



OJJDP FACT SHEET

Shay Bilchik, Administrator

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Juvenile Vandalism, 1996

by Anne L. Stahl

The typical juvenile arrested for vandalism in 1996 was a male age 16

The FBI's Uniform Crime Reporting (UCR) Program defines vandalism as willful or malicious destruction, injury, disfigurement, or defacement of any public or private property, real or personal, without the consent of the owner or persons having custody or control. In 1996, law enforcement agencies made an estimated 141,600 arrests of persons under age 18 for vandalism. These juvenile arrests represented 44% of all arrests for vandalism.

Males (89%) and youth younger than 16 (63%) accounted for the majority of juvenile arrests for vandalism. The juvenile vandalism arrest rate (arrests per 100,000 persons ages 10 through 17) remained virtually level between 1980 and 1988 (398 and 391, respectively) and increased to a high of 497 in 1994. By 1996, the juvenile vandalism arrest rate had declined to 455.

Formal court processing of juvenile vandalism cases increased by 35,000 cases between 1986 and 1995

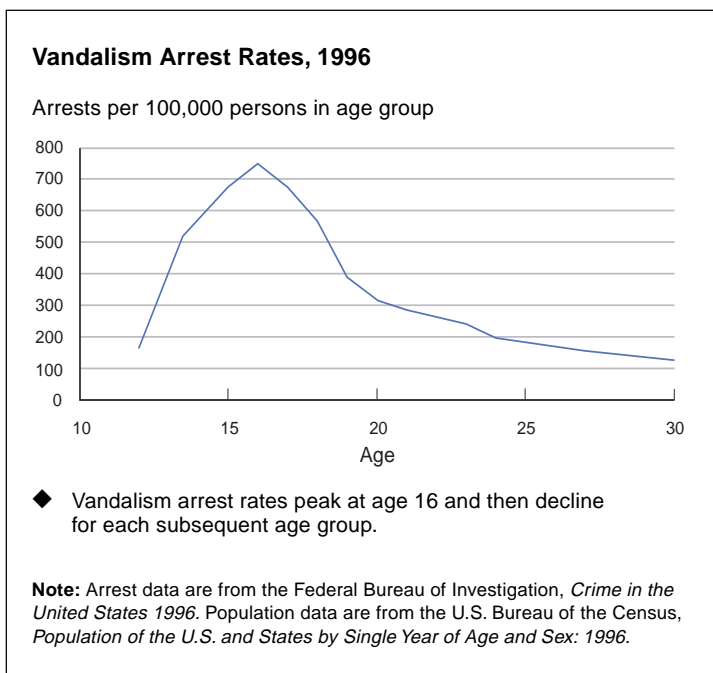
In 1995, an estimated 121,700 vandalism cases were processed by courts with juvenile jurisdiction. Between 1986 and 1994, the number of vandalism cases increased 43% (from 86,700 to 124,000 cases) and then dropped 2% between 1994 and 1995. A case represents one youth processed on a new referral, regardless of the number of offenses contained in that referral. An individual youth can be involved in more than one case during the year.

Vandalism was the most serious offense in 14% of the property cases disposed by the courts in 1995. When a case is referred to juvenile court, a decision is made whether to handle it formally or informally. When a case is handled informally (without the filing of a petition and an adjudicatory or waiver hearing), the youth may voluntarily agree to comply with certain specified sanctions without a formal court order.

In 1995, 52% of the vandalism cases referred to juvenile courts were handled informally. Nearly half these cases (47%) were dismissed. In more than one-third of the cases handled informally (37%), the youth agreed to comply with probation conditions. In 17% of these cases, the youth agreed to other sanctions such as restitution, community service, or fines.

In 1986, 37% of the juvenile vandalism cases referred to juvenile court were handled formally (with the filing of a petition). This increased to 40% in 1991. However, in 1995, nearly half the vandalism cases referred to juvenile court (48%) were formally processed. The increase in the proportion of cases being handled formally, combined with an increase in the volume of vandalism referrals, resulted in a 54% increase in the number of vandalism cases handled formally by the courts between 1991 and 1995.

In 1995, 53% of formally processed cases resulted in the youth being adjudicated delinquent by the court. Probation was the most serious disposition ordered by the court in more than half of these adjudicated cases (58%). In 20% of adjudicated cases, the youth was ordered to comply with specified sanctions such as restitution, community service, or fines, and in another 18%, the youth was placed in a residential facility.



For further information

This Fact Sheet is based primarily on data from the National Juvenile Court Data Archive, which is maintained by the National Center for Juvenile Justice (NCJJ) for the Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention (OJJDP). The Archive collects demographic, legal, and disposition data on more than 700,000 delinquency and status offense cases annually and summarizes them in OJJDP's annual series *Juvenile Court Statistics*. The most recent report, *Juvenile Court Statistics 1995*, presents national estimates of juvenile court cases based on data from nearly 1,800 courts with jurisdiction over 67% of the U.S. juvenile population.

Copies of *Juvenile Court Statistics 1995* are available from OJJDP's Juvenile Justice Clearinghouse, 800-638-8736. OJJDP also supports distribution of a PC-compatible software version of the data analyzed in *Juvenile Court Statistics*. For a free copy of the software, *Easy Access to Juvenile Court Statistics*, call the National Juvenile Court Data Archive at NCJJ, 412-227-6950. This software can also be downloaded from OJJDP's home page: www.ncjrs.org/ojjhome.htm.

Anne L. Stahl is the Manager of Data Collection for the National Juvenile Court Data Archive, which is supported by an OJJDP grant.

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