

DIVISION OF CRIMINAL JUSTICE SERVICES

A Statistical Report of the
Department of Military Affairs and Public Safety
State of West Virginia

1990-1997

WV JUVENILE ARREST REPORT

OCTOBER 1999

This report describes the type and frequency of crime committed in West Virginia by juveniles in an eight-year period from 1990 to 1997. Trends in age at arrest, offense type and county distribution of arrests are included.

This information is for use by criminal justice professionals and policy makers to facilitate sound policy decisions, ensure fair allocation of resources and determine more appropriate juvenile prevention and intervention measures.

All information presented in this report regarding juvenile arrests in WV was taken from 1990 to 1997 Uniform Crime Reports (UCRs), titled *Crime in West Virginia*, published annually by the West Virginia State Police.

UCRs are the only source of statewide arrest data. They record only the most serious offense for each arrest reported by local police departments, sheriff offices and State Police detachments.

The accuracy of state arrest data relies on complete and timely reporting by all law enforcement agencies. Juvenile arrests not reported to UCR are not included in the statistics.

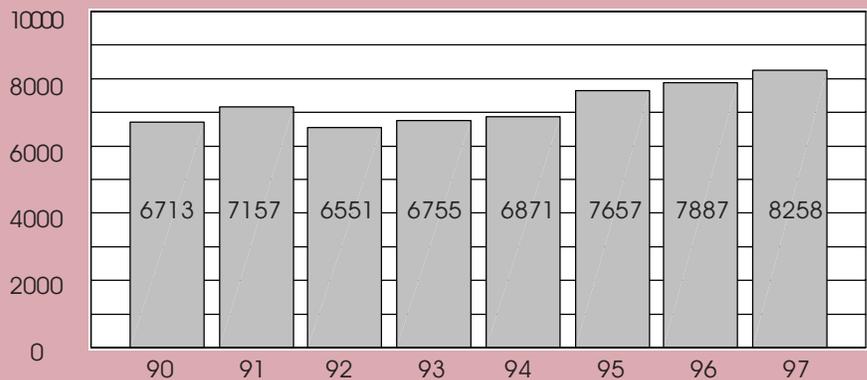
Beginning January 1999, WV converted from the UCR system to an Incident Based Reporting System (WVIBRS). This new system is automated and will allow more in-depth data analysis in future years.

All national statistics included in this report were taken from *Crime State Rankings 1998* (Morgan Quitno Press, 1998), a compilation of crime statistics gathered by the FBI from state UCRs.

These statistics include only those arrests reported by law enforcement agencies in 1996. National and state crime rates were calculated using 1990 Census figures for juveniles ages 10 to 17.

Total Number of Juvenile Arrests

Graph 1



Summary

The **total number of juvenile arrests** in WV increased at an average rate of 3% each year from 1990 to 1997. The most significant increase was between 1994 and 1995 when total juvenile arrests grew 11% from 6,871 to 7,657.

Although the 3% average annual increase in juvenile arrests seems small, overall the total number of juvenile arrests increased 23% during the period of analysis. There were 6,713 juvenile arrests in 1990 compared to 8,258 in 1997.

UCR categorizes arrest offenses into Part I and Part II offenses. Part I offenses include: murder, rape, robbery, felonious assault, larceny, breaking and entering and auto theft. Part II offenses include: property offenses, runaway, fraud, arson, drug violations and weapon offenses.

Overall, the total number of Part I arrests grew by less than one percent from 1990 to 1997. Part II arrests increased by 35%.

The most significant increase in Part I arrests was between 1990 and 1991 when the number of arrests grew 13% from 2,428 to 2,750. The greatest increase in Part II

arrests was between 1994 and 1995 when the number of arrests grew 17% from 4,388 to 5,115.

When compared to national totals, juvenile crime in WV is relatively low. There were more than 2.1 million juvenile arrests reported in the US in 1996. WV ranked 42nd among the states reporting that year with just over 7,800 total juvenile arrests or 0.37% of the national total.

The type of offenses most frequently committed by juveniles varied only slightly from year to year, as did the top ten counties with the highest juvenile arrest levels.

However, some drug and violent crime arrests increased at a higher percentage than arrests for other offenses. The most noticeable increase was a more than 350% rise in juvenile drug arrests between 1990 and 1997.

Also notable was the 22% increase in juvenile violent crime arrests during those years. There were 139 arrests for violent crime in 1990 and 170 arrests in 1997. Violent crimes include rape, robbery, murder and felonious assault.

Juvenile Arrests by Age

For the entire eight-year period, 17 year old juveniles had the highest total number of arrests. An average of 1,831 were arrested each year.

Juveniles 13 to 14 years old were arrested for Part I offenses more than any other age group. 17 year old juveniles were arrested for Part II offenses more often than any other group.

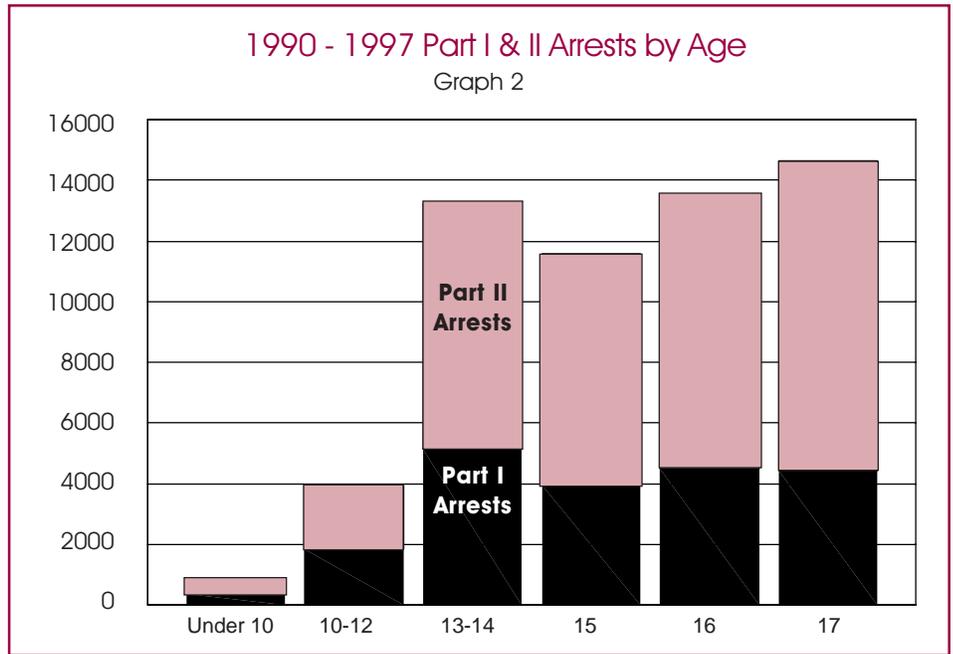
Juvenile Arrests by Offense

The leading juvenile offense from 1990 to 1997 was **larceny theft**. On average, there were 1,636 juvenile arrests each year for this offense during the eight-year period.

The lowest number of juvenile arrests for larceny theft was the 1990 total of 1,493. However, that number jumped 18% to 1,765 in 1991. Juvenile arrests for larceny theft peaked in 1996 at 1,790. The remaining years varied slightly from these amounts.

Even though the number of juvenile arrests in WV for larceny theft in 1996 was high compared to other years, the state still ranked low when compared with national statistics. WV was 40th for total juvenile arrests among the 46 states reporting in 1996.

An average of 789 juveniles were arrested annually for being runaways from 1990 to 1997, making **runaway** the second most common juvenile offense. The largest number of arrests for runaway was 947 in 1991. The numbers continued to be fairly high throughout the eight-year



period. The fewest runaway arrests were made in 1994 when there was a 24% decrease from 1991.

Assault was the third most frequent offense averaging approximately 620 juvenile arrests each year. This average includes both Part I and Part II assault arrests.

Breaking and entering was the fourth most frequent offense with an average of 518 juvenile arrests annually.

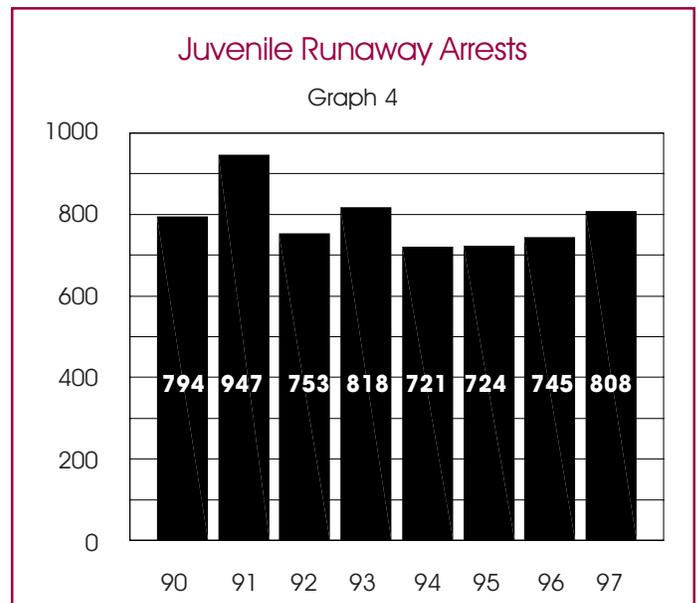
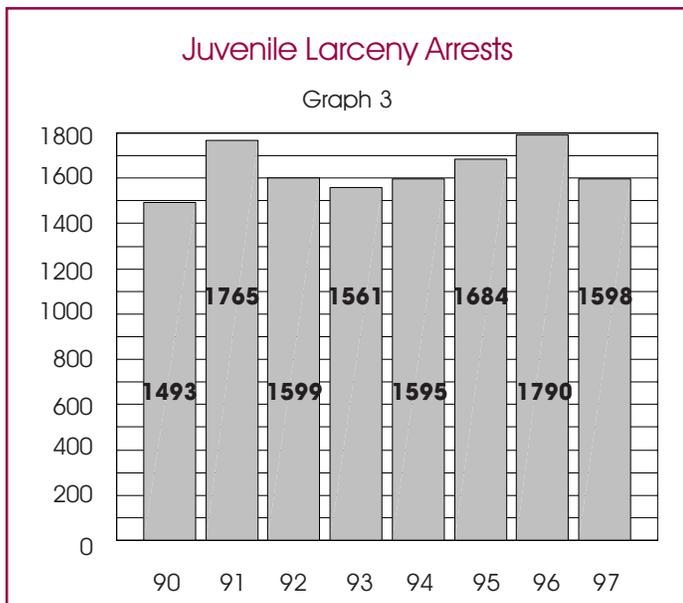
In contrast, two of the most infrequent juvenile offenses from 1990 through 1997 were manslaughter and prostitution.

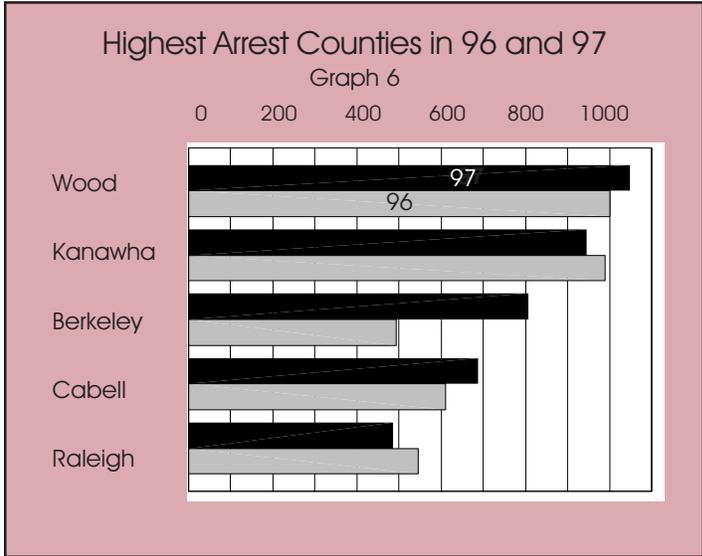
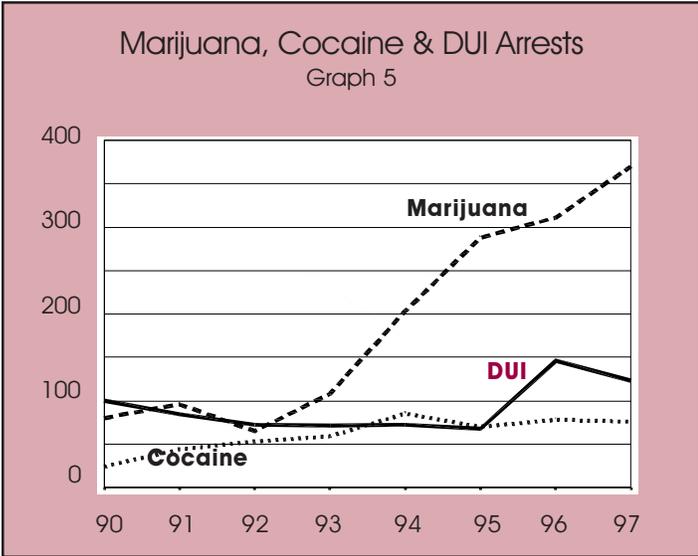
Several other arrest trends are notable for less frequent but serious offenses. For instance, the number of **rape** arrests

decreased by more than half during the eight-year period. There were 19 in 1990 but only 8 rape arrests in 1997. **Robbery** arrests, on the other hand, increased by more than 170%. There were 24 juvenile robbery arrests in 1990 and 65 in 1997.

There was also a significant increase in juvenile **murder** arrests during the period of analysis. The number rose from 8 arrests in 1990 to 17 arrests in 1995. That trend reversed itself by 1997 when the number of juvenile murder arrests was down to 7.

In the US, there were 2,172 reported juvenile arrests for murder in 1996. WV ranked 32nd that year with a total of only 9 juvenile murder arrests.





The offense category with the most dramatic increase was drug violations. Total **juvenile drug arrests** increased more than 353% during the period of analysis. The total number of juvenile drug arrests was 109 in 1990 and grew to 494 by the end of 1997.

The drug violations involved in this study included possession, sale and manufacturing of opium and cocaine, marijuana, synthetic narcotics and other dangerous nonnarcotic drugs.

Despite a drastic increase in total juvenile drug arrests over the eight-year period, WV ranked low (#43) compared to other state totals in 1996. WV had less than one-third of one percent of the total national juvenile drug arrests in 1996.

More than 70% of the total juvenile drug offense arrests from 1990 to 1997 involved marijuana. There were 1,321 arrests for possession of marijuana and 200 arrests for the sale and manufacturing of marijuana during the eight-year analysis period. Overall, marijuana related arrests increased 363% from 1990 to 1997.

Possession or sale & manufacturing of opium/cocaine and their derivatives were the second most common drug offenses. There were 327 juvenile arrests for possession and 162 arrests for sale and manufacturing from 1990 to 1997.

The number of **DUI arrests** among juveniles dropped 32% from 1990 to 1995. There were 100 juvenile DUI arrests in 1990 and only 68 arrests in 1995. However, DUI arrests increased to more than 100 in the following two years. There were 146 in 1996 and 123 in 1997.

In 1996, WV ranked 29th among other states with 1.13% of the national total of more than 12,800 juvenile DUI arrests.

The offense category with the most dramatic decrease in arrests was drunkenness. Arrests for that offense decreased 56% in the eight-year period. There were 493 juvenile drunkenness arrests in 1990 and 216 in 1997.

Juvenile Arrests by County

The counties that reported the most juvenile arrests each year remained consistent from 1990 to 1997. **Kanawha** and **Wood** counties had the most juvenile arrests almost every year. Kanawha stayed within the top 2 and Wood within the top 4 each year.

Other counties that were frequently in the top ten included **Berkeley, Cabell, Raleigh, Harrison, Mercer, Fayette, Monongalia and Ohio.**

Conversely, Summers, Doddridge, Clay, Pleasants and Webster counties had some of the lowest arrest rates throughout the eight-year period. All had 20 or less juvenile arrests each year.

Acknowledgments

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All information presented in this report in no way represents the opinions of the US Department of Justice or the State of West Virginia.

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