

FACT SHEET



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UNIVERSITY of ALASKA ANCHORAGE

OCTOBER 2013, AJSAC 13-10

Juvenile Justice Referrals in Alaska, 2003–2013

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This fact sheet presents juvenile justice statistics from the Alaska Department of Health and Social Services (DHSS), Division of Juvenile Justice (DJJ) for state fiscal years FY 2003 to FY 2013. Law enforcement agencies make referrals to DJJ if there is probable cause that a youth committed an offense which would be criminal if committed by an adult, committed a felony traffic offense, or committed an alcohol offense after two prior convictions for minor consuming in District Court. Youth who commit very serious offenses such as murder and sexual assault may be waived, or moved, to the adult criminal justice system. Youth waived to adult court may be prosecuted at the discretion of the district attorney.

DJJ is a restorative justice agency whose mission is to hold juvenile offenders accountable for their behavior, promote the safety and restoration of victims and communities, and assist offenders and their families in developing skills to prevent crime. DJJ has three core services: Probation, Detention, and Treatment, all overseen by the state office. This report focuses on data for youth referrals to the *Probation* component of DJJ (which also processes intake) for the period FY03–FY13.

DJJ services are directed through four separate regional administrative units that differ widely in demographic and geographic makeup. The *Anchorage Region* (ANC) covers the Anchorage metropolitan area. The *Northern Region* (NRO) includes Fairbanks and much of rural Alaska from Bethel to Barrow. The *South Central Region* (SCRO) covers the southern portion of the state from the Aleutians in the west through Prince William Sound in

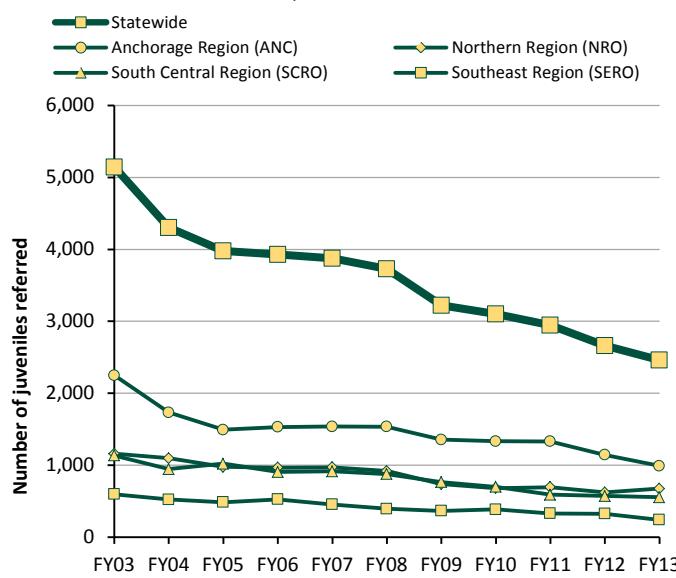
the east. The *Southeast Region* (SERO) covers the entire Southeast panhandle from Yakutat to Metlakatla.

The data presented in the figures and tables below reflect the number of *unique juveniles*, *referrals*, and *charges* for state fiscal years 2003–2013. All of the data were extracted from the DJJ Data Trends website. (Readers can access source reports online at: <http://dhss.alaska.gov/djj/Pages/GeneralInfo/Stats.aspx>.) For ease of reference, a glossary of terms commonly used in juvenile justice can be found at the end of this fact sheet.

Unique Juveniles. Some juveniles are referred to DJJ for intake multiple times within a year. The data presented in Figure 1 represent the number of

FIGURE 1

Total Number of Unique Juveniles Referred to the Alaska Division of Juvenile Justice, FY 2003–2013



Source of data: Alaska Division of Juvenile Justice, "Statistical Overview," <http://dhss.alaska.gov/djj/Pages/Overview.aspx>

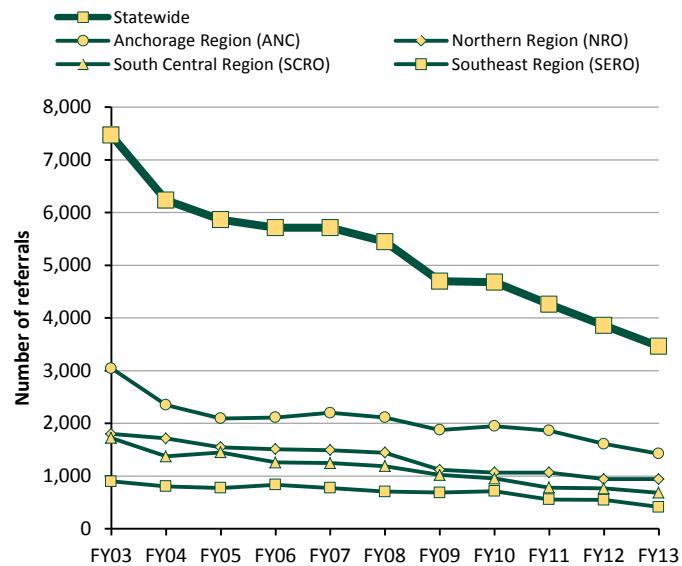
unduplicated counts of juveniles who were referred to DJJ during the FY03–FY13 time period. The number of juveniles who were referred to DJJ for intake declined by 52.1% from 5,143 in FY 2003 to 2,462 in FY 2013. The number of unique juveniles referred to DJJ declined for each of DJJ’s four regions: ANC (-55.9%), NRO (-41.7%), SCRO (-51.2%), and SERO (-59.7%).

Referrals. A *referral* is a request by a law enforcement agency for a DJJ response following the arrest of a juvenile or as a result of the submission of a police investigation report alleging the commission of a crime or a violation of a court order. The juvenile probation officer (JPO) is the first point of contact for an offender following an arrest by police. For the period spanning FY03–FY13, the **number** of referrals made to DJJ decreased by 53.6% statewide, from 7,466 in FY03 to 3,462 in FY13 (see Figure 2). The total number of DJJ referrals also decreased in each region during the FY03–FY13 time period: ANC (-53.2%), NRO (-47.6%), SCRO (-60.4%), and SERO (-54.1%).

Charges. DJJ defines a *charge* as an individual offense or violation of law. Some referrals include multiple charges. Individual charges are categorized according to *class* and *type*. Referrals to DJJ may include more than one charge class or charge type. The total **number** of charges, statewide, declined during the FY03–FY13 period, from 11,708 in FY03 to 5,655 in FY13 (-51.7%).

FIGURE 2

Total Number of Referrals to the Alaska Division of Juvenile Justice, FY 2003–2013



Source of data: Alaska Division of Juvenile Justice, "Statistical Overview,"
<http://dhss.alaska.gov/djj/Pages/Overview.aspx>

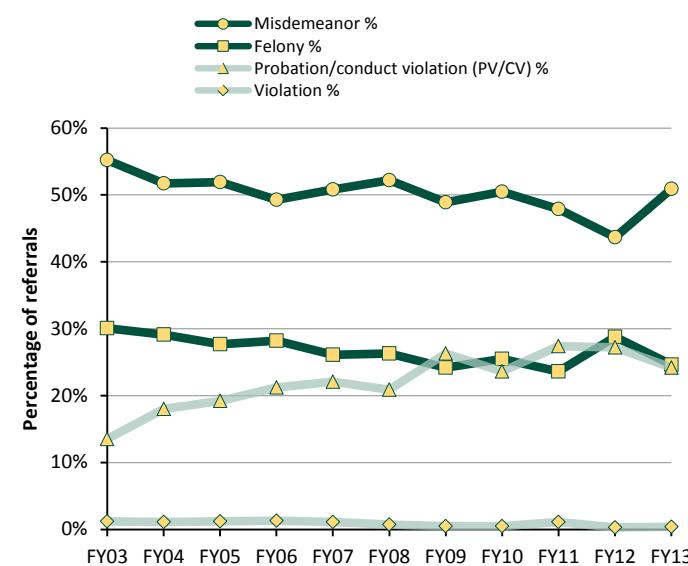
Charge Class. DJJ separates charges into four **charge classes**: *felonies*, *misdemeanors*, *probation/conduct violations*, and *violation/other*. Between FY03 and FY13 the total **number** of referrals within each charge class declined. The total number of *felony* offenses referred to DJJ dropped from 3,520 in FY03 to 1,390 in FY13 (-60.5%). *Misdemeanor* offenses declined from 6,465 in FY03 to 2,877 in FY13 (-55.5%). The number of *probation violations/conduct violations* fell from 1,580 in FY03 to 1,367 in FY13 (-13.5%). Offenses classified as *violation/other* dropped from 143 in FY03 to 21 in FY13. (These data are not represented in Figure 3.)

The charge class composition of DJJ referrals underwent noticeable change during the FY03–FY13 period. In FY03, 30.1% of all DJJ referrals included *felony offenses*; by FY13 this **proportion** declined to 24.6% (see Figure 3). In similar fashion, the proportion of offenses classified as *misdemeanors* dropped from 55.2% in FY03 to 50.9% in FY13. The proportion of offenses classified as *violation/other* declined from 1.2% in FY03 to 0.4% in FY13. In contrast to these trends, the proportion of offenses classified as *probation/conduct violations* **nearly doubled**, from 13.5% of all offenses in FY03 to 24.2% in FY13 (+83.3%).

Charge Type. DJJ separates charges into seven **offense types**: *person offenses*, *property offenses*,

FIGURE 3

Offenses Referred to the Alaska Division of Juvenile Justice by Charge Class, FY 2003–2013



Source of data: Alaska Division of Juvenile Justice, "Offenses by Charge Class,"
<http://dhss.alaska.gov/djj/Pages/OffenseClasses.aspx>

probation/conduct violations, drug & alcohol offenses, public order offenses, weapons offenses, and miscellaneous offenses. Between FY03 and FY13 the **number** of referrals within each charge type declined substantially. The number of offenses classified as *crimes against persons* dropped from 1,965 in FY03 to 1,048 in FY13 (-46.7%) while referrals for *property offenses* declined from 6,325 to 2,208 (-65.1%). The number of *probation/conduct violations* offenses fell from 1,578 in FY03 to 1,367 in FY13 (-13.4%). Referrals for *drug & alcohol offenses* declined from 877 in FY03 to 515 in FY13 (-41.3%). Declines were also seen in *public order* (-42.9%), *weapon* (-52.7%), and *miscellaneous* (-58.9%) offenses (These data are not represented in Figure 4.)

Figure 4 presents the composition of offense types for DJJ referrals for the period FY03–FY13. Between FY03 and FY13, the **proportion** of all offense charges attributable to *property offenses* declined substantially – from 54.0% of all referral charges in FY03 to 39.0% of all referral charges in FY13 (-27.8%). Other offenses categorized by DJJ as *miscellaneous* remained stable, increasing slightly from 0.8% of all referral charges in FY03 to 0.7% in FY13. Conversely, the proportion of *person offenses* increased from 16.8% in FY03 to 18.5% in FY13 (+10.1%). There were also increases in the proportions of *probation/conduct violations* (+79.3%),

drug & alcohol offenses (+21.3%), and *public order offenses* (+16.9%). The proportion of charges attributed to *weapons offenses* remained unchanged at 1.6% from FY03 to FY13.

Offender demographics. Demographic information for individual youth is collected by DJJ at each referral intake. (All race/ethnicity data collected by DJJ is reported by the referred juvenile at each referral intake.) Table 1 presents the overall demographic characteristics of the youth referred to DJJ for each fiscal year. Because some individuals are referred multiple times within each fiscal year, the data presented in Table 1 do **not** reflect the demographic characteristics of the unduplicated counts referred to DJJ.

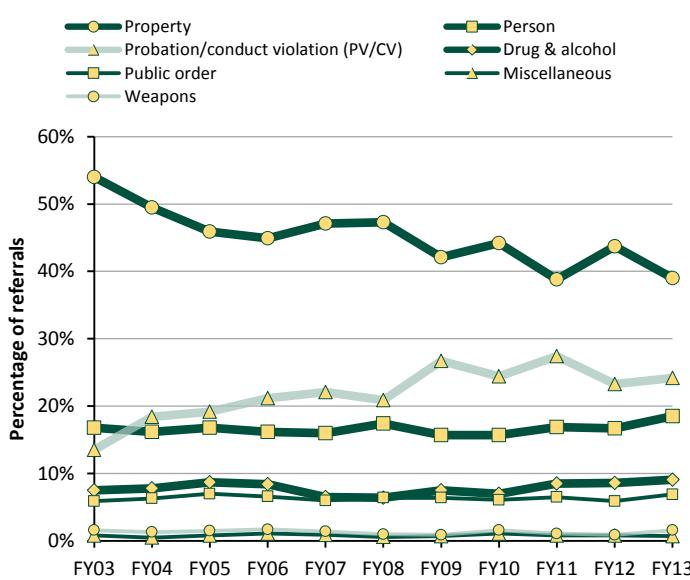
As shown in Table 1, the gender composition of juveniles referred to DJJ remained stable between FY03 and FY13. In FY03, 73.4% of all referrals were male; in FY13 this figure stood at 72.3% (-1.5%). In FY03, 26.6% of all DJJ referrals were female; in FY13 the proportion of female referrals was 27.7% (+4.1%).

Changes were observed in the age characteristics of referrals to DJJ between FY03 and FY13. In general, youth referred to DJJ in FY13 tended to be older than in FY03. In FY03, 62.6% of referrals were for youth between the ages of 15 and 17; by FY13, the proportion of referrals of youth between the ages of 15 and 17 increased to 64.5% (+3.0%). A larger proportional increase was observed for referrals of youth aged 18 and over.¹ In FY03, 3.1% of referrals were for individuals 18 and over; in FY13 that proportion was 3.9% (+25.8%). The proportion of referrals for juveniles decreased from FY03 to FY13 for those under 10 years of age (-7.1%), 10–12 years of age (-13.2%), and 13–14 years of age (-6.7%).

The racial/ethnic characteristics of referrals to DJJ changed substantially between FY03 and FY13. The proportion of DJJ referrals for Black/African American and Alaska Native/American Indian youth increased during the FY03–FY13 period (+59.0% and +16.4%, respectively). The proportion of all DJJ referrals of

FIGURE 4

Offenses Referred to the Alaska Division of Juvenile Justice by Charge Type, FY 2003–2013



Source of data: Alaska Division of Juvenile Justice, "Offenses by Charge Type," <http://dhss.alaska.gov/djj/Pages/OffenseTypes.aspx>

1. Youth 18 years or older may be referred to DJJ for status offenses, offenses committed while the youth was under age 18, or probation/conduct violations related to a prior DJJ referral. A status offense is conduct that is unlawful because of offender age. Examples of status offenses are truancy, alcohol possession, and curfew violations.

TABLE 1

Demographic Characteristics Associated with Juveniles Referred to the Alaska Division of Juvenile Justice, FY 2003–2013*

	FY03	FY04	FY05	FY06	FY07	FY08	FY09	FY10	FY11	FY12	FY13	% change FY03–FY13
Sex												
% male	73.4 %	73.9 %	73.2 %	73.9 %	73.7 %	73.9 %	73.0 %	74.6 %	71.0 %	72.9 %	72.3 %	-1.5 %
% female	26.6	26.1	26.8	26.1	26.3	26.1	27.0	25.4	29.0	27.1	27.7	4.1
Age												
Less than 10 years	1.4 %	0.9 %	1.2 %	0.9 %	0.9 %	1.6 %	1.1 %	1.0 %	1.2 %	0.8 %	1.3 %	-7.1 %
10–12 years	9.1	7.3	6.9	6.1	6.0	7.2	6.3	6.4	7.1	7.4	7.9	-13.2
13–14 years	23.9	25.9	23.2	20.8	23.6	21.7	20.3	20.3	21.1	21.9	22.3	-6.7
15–17 years	62.6	62.5	65.8	69.1	66.1	66.9	68.7	68.7	67.5	66.4	64.5	3.0
18 and over	3.1	3.5	2.8	3.1	3.3	2.5	3.7	3.5	3.1	3.5	3.9	25.8
Race/ethnicity												
Alaska Native/American Indian	31.7 %	33.5 %	33.9 %	33.5 %	34.2 %	32.9 %	29.7 %	31.7 %	34.6 %	32.9 %	36.9 %	16.4 %
Asian	3.6	3.8	3.0	3.1	3.5	2.7	2.2	2.0	1.6	1.6	1.8	-50.0
Black/African American	6.1	5.8	6.6	6.4	7.4	7.3	8.2	8.8	9.6	10.4	9.7	59.0
Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islander	1.2	1.2	1.6	2.3	2.5	1.7	2.6	3.1	2.9	4.1	2.9	141.7
White/Caucasian	47.0	43.9	43.6	42.9	40.1	41.5	44.5	42.6	40.5	41.7	38.0	-19.1
Multiracial	7.7	8.6	7.5	7.3	7.2	7.6	7.9	5.8	5.4	4.3	3.7	-51.9
Other	1.4	1.3	1.8	2.0	1.8	1.9	1.0	0.1	NA	NA	NA	NA
Unknown	1.4	1.9	2.2	2.5	3.4	4.4	3.9	5.9	5.3	5.1	7.0	400.0

* Juveniles may be referred multiple times within a fiscal year. The data presented here do not reflect the demographic characteristics of the unique individuals referred to DJJ; rather, they show the proportion of referrals involving juveniles with those demographic characteristics.

Source of data: Alaska Division of Juvenile Justice, "DJJ Data Trends," <http://dhss.alaska.gov/djj/Pages/GeneralInfo/Stats.aspx>

Native Hawaiian/Other Pacific Islander youth increased from 1.2% in FY03 to 2.9% in FY13. The proportion of unknown race/ethnicity increased from 1.4% in FY03 to 7.0% in FY13. Conversely, the proportion of referrals for youth who were Asian and White/Caucasian declined markedly (-50.0% and -19.1%, respectively). Finally, the proportion of referrals involving youth categorized as multiracial declined 51.9% from FY03 to FY13.

Summary. This fact sheet presented summary information on referrals to the Alaska juvenile justice system for state fiscal years 2003–2013, including: the number of unique juveniles referred to DJJ, the total number of referrals made to DJJ by law enforcement, the total number of charges by class and offense type, and finally, demographic data including sex and race information of juveniles in the system. Each data section included trend information over the time period for the state, as well as the four administrative regional units of DJJ.

The data show that the total unduplicated count of youth referred to DJJ in FY 2013 was 2,462 – a decline of 52.1% from FY 2003, with decreases seen across all administrative regions of DJJ. The data also show that

the total number of referrals to DJJ decreased by 53.6% statewide from FY03 to FY13, with each regional unit reporting decreases.

Overall, the **number** of referrals to DJJ declined from FY03 to FY13. The number of charges declined in three out of the four charge classes, but the **proportion** of probation/conduct violations nearly doubled from FY03 to FY13. Of the seven offense types into which charges are separated, the proportion of person offenses increased slightly while the proportion of property offenses declined. Weapons offenses remained unchanged from FY03 to FY13. Drug & alcohol and public order offenses increased, while miscellaneous offenses declined from FY03 to FY13. Probation and conduct violations saw the largest proportional increase over the period (+79.3%).

Offender demographics show that although the gender composition of youth offenders remained stable over the period, changes were seen in age and race/ethnic characteristics of offenders from FY03–FY13. In general, youth in the DJJ system tended to be older in FY13 than in FY03. Changes in race/ethnic characteristics from FY03–FY13 were seen in the increasing proportion of referrals for Native

Hawaiian/Pacific Islander, Black/African American, Alaska Native, and multiracial youth. The proportion of referrals for youth who were Asian and White/Caucasian declined markedly, while youth categorized as multiracial declined by more than half.

Note: Data in this report were extracted from the Alaska Division of Juvenile Justice website in December 2013. These data were not available in October, the date of this *Fact Sheet*. This *Fact Sheet* was not released for publication until January 2014.

NOTES

Charge Class: refers to the *seriousness* of the charge.

Charge Type: refers to general categories of criminal offenses. Crimes against persons include offenses such as robbery, assault, sexual abuse, and kidnapping. Crimes against property include burglary, theft, credit card fraud, and trespass. Crimes against public order include offenses such as providing false information to police, hindering prosecution, harming a police dog, escape and unlawful evasion. Drug & alcohol offenses include habitual possession or consumption of alcohol by a minor. Weapon offenses are misconduct involving a weapon. Miscellaneous offenses include offenses such as municipal criminal code violations and probation or conduct violations by juveniles under court supervision.

Intake: includes a series of reviews and preliminary findings following a referral from a law enforcement agency regarding an allegation of illegal conduct by a juvenile.

Referral: a request by a law enforcement agency for a DJJ response following the arrest of a juvenile or as a result of the submission of a police investigation report alleging the commission of a crime or violation of a court order. A referral is counted as a single episode or event and may relate to multiple charges. Some juveniles were referred multiple times within the year. Some referrals included more than one charge.

Regional Administrative Units: There are four DJJ central offices for regional administrative units:

- Anchorage (ANC) — Anchorage Regional Office is located in Anchorage and covers the Municipality of Anchorage and each of the smaller cities and communities within the municipal boundaries.
- NRO — Northern Regional Office is located in Fairbanks and is composed of the communities in the Yukon-Kuskokwim Delta, Norton Sound, North Slope and the interior section of the state.
- SCRO — South Central Regional Office is located in Anchorage and is composed of the communities surrounding Anchorage including: Mat-Su, Kenai, Homer, Dillingham, Kodiak, Valdez, etc. SCRO does not include the Municipality of Anchorage.
- SERO — Southeast Regional Office is located in Juneau and includes the communities of the southeast panhandle including Juneau, Sitka, Petersburg, Ketchikan and Prince of Wales Island.

Source: Alaska Division of Juvenile Justice, http://dhss.alaska.gov/djj/Pages/GeneralInfo/information/stats_fy2011/glossary.aspx

THE ALASKA JUSTICE STATISTICAL ANALYSIS CENTER

ABOUT



The Alaska Justice Statistical Analysis Center (AJSAC) was established by Administrative Order No. 89, signed by Governor William Sheffield on July 2, 1986. Since that time the AJSAC has been housed within the University of Alaska Anchorage Justice Center. The AJSAC assists Alaska criminal justice agencies, as well as state and local governments and officials, with the development, implementation, and evaluation of criminal justice programs and policies through the collection, analysis, and reporting of crime and justice statistics.

Since 1972, the Bureau of Justice Statistics (BJS) and its predecessor agency, the National Criminal Justice Information and Statistics Service, has provided support to state and territorial governments to establish and operate Statistical Analysis Centers (SACs) to collect, analyze, and report statistics on crime and justice to federal, state, and local levels of government, and to share state-level information nationally. There are currently 53 SACs located in the United States and its Territories. The AJSAC is a member of the Justice Research and Statistics Association (JRSA), a national nonprofit organization comprised of SAC directors, researchers, and practitioners dedicated to policy-oriented research and analysis.

CONTACT INFORMATION

Location

The Alaska Justice Statistical Analysis Center (AJSAC) is housed in the University of Alaska Anchorage Justice Center, which is located on the second floor of the UAA/APU Consortium Library, Suite 213.

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To learn more about the AJSAC research, please visit our website at: <http://www.uaa.alaska.edu/ajsac/>.

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