

Alaska Justice Statistical Analysis Center

FACT SHEET



JUSTICE CENTER

UNIVERSITY of ALASKA ANCHORAGE

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Juvenile Justice Referrals and Charges in Alaska, FY 2006–2015

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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 2006–2015. 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 District Court convictions for minor consuming. 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 components: 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 FY 2006–2015.

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

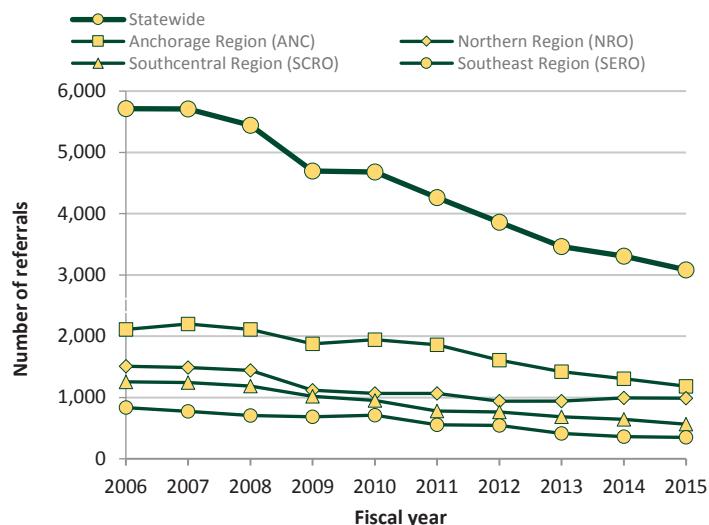
the east. The Southeast Region (SERO) covers the entire Southeast panhandle from Yakutat to Metlakatla.

The data presented in the figures and tables below reflect the referrals, charges, and number of unique referred individuals for Alaska FY 2006–2015. 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>.)

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. For the period

FIGURE 1.

Referrals to the Alaska Division of Juvenile Justice, FY 2006–2015



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

spanning FY06–FY15, the number of referrals made to DJJ decreased 46.0% statewide, from 5,713 in FY06 to 3,083 in FY15 (see Figure 1). The total number of DJJ referrals also decreased in each region during the FY06–FY15 time period: ANC (-43.9%), NRO (34.7%), SCRO (-55.1%), and SERO (-58.2%).

The gender composition of juveniles referred to DJJ remained stable between FY 06 and FY15. In FY06, 73.8% of all referrals were of males; in FY15, this figure stood at 74.5%. In FY06, 26.2% of all DJJ referrals were for females; in FY15, the proportion of female referrals was 25.5%. (Data not shown.)

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 FY06–FY15 period, from 9,700 in FY06 to 5,501 in FY15 (-43.3%).

Charge class. Charges are categorized into four charge classes: felonies, misdemeanors, probation/conduct violations, and violation/other. Between FY06 and FY15 the total number of charges within each charge class declined (Figure 2). The total number of charges for felony offenses referred to DJJ dropped from

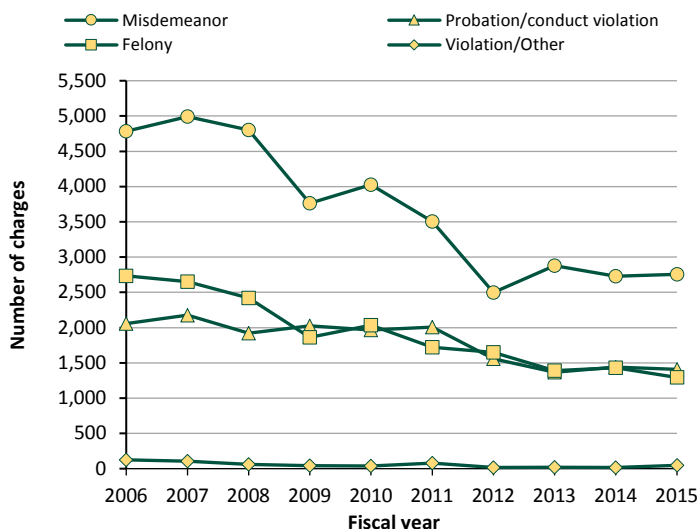
2,734 in FY06 to 1,293 in FY15 (-52.7%). Charges for misdemeanor offenses declined from 4,783 in FY06 to 2,756 in FY15 (-42.4%). The number of charges for probation/conduct violations fell from 2,058 in FY06 to 1,407 in FY15 (-31.6%). Charges with offenses classified as violation/other dropped from 125 in FY06 to 45 in FY15 (-38.5%).

In FY06, 28.2% of all DJJ charges included felony offenses; by FY15 this proportion declined to 23.5%. The proportion of charges for offenses classified as misdemeanors increased slightly from 49.3% in FY06 to 50.1% in FY15. The proportion of charges for offenses classified as violation/other declined from 1.3% in FY06 to 0.8% in FY15. In contrast to these trends, the proportion of charges for offenses classified as probation/conduct violations increased from 21.2% of all offenses in FY06 to 25.6% in FY15. (These data are not represented in Figure 2.)

Charge type. Charges are categorized into seven offense types: person offenses, property offenses, probation/conduct violations, drug & alcohol offenses, public order offenses, weapons offenses, and miscellaneous offenses. Between FY06 and FY15 the number of charges including crimes against persons dropped from 1,149 in FY06 to 555 in FY15 (-51.7%) while property offense charges declined from 2,518 to 1,307 (-48.1%) (Figure 3).

FIGURE 2.

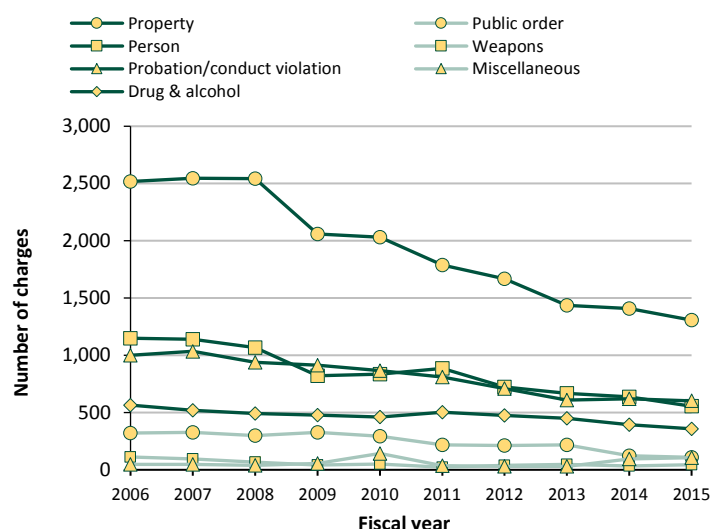
Charges by charge class in referrals to the Alaska Division of Juvenile Justice, FY 2006–2015



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

FIGURE 3.

Charges by charge type in referrals to the Alaska Division of Juvenile Justice, FY 2006–2015



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

The number of charges for probation/conduct violations offenses fell from 1,000 in FY06 to 602 in FY15 (-39.8%). Charges for drug & alcohol offenses declined from 565 in FY06 to 358 in FY15 (-36.6%). Decreases were also seen in charges for public order (-66.0%; n=212) and weapons (-59.8%; n=67) offenses. Charges for miscellaneous offenses increased (+122.9%; n=59) over the period.

Between FY06 and FY15, the proportion of all offense charges attributable to property offenses declined from 44.1% of all charges in FY06 to 42.4% of all charges in FY15. Other charges for offenses categorized by DJJ as miscellaneous increased from 0.8% of all charges in FY06 to 3.5% in FY15. The proportion of charges for person offenses decreased from 20.1% in FY06 to 18.0% in FY15. Overall, there were increases in the proportions of charges for probation/conduct violations — from 17.5% to 19.5% — and drug & alcohol offenses — from 9.9% to 11.6%, along with decreases in charges for public order offenses — from 5.6% to 3.5% — and weapons offenses — from 2.0% to 1.5% over the period from FY06 to FY15. (These data are not represented in Figure 3.)

Unique juveniles. Some juveniles are referred to DJJ for intake multiple times within a year. The data presented in Figure 4 represent the number of unduplicated counts of juveniles who were referred to DJJ during the FY06–FY15 time period. The number of juveniles who were referred to DJJ for intake declined 46.1% from 3,929 in FY 2006 to 2,118 in FY 2015.¹ The number of unique juveniles referred to DJJ declined for each of DJJ’s four regions: ANC (-44.0%), NRO (-32.9%), SCRO (-51.2%), and SERO (-57.5%) over the period.

SUMMARY

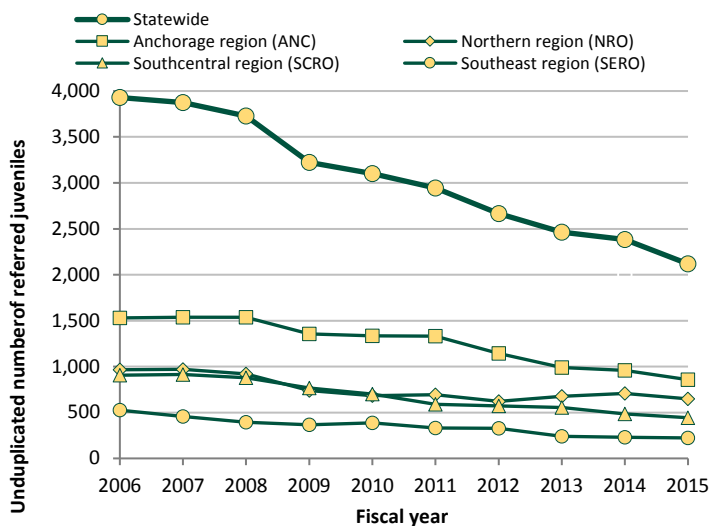
This fact sheet presented summary information on referrals and charges in the Alaska juvenile justice system for state fiscal years 2006–2015, including: the total number of referrals made to DJJ by law enforcement, the total number of charges by class and offense type, and the number of unique juveniles referred to DJJ. Each data section included trend information over the time period for the state, as well as the four administrative regional units of DJJ.

Overall, the data show that the total number of referrals to DJJ was nearly halved from FY 2006 to FY 2015, with each administrative region reporting decreases. The number of charges declined in all four charge classes – felony, misdemeanor, probation/conduct violations, and other violations – over the period. Of the seven offense types into which charges are separated – person, property, probation/conduct violation, drug & alcohol, public order, weapons, and miscellaneous – charges for six charge types (all except Miscellaneous) decreased by at least one-third. Miscellaneous charges more than doubled over the fiscal period.

The total number of unique individuals referred to DJJ declined by nearly half from FY 2006 to FY 2015, with decreases seen across all administrative regions of DJJ.

FIGURE 4.

Unique juveniles referred to the Alaska Division of Juvenile Justice, FY 2006–2015



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

1. Beginning in FY 2015, DJJ calculated unique individuals differently to account for individual youth referrals across multiple administrative regions. Due to cross-region referrals of 53 youth, the total number of unique individuals in each region do not equal the statewide total.

NOTES

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.

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 offenses such as 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.

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

- 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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