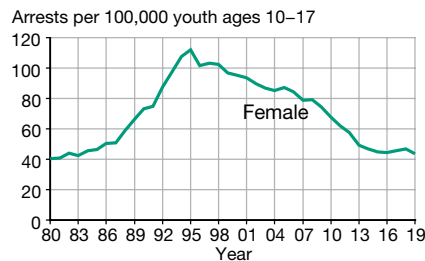
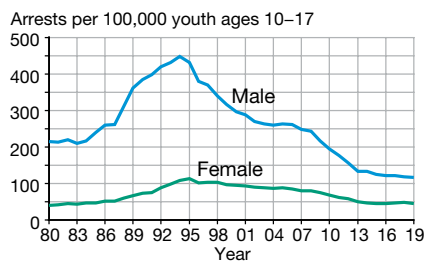
The juvenile arrest rate for aggravated assault for males doubled between 1980 and its 1994 peak, while the female rate increased by more than 170% to reach a peak in 1995. Since their respective peaks, the rates for both groups declined through 2019, but the relative decline was greater for males (74%) than for females (61%). As a result, in 2019, the male arrest rate reached its lowest level since at least 1980 while the female rate was 3% above its 1983 low point. The disproportionate increase in the female arrest rate for aggravated assault compared with that of males indicates that factors that impinged differently on females and males affected the rates. One possible explanation may be found in policy changes over this period that encouraged arrests in domestic violence incidents, which have higher rates of arrests of females than other types of aggravated assault incidents.

The period from 1980 through 1994 saw substantial increases in aggravated assault arrest rates for juveniles in each racial group—Black (149% increase), Asian (126%), White (97%), and American Indian (73%)—followed by a period of decline. The rate reached a historic low in 2014 for American Indian youth, 2016 for White youth, and 2017 for Asian youth. From their low

The juvenile arrest rate for aggravated assault was cut in half between 2008 and 2019



Aggravated assault arrest rate trends by gender and race



- The Black-White disparity in aggravated assault arrest rates peaked in 1988, when the Black rate was more than 4 times the White rate; by 2019, the Black-White ratio was a little more than 3-to-1.

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. Bureau of the Census. (See arrest rate data source note at the end of this chapter for details.)

points to 2019, rates increased 96% for American Indian youth, 12% for Asian youth, and 1% for White youth. Unlike the pattern for other race groups, the

aggravated assault arrest rate for Black youth declined through 2019, reaching its lowest level since at least 1980 and 75% below the 1994 peak.

The juvenile arrest rate for property crimes in 2019 was at its lowest level since at least 1980

After 1994, the juvenile property crime arrest rate fell continuously for more than a decade

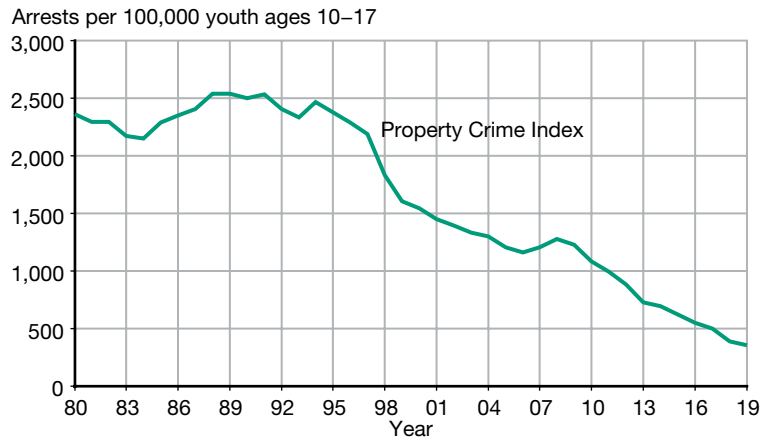
Between 1980 and 1994, the juvenile arrest rate for Property Crime Index offenses varied little, always remaining within 10% of the average for the period. After years of relative stability, the juvenile Property Crime Index arrest rate began a decline in the mid-1990s that continued annually until reaching a then-historic low in 2006, down 54% from its 1988 peak. This decline was followed by a 10% increase over the next 2 years, and then a 72% decline between 2008 and 2019. As a result, juveniles were far less likely to be arrested for property crimes in 2019 than in any previous year.

Property crime arrest rates reached a historic low in 2019 for all but American Indian youth

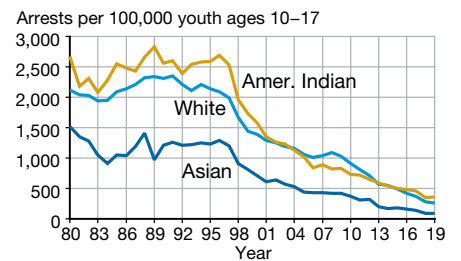
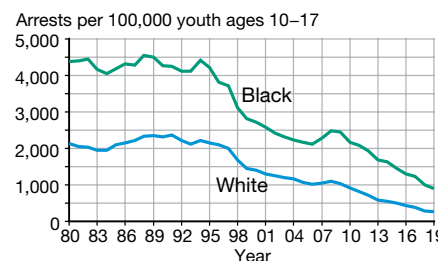
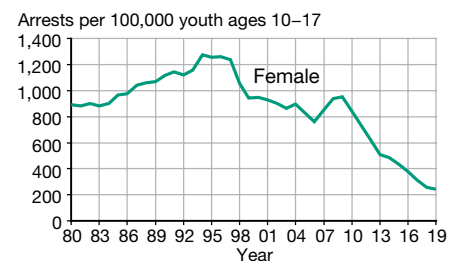
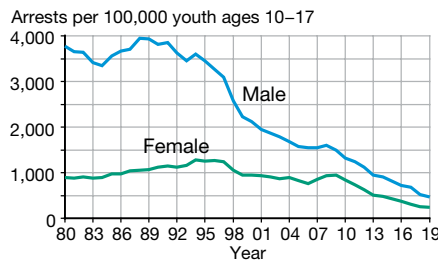
Male and female juvenile Property Crime Index arrest rates followed similar patterns after the mid-1990s. Both rates declined between 1994 and 2006 (57% for males and 40% for females), increased for about two years, and then declined again. Between 2010 and 2019, the relative decline in the female rate outpaced the decline in the male rate (71% and 64%, respectively). However, the net result was that both rates reached a historic low in 2019.

Juvenile Property Crime Index arrest rates fell 80% or more for each racial group between 1990 and 2019. As a result, arrest rates in 2019 were at their lowest level for White, Black, and Asian youth, while the rate for American Indian youth in 2019 was just 1% above its 2018 low point. On average, the Black juvenile arrest rate for property crimes was 3 times the White arrest rate over the last 10 years, much smaller than the disparity in arrest rates for violent crimes over the same period, which averaged more than 5 times the White rate.

The juvenile Property Crime Index arrest rate fell 72% between 2008 and 2019



Property Crime Index arrest rate trends by gender and race



■ The Property Crime Index is dominated by larceny-theft, which, in 2019, accounted for 70% of all juvenile Property Crime Index arrests. Therefore, the trends in Property Crime Index arrests largely reflect the trends in arrests for larceny-theft.

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. Bureau of the Census. (See arrest rate data source note at the end of this chapter for details.)

The juvenile arrest rate for burglary reached a new low in 2019, 92% below the 1980 peak

Juvenile arrests for burglary fell more than adult arrests

In 2019, the juvenile arrest rate for burglary reached its lowest point in the past 40 years, nearly one-tenth of its 1980 level. While adult arrests for burglary also declined over the period, the decline for juveniles outpaced that of adults. For example, between 2010 and 2019, the number of juvenile burglary arrests fell 68% while adult burglary arrests fell 33%. In 2010, 23% of all burglary arrests were arrests of a juvenile; in 2019, reflecting the greater decline in juvenile arrests, 12% of burglary arrests were juvenile arrests.

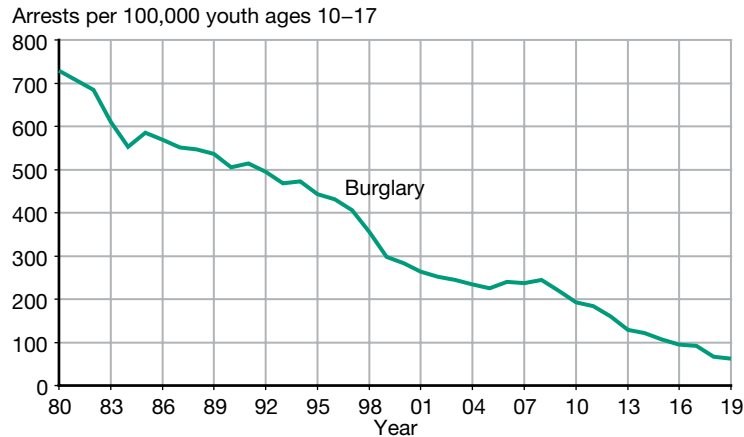
Juvenile male arrest rates for burglary declined more than female rates

The substantial decline in the juvenile burglary arrest rate was primarily the result of a decline in juvenile male arrests. Between 1980 and 2019, the male rate fell 92% while the female rate dropped 81%. By 2019, the male rate reached its lowest level since at least 1980, and the female rate was 3% above the 2018 low-point. Following the larger relative decline for males, females accounted for a larger share of juvenile burglary arrests in 2019 (14%) than in 1980 (6%).

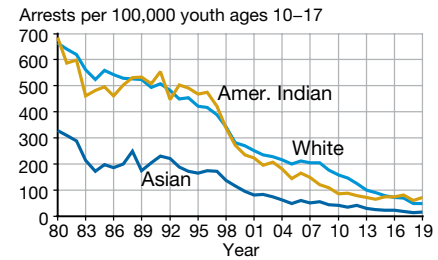
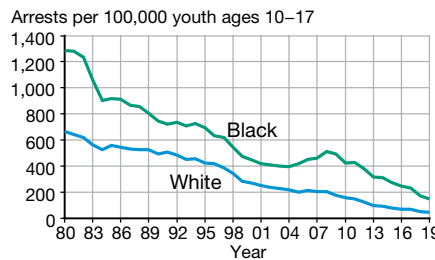
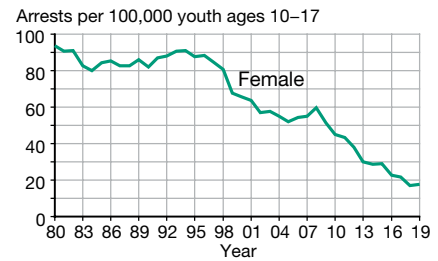
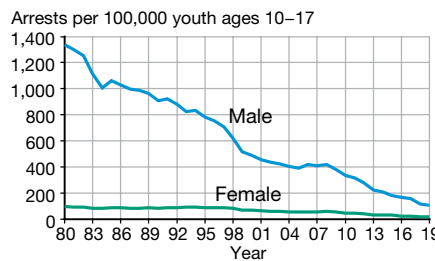
Juvenile burglary arrest rates for White and Black youth reached a new low in 2019

Between 1980 and 2019, the juvenile burglary arrest rate declined for all racial groups: 95% for Asians, 93% for Whites, 90% for American Indians, and 88% for Blacks. As a result, rates for White and Black youth in 2019 were at their lowest level since 1980, while the rates for American Indian and Asian youth were 19% and 18%, respectively, above their 2018 low point.

The juvenile burglary arrest rate fell 75% between 2008 and 2019



Burglary arrest rate trends by gender and race



- Following the larger relative decline in the juvenile burglary rate for males, the gender disparity in arrest rates has diminished. In 1980, the juvenile male arrest rate for burglary was more than 14 times the female rate; in 2019, the male rate was 6 times the female rate.

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. Bureau of the Census. (See arrest rate data source note at the end of this chapter for details.)

Following a 73% decline since 2008, the juvenile arrest rate for larceny-theft reached a new low in 2019

Juvenile larceny-theft rates declined annually since 2008

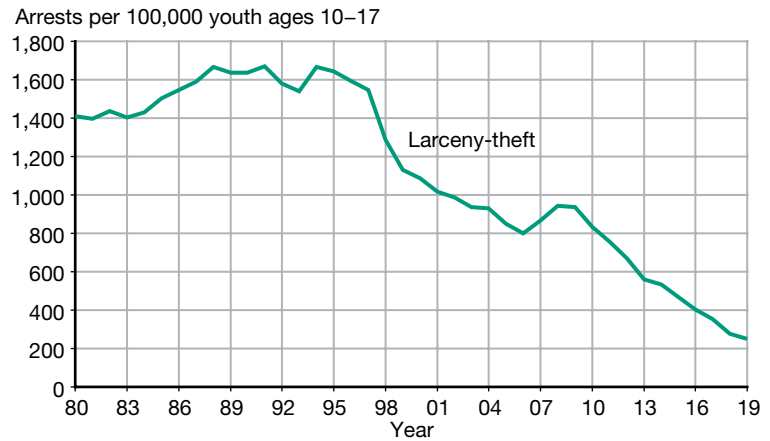
The juvenile arrest rate for larceny-theft generally increased between 1980 and the mid-1990s and then fell 52% between 1994 and 2006, reaching a then-historic low. Following an increase between 2006 and 2008, the rate then declined for the next 11 years. By 2019, the rate was 69% below the prior low-point in 2006, and 85% below the 1991 peak. The overall decline in arrests for such a high-volume offense translated into significantly fewer juveniles charged with property crimes entering the justice system.

The female larceny-theft arrest rate decreased more than the male rate since 2010

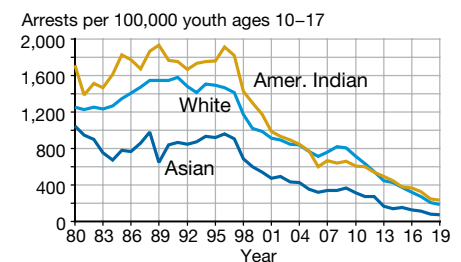
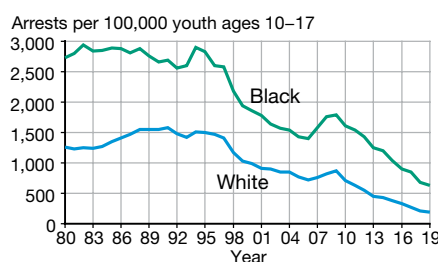
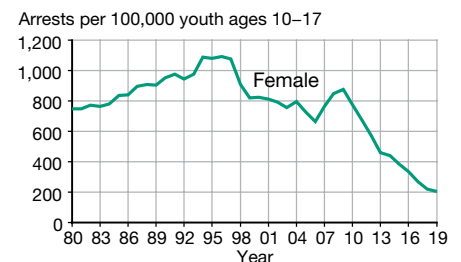
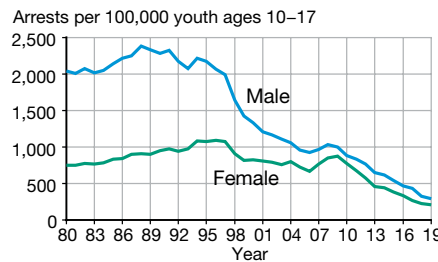
Male and female juvenile larceny-theft arrest rates followed similar patterns after the mid-1990s. Both rates declined between 1994 and 2006 (58% for males and 39% for females), increased briefly, and then declined again. Between 2010 and 2019, the relative decline in the female rate outpaced the decline in the male rate (73% and 67%, respectively). The net result was that both rates reached a historic low in 2019.

Race-specific trends in the larceny-theft arrest rate mirrored the overall trend. The rates declined between 1994 and 2006 for all race group: 66% each for Asians and American Indians, 53% for Whites, and 52% for Blacks. Following a brief interruption, rates for all race groups declined considerably since 2010 (77% for Asians, 74% for Whites, 62% for American Indians, and 61% for Blacks) and, by 2019, were at their lowest level since 1980.

The juvenile arrest rate for larceny-theft in 2019 was 85% below the 1991 peak



Larceny-theft arrest rate trends by gender and race



- Between 1980 and the mid-2000s, the proportion of larceny-theft arrests involving Black youth stayed within a limited range (24% to 29%). However, following the larger decline in arrests involving White youth since 2006 (75% vs. 57% for Black youth), the proportion of larceny-theft arrests involving Black youth has grown, from 29% in 2006 to 41% in 2019.

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. Bureau of the Census. (See arrest rate data source note at the end of this chapter for details.)

The motor vehicle theft arrest rate for juveniles declined in the last 2 years

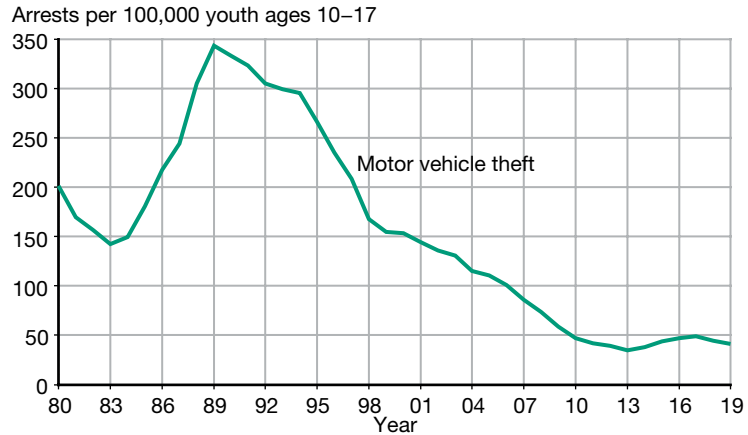
The juvenile arrest rate for motor vehicle theft peaked in 1989

The juvenile arrest rate for motor vehicle theft more than doubled between 1983 and 1989, up 141%. After the 1989 peak, the juvenile arrest rate for motor vehicle theft declined steadily to reach a historic low in 2013 (90% below the 1989 peak), then increased again. Despite a decline in the past 2 years, the 2019 rate was 17% above the 2013 low point. Trends for juveniles and adults followed similar patterns until recently; in the 10-year period between 2010 and 2019, the number of juvenile motor vehicle theft arrests fell 14%, while adult motor vehicle theft arrests increased 20%.

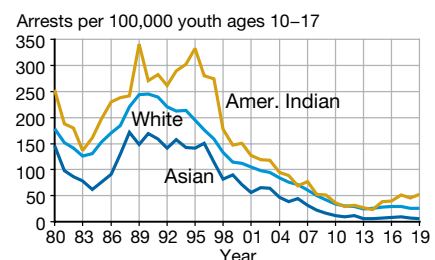
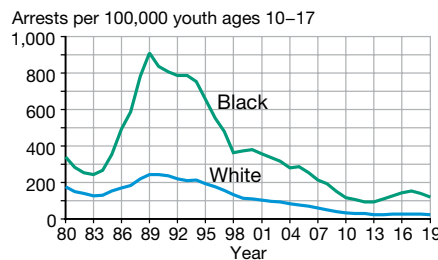
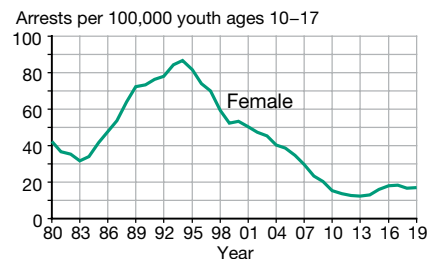
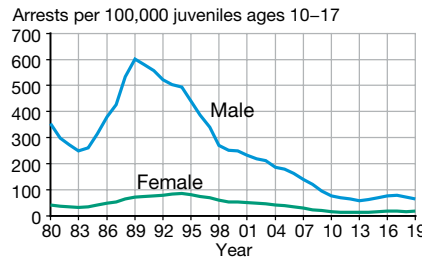
Male and female juvenile arrest rates for motor vehicle theft displayed generally similar trends in the 1980s and 1990s. However, the male rate peaked in 1989, but the female rate did not peak until 1994. Both rates fell substantially from their peak (91% for males, 86% for females), to reach a historic low in 2013. Despite recent declines, the rates for both in 2019 were above the 2013 low point.

From 1983 to their peak years, arrest rates for motor vehicle theft nearly doubled for White juveniles (peak year 1990), more than doubled for Asian juveniles (peak year 1988), increased nearly 150% for American Indian juveniles (peak year 1989), and more than tripled for Black juveniles (peak year 1989). Rates for White, Black, and Asian youth reached a historic low in 2013, while the low point for American Indians came one year later. By 2019, motor vehicle theft arrest rates for all racial groups were well below their late 1980s or early 1990s peaks.

Since the 2013 low point, the juvenile arrest rate for motor vehicle theft increased through 2017, then declined 16% by 2019



Motor vehicle theft arrest rate trends by gender and race



- Juvenile motor vehicle theft arrest rates decreased for most demographic subgroups since 2017: 18% for males, 9% for females, 38% for Asians, 20% for Blacks, and 13% for Whites. The rate for American Indians increased 3% during the same period.

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. Bureau of the Census. (See arrest rate data source note at the end of this chapter for details.)

Following a 63% decline since 2011, the juvenile arrest rate for arson in 2019 reached a historic low

Most juvenile arrests for arson involve youth under age 15

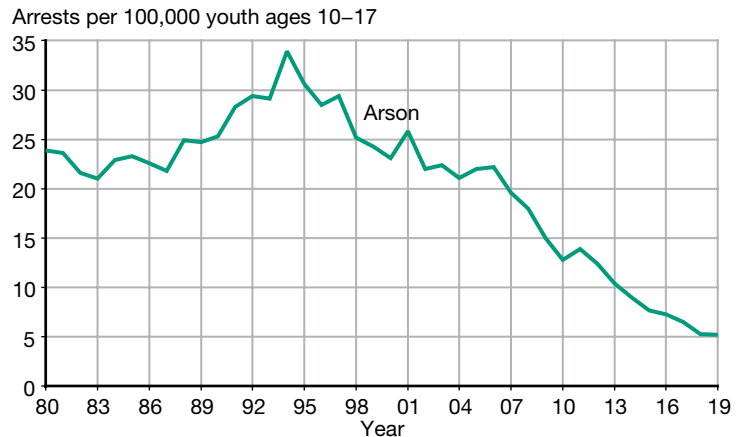
Unlike other Property Crime Index offenses, the majority of juvenile arson arrests involve youth under the age of 15. In 2019, youth under age 15 accounted for more than half (57%) of all juvenile arson arrests. In comparison, 33% of all juvenile burglary arrests and 30% of all juvenile larceny-theft arrests in 2019 involved youth under age 15. Overall, juveniles accounted for 7% of all arrests in 2019, but their share of arson arrests (20%) was considerably higher.

The arson arrest rate declined considerably since the 1994 peak

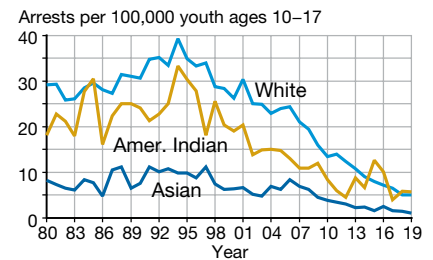
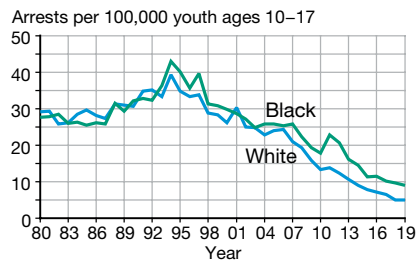
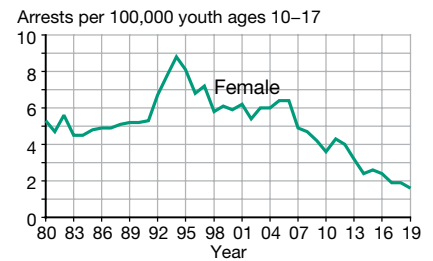
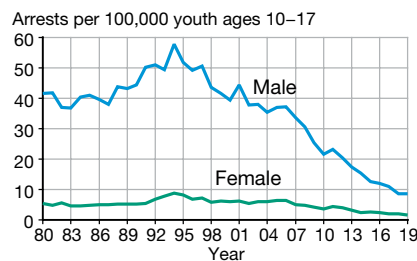
After a period of relative stability in the 1980s, the juvenile arrest rate for arson increased more than 50% between 1987 and 1994. Since the 1994 peak, the rate generally declined through 2019, falling 85% to reach a new low point. This general pattern was replicated in the trends for males and females. Between 1987 and 1994, the male rate increased 52% and the female rate increased 80%. Since the 1994 peak, both rates fell more than 80%; the net result was that, by 2019, both rates were at their lowest level since 1980.

Race-specific trends in arrest rates for arson followed a similar pattern between 1980 and 2019. Rates for White, Black, and American Indian juveniles reached a peak in 1994, while the rate for Asians peaked 3 years earlier. Since their respective peaks and 2019, rates for all race groups declined substantially: 92% for Asians, 87% for Whites, 83% for American Indians, and 79% for Blacks. As a result, rates for White, Black, and Asian youth in 2019 were at their lowest level, while the rate for American Indian youth remained above the 2017 low point.

The juvenile arrest rate for arson in 2019 was 85% below the 1994 peak



Arson arrest rate trends by gender and race



- Compared with other property crimes, the disparity between arson arrest rates for Black juveniles and White juveniles was relatively low. In 2019, the arson arrest rate for Black juveniles was about twice the rate for White juveniles, but for burglary and larceny-theft, the Black rate was more than three times the White rate.

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. Bureau of the Census. (See arrest rate data source note at the end of this chapter for details.)



The juvenile arrest rate for simple assault in 2019 remained well above the 1981 low point

Simple assault accounted for the majority of assault arrests

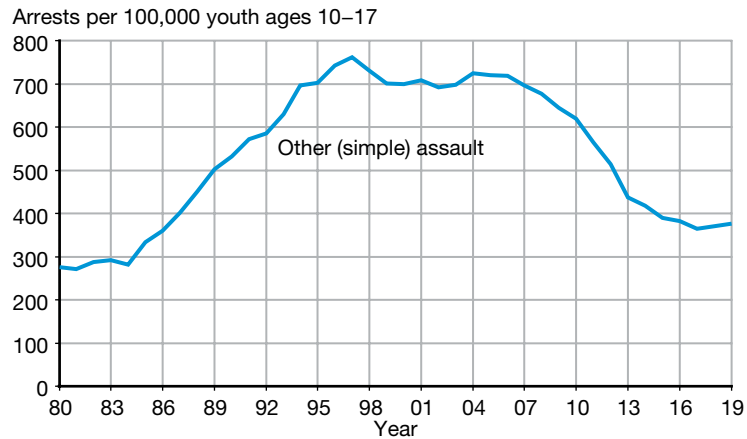
The juvenile arrest rate for simple assault increased 176% between 1980 and 1997, then held relatively stable through the mid-2000s. The rate then fell 50% by 2017. Despite an increase in the last two years, the rate in 2019 remained well below the levels of the late 1990s and mid-2000s. Comparatively, the rate for juvenile aggravated assault arrests declined 71% between its 1994 peak and 2019. As a result of the greater decrease in aggravated assault rates, a larger proportion of assaults that law enforcement handled in recent years has been for the less serious form. In 2019, 82% of assault arrests were for simple assault, compared with 68% in 1980.

Growth in the female arrest rate for simple assault outpaced the male rate

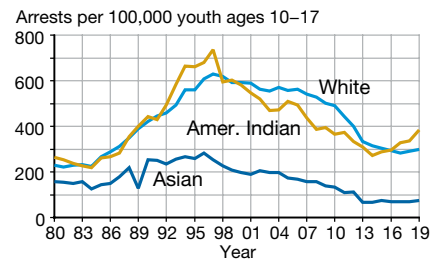
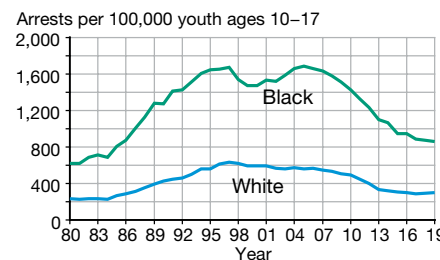
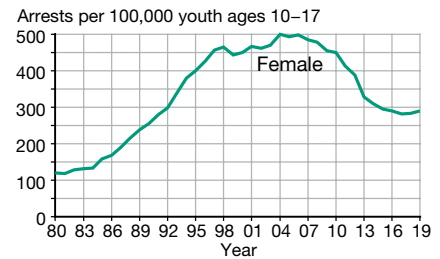
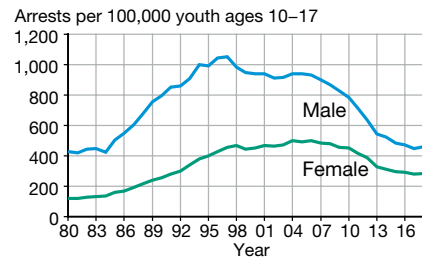
The male juvenile arrest rate for simple assault reached a peak in 1997, while the female rate peaked in 2004. Between 1980 and their respective peaks, the increase in the female arrest rate far outpaced the increase in the male rate (321% vs. 146%). By 2019, both rates were well below their peaks, by 56% for males and by 42% for females. As a result, the female proportion of juvenile arrests for simple assault grew from 21% in 1980 to 38% in 2019.

Simple assault arrest rates peaked in 1996 for Asian youth, 1997 for White and American Indian youth, and 2005 for Black youth. Since their respective peaks and 2019, rates for all race groups declined: 73% for Asians, 52% for Whites, 49% for Blacks, and 48% for American Indian youth.

The juvenile arrest rate for simple assault declined 48% between 2004 and 2019



Simple assault arrest rate trends by gender and race



- The relative decline in juvenile arrest rates over the past 10 years was the same for simple assault and aggravated assault (39% each). However, while the aggravated assault rate reached a historic low in 2019, the simple assault rate remained well above the 1981 low point.

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. Bureau of the Census. (See arrest rate data source note at the end of this chapter for details.)

The juvenile arrest rate for weapons law violations in 2019 was 77% below the 1994 peak

The juvenile weapons arrest fell 65% since 2006

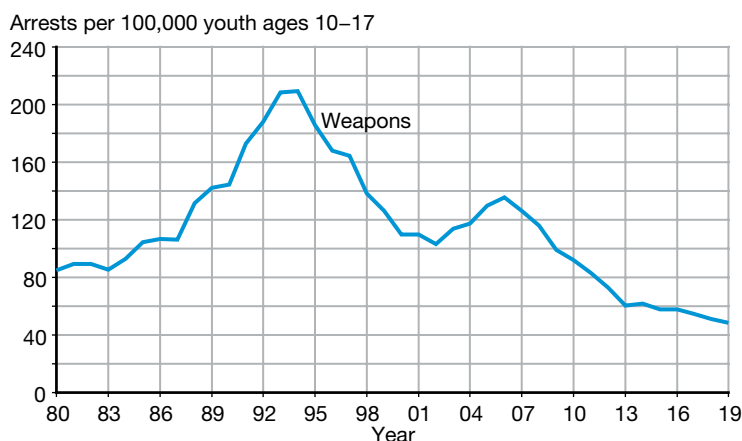
Between 1980 and 1994, the juvenile arrest rate for weapons law violations increased 146%. Then the rate fell substantially, so that by 2002 the rate was just 21% more than the 1980 level. This decline was interrupted between 2002 and 2006, when the juvenile weapons law violation arrest rate increased 32%. The rate has since fallen 65%, bringing the 2019 rate to its lowest level since at least 1980, and 77% below the 1994 peak. It must be remembered that these statistics do not reflect all arrests for weapons offenses. An unknown number of other arrests for more serious crimes also involved a weapons offense as a secondary charge, but the FBI's arrest statistics classify such arrests by their most serious charge and not the weapons offense.

The weapons arrest rate for White and Black youth reached a new low in 2019

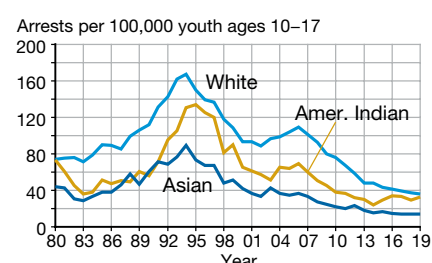
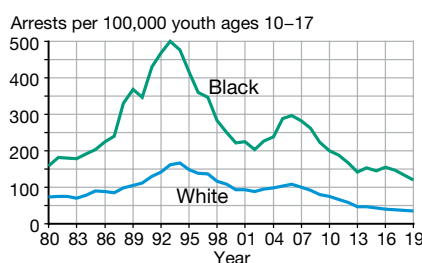
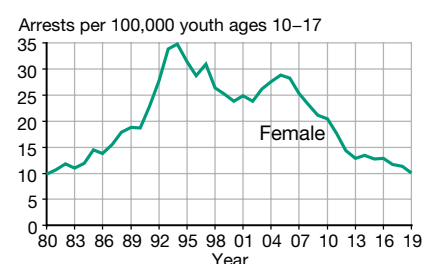
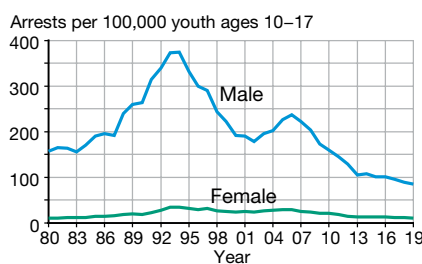
Between 1980 and 1994, the arrest rate for weapons law violations increased proportionally more for females (256%) than for males (139%). Since the peak, both rates experienced brief periods of decline and growth through the mid-2000s, then declined steadily through 2019. While the relative decline in both rates was the same between 2006 and 2019 (64%), the male rate reached a historic low in 2019 but the female rate was 3% above the 1980 low point.

Arrest rates for weapons law violations peaked in 1993 for Black juveniles, in 1994 for White and Asian juveniles, and in 1995 for American Indian juveniles. The increase between 1980 and the peak year was the greatest for Black juveniles (215%), followed by Whites (126%), Asians (104%), and American Indians (83%). Similar to trends for males and females, the rates for all racial groups dropped quickly after their peaks, grew between 2002 and 2006,

The juvenile arrest rate for weapons law violations reached a new low in 2019, 77% below the 1994 peak



Weapons law violation arrest rate trends by gender and race



- Juvenile arrests for weapons law violations typically involve older juveniles (ages 15–17). Since 2005, older juveniles accounted for at least two-thirds of juvenile weapons law violation arrests.

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. Bureau of the Census. (See arrest rate data source note at the end of this chapter for details.)

and fell again. Since 2006, the rate for White youth and Black youth declined (67% and 59%, respectively) to a new low in 2019, while the rate for Asian youth fell 62% to reach a low in 2017,

then stayed within a limited range through 2019. Conversely, the rate for American Indian youth fell 65% to reach a low in 2014 and then increased through 2019.



The juvenile drug abuse violation arrest rate was cut in half in the last 10 years and reached its lowest level since 1980

Racial disparity in drug arrests increased in the 1980s and early 1990s

The annual juvenile arrest rates for drug abuse violations (a category that includes both drug possession and drug sales) varied within a limited range in the 1980s. A closer look at juvenile drug arrest rates finds sharp racial differences. The drug abuse violation arrest rate for White juveniles generally declined between 1980 and 1991 while the Black rate increased dramatically. The White rate fell 54%, compared with a 190% increase for Black youth. In 1980, the White and Black arrest rates were essentially equal, with Black youth involved in 14% of all juvenile drug arrests. By 1991, the Black rate was nearly 6 times the White rate, and Black youth were involved in 52% of all juvenile drug arrests.

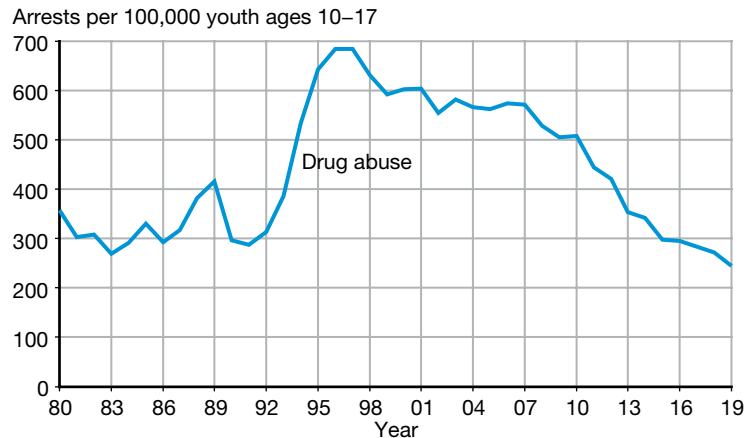
Drug arrests soared for all youth between 1991 and 1997

Between 1991 and 1997, the juvenile arrest rate for drug abuse violations increased 138% and then declined. Most of the decline took place in the last 10 years, when the rate fell 52%. By 2019, the arrest rate reached its lowest level since at least 1980, and was 64% below the 1997 peak.

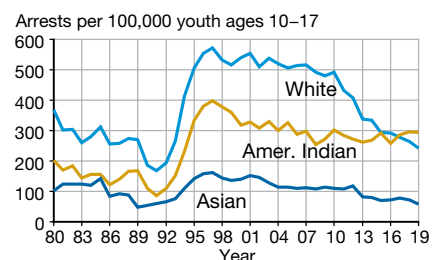
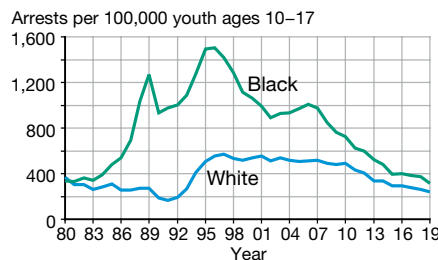
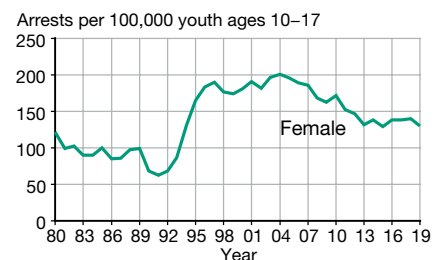
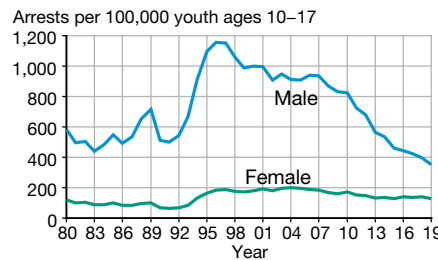
After a period of substantial growth in the early and mid-1990s, the male juvenile arrest rate for drug abuse violations generally declined after 1996 while the female rate remained relatively stable through the mid-2000s. Both rates declined in the last 10 years (57% for males, 24% for females). By 2019, the male rate reached a new historic low, while the female rate was more than twice the 1991 low point.

The drug abuse violation arrest rate for Black youth declined considerably after the 1996 peak, and most of the decline took place since 2006 (69%). Conversely, after reaching a peak in 1997,

The juvenile drug abuse arrest rate declined annually since 2010



Drug abuse violation arrest rate trends by gender and race



- The juvenile drug abuse arrest rate declined for all racial groups in the past 10 years, falling 56% for Black youth, 51% for White youth, 46% for Asian youth, and 3% for American Indian youth.
- Drug abuse arrest rates for American Indian youth in 2019 were 3 times their 1991 low point, and the rate for Asian youth was 22% above their 1989 low point.

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. Bureau of the Census. (See arrest rate data source note at the end of this chapter for details.)

the White rate stayed within a limited range through 2010, then declined 51%. By 2019, the rate for Black youth

was at its lowest level since at least 1980, but the rate for White youth was 44% above the 1991 low point.

The juvenile arrest rate for disorderly conduct in 2019 was 77% below the 1996 peak

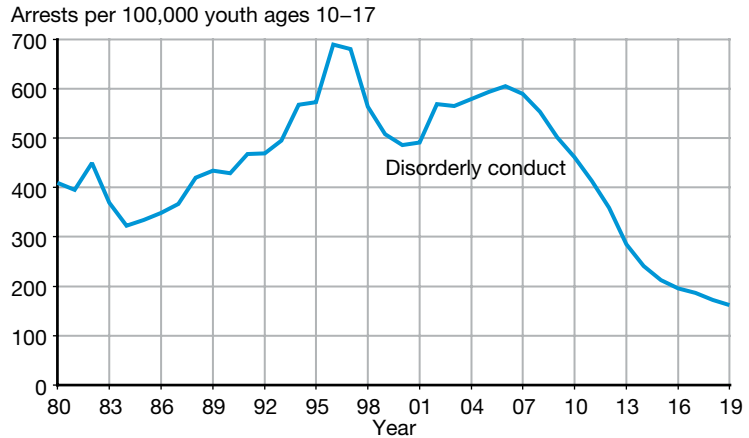
In 2019, the juvenile disorderly conduct arrest rate reached its lowest level since 1980

The juvenile arrest rate for disorderly conduct more than doubled between 1984 and 1996, declined through 2000, then increased again through 2006. This period of increase was followed by 13 years of decline through 2019, during which time the juvenile disorderly conduct arrest rate fell more than 70%, and reached its lowest level since 1980.

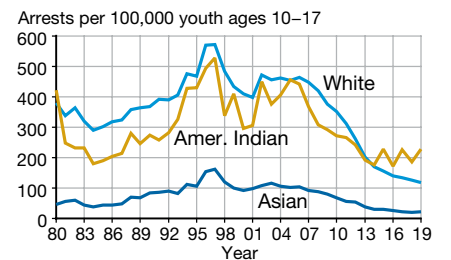
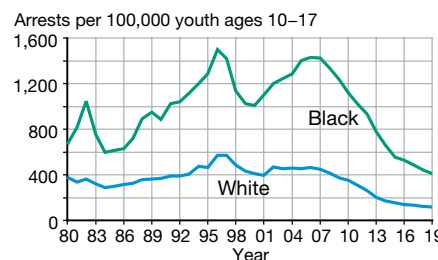
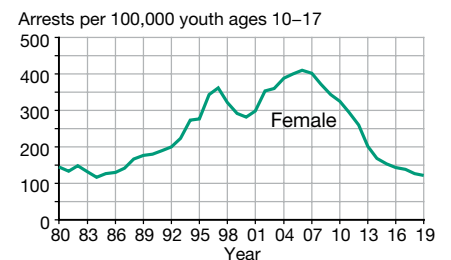
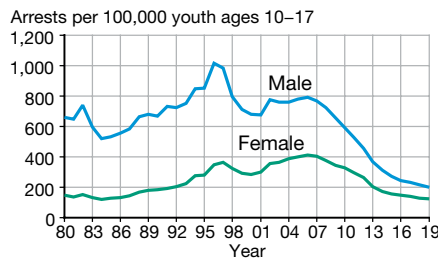
Female and male juvenile arrest rates for disorderly conduct followed a similar pattern

For both females and males, the juvenile arrest rate for disorderly conduct increased between 1984 and 1996, but the increase in the female rate outpaced that of males (192% vs. 97%). After reaching its peak in 1996, the male rate experienced brief periods of decline and growth through 2006. The female rate also declined after 1996, but this decline was followed by a period of growth that saw the rate reach a new peak in 2006. Since 2006, the rate for both males and females declined continuously through 2019, but the decline in the male rate exceeded the decline in the female rate (75% vs. 70%). By 2019, the juvenile male arrest rate for disorderly conduct was at its lowest point since at least 1980, while the female rate was 4% above its 1984 lowpoint. As a result of these changes, the female share of juvenile arrests for disorderly conduct has steadily grown, from 16% in 1984 to 37% in 2019.

The juvenile arrest rate for disorderly conduct declined annually since 2006



Disorderly conduct arrest rate trends by gender and race



- Since 2006, the juvenile arrest rate for disorderly conduct declined 70% or more for White, Black, and Asian youth, and was cut in half for American Indian youth. By 2019, the rates for White youth and Black youth were at their lowest levels since at least 1980, while the rates for American Indian youth and Asian youth were above their historic low years (2016 and 2018, respectively).

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. Bureau of the Census. (See arrest rate data source note at the end of this chapter for details.)

Age-specific arrest rates for violent crime in 2019 were well below their mid-1990s peak for all juvenile age groups

What is the age-crime curve?

Most displays of juvenile and adult arrest rates show data that combines all ages younger than 18 into the juvenile group and all ages 18 and older into the adult group. However, UCR data allow the calculation of age-specific arrest rates. When graphed, these rates show a mountain-shaped curve—which increases from adolescence through young adulthood and then declines—often referred to as the “age-crime curve.” This age-crime curve is seen across offense categories, although the exact shape of the curve may change along with various factors, such as offense or gender. Variations are also seen over time.

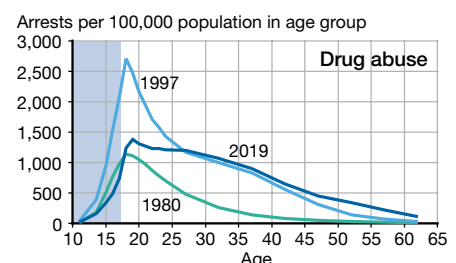
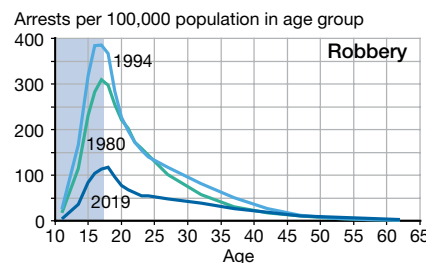
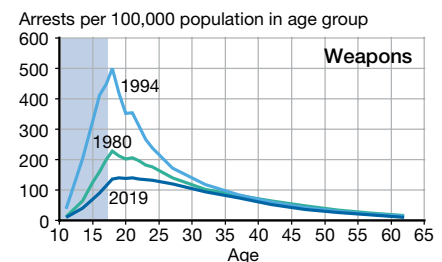
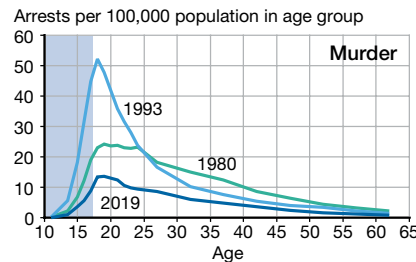
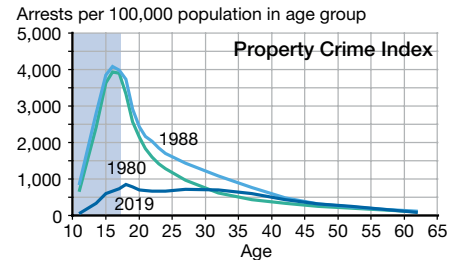
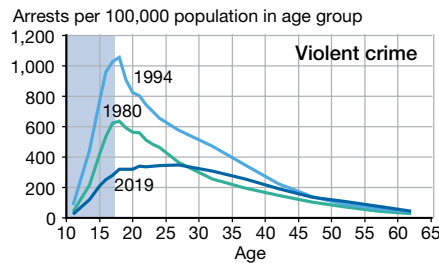
Although the overall juvenile arrest rate for violent crime offenses was 131.7 per 100,000 youth ages 10–17 in 2019, the age-specific rates ranged from 24.4 for children ages 10–12 to 281 for 17-year-olds. The age with the highest rate were adults ages 25 to 29 with a rate of 345.8. In 2019, all ages between 18 and 34 had violent crime arrest rates greater than 300. After youth ages 10–12, the age group with the next lowest rate were adults age 60 (44.7 per 100,000 persons ages 60–64).

The shape of the age-crime curve has changed for some offenses

For both murder and aggravated assault, age-specific arrest rates in 2019 were substantially below the levels of the mid-1990s. The biggest declines were in the age groups that had the highest rates. For example, between the mid-1990s peak and 2019, age-specific murder arrest rates fell 60% or more for all persons under age 25, and the rates for aggravated assault fell more than 50% for persons under age 23.

Simple assault arrest rates in 2019 were higher than the rates in 1980 for all ju-

The shape of the age-crime curve varies across offense categories and over time within offenses

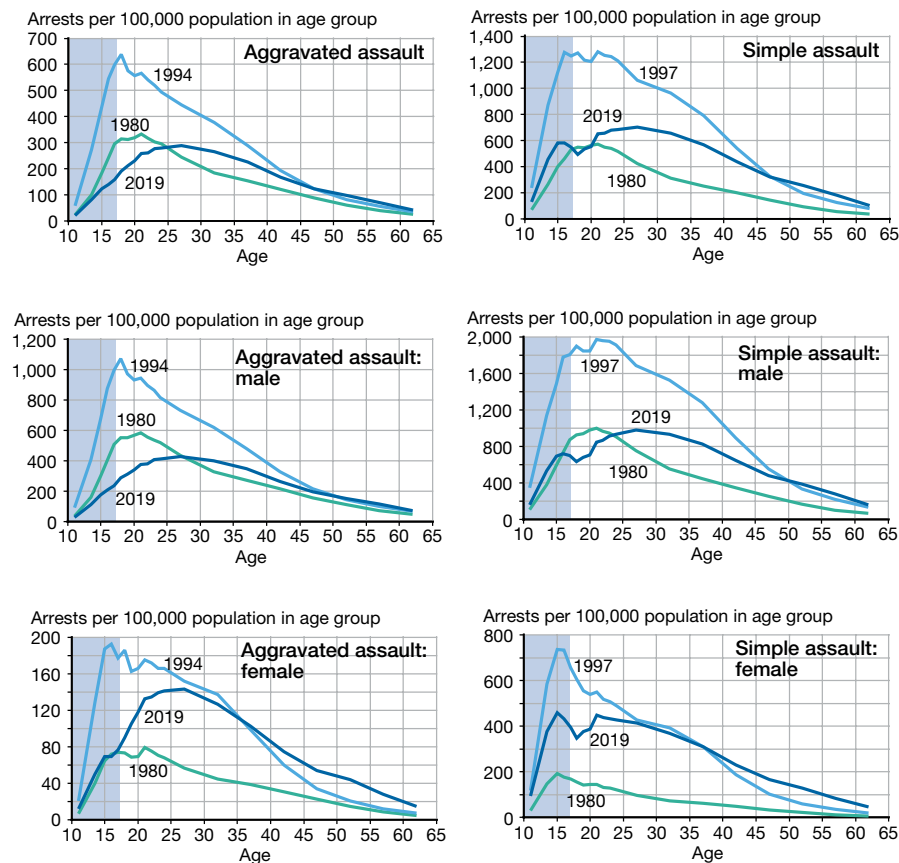


- Violent crime arrest rates were higher in 2019 than in 1980 for adults age 30 and over; for juveniles, 2019 rates were well below the rates in 1980.
- Property Crime Index arrest rates in 2019 were below 1980 rates for ages younger than 30; for youth younger than 18, the rates in 2019 were at least 80% below the rates in 1980.
- For murder and robbery, 2019 arrests rates declined for all age groups from their peak year, and the relative decline was greater for juveniles than young adults. For example, murder arrest rates dropped an average of 81% for youth ages 15–17, 71% for young adults ages 18–20, and 64% for young adults ages 21–24.
- The 2019 arrest rates for weapons offenses were less than the 1980 rates for all ages, and the largest relative declines were for those ages 15 through 18.
- Unlike other offense categories, the 2019 arrest rates for drug abuse violations were higher than the 1980 arrest rates for all adults age 18 or older.

Note: Rates are shown for 2019, 1980, and the year with the highest juvenile arrest rate peak for each offense.

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. Bureau of the Census. (See arrest rate data source note at the end of this chapter for details.)

Age-specific arrest rates for aggravated assault and simple assault vary by gender



- Overall, the 2019 aggravated assault arrest rates for youth younger than 15 were about the same as in 1980.
- The 2019 age-specific simple assault arrests rates for juveniles were higher than the corresponding rates in 1980 for all but persons ages 18–20, but the patterns varied by gender. Across all ages, 2019 simple assault arrest rates for females were higher than in 1980; for males, the rates in 2019 were lower than in 1980 for persons ages 16–23.
- Assault arrest rates for females were well below the rates for males, but the magnitude of the difference varied by offense. For example, for simple assault, female rates for persons under age 23 were about half the rate of males of the same age; for aggravated assault, female rates were about one-third the corresponding rates for males.

Note: Rates are shown for 2019, 1980, and the year with the highest juvenile arrest rate peak for each offense.

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. Bureau of the Census. (See arrest rate data source note at the end of this chapter for details.)

venile age groups, and for adults ages 21 and older, but the 2019 rates were below the 1997 level for all age groups through age 45. In fact, between 1997 and 2019, age-specific arrests rates for simple assault fell 45% or more for each juvenile age group as well as adults ages 18–24. However, unlike the pattern in 1997, when the simple assault arrest rate peaked at age 21, the rate in 2019 peaked at age 27.

Age-crime curves vary by gender within offense categories

A closer look at the age-specific arrest rates for assault by gender shows some very different patterns for males and females. The age-specific arrest rates for both aggravated and simple assault declined for males and females from their respective peak years through 2019, but the relative declines were greater for males than females for all offense-age combinations.

For aggravated assault, 2019 arrest rates for males were below the levels of 1980 for all age groups under 30, but for females, age-specific rates in 2019 were higher than the corresponding rates in 1980 for all but 16-year-olds.

For simple assault, the 2019 age-specific arrest rates for males were below the 1980 rates for persons ages 16–23, while the rates for females in 2019 were above the 1980 rates for all age groups.

Clearance figures implicate juveniles in about 1 in 20 murders, 1 in 15 aggravated assaults, and 1 in 7 robberies in 2019

Clearances give insight into the relative involvement of juveniles and adults in crime

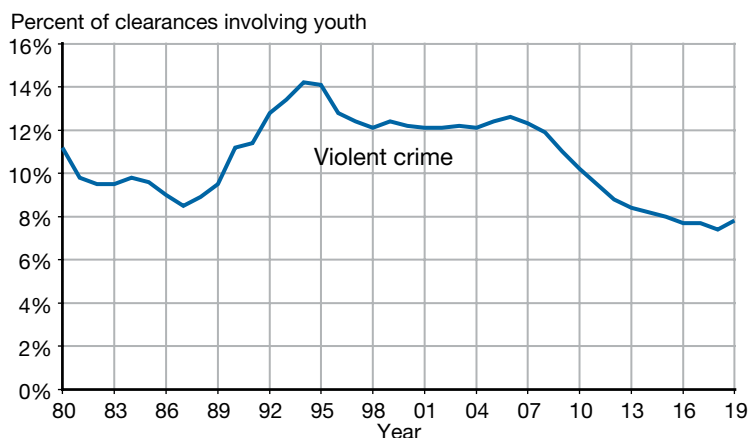
Clearance statistics measure the proportion of reported crimes that are resolved by an arrest or other, exceptional means (e.g., death of the person who committed the crime, unwillingness of the victim to cooperate). A single arrest may result in many clearances if the person arrested committed several crimes. Or multiple arrests may result in a single clearance if the crime was committed by a group of people. The FBI reports information on the proportion of clearances that involved persons under age 18. This statistic is a better indicator of the proportion of crime committed by this age group than is the arrest proportion, although there are some concerns that even the clearance statistic overestimates the juvenile proportion of crimes. Nevertheless, trends in clearance proportions are reasonable indicators of changes in the relative involvement of juveniles in various crimes.

The juvenile share of violent crime returned to levels of the late 1980s

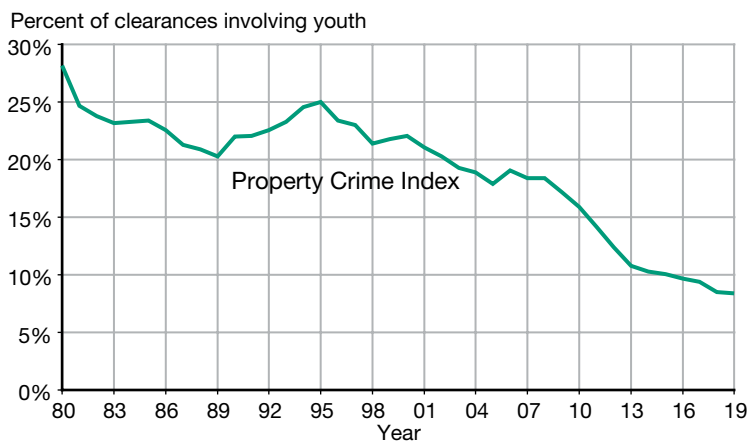
The FBI's *Crime in the United States* series shows that the proportion of violent crimes attributed to juveniles has declined nearly every year since 2006. The juvenile proportion of violent crimes cleared by arrest (or exceptional means) grew from an average of 9% in the 1980s to 14% in 1994, then fell to 12% in 1998, where it remained through most of the 2000s. By 2011, the proportion fell below 10%, and has remained at or below 8% since 2015. In 2019, juveniles committed 1 in 13 violent crimes known to law enforcement.

Each of the violent crime offenses showed an increase in juvenile clearances between 1980 and the mid-1990s. The juvenile proportion of

The juvenile proportion of violent crimes cleared by arrest or exceptional means has remained relatively stable in the last 5 years



The juvenile share of property crime has fallen substantially since 1980



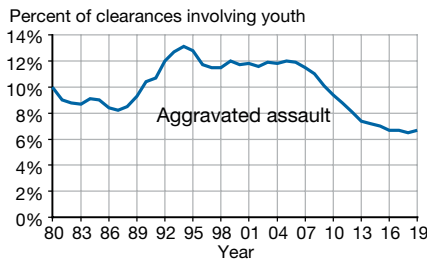
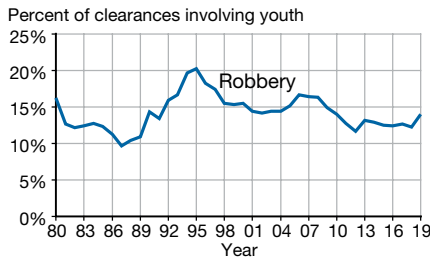
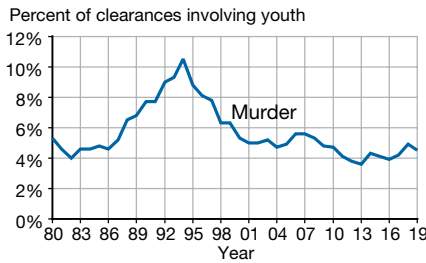
Note: Prior to 2013, rape is included in the calculation for violent crimes, but is excluded in the calculation for 2013 through 2019.

Source: Authors' analysis of the FBI's *Crime in the United States* reports for 1980 through 2019.

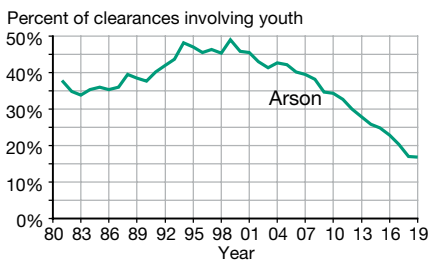
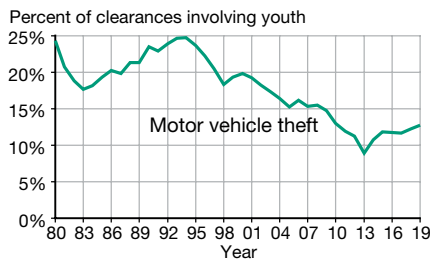
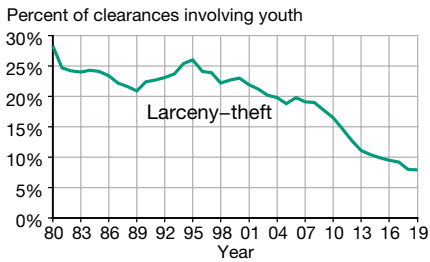
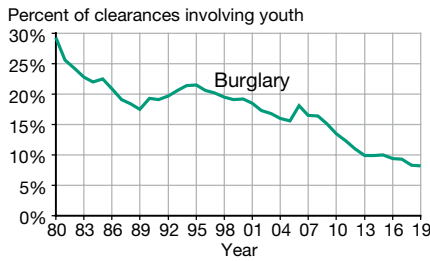
murder clearances peaked in 1994 at 10% and then fell. Between 2010 and 2019, the proportion has stayed within a limited range, averaging 4% over the past 10 years. The juvenile proportion of robbery clearances peaked in 1995 (20%), and then declined through the mid-2000s. In the last 10 years, the proportion varied between 12% and 14%; in 2019, about 1 in 7 (14%) rob-

beries were attributed to juveniles. After reaching a peak in 1994 (13%), the juvenile proportion of aggravated assault clearances was relatively constant through the mid-2000s, and then declined through 2019. The proportion stayed within a limited range over the last 5 years, and well below the 1987 low point.

Clearance statistics imply that juvenile involvement in aggravated assault has declined since 2006



In 2019, the juvenile shares of clearances for burglary, larceny-theft, and arson were at their lowest points since 1980



Note: Arson clearance data were first reported in 1981.

Source: Authors' analysis of the FBI's *Crime in the United States* reports for 1980 through 2019.

A juvenile committed roughly 1 in 12 property crimes known to law enforcement in 2019

In the 1980s, the juvenile proportion of cleared Property Crime Index offenses decreased from 28% to 20%. This proportion then increased in the early 1990s, peaking in 1995 at 25%. After 1995, the juvenile proportion of clearances for Property Crime Index offenses generally declined, so that by 2019 it was at its lowest level (8%) since at least 1980.

By 2019, juvenile clearance proportions for the crimes of burglary, larceny-theft, and arson were at their lowest levels since 1980 (8%, 8%, and 17%, respectively). For motor vehicle theft, the juvenile proportion of clearances reached a low-point in 2014 (9%) and then increased to 13% in 2019.

The juvenile proportion of crimes cleared varied with community size

In general, larger cities had a lower proportion of clearances attributed to juvenile arrests for violent crimes and Property Crime Index offenses in 2019.

Percent of clearances involving juveniles, 2019:

Population served by reporting agencies	Violent crime	Property Crime Index
All agencies	7.8%	8.4%
1 million or more	7.3	5.9
500,000 to 999,999	7.1	7.7
250,000 to 499,999	8.0	10.1
100,000 to 249,000	8.1	9.4
50,000 to 99,999	8.0	9.0
25,000 to 49,999	8.1	8.4
10,000 to 24,999	8.1	7.3
under 10,000	10.5	8.0

Source: Authors' analysis of the FBI's *Crime in the United States 2019*.



In 2019, about one-third of the states had a juvenile violent crime arrest rate above the national average

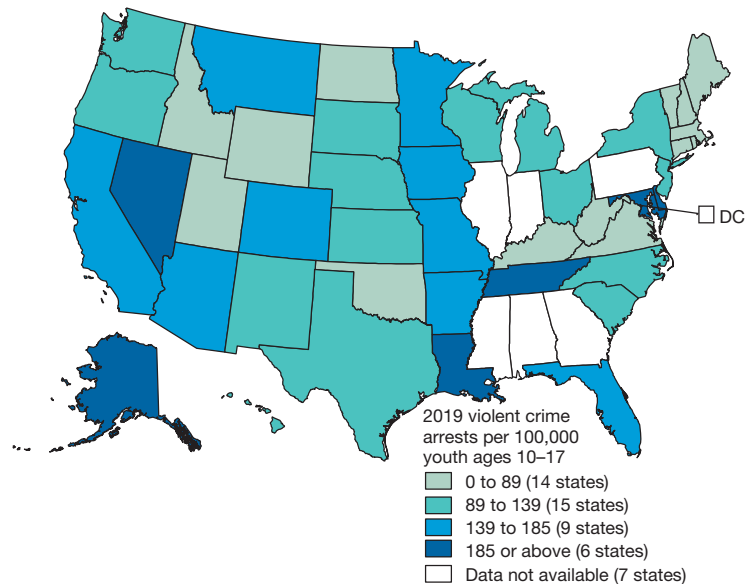
Among states with at least minimally adequate reporting, those with high juvenile violent crime arrest rates in 2019 were Delaware, Maryland, and Nevada

State	Reporting population coverage	Arrests of youth under age 18 per 100,000 youth ages 10–17, 2019					State	Reporting population coverage	Arrests of youth under age 18 per 100,000 youth ages 10–17, 2019				
		Violent Crime	Robbery	Aggrav. assault	Other assault	Weapon			Violent Crime	Robbery	Aggrav. assault	Other assault	Weapon
U.S. total	77%	139	53	83	378	49	Missouri	63%	165	52	107	460	36
Alabama	2	35	23	12	46	35	Montana	88	183	4	178	638	18
Alaska	94	198	33	158	514	25	Nebraska	91	100	67	32	828	59
Arizona	77	181	51	127	618	50	Nevada	96	298	84	212	679	93
Arkansas	88	144	28	113	603	39	New Hampshire	94	44	10	31	534	3
California	97	168	72	94	187	67	New Jersey	100	111	52	57	131	68
Colorado	85	145	51	92	398	68	New Mexico	65	129	17	108	498	49
Connecticut	100	76	41	34	485	43	New York	51	106	49	54	203	26
Delaware	100	327	116	210	906	64	North Carolina	69	104	54	44	308	51
Dist. of Columbia	0	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	North Dakota	100	80	9	68	699	29
Florida	100	157	65	89	412	45	Ohio	79	102	40	60	505	35
Georgia	22	99	33	62	392	56	Oklahoma	99	89	25	62	205	40
Hawaii	81	90	59	31	344	15	Oregon	88	116	35	80	316	21
Idaho	98	77	7	65	378	49	Pennsylvania	25	197	49	144	404	50
Illinois	1	327	180	140	889	160	Rhode Island	100	85	26	57	428	95
Indiana	40	94	20	73	323	42	South Carolina	84	115	37	73	516	90
Iowa	82	168	26	143	632	45	South Dakota	92	118	15	100	750	122
Kansas	55	104	19	84	427	30	Tennessee	95	194	70	119	618	66
Kentucky	97	67	30	34	213	23	Texas	90	136	48	85	336	25
Louisiana	75	243	47	188	689	106	Utah	89	65	16	48	389	46
Maine	100	26	7	20	441	6	Vermont	100	60	11	48	443	32
Maryland	100	323	198	122	872	103	Virginia	96	80	39	39	348	34
Massachusetts	86	86	16	70	226	18	Washington	93	124	60	62	418	33
Michigan	96	92	23	67	289	31	West Virginia	53	21	3	18	104	2
Minnesota	96	145	70	72	418	55	Wisconsin	94	136	42	91	451	77
Mississippi	42	76	29	42	373	60	Wyoming	88	66	0	66	849	22

NA = Arrest counts were not available for the District of Columbia in the FBI's *Crime in the United States 2019*.

Notes: Arrest rates for jurisdictions with less than complete reporting may not be representative of the entire state. In the map, rates were classified as "Data not available" when agencies with jurisdiction over more than 50% of their state's population did not report. Readers should consult the related technical note at the end of this chapter. Detail may not add to totals because of rounding.

Source: Analysis of arrest data from *Crime in the United States 2019* (Washington, DC: Federal Bureau of Investigation, 2019) tables 3 and 22, and population data from the National Center for Health Statistics' *Vintage 2019 Postcensal Estimates of the Resident Population of the United States (April 1, 2010, July 1, 2010–July 1, 2019), 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 July 9, 2020].



High juvenile property crime arrest rates in 2019 did not necessarily mean high violent crime arrest rates

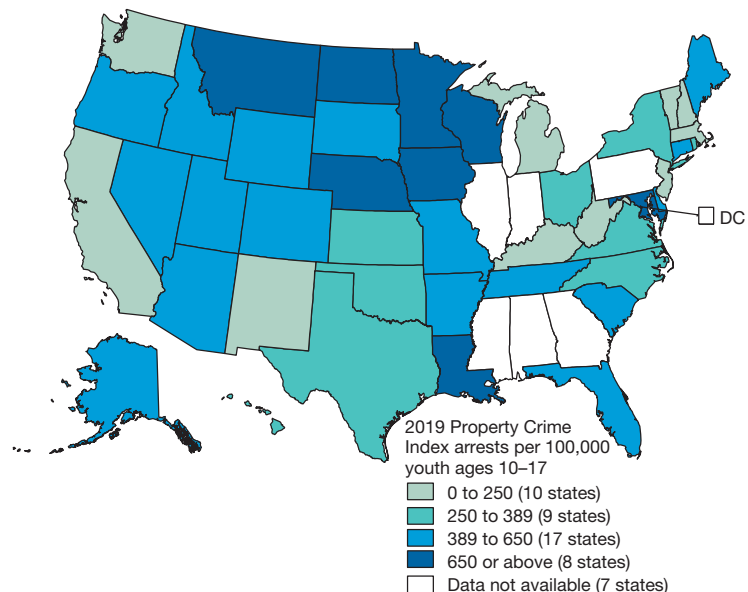
Among states with at least minimally adequate reporting, those with high juvenile Property Crime Index arrest rates in 2019 were Montana, Nebraska, and North Dakota

State	Reporting population coverage	Arrests of youth under age 18 per 100,000 youth ages 10–17, 2019					State	Reporting population coverage	Arrests of youth under age 18 per 100,000 youth ages 10–17, 2019				
		Property Crime Index	Burglary	Larceny-theft	Motor vehicle theft	Vandalism			Property Crime Index	Burglary	Larceny-theft	Motor vehicle theft	Vandalism
U.S. total	77%	389	67	270	46	93	Missouri	63%	461	60	342	55	109
Alabama	2	808	0	785	23	69	Montana	88	724	68	588	60	269
Alaska	94	444	152	205	72	149	Nebraska	91	952	48	807	85	323
Arizona	77	489	84	343	57	254	Nevada	96	414	74	295	39	110
Arkansas	88	506	82	387	34	94	New Hampshire	94	208	22	170	15	167
California	97	168	61	74	30	54	New Jersey	100	247	49	176	19	56
Colorado	85	619	64	466	77	170	New Mexico	65	183	30	142	10	65
Connecticut	100	400	61	270	65	85	New York	51	359	62	254	39	147
Delaware	100	597	157	352	80	152	North Carolina	69	383	91	253	34	65
Dist. of Columbia	0	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	North Dakota	100	747	92	565	79	245
Florida	100	597	140	347	107	44	Ohio	79	354	50	275	25	94
Georgia	22	397	67	302	24	54	Oklahoma	99	357	69	239	42	47
Hawaii	81	288	35	240	9	19	Oregon	88	465	60	355	36	144
Idaho	98	439	56	342	24	129	Pennsylvania	25	377	60	278	32	125
Illinois	1	441	33	334	40	167	Rhode Island	100	358	76	239	25	199
Indiana	40	312	34	241	35	48	South Carolina	84	444	85	323	31	77
Iowa	82	694	108	500	74	231	South Dakota	92	623	55	471	90	178
Kansas	55	313	41	240	23	119	Tennessee	95	566	81	362	117	128
Kentucky	97	272	60	158	44	50	Texas	90	312	47	227	35	45
Louisiana	75	701	173	453	65	105	Utah	89	616	48	533	26	209
Maine	100	462	69	352	28	181	Vermont	100	251	78	143	26	147
Maryland	100	656	108	443	93	142	Virginia	96	345	32	287	21	54
Massachusetts	86	122	29	73	17	45	Washington	93	276	56	192	24	110
Michigan	96	278	38	208	29	45	West Virginia	53	33	8	21	3	20
Minnesota	96	700	54	560	80	123	Wisconsin	94	699	62	545	84	276
Mississippi	42	439	102	292	42	45	Wyoming	88	595	88	446	57	241

NA = Arrest counts were not available for the District of Columbia in the FBI's *Crime in the United States 2019*.

Notes: Arrest rates for jurisdictions with less than complete reporting may not be representative of the entire state. In the map, rates were classified as "Data not available" when agencies with jurisdiction over more than 50% of their state's population did not report. Readers should consult the related technical note at the end of this chapter. Detail may not add to totals because of rounding.

Source: Analysis of arrest data from *Crime in the United States 2019* (Washington, DC: Federal Bureau of Investigation, 2019) tables 3 and 22, and population data from the National Center for Health Statistics' *Vintage 2019 Postcensal Estimates of the Resident Population of the United States (April 1, 2010, July 1, 2010–July 1, 2019), 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 July 9, 2020].





What do police do with juveniles they arrest?

Many large local police departments have personnel designated to address problems related to juveniles

The Bureau of Justice Statistics' Local Police Departments, 2016 report, part of the Law Enforcement Management and Administrative Statistics (LEMAS) data collection series, provides detailed characteristics of an estimated 12,261 local police departments throughout the U.S. In 2016, these local departments employed nearly 600,000 full-time persons, and more than 468,000 of these employees were sworn personnel with full arrest powers.

Many local police departments had personnel designated to address specific crime-related problems or serve in various functions. In some instances, these issues were addressed by a specialized unit that had full-time personnel. Departments serving 100,000 or more residents were more likely than those serving less than 100,000 residents to have the personnel necessary to operate such units.

In 2016, the majority of local police departments serving 100,000 or more

residents assigned personnel full-time to specialized units for child abuse (72%), drug enforcement (89%), gangs (71%), domestic violence (69%), school safety (59%), and juvenile crimes (50%). However, the proportions were much lower among departments serving less than 100,000 residents: child abuse (6%), drug enforcement (14%), gangs (3%), domestic violence (6%), school safety (11%), and juvenile crimes (7%).

Most arrested juveniles were referred to court

In nine states, statutes define some persons younger than age 18 as adults for prosecution purposes. These persons are not under the original jurisdiction of the juvenile justice system; they are under the jurisdiction of the criminal justice system. For arrested youth who are younger than 18 and under the original jurisdiction of their state's juvenile justice system, the FBI's UCR Program monitors what happens as a result of the arrest. This is the only aspect of the UCR data collection that is sensitive to state variations in the legal definition of a juvenile.

In 2019, 42% of arrests involving youth eligible in their state for processing in the juvenile justice system were handled within law enforcement agencies, 49% were referred to juvenile court, and 4% were referred directly to criminal court. The others were referred to a welfare agency or to another police agency. The proportion of juvenile arrests referred to juvenile court in 2019 was less than the proportion in 1980 (58%).

In 2019, juvenile arrests were less likely to result in referral to juvenile court in large cities (population over 250,000) than in moderate-size cities (population 100,000–250,000) or small cities (population less than 100,000). In large cities, 43% of juvenile arrests resulted in referral to juvenile court, compared with 56% in moderate-size cities and 49% in small cities. Conversely, a larger proportion of juvenile arrests in larger cities (50%) were handled in the department and released than in moderate-size (43%) or small cities (42%).

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National Center for Health Statistics. 2012. *Intercensal Estimates of the Resident Population of the United States for July 1, 2000–July 1, 2009, by Year,*

Arrest rate source note

Arrest estimates developed by the Bureau of Justice Statistics for 1980–2014 were retrieved from their *Arrest Data Analysis Tool* [available online at www.bjs.gov/index.cfm?ty=datool&url=/arrests/index.cfm, retrieved December 12, 2018]; the National Center for Juvenile Justice developed arrest estimates for 2015–2019 based on data published in the FBI’s *Crime in the United States* reports for the respective years; population data for 1980–1989 is 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 is 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 is from the National Center for Health Statistics (prepared under a collabor-

ative 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, 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 2010–2019 are from the National Center for Health Statistics (prepared under a collaborative arrangement with the U.S. Census Bureau), *Vintage 2019 Postcensal Estimates of the Resident Population of the United States (April 1, 2010, July 1, 2010–July 1, 2019), 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 July 9, 2020, following release by the U.S. Census Bureau of the unbridged vintage 2019 postcensal estimates by 5-year age group, retrieved on July 29, 2020].

Technical note

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 ac-

tivity 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.

County, Single-Year of Age (0, 1, 2, . . . , 85 Years and Over), Bridged Race, Hispanic Origin, and Sex [data files]. Prepared under a collaborative arrangement with the U.S. Census Bureau. Available online at www.cdc.gov/nchs/nvss/bridged_race.htm [released 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].

National Center for Health Statistics. 2020. *Postcensal Estimates of the Resident Population of the United States (April 1, 2010, July 1, 2010–July 1, 2019) by Year, County, Single-year of Age (0, 1, 2, . . . , 85 Years and Over), Bridged Race, Hispanic Origin, and Sex (Vintage 2019)* [data files]. Prepared under a collaborative arrangement with the U.S. Census Bureau. Available online: cdc.gov/nchs/nvss/

[bridged_race.htm](#) [released July 9, 2020, following release by the U.S. Census Bureau of the unbridged vintage 2019 postcensal estimates by 5-year age groups].

U.S. Census Bureau. *U.S. Population Estimates by Age, Sex, Race, and Hispanic Origin: 1980 to 1999* [data files]. Available online [released April 11, 2000].