Juvenile Justice Data Project

Phase 2:
Longitudinal Outcome Indicators for Juvenile Justice Systems in California

Findings and Recommendations

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Overview / Introduction

This Report Differs from Previous Reports on California's Juvenile Justice System

A key goal of the Juvenile Justice Data Project (JJDP) is to develop outcome indicators for the juvenile justice systems in California, one in each county and one at the state level Division of Juvenile Justice (DJJ). In our Phase 1 report, we describe the programs at each level of graduated sanctions or responses that are being used within the county systems, the prevalence at each level for a snapshot in time, and some common practices. (http://www.cdcr.ca.gov/Reports_Research/djj_data_project_rpts.html)

In this Phase 2 report, we review our progress in developing system outcome indicators using existing data. For this effort, the research team has assembled and merged existing data collected by various entities in the counties and state that are compiled and maintained by California Department of Justice (DOJ) through the Juvenile Courts and Probation Statistical System (JCPSS) and through the Criminal History System (CHS). Neither of these two systems was designed to track juvenile histories longitudinally.

DOJ produces a yearly report using the JCPSS and other related data to document the volume of arrests, referrals, dispositions and placements of juveniles over the course of a year in California (http://ag.ca.gov/cjsc/pubs.php#juvenileJustice). These reports have been very useful to counties, state departments and researchers interested in this event-based information from year to year and interested in trends over time.

The purpose of this JJDP effort is to use this existing information differently by following a sample of juveniles through the system longitudinally in order to develop system indicators that document their outcomes. Outcomes include: recidivism rates each year after intake, the proportion of juveniles who enter the system and have no further arrests, the proportion of young offenders who continue offending into adulthood, and the proportion of young offenders who end up being incarcerated fours years after their first arrest.

Brief History of the JJDP

Early in the Schwarzenegger administration, a diverse group of juvenile justice stakeholders were brought together to identify key areas of concern related to California's broad continuum of juvenile justice. The most overwhelming need identified by this working group (which included law enforcement, state administrators, county probation chiefs, juvenile court judges, victims and family representatives, as well as managers from the state's departments of education and mental health) was the need for a *statewide* focus on improved juvenile justice outcomes.

In October 2004, the Youth and Adult Corrections Agency (now the California Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation, or CDCR), the Youth Law Center and members of the Governor's Juvenile Justice Working Group formed a statewide committee, the California Juvenile Justice Accountability Project (CJJAP), eventually renamed the Juvenile Justice Data Project (JJDP). The group included representatives from law enforcement, probation, corrections, county government, state agencies, advocacy groups, service providers, data analysts and policymakers, who gave generously of their time to identify programs and processes that would improve state and local outcomes for youth in California's juvenile justice system (see next page for a complete list).

In response to this need, the JEHT Foundation agreed to fund the Juvenile Justice Data Project late in 2005 and has continued to do so through the development of this report. The project has grown into the only comprehensive statewide workgroup focused on improving juvenile justice outcomes. The first priority of this group was to improve their own ability to collect and track the data necessary to monitor and improve their own portions of the system. To date, participation in this project has been entirely voluntary. While similar statewide planning and data projects have taken place in such states as Oregon, Missouri, Washington and Minnesota, nothing of this scope had been attempted in a state as large and diverse as California.

The project has created a neutral forum in which all participants are equal players seeking a common goal of improved data collection. For the first time in several decades, these efforts aim to allow state and county decision-makers to look at the juvenile justice system as a whole, to compare data and to problem-solve based on actual information. We hope that this project will contribute to our capacity to understand and improve California's juvenile justice "system" in ways that otherwise would not be possible.

The ultimate goal of the Juvenile Justice Data Project is to develop a standard set of measurable indicators that can be uniformly collected on a statewide basis and used by macro-level decision makers at the county and state level to describe the workings—and eventually the outcomes—across the entire juvenile justice continuum. An objective of the project is to develop and improve the capacity for state, county and other local entities to review their juvenile justice programs using coherent and consistent information in order to identify particular areas or issues that might be worth further exploration and/or explanation.

JJDP Taskforce Members

Berkeley Center for Criminal Justice
www.law.berkeley.edu/centers/bccj

Books Not Bars
www.booksnotbars.org

California Academy of Child and Adolescent Psychiatry

California Alliance of Child and Family Services
www.cacfs.org

California Budget Project
www.cbp.org

California Children and Families Commission
www.ccfc.ca.gov

California Department of Alcohol and Drug Programs
www.adp.ca.gov

California Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation
www.cdcr.ca.gov

California Department of Education
www.cde.ca.gov

California Department of Justice Criminal Justice Statistics Center
ag.ca.gov/cjsc/index.php

California Department of Social Services
www.dss.cahwnet.gov

California District Attorneys Association
www.cdaa.org

California Institute for Mental Health
www.cimh.org

California Mental Health Directors Association
www.cmhda.org

California Police Chiefs Association
www.californiapolicechiefs.org

California Public Defenders Association
www.cpda.org

California State Association of Counties
www.csac.counties.org

California State Sheriffs' Association
www.calsheriffs.org

California State Senate Budget and Fiscal Review Committee
www.sen.ca.gov

Center for Research on Crime
hennigan@usc.edu

Center for Social Services Research
cssr.berkeley.edu

Chief Probation Officers of California
www.cpoc.org

Commonweal
www.commonweal.org

Corrections Standards Authority
www.cdcr.ca.gov/DivisionsBoards/CSA

Contra Costa County Probation Department
www.co.contra-costa.ca.us/depart/probation

County Welfare Directors Association
www.cwda.org

Division of Juvenile Justice
www.cya.ca.gov/DivisionsBoards/DJJ/index.html

Faith Communities for Families and Children
www.fcforfc.org

Fresno Unified School District
www.fresno.k12.ca.us

Fight Crime Invest in Kids
www.fightcrime.org/ca

i.e. communications
www.iecomm.org

Judicial Council
www.courtinfo.ca.gov/jc

National Council on Crime and Delinquency
www.nccd-crc.org/nccd

Orange County Probation Department
www.oc.ca.gov/Probation

Sacramento County Probation Department
www.probation.saccounty.net

San Francisco Mayor's Office of Criminal Justice
www.sfgov.org/site/mocj

San Mateo County Manager's Office
www.co.sanmateo.ca.us

Seneca Center
www.senecacenter.org

Solano County Probation Department
www.co.solano.ca.us/Department/Department.asp?NavID=91

Youth Law Center
www.ylc.org

METHODS

Longitudinal Sample.

With the assistance of the staff at the Criminal Justice Statistics Center of the California Department of Justice, we identified 29 counties that reported their complete JCPSS data to the Center each year starting from 2001 and continuously through 2005. We divided these counties by size of population as large (over 700,000), medium (between 700,000 and 200,000), and small (below 200,000) and by the five CPOC regions (North, Sacramento, Bay, Central and South). Within this framework, we chose to include the largest number of counties we could include and still approximately represent each size category and region in the sample in proportion to its overall population in the state. Twenty-one of the possible 29 counties were included.

Chart 1 lists the counties in the JJDP sample categorized by county size. The large counties included are Alameda, Fresno, Los Angeles, Orange, Sacramento, and San Mateo. There were a total of 28,678 juveniles in the sample or 74.5% from these large counties. There were a total of 2,858,890 juveniles ages 11 to 17 who were living in all large counties, or 79.8% of the state juvenile population in 2001. The large county category is slightly under-represented in the sample. Making the same comparisons for medium-sized counties (18.3% in the sample and 13.9% in the juvenile population), the table shows that this category is somewhat over-estimated and the small county category is also slightly over-estimated (7.2% to 6.2%) in the JJDP sample.

Chart 1. JJDP Achieved Sample Relative to State Population by County Size

	2001 Probation Intake in JJDP Sample Counties		2001 Population Ages 11 to 17 in all California Counties[1]	
by County Size	Number of juveniles sample	Percent of sample	Number of juveniles in population	Percent of state
LARGE COUNTIES				
Counties in sample with total populations greater than 700,000 (2001): Alameda, Fresno, Los Angeles, Orange, Sacramento and San Mateo.	28,678	74.5%	2,858,890	79.8%
Remaining counties: Contra Costa, Kern, Riverside, San Bernardino, San Diego, San Francisco, Santa Clara and Ventura.				
MEDIUM COUNTIES				
Counties in sample with total populations between 200,000 and 700,000 (2001): Butte, Monterey, Santa Barbara, Solano and Stanislaus.	7,045	18.3%	498,786	14.0%
Remaining counties: Marin, Merced, Placer, San Joaquin, San Luis Obispo, Santa Cruz, Sonoma and Tulare.				
SMALL COUNTIES				
Counties in sample with total populations less than 200,000 (2001): Calaveras, Glenn, Humboldt, Inyo, Madera, Modoc, Mono, Sutter, Trinity and Tuolumne.	2,785	7.2%	222,982	6.2%
Remaining counties: Alpine, Amador, Colusa, Del Norte, El Dorado, Imperial, Kings, Lake, Lassen, Mariposa, Mendocino, Napa, San Benito, Shasta, Sierra, Siskiyou, Tehama, Yolo and Yuba.				
TOTAL	38,508	100.0%	3,580,658	100.0%

[1] Source for pop data: Puzzanchera C, Finnegan T and Kang W (2007). "Easy Access to Juvenile Populations" Online. http://www.ojjdp.ncjrs.gov/ojstatbb/ezapop/

Chart 2 lists the counties in the sample categorized by the CPOC regions, and compares the achieved sample size to the juvenile populations in these regions in 2001. Here we see that Bay Region (14.8% in the sample to 19.5% in the state) and South Region (51.9% in the sample to 59.5% of the state) are both somewhat under-represented while Central Region (20.1% to 10.0%) and North Region (3.7% to 2.3%) are over-represented. The most serious deviations are for Central and South Regions. The counties in the Central Region are weighted more heavily and the counties in the South Region are weighted less heavily in the JJDP state estimate than they should be. To the extent that these two regions differ on the trends reported below, that state estimate will be somewhat biased in the direction of the Central Region findings, away from the South Region findings.

This issue of bias is relevant to how well the JJDP sample represents the state of California, but does not significantly bias the rates per population within counties or the categories given in the data charts in the next sections below, nor do we believe that it seriously affects the ratios calculated to explore relative differences in the rates. In the future, longitudinal reviews can reduce or avoid this issue of representation because nearly all of the counties are now submitting JCPSS data on a regular basis.

Chart 2. JJDP Achieved Sample Relative to State Population by Region

	2001 Probation Intake in JJDP Sample Counties		2001 Population Ages 11 to 17 in all California Counties[1]	
by CPOC Region	Number of juveniles sample	Percent of sample	Number of juveniles in population	Percent of state
NORTH REGION				
Counties in sample: Butte, Glenn, Humboldt, Modoc and Trinity	1,421	3.7%	81,224	2.3%
Remaining counties: Colusa, Del Norte, Lassen, Plumas, Shasta, Sierra, Siskiyou and Tehama				
SACRAMENTO REGION				
Counties in sample: Calaveras, Sacramento and Sutter	3,629	9.4%	312,587	8.7%
Remaining counties: Alpine, Amador, El Dorado, Lake, Nevada, Placer, San Joaquin, Yolo and Yuba				
BAY REGION				
Counties in sample: Alameda, Monterey, San Mateo and Solano	5,715	14.9%	699,598	19.5%
Remaining counties: Contra Costa, Marin, Mendocino, Napa, San Benito, San Francisco, Santa Clara, Santa Cruz and Sonoma				
CENTRAL REGION				
Counties in sample: Fresno, Inyo, Madera, Mono, Stanislaus and Tuolumne	7,742	20.1%	358,187	10.0%
Remaining counties: Kern, Kings, Mariposa, Merced and Tulare				
SOUTH REGION				
Counties in sample: Los Angeles, Orange and Santa Barbara	20,001	51.9%	2,129,062	59.5%
Remaining counties: Imperial, Riverside, San Bernardino, San Diego, San Luis Obispo and Ventura				
TOTAL	38,508	100.0%	3,580,658	100.0%

[1] Source for pop data: Puzzanchera C, Finnegan T and Kang W (2007). "Easy Access to Juvenile Populations" Online. http://www.ojjdp.ncjrs.gov/ojstatbb/ezapop/

The next step was to assemble and link the juvenile and adult criminal histories for each individual who entered the juvenile justice system in one of the sample counties during 2001. All events recorded in the juvenile or adult system between the intake date in 2001 through the same date in 2005, four years later, would need to be identified and assembled into a complete history. This was a complicated and lengthy undertaking.

Merging and Matching Data Systems.

Part of the challenge was to identify which juveniles were active in more than one county and had JCPSS records in multiple counties that needed to be linked. Another was to determine which juveniles had records in the adult criminal history system (CHS) that needed to be linked to their juvenile history. This task was complicated because each county juvenile justice system and the adult criminal system all have different unique personal identifiers, county PINs and state CII numbers. Few juvenile files had the state CII number attached. Therefore, the matching and merging required several steps and required the use of proxy personal identifiers (name, sex, and date of birth) to match and merge complete histories.

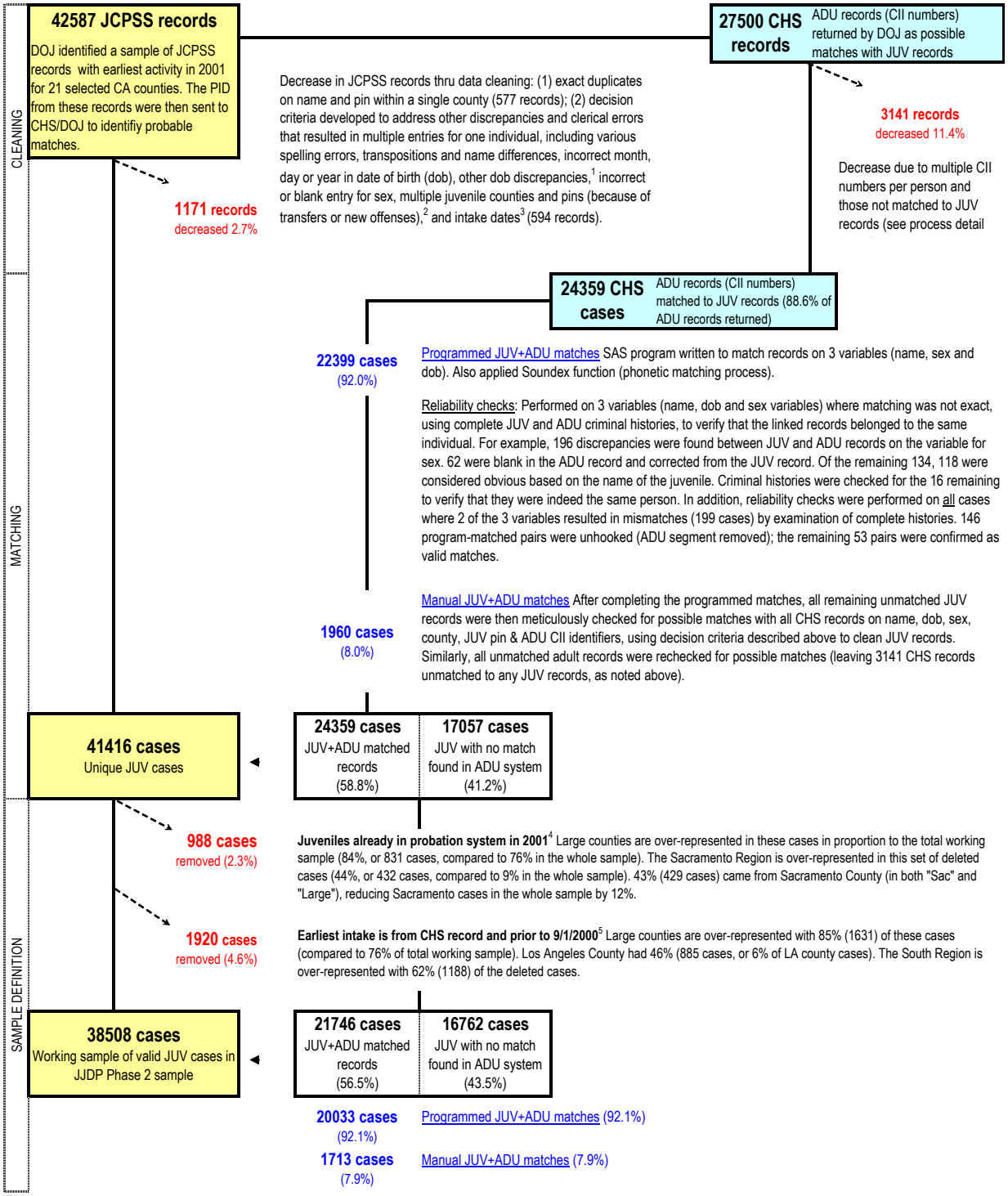
For the first step, the staff at the Criminal Justice Statistics Center at DOJ was able to sort out which of the many events reported in each county's JCPSS 2001 data represented an individual entering that county's system for the first time. Then all JCPSS entries for those juveniles were pulled county by county and sent to the research team. A list of the proxy identifiers from each county's data was formatted according to specifications and submitted to the DOJ staff working with the Criminal History System. Possible matches were identified and sent to the research team along with complete criminal histories.

The research team received 42,587 juvenile records pulled from JCPSS and 27,500 possible matching adult records pulled from CHS. Over several months, the research team worked to isolate unique juvenile records (first identifying and consolidating duplicate records within counties and overlap between counties) and match these with the most probable adult criminal record using the proxy identifiers, employing soundex programming to handle deviations in names and spelling, and in a few thousand cases, examined the potential matches by hand. In the end, 38,508 unique juvenile records remained after eliminating duplicates within counties and across counties. Of these, 21,746 were matched with an adult record. Chart 3 documents more details of the matching and merging process used.

As the criminal histories were assembled, 220 juveniles with records in multiple counties were assigned a single "home" county so that he or she would be counted only once in the analyses, but the merged records included his or her entire history wherever the activities took place. When designation of the home county was ambiguous, we chose the county where the probation department appeared to have had been the most involved, even if the case began or ended in some other county.

Chart 3

Method to Create Merged JCPSS (JUV) & CHS (ADU) Criminal History Records



Footnotes

[1] DOB entries with clerical errors were corrected. Cases with birth years prior to 1983 (making these juveniles too old for juvenile probation intake in 2001) that could not be confirmed as likely clerical errors were deleted. Thirteen cases with birth years from 1995 to 1999 were examined and left in the sample.

[2] Home county determination: where a second JUV county was identified (220 JUV cases), the probation history in each county was compared to determine which county worked case. All sample analysis is reported in terms of the home county.

[3] All cases must indicate both a JCPSS probation intake date in 2001 and an "action code" equal to "1" (referral) or "2" (court).

[4] Cases where the earliest 2001 JCPSS record included an "action code" equal to "3" for termination (indicating an intake prior to our 2001 sample).

[5] 869 cases (2.3% of working sample) with first arrests in the last four months of 2000 (460 in December 2000) were retained because lags in assignment date to probation noted in JCPSS records were found.

FINDINGS

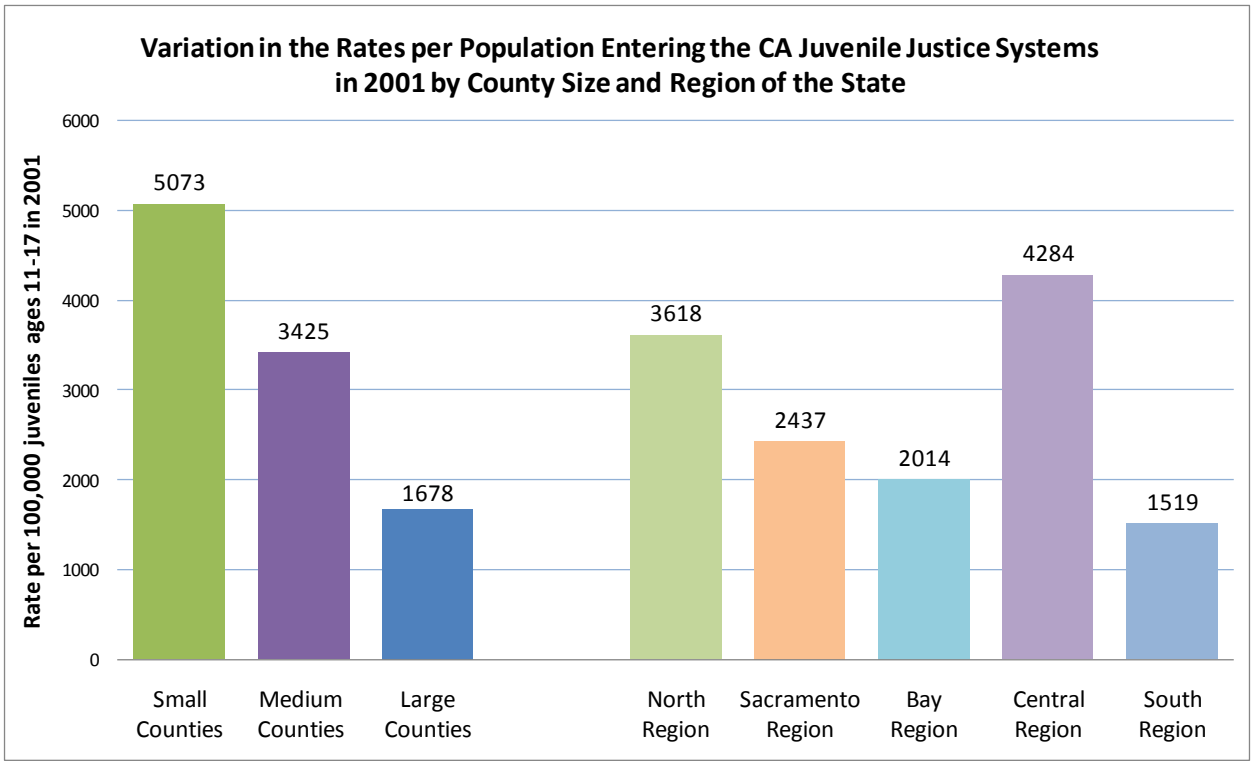
Entering the Juvenile Justice System

Intake: Statewide and by County Categories

Based on the JJDP sample using 21 counties to represent the state, we estimate that California had 1955 juveniles per 100,000 juveniles in the population who entered a county juvenile justice system in 2001 through juvenile probation or juvenile court (Chart 4). The rate of intake was two and a half times higher than this in the small county systems with a rate of 5073 and 75% higher in medium-sized county systems with a rate of 3425. The large county systems had the lowest rate of intake in the juvenile justice system that year; 1678 per 100,000 juveniles in their population.

The Central Region (4284) and North Region (3618) had the highest intake rates while the rates in the South (1519), Bay (2014) and Sacramento Region (2437) were much lower.

Chart 4

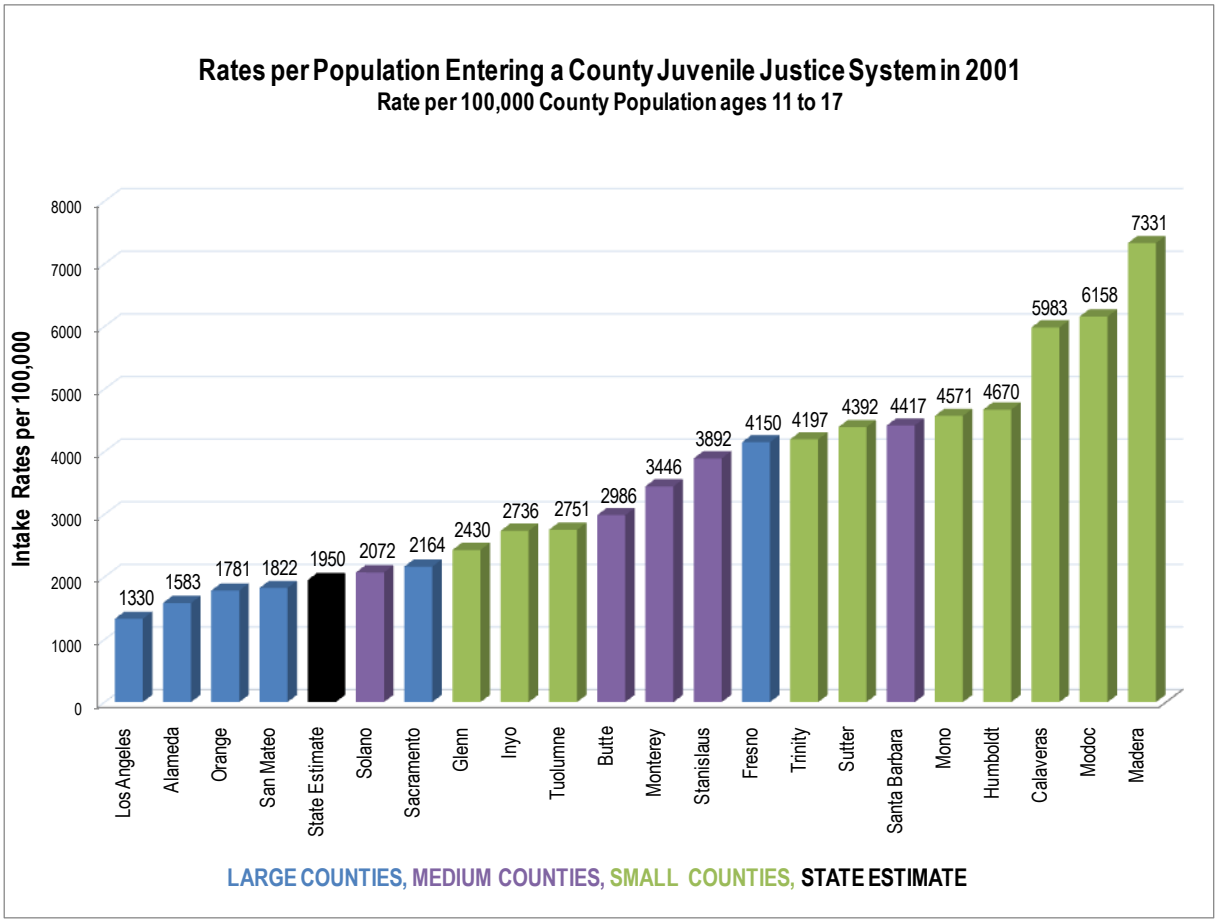


More detail on the counts and rates of juveniles entering the county juvenile justice systems in 2001 are give in Tables 1 through 9 in the appendix.

Significant variability in county-by-county intake rates is illustrated in Chart 5 below. The rates of intake per juvenile population in all sampled counties are ordered from lowest to highest and the columns in the graph are color coded for county size. The chart illustrates systematic differences in county intake rates by county size.

All of the large counties (except Fresno, with a rate of 4150) have relatively low rates of intake ranging from 1330 in Los Angeles to 2164 in Sacramento. The majority of small-size counties have high rates of intake (from Madera with 7331 to Trinity with 4197) indicating that a much larger proportion the juvenile population residing in these counties became involved in the juvenile justice system in 2001. Three other small-size counties had rates in between the medium and large counties. Most of the medium-size counties have intake rates between 2986 (Monterey) and 3892 (Stanislaus). Solano differs from other medium-size counties with a relatively low intake rate (2072).

Chart 5



Differences in the characteristics and experiences of youth in the juvenile justice system across county size will be a strong theme in this report. While comparing within county size is meaningful, it is like comparing apples and oranges, and is confounded by numerous contextual differences that must be taken into consideration when interpreting the findings. Here it is apparent that one major difference is that many of the smaller counties cast a wider net for juveniles entering the system relative to larger counties. This suggests that a greater proportion of individuals with less serious offending patterns are involved in most of the smaller counties, while a larger proportion of individuals with more serious offending patterns are involved in most of the larger counties. Medium-size counties are in between.

Without the benefit of standard risk and needs assessment results, it is difficult to confirm this observation. However, if this is true, one would expect a strong negative correlation between

recidivism rates and intake rates such that counties with the higher intake rates (presumably skewed toward less serious delinquency issues to begin with) have lower subsequent recidivism rates and counties with low intake rates (by limiting intake to those with more serious delinquency issues at the outset) have higher subsequent recidivism rates. Analyses confirm a strong negative correlation between intake rates and recidivism defined as the percent of intake with a new violation 4 years later, r=-.71.

Chart 6

Negative correlation[1] between the county rates of intake into the juvenile justice system and the percent recidivism[2] during the 4th year after intake

JJDP Sample of counties	Intake rate per 100,000 county population age 11 to 17	Percent recidivism[1] during the 4th year after intake
Los Angeles	1330	23.3
Alameda	1583	22.1
Orange	1781	19.3
San Mateo	1822	18.5
Solano	2072	22.4
Sacramento	2164	22.0
Glenn	2430	14.5
Inyo	2736	13.2
Tuolumne	2751	19.7
Butte	2986	18.9
Monterey	3446	15.4
Stanislaus	3892	17.8
Fresno	4150	16.2
Trinity	4197	10.3
Sutter	4392	5.6
Santa Barbara	4417	18.3
Mono	4571	3.6
Humboldt	4670	16.9
Calaveras	5983	9.4
Modoc	6158	7.5
Madera	7331	11.4

[1] r = -.71; n=21; p<.01

[2] Defined as one or more new law or technical violations during the fourth year subsequent to first referral to juvenile probation in 2001

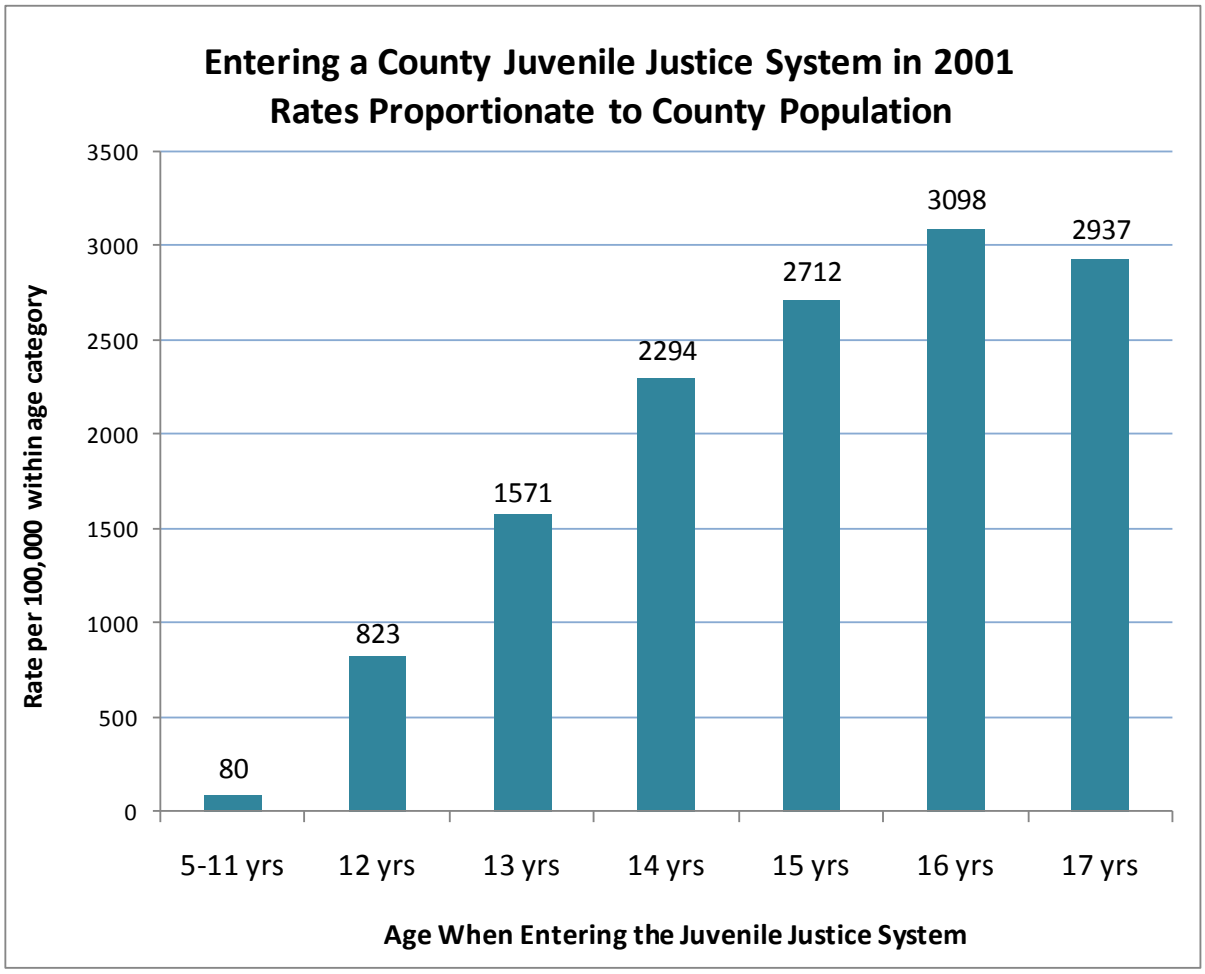
Intake: Demographics Statewide and by County Categories

Statewide, males enter the juvenile justice system at a rate 2.5 times higher than the rate for females (2760 vs. 1107).

The rates of intake by age are presented in Chart 7. The rate of intake per 100,000 juveniles of the same age in the population is highest for 16 yr olds (3098), then 17 yr olds (2937). The rate dropped by almost 50% from 13 year olds to 12 year olds (1571 to 823).

Over 95% of the juveniles in the JJDP sample were 12 years old or older at entry; however the 4.6 percent of the sample younger than age 12 is of concern. Appendix tables 8 and 9 document the county-by-county distribution of children under age 12 who entered the juvenile justice system in 2001. We estimate that a rate of 80 children per 100,000 population ages 5 to 11 entered the juvenile justice system in 2001. All but one of the sample counties included children as young as 9; the majority also included children as young as 6; and eight of the sample counties reported that one or more five year olds entered their system. The total count of children younger than age 12 in our sample is 1,722, which indicates approximately double that number of children statewide.

Chart 7

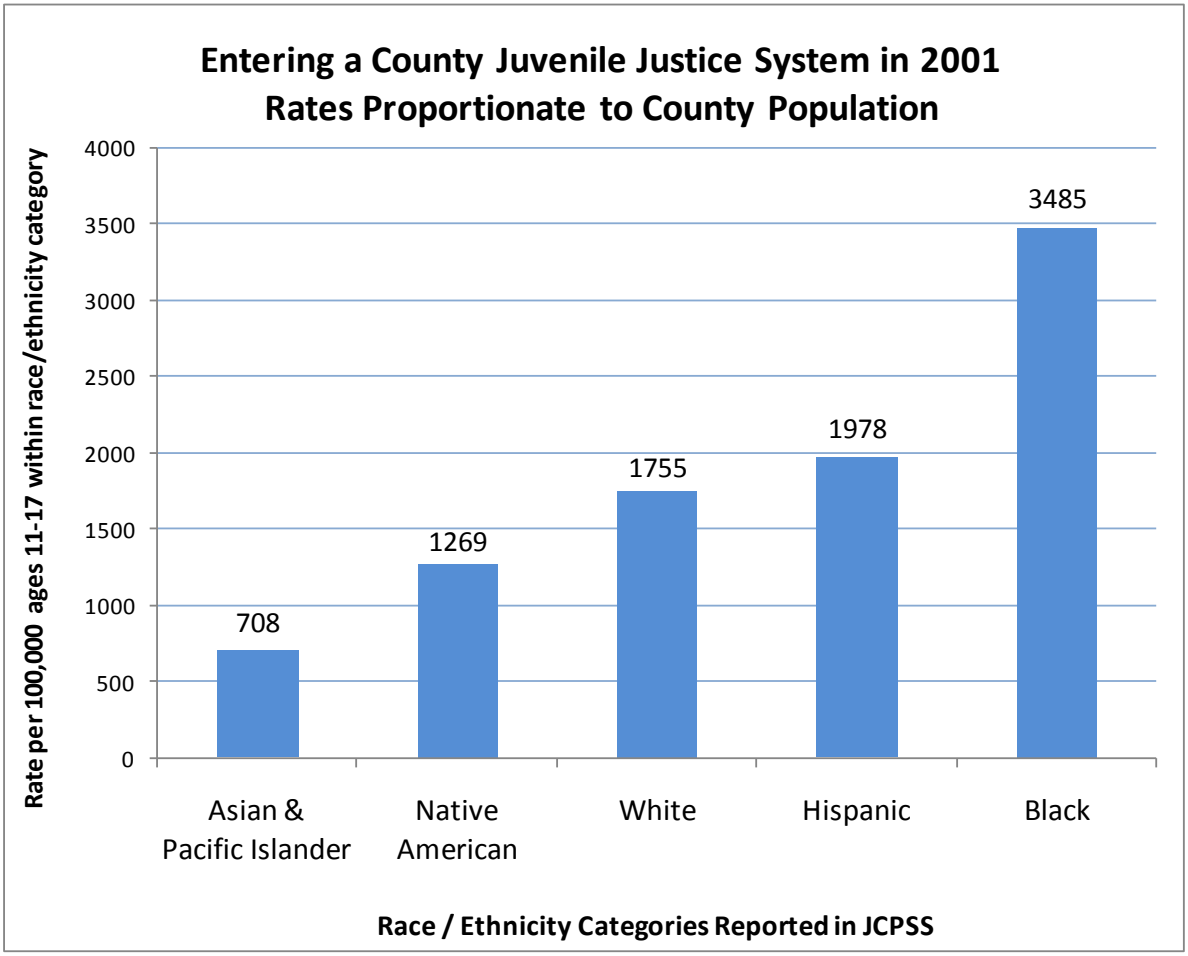


The rates proportionate to the population of juveniles residing in all the sample counties combined broken down by race /ethnic categories are shown in Chart 8. Black or African American* youth have the highest rate of entry into the system (3485), significantly higher than the rates for Hispanics or Latinos** (1978), whites (1755), and Native Americans (1269). Asian & Pacific Islanders (708) have the lowest rate of intake.

Statewide, in proportion to their population, blacks are twice as likely to enter the juvenile justice system as white juveniles are. Overall Hispanics are about 15% more likely and Asian & Pacific Islanders less than half as likely to enter the juvenile justice system, as are white juveniles.

The ratio of black to white intake rates is 2.5 in the large counties and equal or nearly equal to that in Central, Bay and South Regions. Tables 4 and 7 in the appendix provide more details on intake by race and ethnicity in this sample of counties.

Chart 8



* The US Census Bureau uses the category label "Black or African American." From this point forward, we will refer to this category simply as black.

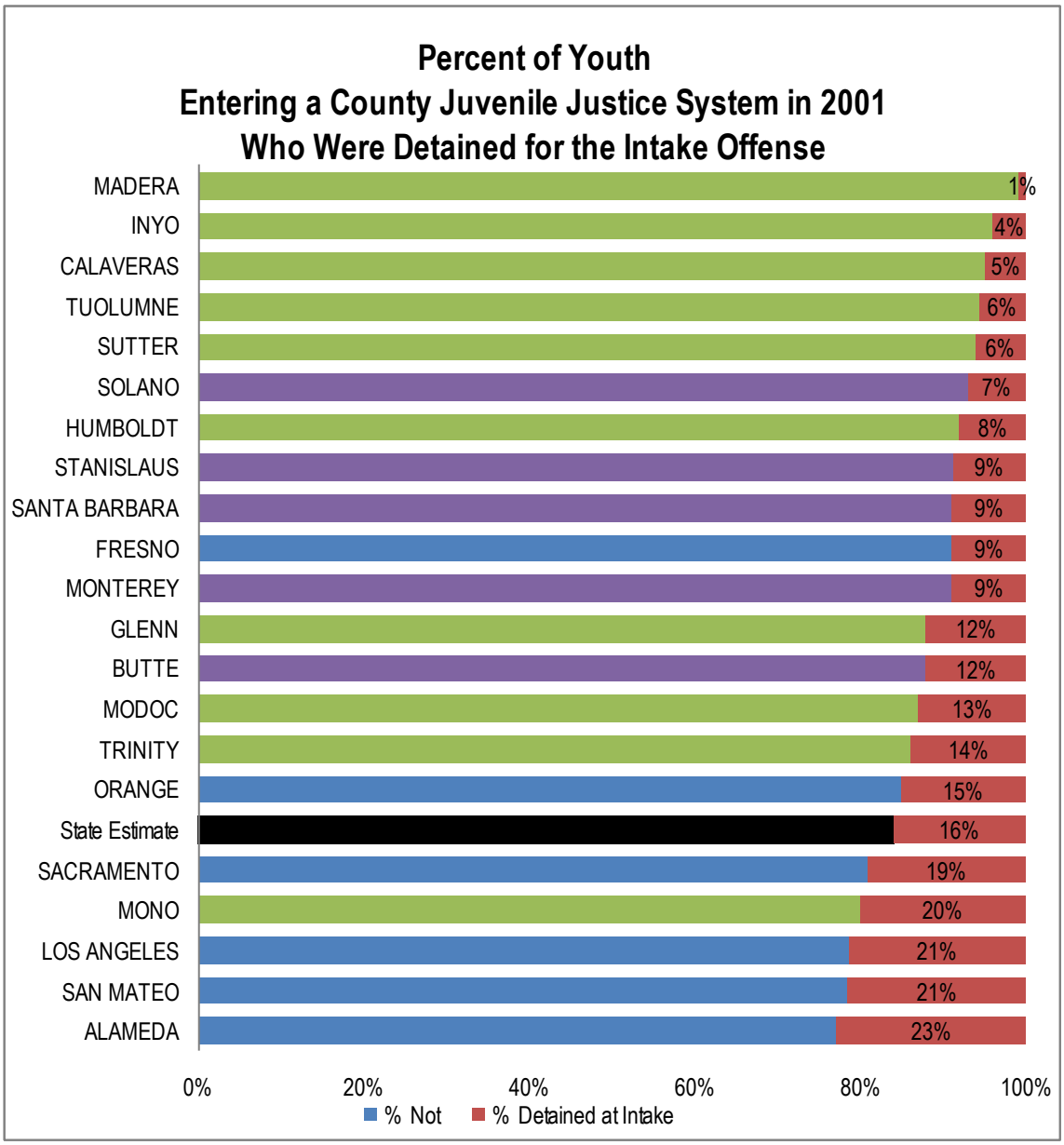
** The Census Bureau uses the category label "Hispanic or Latino." We will refer to this category simply as Hispanic.

Detention at Intake

Detention: Statewide and by County Categories

What proportions of the juveniles who entered the juvenile justice system were detained in a juvenile hall or other detention center at intake across county jurisdictions? Our statewide estimate based on the JJDP 2001 sample is that 15.7% of intake or 307 per 100,000 of the juvenile population were detained at intake. Chart 9 shows the county-by-county percents that vary significantly by county size (18.4% in large; 8.8% in medium and 5.4% in small counties) and by region of the state (18.8% in South, 16.7% in Sacramento Region, 16.2% in Bay, 10.7% in North and 7.8% in Central).

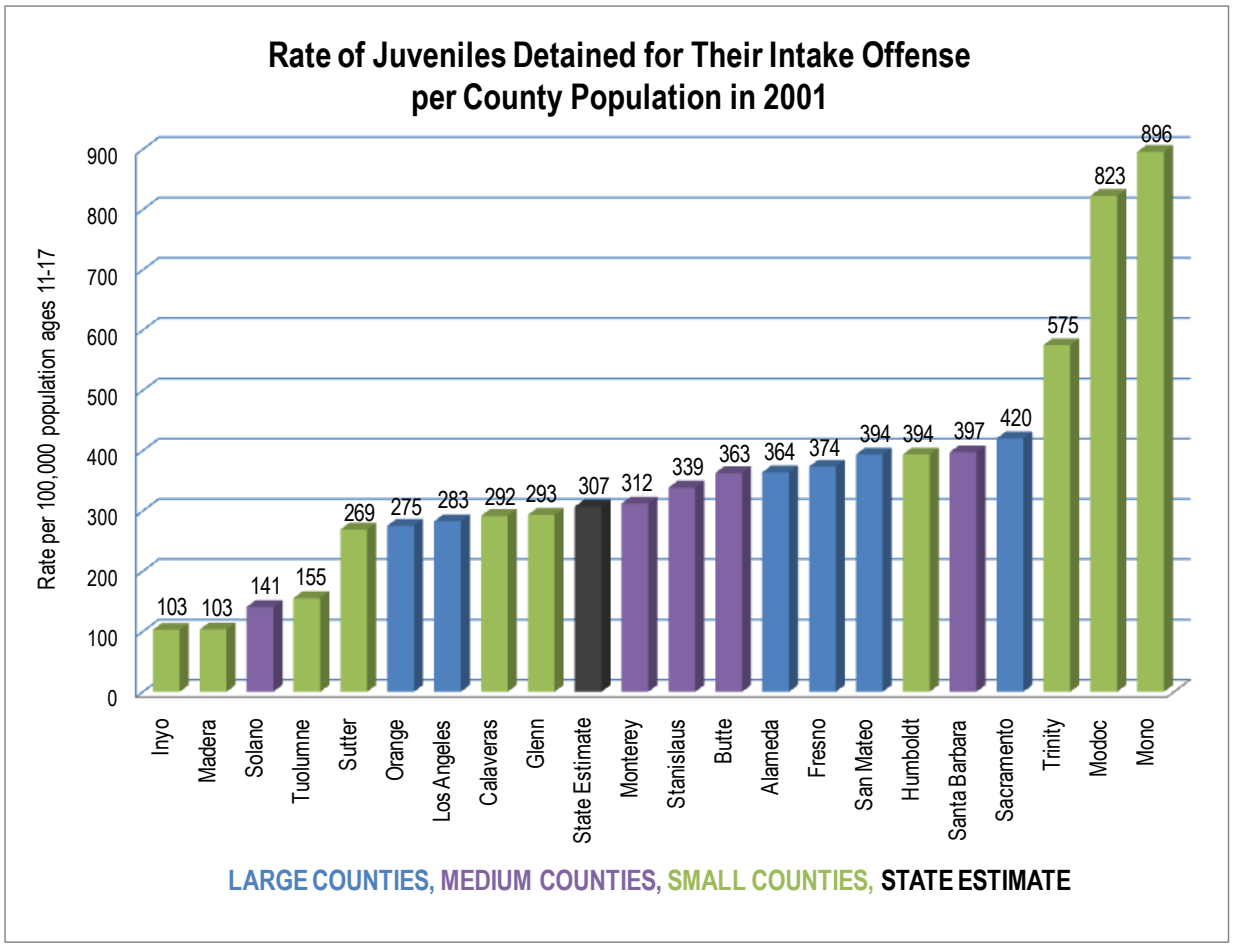
Chart 9



Large counties are shaded blue, medium-sized are purple, and small counties are green.

Some of the variation we see in Chart 10 is due to different intake practices. Recall that some counties involve a much larger percent of their juvenile population in their juvenile justice system than others. It seems that the population entering the system in these counties is skewed towards higher risk individuals who could be expected to be detained at higher rates as a result. We can also look at the rates of detention per 100,000 juveniles in the county population to observe differences in detention rates that are not tied to the intake rates.

Chart 10



Neither county size nor region of the state is strongly related to the distribution of these rates per population except that the medium-sized counties in the sample (other than Solano) fall in the middle of the distribution. Some large counties detain relatively low rates of their population (Orange and Los Angeles) and another (Sacramento County) relatively high. Three small counties have the highest rates of detention (Mono, Modoc and Trinity) and two have the lowest rates of detention (Inyo and Madera). Other than Madera (which has the highest intake rate per population and detained only 1% of its intake population), the differences among the small counties may fluctuate from year to year because the overall populations in these small counties are low enough that just a few individuals can sway the rates.

More detail on the counts and rates of juveniles detained at intake into a juvenile justice system are given in Tables10 through 18 in the appendix.

Detention: Demographics Statewide and by County Categories

Rates of detention at intake also vary across demographics. Statewide males were only slightly more likely to be detained at intake than were females—16.9% relative to 13.1%. The differences between the percent of males detained and the percent of females detained were statistically significant in only three regions. The differences in percents varied from 6.8 to 4.2%. There was virtually no difference between the percent of males detained and the percent of females detained in the North and South Regions (less than 1%). For more details see Table14 in the appendix.

The percent of juveniles detained at intake increases across age from 7.4 % of those under 12 years old up to 17.6% of those 17 years old at intake in the overall sample. This trend was not observed for the Sacramento Region where 20% of the 12 and 13 year olds were retained and fewer of the 17 year olds were detained (14%).

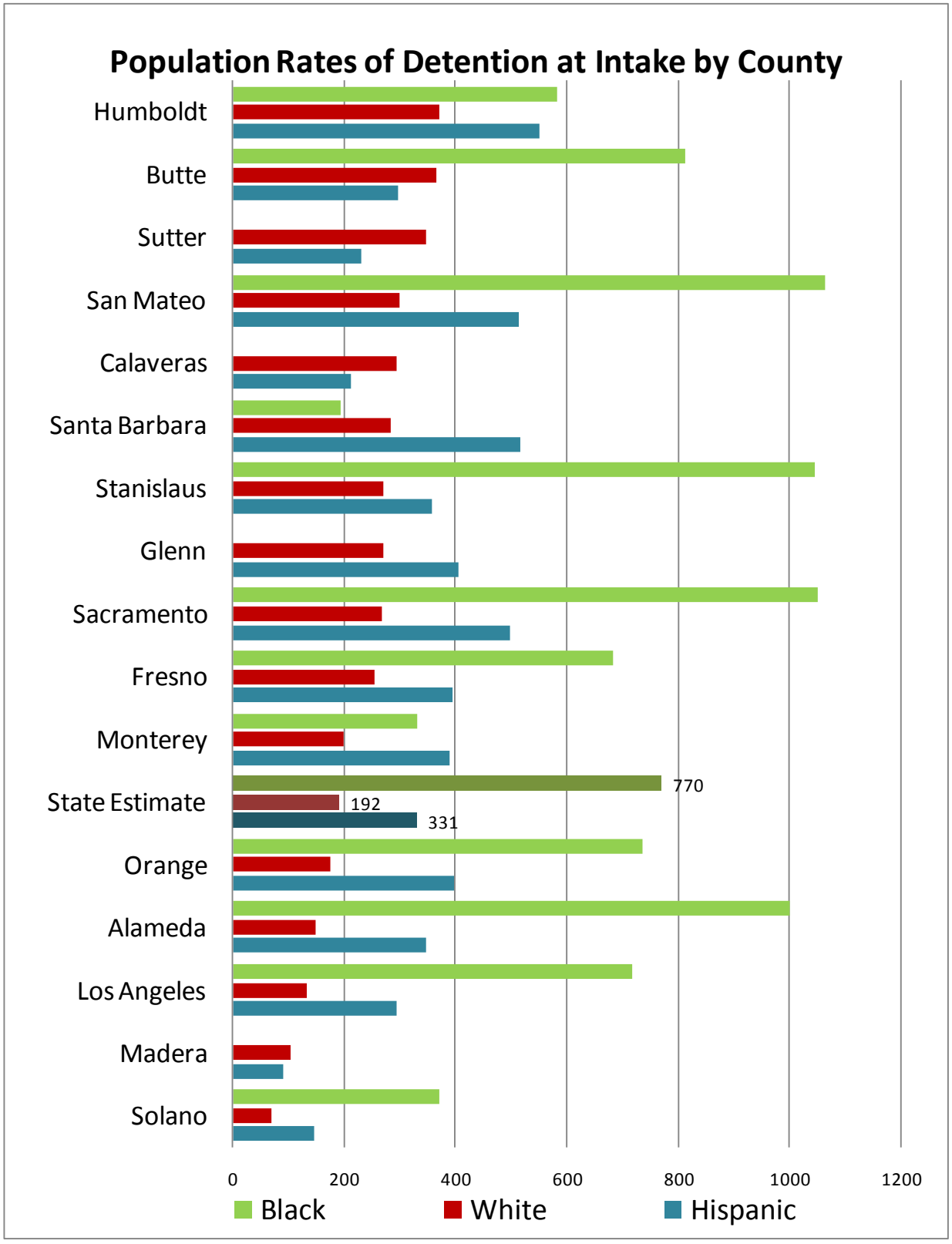
We looked especially at the detention of children under age 12. The proportion of children under the age of 12 who were detained at intake varied by region. The highest rate per population, 26, was in the North Region. The sample-wide rate was 8 juveniles under the age of 12 per 100,000 in the population. See Table 15 in the appendix.

Detention at intake was more likely for black and Hispanic youth in many parts of the state. For black youth, in addition to being over-represented in the population at intake (double the white population rate), it is also true that more black juveniles in the sample were detained in a detention center at intake relative to white juveniles. Compounding both of these (disproportionate intake plus disproportionate detention) led to a rate of detention per population that was 4 times higher for black youth vs. white youth (770 vs. 192). In the four sampled counties where black populations are above average for the sample (Alameda, Los Angeles, Sacramento and Solano) black youth were detained 6.74, 5.37, 3.93, and 5.33 times the rate per population of white youth.

Overall in our sample, the rate of detention per population for Hispanics was 75% higher than for white youth (330 vs. 192) and approximately 40% lower for Asian youth (112 vs. 192) and 25% lower Native American youth (146 vs. 192). In the seven counties where the Hispanic population was average or higher—Fresno, Los Angeles, Madera, Monterey, Orange, Santa Barbara and Stanislaus—Hispanic youth were detained at 1.55, 2.20, 0.87, 1.95, 2,26, 1.81, 1.31 times the rate per population of white youth.

Chart 11 below shows the population rates of detention for black, white and Hispanic youth county by county, excluding those counties with very low black or Hispanic populations. Detention rates for one or both of these minority groups were disproportionately higher in each county included on the chart except for Calaveras, Sutter and Madera County. This chart is based on Tables 13 and 16 in the appendix.

Chart 11


Population Rates of Detention at Intake by County
Humboldt
Butte
Sutter
San Mateo
Calaveras
Santa Barbara
Stanislaus
Glenn
Sacramento
Fresno
Monterey
State Estimate
Orange
Alameda
Los Angeles
Madera
Solano
770
192
331
0
200
400
600
800
1000
1200
Black
White
Hispanic

Recidivism

Recidivism: Statewide and by County Categories

Before considering how many of the juveniles in the sample were charged with new violations (recidivism), we consider for how many juveniles was their first offense their only offense in the system? The answer is that 54.3% statewide had no new arrests over all 4 years studied. By county size, 51% in the large counties, 62% in the medium-sized counties and 69% of juveniles in the small counties had no new arrests. By regions, 62% in North, 53% in Sacramento Region, 57% in Bay, 64% in and 50% in the South Region had no new arrests over the years studied.

For the rest of the youth, at least one new charge was filed. Here we define recidivism as any subsequent law violation or technical violation that was entered into the Juvenile Court and Probation Statistical System (JCPSS) or the adult Criminal History System (CHS) after the intake referral to probation. We tallied new violations reported yearly, within the first, second, third or fourth year after the 2001 intake date. Four years after intake, we estimate that 80% of the youth entering the system statewide had no new charges filed. In Chart 12 we see that this proportion varies across county categories. As we interpret these differences, it is important to keep in mind that that the differences observed across county size and regions do not necessarily correspond with differences in success working the juvenile offenders. As discussed above, the widely varying rates of intake across counties shown in Chart 4 are correlated with different practices across county size and regions that are in part driven by varying proportions of high and low risk youth involved in the systems in the first place.

Chart 12 includes two different ways of expressing yearly recidivism rates. On the left, recidivism is defined as the rate per intake—what percent of juveniles who entered the system had a new violation reported during each year subsequent to their intake? On the right, the recidivism rate is expressed as the rate per population—how many juveniles were reported to have a new violation per 100,000 juveniles in the population aged 11 to 17? The first definition is intuitive and commonly used; however, the second definition is useful in this context because it controls for the differences due to narrow or wide intake practices across counties. For this reason, the second definition is more appropriate for comparisons across county categories.

Chart 12: Annual Recidivism Rates

	Recidivism as the Percent of Intake				Recidivism as Rate per 100,000 Juv Population			
	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Year 4	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Year 4
Statewide estimate:	25%	21%	21%	20%	484	406	410	389
Large Counties	28%	22%	22%	21%	467	369	374	355
Medium Counties	16%	18%	19%	18%	562	624	641	621
Small Counties	14%	14%	13%	12%	730	730	672	597
North Region	17%	16%	17%	17%	616	591	606	614
Sacramento Region	27%	20%	21%	19%	651	492	508	469
Bay Region	22%	20%	21%	20%	446	398	423	396
Central Region	17%	18%	17%	16%	710	776	707	684
South Region	29%	22%	23%	22%	439	341	349	332

Across county size, large counties report higher recidivism as a percent of intake (from 28% to 21%, from year 1 through year 4), but this level of offending is relatively low in the context of their population (rate of 457 to 355, from year 1 through year 4). In contrast small counties experience lower recidivism rates as a percent of intake as a group (from 14% to 12%) but this level of offending is relatively high in the context of their population (rate of 730 to 597). Similarly by region, those with the highest recidivism as a percent of intake (South and Bay Regions) have the lowest rates of continued offending as per population. The opposite is found for the North and Central Regions. The Sacramento Region falls in between.

The statewide estimates show relatively flat but decreasing recidivism rates of intake over the four years studied, from 25% in the first year to 20% in the fourth year. These rates are not adjusted for various interventions or dispositions individuals may have received that placed him or her in secure facilities for a period of time. Since the dispositions at the county level do not carry over multiple years without some court action, the primary source of bias in these charts is due to youth sent to the California Youth Authority (CYA, now called DJJ) or directly filed in adult court or otherwise remanded to adult court. In the next section we will see that the percent of intake involved is these dispositions varies from 0.4% in year 1 to 1.1% in year 4. So this appears to be a relatively minor source of bias overall.

The recidivism rates by county size and region mask considerable variation among the counties (see Tables 20 and 31 in the appendix). Recidivism rates increase over time in some medium-size counties (Butte and Stanislaus) and some small-size counties (Calaveras and Tuolumne), while other small counties (Modoc and Trinity) and some large counties (Los Angeles, Sacramento and Orange) show solid declines.

Recidivism: Demographics Statewide and by County Categories

The demographics of recidivism at the state level are summarized in Chart 13 below. The rates in this chart show that males have higher recidivism rates across time than females. Male recidivism rates expressed as a percent of intake drop from 27% in the first year to 23% in the fourth year while the corresponding female rates of intake drop from 18% down to 11%. Across all county size and region categories, analyses confirm that males are twice as likely as females to have a new law or technical violation in the fourth year after intake.

Recidivism rates for the youngest offenders in the system showed an increase in recidivism over time. The percent of juveniles who were under 12 years old when they entered the system that had a new violation reported rose from 13% in year 1 up to 24% in year 4. It also rose for the juveniles who were 12 years old at intake, from 20% in year 1 up to 25% in year 4. At the other end of the spectrum, the oldest offenders were the ones who showed the steepest declines in recidivism over time. For the juveniles who were age 16 at intake, the percent recidivism fell from 25% in year 1 down to 18% in year 4. Recidivism also fell for those who were age 17 at intake, from 23% down to 16% and these rates do include criminal activity in the adult system as individuals "age-out" of the juvenile justice system. Across all county size and region categories, analyses confirm that the percent recidivism in the fourth year among younger offenders (including those who were under age 13 and those who were 13 or 14 at intake) is higher (approximately 40% higher) than offenders who were 15 to 17 years old at intake.

Chart 13

Recidivism Rates by Demographics

	Recidivism as the Percent of Intake				Recidivism as Rate per 100,000 Juv Population			
	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Year 4	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Year 4
Statewide ages 11-17	25%	21%	21%	20%	484	406	410%	389
Males ages 11-17	27%	24%	24%	23%	752	654	673	644
Females ages 11-17	18%	13%	12%	11%	202	144	133	121
age 5-11 yrs	13%	15%	21%	24%	11	12	17	19
age 12 yrs	20%	20%	25%	25%	165	163	204	204
age 13 yrs	25%	24%	26%	24%	392	374	407	380
age 14 yrs	28%	26%	26%	23%	651	598	595	528
age 15 yrs	28%	23%	22%	20%	748	629	599	530
age 16 yrs	25%	19%	17%	18%	775	593	537	543
age 17 yrs	23%	16%	16%	16%	670	463	466	457
White ages 11-17	20%	16%	17%	16%	354	285	297	277
Hispanic ages 11-17	27%	23%	23%	21%	530	447	446	425
Black ages 11-17	30%	27%	27%	27%	1044	939	948	930
Asian & Pacific 11-17	22%	15%	15%	12%	152	106	109	88
Native Amer 11-17	21%	23%	20%	22%	267	291	251	275

There are several potential explanations for these countervailing patterns of recidivism, increasing over time for the youngest and decreasing over time for the oldest, which cannot be distinguished without further information. Longitudinal studies that follow a sample of youth from childhood into adulthood and measure self-reported offending each year find that delinquency and criminal offending typically increases throughout adolescence and decreases with maturity into adulthood. Are the age differences in recidivism we see here simply a maturational trend? This may be partially true, but the research literature also suggests that as a group, young persons who begin delinquent and criminal behavior at an early age are likely to be at higher risk of becoming serious and chronic offenders that continue offending into adulthood. Furthermore there is research that suggests that programs or interventions that mix less sophisticated youth with more sophisticated youth, or low risk youth with high risk youth, younger offenders with older offenders can have criminogenic effects, meaning that these programs can unintentionally lead to an increase in crime for the more vulnerable participants. The main point here is that without knowledge of the sanctions or interventions provided to the young offenders or knowledge of their levels of risk assessed at system intake, it is difficult to disentangle these potential explanations to interpret the meaning of these outcomes.

Black juveniles have the highest recidivism rates—27% in the fourth year, which translates into 930 per 100,000 black juvenile population, followed by Hispanic juveniles—21% in the fourth year, which was 425 offenders per 100,000 Hispanic juvenile population and Native American juveniles—22% of intake, or 275 per population. Post hoc comparisons confirm that within large and medium-size counties and within each region except North, the percent of black youths with a new law or technical violation in the fourth year was higher than the percent recidivism for white youths—approximately 60% higher overall. In large counties and in the Central, South and Sacramento Regions, the percent of Hispanic youth with a new law violation was larger than the percent of recidivism for white youth—approximately 30% higher overall. Within large-size counties and the South Region, the percent of new law or technical violations in the fourth year was lower for Asian youth than for white youth—approximately 20% lower overall.

Charts 12 and 13 are based on Tables 19, 20 and 31 in the appendix. More details on recidivism by counties, county categories and demographics are included in Tables 19 through 41.

Finally, we also examined the relationship between being detained in juvenile hall or a detention center when arrested for the first time and recidivism over the four years studied. Tables 42 and 43 in the appendix address this issue. Statewide, we estimate that juveniles detained at intake were 1.8 times more likely to have a new law or technical violation four years later than those not detained. This ratio is higher in the Sacramento and Central Regions where recidivism is 2.4 times more likely for those detained vs. those not detained. The ratio was also elevated among children under age 12 (2.65) and for females (2.21).

A favorable interpretation of these differences is that only youth at high risk of re-offending are detained (hence the higher recidivism rates), even in the more vulnerable categories of children under age 12 and females. However, it is also possible based on past research that the detention of vulnerable populations and lower-risk individuals can unintentionally increase criminal behavior in the long run (criminogenic effect) and it is the detention experience itself that affects these individuals in ways that increase rather then decrease their odds of continuing to offend. It is important that juvenile justice systems use validated risk assessments at intake to avoid this problem and equally important that the results of these assessments be entered in JCPSS so future reviews can distinguish between favorable and concerning interpretations of these outcomes associated with detention.

Court Dispositions

Dispositions: Statewide, by Wardship and by County Categories

The most serious disposition received during each of the four years studied was identified for each juvenile in the sample. The hierarchy used to determine which disposition was the most serious was from highest to lowest: 9) adult conviction with a sentence to prison or jail (that did not appear to be stayed); 8) a disposition to CYA or were direct filed or remanded to adult court (but had not received a judgment from adult court in that year); 7) disposition to a secure county facility; 6) disposition to a private facility or non-secure public or other county facility; 5) disposition for community supervision by adult probation; 4) disposition for community supervision or indication of informal supervision by juvenile probation; 3) diversion indicated or court action to dismiss a charge or close a case or terminate probation; 2) no new disposition recorded over the year; 1) left the county due to a transfer to another jurisdiction or deportation.

The percent of juveniles at each level of the disposition hierarchy over the years studied is given in Chart 14 (and Table 44 in the appendix). In the 4th year, a total of 5.2% had orders to be incarcerated either in adult prison or jail (4.1% were sent to CYA with 1.1% remands and direct files). A total of 2.7% of juveniles were placed out of the home (2.1% in a secure county facility or 0.6% in a private or other facility) And 2.8% were being supervised in the community (1.8% as an adult or 2.8% as a juvenile).

In Chart 15 (and Table 45 in the appendix), the most serious dispositions are displayed separately for juveniles who were or were not made a ward at some time over the four years studied; 36% of the juveniles in the sample were made wards. In the 4th year, 2.9% of the non-wards were sentenced to prison or jail, 2.2% were being supervised by probation in the community (formally or informally). Among wards, 9.4% were sent to prison, jail or to CYA (including remands and direct files); 7.8% were placed out of the home in a secure county facility (6%) or other local facility (1.8%); and 10% were being supervised by probation in the community (as an adult 2.3% or juvenile 6.7%).

Chart 14

Most Serious Disposition Received by Year: Percent of Juveniles in Longitudinal Sample

Gray = No dispositions; Green = Community; Blue/Purple = Juvenile County or Private Facility; Orange /Red = CYA, Prison or Jail

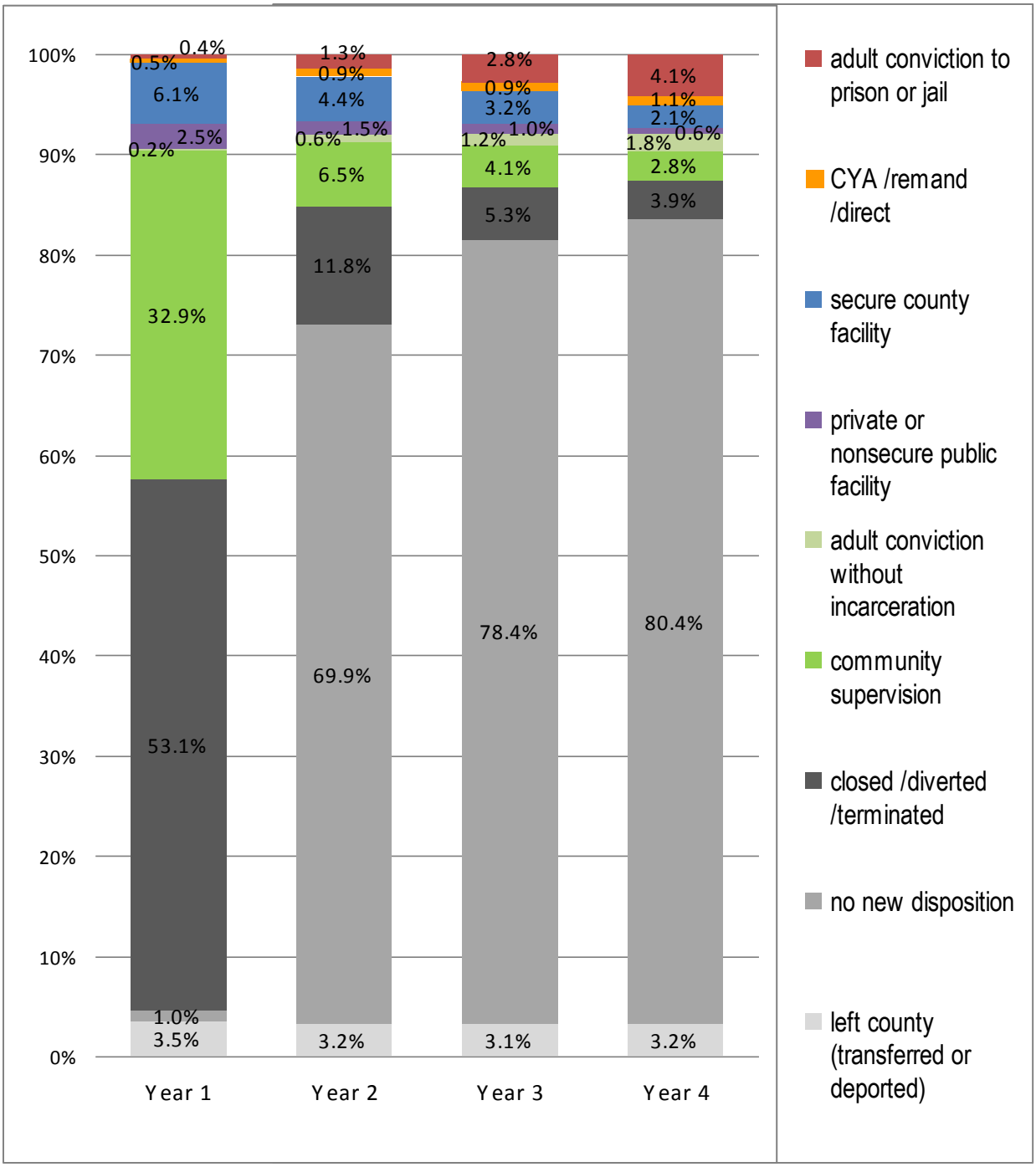
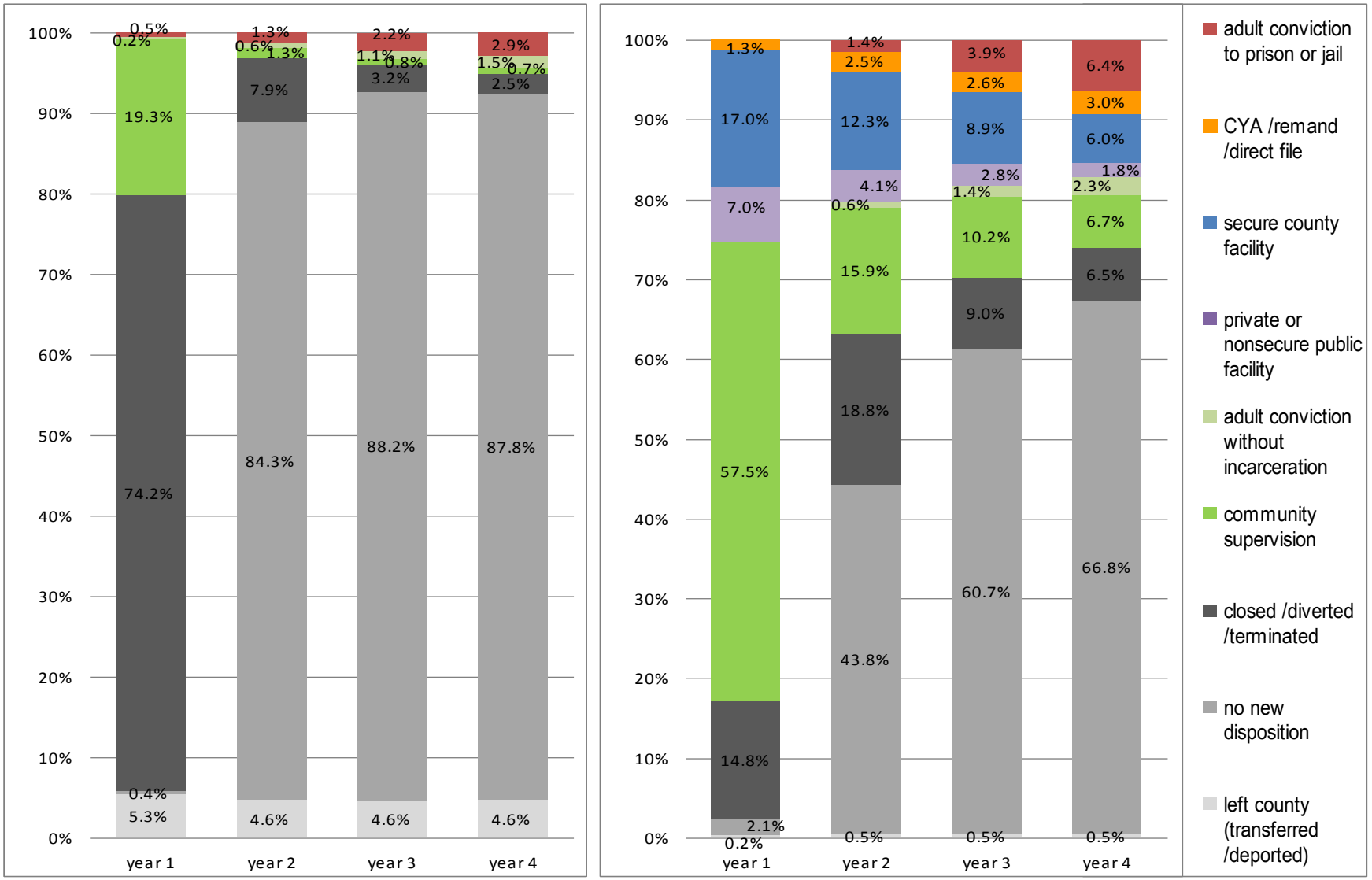


Chart 15

Most Serious Disposition Yearly as a Percent of the 24,816 Non-Wards (on the left) and 13,690 Wards (on the right)

Gray = No dispositions; Green = Community; Blue/Purple = Juvenile County or Private Facility; Orange /Red = CYA, Prison or Jail



Tables detailing the dispositional outcomes by county size and region are included in Tables 46 and 47 in the appendix. By county size, dispositions to secure county facilities in year 4 were received for similar rates of intake in large and small counties (2.3% and 2.2%) but at a lower rate in medium-size counties (1.3%). Expressed as the rate per juveniles in the population, orders to a secure county facility in the 4th year were more widespread in small counties (110 per 100,000) than in medium-sized (44 per 100,000) or large counties (39 per 100,000). By region, the percent of intake with orders to a secure county facility were highest in South Region (2.7%) and Central Region (2.5%), but as a rate per population this was elevated only in the Central Region (108 per 100,000) and lowest in the Bay Region (8 per 100,000).

The percent of youth in the sample with an order to CYA or direct-filed or remanded to adult court (but had not received a judgment from adult court in that year) was 1.25% in large-size counties and lower, close to 0.5%, in both medium- and small-size counties. In terms of rate per population, these rates were 21, 17 and 26 respectively. By region, the highest percent of intake ordered to CYA or sent to adult court was in the South Region (1.4%), but the highest rate per population was in the Central Region (30 per 100,000).

Dispositions: Demographics Statewide and by Wardship

The distribution of top dispositions received varied for males and females. In the fourth year, the percent of males in the sample that received an order to a secure facility was 3 times higher and those that received an order to CYA (or sent to adult court) was 7.8 times higher than the percent of females (see Table 48 in the appendix).

The distribution of top dispositions across categories of age mirror the findings for recidivism in that we see the frequency of more severe dispositions rise over time for the youngest juveniles (up to 6% in a secure county facility in year 4), but we do not see a fall over time for the older juveniles at the extreme end of the continuum. At the top of the hierarchy in yr 4 we see that 5.9% of the juveniles who were 15 to 17 years old at intake (now ages 18 to 20) were convicted in adult court and sent to prison or jail (see Table 49 in the appendix).

Race and ethnicity had a strong association with dispositional outcomes for youth entering the juvenile justice system in 2001. Four years after intake, a 5.6 times higher percentage of black youth, 3.5 times higher percentage of Hispanic youth, 3.2 times higher percentage of Asian youth and 5.3 times higher percentage of Native American youth had an order to CYA or were direct filed or remanded to adult court than the percentage of white youth with similar orders. Given the elevated rate of intake for black youths, the rate per population with these dispositions or orders was 11 times higher for black than for white youth. For details across all levels of dispositions and all race ethnic groups coded, see Table 50 in the appendix.

The distribution of top dispositions by wardship is given in Table 51 in the appendix.

Type and Level of Charges

Charges Linked to the Most Serious Dispositions

We isolated the type and level of charges that led to the most serious dispositions discussed above. For each disposition, only the most serious charge (based on the hierarchy of seriousness used by DOJ) was considered. The type of charge associated with the top dispositions varied across county size. For placement out of the home into a secure county facility, the most frequent charge was a technical violation of the conditions of probation. As depicted in Chart 16, a technical violation led to placement in a secure county facility in 30% of the cases in small counties and 51% of the cases in medium-size counties. In contrast, a technical violation led to this placement in only 16% of the cases in large counties where the most frequent charge that led to this placement was a misdemeanor property offense (26%) followed by a violent felony (18%). A similar pattern of disparities was found for placement out of the home into a private facility or non-secure public facility. (See the pie charts across the bottom half of Chart 16 on the next page.)

Chart 17 shows the charges associated with an order to adult prison or jail (top of the chart) and to CYA including cases direct filed or remanded to adult court (bottom half of the chart). In large and medium-size counties, the charge most frequently associated with an order to CYA or remand to adult court was a violent felony (59% and 42% respectively). The second most frequent charge in medium-size counties was a technical violation (18%). In large counties, a technical violation was associated with this disposition in 4% of the cases, which ranked lower than property felonies (10%), other felonies (10%) and violent misdemeanors (7%). There were too few cases in small-size counties to break out charges for this disposition category.

Chart 16

Type and Level of Charge Associated with Placement Out of the Home in a Secure County Facility or Private Facility/Non-Secure Public Facility (Averaged over 4 Years)

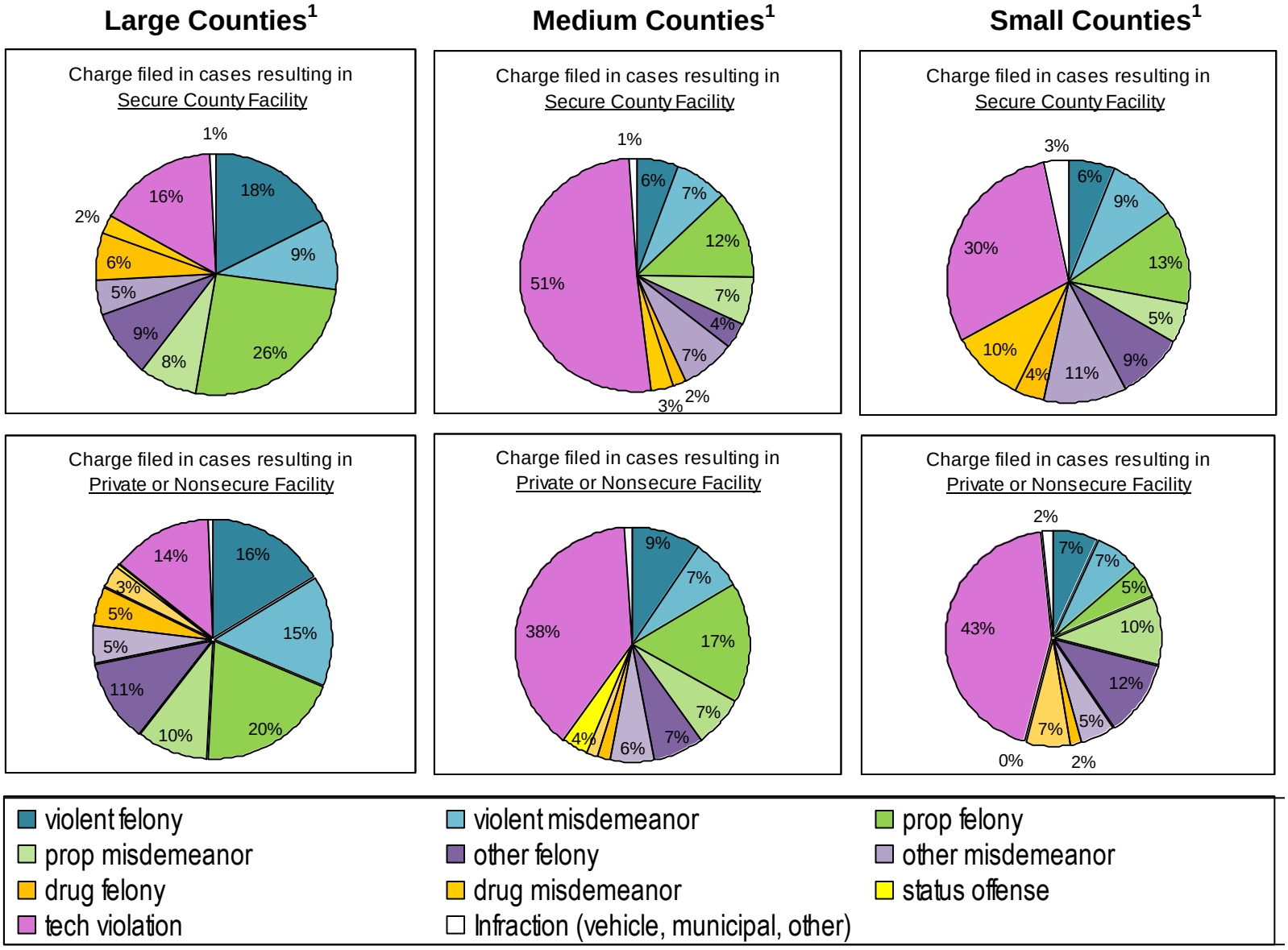
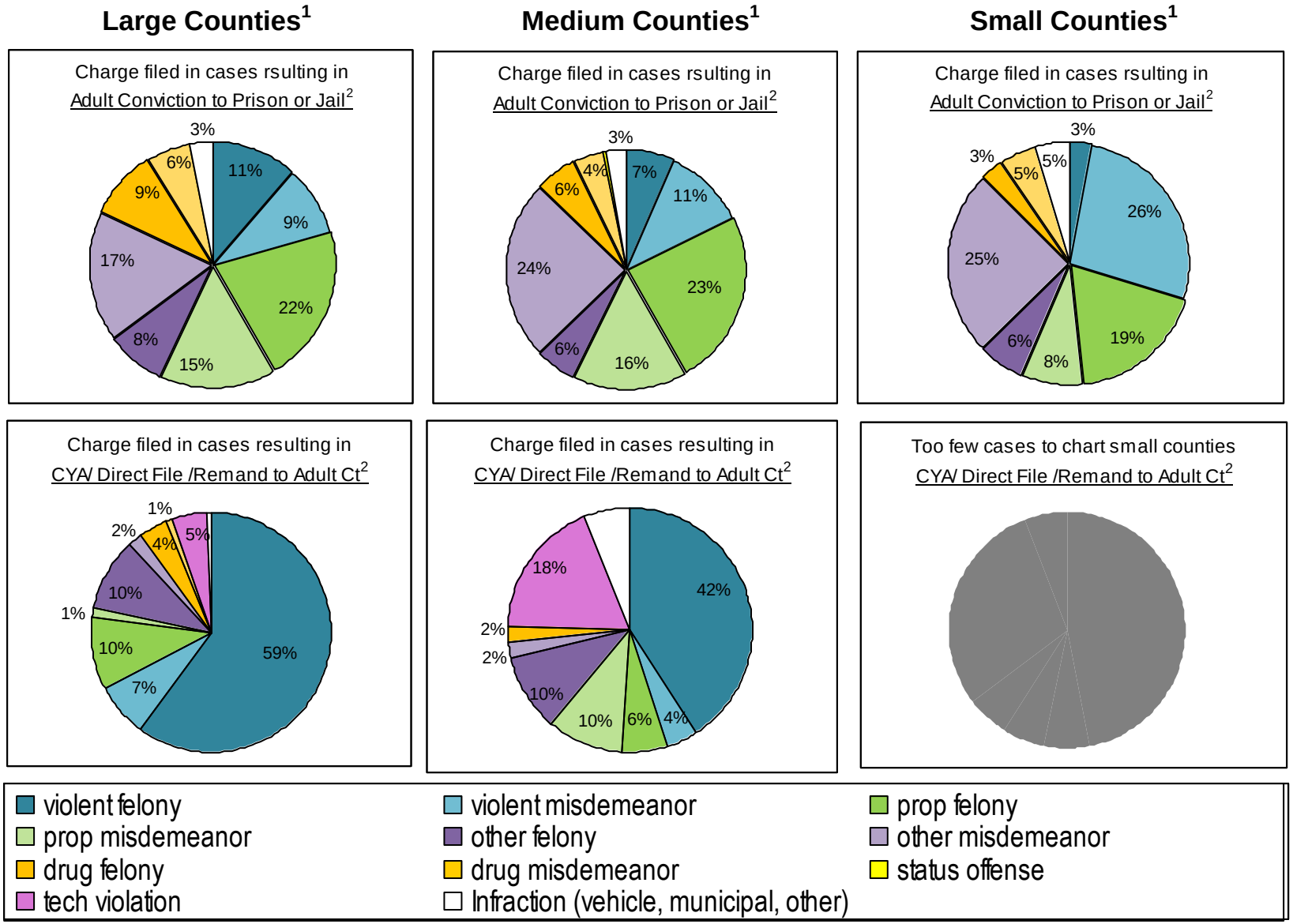


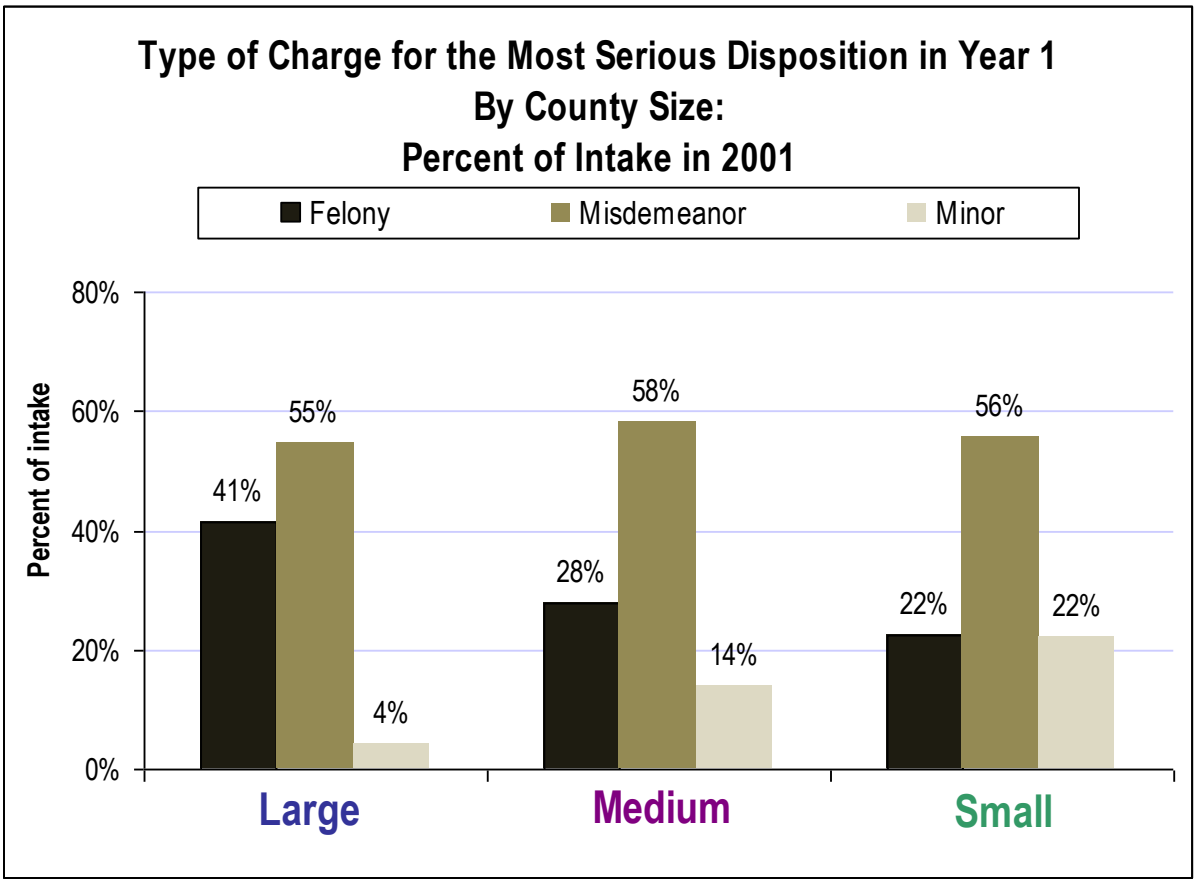
Chart 17

Type and Level of Charge Associated with an Order to Prison or Jail from the Adult System Data or a Case Direct-Filed/Remanded to Adult Court or Ordered to CYA from the Juvenile System Data (Averaged over 4 Years)



The charges linked with the most serious dispositions received over the four years studied are included in Table 52 in the appendix. Consistent with our interpretation of the implications of different intake rates over county size, we see that charges for status offenses and infractions are more common in the small-size (22%) and medium-size counties (14%) relative to large-size counties (4%). However, felony charges are more common in the large counties. In Chart 19 below, we see that the percent of felony charges (associated with the most serious disposition received that year) was 41% in large-size counties, 28% in medium-size counties and 22% in small-size counties.

Chart 19



Conclusions and Recommendations

We have learned that using existing juvenile justice data reconfigured into a longitudinal database and linked with adult system criminal histories, enable us to describe several aspects of the juvenile justice system. The aspects we have been able to describe with existing data include the rate of juveniles entering the system (intake), rate of detention at intake, rate of recidivism across time, rates of various dispositions across time from diversions to community supervision to placement out of the home at the county to incarceration at the state level and the charges associated these dispositions.

Most of these aspects vary across the 21 county juvenile justice systems included in the study sample and by inference, across all of the 58 county juvenile justice systems in the state. We can estimate that statewide intake in the juvenile justice system in 2001 was 1955 per 100,000 juvenile population; 16% were detained at intake which represents 307 per 100,000 juvenile population; 25% were charged with a new law or technical violation in the first year after intake; 21% in the second year; 21% in the third year and 20% in the fourth year after intake. We can observe that these rates vary significantly by comparisons across county size, region of the state, and the sex, age and race/ethnicity of the young offender. We understand that indicators based on percents of intake can be misleading when comparisons are made across counties because of striking differences in rates of intake per population.

Using the data currently available, the USC research team has been able to review several system outcomes in meaningful ways. However the following recommendations for changes or additions to the JCPSS system would greatly increase the value, accuracy and scope of the juvenile justice outcomes that could be reviewed. The final recommendation is for a mandate to continue periodic reviews of this type within the juvenile justice system in California.

1. It is recommended that scores from a validated, nationally recognized risk assessment administered to every juvenile at intake be reported in JCPSS for each juvenile entering the system. This addition will increase the specificity and greatly strengthen the interpretation and usefulness of outcomes reviewed.

First, every county probation department should be assessing each juvenile at intake to determine his or her risk of re-offending because this is now the standard for best practices. This practice is important and should not be optional because research has demonstrated that failure to match a juvenile's level of risk at intake (and later his or her specific needs) with the level of response or intervention provided can lead to ineffective efforts, or worse, counter-productive consequences that increase rather than decrease the likelihood of continued offending.

Second, as reported in the JJDP Phase 1 Report,[*] several counties have adopted a recognized risk assessment and other counties indicated that they were planning to do so. However, most departments have not taken this step or are using a locally developed assessment that has not been validated or standardized. Counties may need funding to adopt a standard assessment program, train staff to administer it and validate the instrument locally. In terms of cost–

[*] http://www.cdcr.ca.gov/Reports_Research/djj_data_project_rpts.html

effective innovations that have the potential for improving juvenile outcomes, implementing a valid nationally recognized risk assessment is near the top of the list.

Recognizing the differences in the nature of populations served in small-, medium- and large-size counties or by regions, the ideal would be for each county probation department to adopt one of three approved assessments, for example. **Once implemented, key scores that indicate basic levels of risk (such as low, mid and high risk) should be recorded in JCPSS so that future reviewers can observe outcomes by risk level.**

2. We expect that the types of programs or interventions received drive outcomes. Therefore, reviews of juvenile justice outcomes will be much more meaningful in the future by including information on the types of programs or interventions individuals in the system receive in JCPSS.

Though challenging, this is not an insurmountable task. Working with the comprehensive descriptions of county probation department programs at each level of graduated sanctions such as the set of descriptions recently compiled in the JJDP Phase 1 county survey could jump-start this process. A checklist for each level of sanctions (e.g., types of informal supervision programs; types of intensive supervision programs, types of probation camp programs; types of DJJ programs) that specifies the key elements included in a program can be developed. **Checklists based on current practices and on evidence-based practices[*] should be developed and incorporated into JCPSS. These checklists should be updated as needed.**

As youth are assigned to programs, the type of program received could be noted from the checklist provided. The start-date and end-date of the program would also be desirable to determine the duration of services.

Some counties have been able to support research units that provide feedback on the effectiveness of specific programs or interventions for youth at different levels of risk. However, the vast majority of county probation departments have not been able to routinely track the outcomes of their programs. Incorporating even a rudimentary framework to start with, in JCPSS, could be quite powerful. This would allow future system reviewers to provide feedback to counties on the long-term outcomes of youth who were involved in various types of interventions. This would allow counties to compare their own outcomes with outcomes in other counties with similar populations. It is difficult to improve outcomes without first having knowledge of what the outcomes actually are. This is one important service that future routine reviews of juvenile justice system outcomes would provide to all counties, including those without the resources to track outcomes themselves.

[*] For examples of evidence-based practices view the model programs featured on the University of Colorado's Blueprints for Violence Prevention website www.colorado.edu/cspv/blueprints/technicalassistance/overview.html or the Washington State Institute for Public Policy site www.wsipp.wa.gov/rptfiles/07-06-1201.pdf or www.wsipp.wa.gov/topic.asp?cat=10&subcat=54&dteSlct=0.

3. Some relatively simple changes in the current JCPSS codes would facilitate future reviews of system outcomes.

    a) The method of recording race / ethnicity is outdated and should be changed to conform to the wording and procedures used in the US Census. This is important so that the census population data used to create rates matches the data collected in JCPSS.

    b) The reliability and ease of identifying longitudinal cohorts or samples would be facilitated by a check-off indicating the first entry for the juvenile. (Also, this checkbox could trigger the request for risk assessment information.).

    c) Adding a "transfer to" field would facilitate the linkage of records for youth active in multiple counties. Currently, transfers are indicated but no information about where they were transferred to is included.

    d) The hierarchy that DOJ uses to code the severity of offenses should be linked in some way to the statutes reported in JCPSS.

    e) Ways of facilitating the tracking of juveniles into the adult system should be explored. The process used in the current study is cumbersome and extremely time consuming.

We believe that a) through d) will be relatively easy to implement, but e) will require some discussion and thought. Finding a way of linking the CII number back to JCPSS rather than the other way around would better maintain the privacy of juvenile records.

4. A mandate to routinely review the outcomes of the juvenile justice systems in California is needed and can be strengthened by implementing the recommendations above.

A longitudinal sample should be periodically identified and tracked over time, with a new sample drawn every few years. This mandate to review system outcomes dovetails nicely with a leadership role in promoting and acting as a clearinghouse for best practices in juvenile justice for our state. **These two efforts together create a mechanism for California to take leadership in implementing and developing best practices to improve outcomes for our youth and our communities**.

The bottom line is that the information we can develop now from our existing databases falls far short of what is needed to truly track the strengths and weaknesses of our juvenile justice systems in California.

Valid Assessment of Young Offenders At Risk for Re-Offending is Lacking

Valid standard uniform assessments of a juvenile's risk of re-offending are lacking—no data of this kind is currently included in the JCPSS database though some counties have this data for their own use.

We know from the JJDP Phase I report that this type of assessment is not in widespread use throughout the state. This not only severely limits opportunities to apply evidence-based practices at the county level, but it also severely limits the usefulness of outcome indicators that can be developed. Just as in actuarial projection, different outcomes are predicted for youth at varying levels of risk. So it becomes impossible to truly appraise how well our systems are doing in holding recidivism down or in reaching other goals without knowing the levels of risk in the populations served.

A best scenario would be to have one uniform, nationally recognized risk assessment used throughout the state. But this is a large and variable state and our juvenile justice systems reflect this variability. In recognition of the strong theme of differences by county size in the findings of both JJDP reports, another desirable scenario would be to have three nationally recognized valid risk assessment approaches approved, and allow counties to choose the one that best meets their needs. The recommendation would be to require that key elements of an approved (demonstrably valid) risk assessment, taken at the time of system entry, be included in the initial JCPSS entry for every juvenile new to the juvenile justice system.

This would allow us to create indicators of recidivism, for example, that allow comparisons with juvenile justice programs in other states and provide links to the research literature on evidence-based practices that are typically linked to level of risk. It would also allow us to monitor our system for possible criminogenic effects of well-intentioned programs that research has shown can do as much harm as good when there is a mismatch between the juvenile participant's level of risk and the structure and content of the program or intervention provided.

Links between Outcomes and the Interventions Received is Lacking

Information on the duration or types of programs or interventions that individuals actually receive in the juvenile justice system is lacking—no data of this kind is currently included in the JCPSS database though some counties have this data for their own use.

County juvenile courts and probation departments work hard to develop supervision programs and other interventions that will assist youth in turning their lives away from criminal offending. In an attempt to take advantage of the unique resources available in various communities and implement evidence-based programs and practices, many counties have been creative in developing unique and powerful supervision and intervention programs. Some have been evaluated, particularly when outside funding has been available to do so, but as a general rule, most of the programs and interventions used in the juvenile justice systems in California are not routinely evaluated beyond immediate program goals such as restitution paid, completion of the intervention curriculum, or recidivism during program itself. The

JJDP Phase 1 report found that the long-term outcomes (beyond the end of the program itself) are very rarely examined. Many or most counties have not had the resources to document the impact of their programs on youth.

Evidence-based practices are looked to as a solution. This alternative holds great promise. However, to be effective, recognized program models and arguably all programs or interventions require a good match between the risk levels and specific needs of the youth involved and the program type chosen. Whether a program is evidence-based or a local innovation, any program can have criminogenic effects when mismatched with participants' needs or when seemingly trivial implementation short cuts change the program dynamics.[*] The bottom line is that one important reason for a routine review of system indicators is to alert system managers and stakeholders to backfiring or ineffective programs.

For this reason, it is strongly recommended that data elements be added to JCPSS that document certain details of the intervention or programs received and some information on the duration of the program. One scenario would be to develop a typology of programs in use (e.g., based on the detailed program by program descriptions provided to JJDP in Phase 1 and/or other available information) and add a checklist-style template to record program information in JCPSS.

A Mandate for Periodic Comprehensive Reviews of Juvenile Justice Outcomes is Lacking

Comprehensive reviews advocated above will double and triple in value each year they are repeated. Trends over time not only bring outcomes into clearer focus, they also provide feedback on the effectiveness of system changes that are implemented. Anticipated and unanticipated upsides and downsides are documented and shared with all concerned. Improving outcomes is an iterative process that is stimulated by reliable feedback that can bring stakeholders together to talk about solutions based on a common understanding of what is really going on.

With the additional data elements recommended above, comprehensive reviews can begin to link outcomes to program models, evidence-based models that have been implemented as well as other programs in use. Such outcomes can be examined across risk levels to see if the expected trends are found and be alerted to unexpected or unwanted trends.

Further, there is a movement across the county to understand the linkages across broad systems that have been working separately in the past. These include education, child welfare, mental health, substance abuse as well as juvenile justice. This vision of cooperation leading to collaboration has been a strong theme among the JJDP stakeholders. There is a growing realization that the paths to successful outcomes in all of these arenas are linked. Looking to the future, a mandate for comprehensive periodic reviews of juvenile justice systems creates opportunities to study and learn more about the relationship of juvenile justice to other systems because it creates opportunities to identify and study crossover issues. For example, one goal of the JJDP project is to explore the possibility of linking the longitudinal juvenile

[*] James A. Wilson and Robert C. Davis. 2006. "Good Intentions Meet Hard Realities: An Evaluation of the Project Greenlight Reentry Program" in Criminology and Public Policy. Vol. 5 (2): 303-338.

justice dataset created for this project with longitudinal data that has been created for the child welfare system (see http://cssr.berkeley.edu/ucb_childwelfare/CdssFiles.aspx), which is an excellent example of the value of building an ongoing longitudinal data resource.

This publicly accessible longitudinal database that is maintained for the child welfare system is an example of the way that the JCPSS data could be accumulated to create a longitudinal juvenile justice database. Links to criminal histories into the adult system could be routinely or periodically identified and tracked for new samples drawn every few years. This mandate to review system outcomes dovetails nicely with a leadership role in promoting and acting as a clearinghouse for best practices in juvenile justice for our state. These two efforts together could create a mechanism for California to take leadership in implementing and developing best practices to improve outcomes for our youth and our communities.