



# OJJDP FACT SHEET

Shay Bilchik, Administrator April 1998 #77

## Person Offenses in Juvenile Court, 1986–1995

by Anne L. Stahl

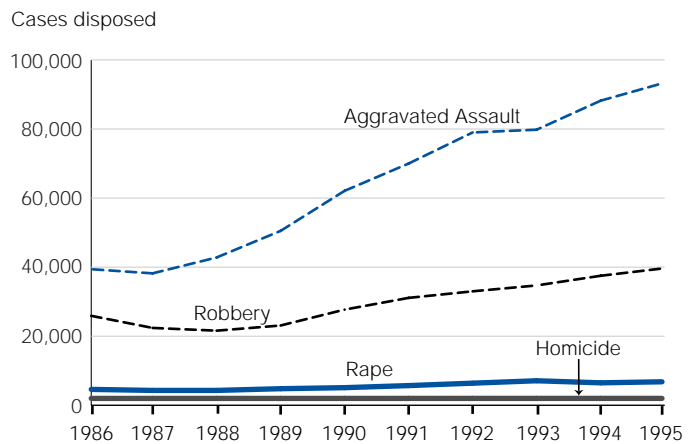
### Person Offenses up 98% From 1986

In 1995, U.S. juvenile courts handled an estimated 377,300 delinquency cases in which the most serious charge was an offense against a person. Person offenses include assault, robbery, rape, and homicide. The 1995 person offense caseload was 98% greater than in 1986. Person offense cases accounted for 22% of all delinquency cases in 1995, compared with 16% in 1986.

The number of person offense cases disposed by juvenile courts in 1995 was equivalent to 13.4 cases for every 1,000 juveniles in the United States age 10 or over who were potentially under the jurisdiction of a juvenile court in the State where the offense was committed. The person offense case rate increased 82% between 1986 and 1995. The case rate for property offenses, in contrast, increased 13% between 1986 and 1995, while the drug offense case rate grew 102% and the rate for public order offenses increased 36%.

In 1995, homicide was the most serious charge in 2,800 cases. This was less than 1% of all person offense cases handled by juvenile courts. The vast majority of person offense cases involved charges of simple assault (205,500) or aggravated

**Delinquency Cases Involving FBI Violent Index Offenses, 1986–1995**



assault (93,200). Together, these two offenses accounted for 79% of all person offense cases processed in 1995.

Juvenile courts handled 99% more cases involving offenses included in the Federal Bureau of Investigation's Violent Crime Index in 1995 than in 1986. Four offenses make up the Index: homicide, forcible rape, robbery, and aggravated assault. Homicide cases increased 87%, aggravated assault cases grew 136%, robbery cases were up 53%, and cases of forcible rape climbed 48%.

### Characteristics of Offenders

Compared with 1986, juveniles involved in person offense cases in 1995 were younger and slightly more likely to be female. In 1995, 64% of person offense cases involved juveniles under age 16, compared with 59% in 1986. Females were involved in 24% of person offense cases in 1995, compared with 20% in 1986. More than half (59%) of person offense cases in 1995 involved white youth, 38% involved black youth, and 3% involved youth of other races.

**Delinquency Cases Handled by U.S. Juvenile Courts, 1986–1995**

Cases Disposed	1986	1991	1995	Percent Change	
				1986–95	1991–95
Person	190,300	277,500	377,300	98%	36%
Property	710,000	846,800	871,700	23	3
Drugs	72,400	65,100	159,100	120	144
Public order	207,300	223,900	306,300	48	37
Total delinquency	1,180,000	1,413,300	1,714,400	45	21
<b>Case Rate</b>					
Person	7.3	10.6	13.4	82%	26%
Property	27.4	32.5	30.9	13	-5
Drugs	2.8	2.5	5.6	102	126
Public order	8.0	8.6	10.8	36	26
Total delinquency	45.5	54.2	60.7	33	12

**Note:** Percentages are calculated using unrounded numbers.

### Characteristics of Person Offense Cases, 1986–1995

	1986	1991	1995
<b>Gender</b>			
Male	80%	80%	76%
Female	20	20	24
<b>Age at Time of Referral</b>			
Under 16 years	59%	62%	64%
16 or older	41	38	36
<b>Race/Ethnicity</b>			
White	58%	56%	59%
Black	40	41	38
Other	2	3	3
<b>Predisposition Detention</b>			
Detained	25%	25%	23%
Not detained	75	75	77
<b>Manner of Handling</b>			
Formal	55%	55%	58%
Informal	45	45	42
<b>Outcome of Formal Handling</b>			
Adjudicated	58%	54%	53%
Not adjudicated	40	44	45
Waived	2	2	2
<b>Disposition of Adjudicated Cases</b>			
Placed out of the home	33%	34%	31%
Probation or supervision	55	54	53
Other (fines, restitution, etc.)	7	8	11
Dismissed or released	5	4	6

**Note:** Percentages may not add to 100% due to rounding.

## Use of Detention

Nearly one-quarter (23%) of the person offense cases processed by juvenile courts in 1995 involved the use of detention at some point between referral and disposition. Approximately the same proportion of drug cases involved detention (24%). In comparison, youth were detained in a smaller proportion of property cases (15%).

## Case Processing

Of the 377,300 person offense cases disposed by U.S. juvenile courts in 1995, 58% were handled formally (that is, a petition was filed requesting a hearing). Of the individuals involved in petitioned cases, 2% were waived to the criminal court system

where they were subject to conviction as criminals, 53% were formally adjudicated as delinquents in the juvenile court, and 45% were petitioned but not adjudicated delinquent.

In 31% of the 116,400 person offense cases that were formally adjudicated by juvenile courts in 1995, the most severe disposition imposed by the court was placement out of the home in a residential facility. Probation was ordered in 53% of the cases, while 11% resulted in other sanctions, including referral to an outside agency, fines, community service, and restitution. Approximately 6% of formally adjudicated person offense cases were released for various reasons with no sanctions imposed.

In 1995, of the estimated 98,200 person offense cases formally petitioned by the court but not adjudicated, most (63%) were dismissed. However, in 21% of these cases the juvenile agreed to informal probation and in 14% to other dispositions. About 3% of nonadjudicated person offense cases resulted in voluntary out-of-home placement.

More than half (52%) of the 158,100 person offense cases handled informally (no petition was filed) by juvenile courts in 1995 were dismissed. The remainder resulted in voluntary probation (31%) or other dispositions (17%), while a small number (1%) resulted in out-of-home placements.

## For Further Information

This Fact Sheet is based on the forthcoming report, *Juvenile Court Statistics 1995*. Copies will be available from the Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention's (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 the National Center for Juvenile Justice, 412-227-6950. This software can also be downloaded from OJJDP's home page: [www.ncjrs.org/ojjhome.htm](http://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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