

DCJS

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Department of Military Affairs and Public Safety
State of West Virginia

WV JUVENILE ARREST REPORT: 1989-1998

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In West Virginia, juvenile arrests have remained relatively stable over the past decade. Between 1989 and 1998, the number of juvenile arrests increased by an average of only 1.5% per year and a total of 12.1% from 1989 to 1998.

The types of offenses charged, however, are not as stable. Part I arrests, which include murder, rape, robbery, felonious assault, breaking and entering and auto theft, have decreased by an average of 1.5% per year and a total of 15.2% from 1989 to 1998.

Part II arrests, which include property offenses, runaway, fraud, arson, drug and alcohol violations and weapons offenses, on the other hand, have increased by an average of 3.2% per year and a total of 29.5% from 1989 to 1998.

During this time period, larceny arrests averaged 1,598 a year, making it the most frequently committed offense. Larceny theft arrests, however, have decreased an average of 6.4% per year. Murder decreased from a peak of 17 in 1995, but manslaughter and felonious assaults have increased.

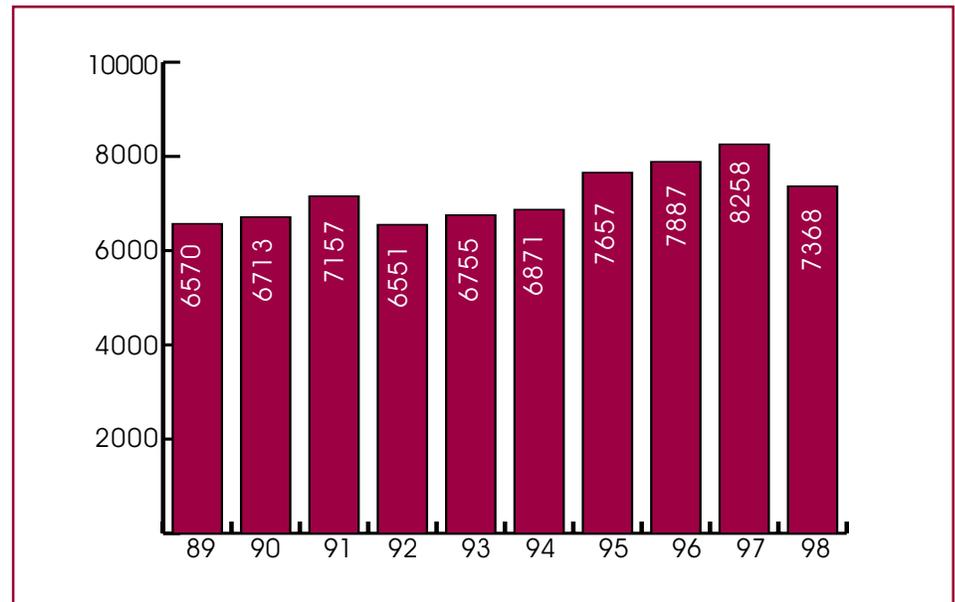
Most notable are the increases in marijuana-related arrests and liquor law violations. Marijuana-related arrests increased an average of 21.6% per year and a total of 287.8% from 1989 to 1998. Liquor law violations also increased dramatically by an average of 28.6% per year and a total of 519.0% from 1989 to 1998.

In 1997, the number of juvenile arrests peaked at 8,258. Compared to other states in this same year, West Virginia ranked second lowest in juvenile violent crime arrest rates.

In the following year, only seven states had fewer total juvenile arrests than West Virginia. Of the 1.8 million juvenile arrests nationwide in 1998, only .4% occurred in West Virginia.

Graph 1

Total Number of Juvenile Arrests: 1989 - 1998



This report describes the trends in the type and frequency of juvenile crime in West Virginia between 1989 and 1998 including the juveniles' age and home county and the offenses charged.

This information is intended to guide sound policy decisions, ensure fair allocation of resources and determine appropriate juvenile prevention and intervention measures.

This report was based on information provided in the annual Uniform Crime Reports (UCRs), titled *Crime in West Virginia*, published by the West Virginia State Police. UCRs are the only source of statewide arrest data and only include the most serious offense for each arrest.

The accuracy and completeness of this information is dependent on quality reporting by local police departments, sheriff offices and state police detachments.

Sources

State Data

Crime in West Virginia
18th-27th Editions, 1989-1998
West Virginia State Police, UCR Section

National Data

Crime in the United States
1998 Uniform Crime Reports
Federal Bureau of Investigation

Juvenile Offenders and Victims: 1999
National Report
Howard N. Snyder and Melissa Sickmund,
Office of Juvenile Justice and
Delinquency Prevention

1998 Estimated Census Figures
Population Estimates Program,
Population Division,
U.S. Census Bureau

Juvenile Arrests by Age

Seventeen year old juveniles had the highest total number of arrests during 1998 (2,101) and for the ten-year period from 1989 to 1998 (18,579). These juveniles also had 15.5% more Part II offense arrests than the second highest age group, 16 year olds.

Juveniles age 13 and 14 had more total Part I offense arrests (6,203) than any other group. During 1998, this group did, however, experience a 13.1% decrease in Part I arrests. Seventeen year olds had the greatest number of Part I arrests (526) in 1998.

Juvenile Arrests by Offense

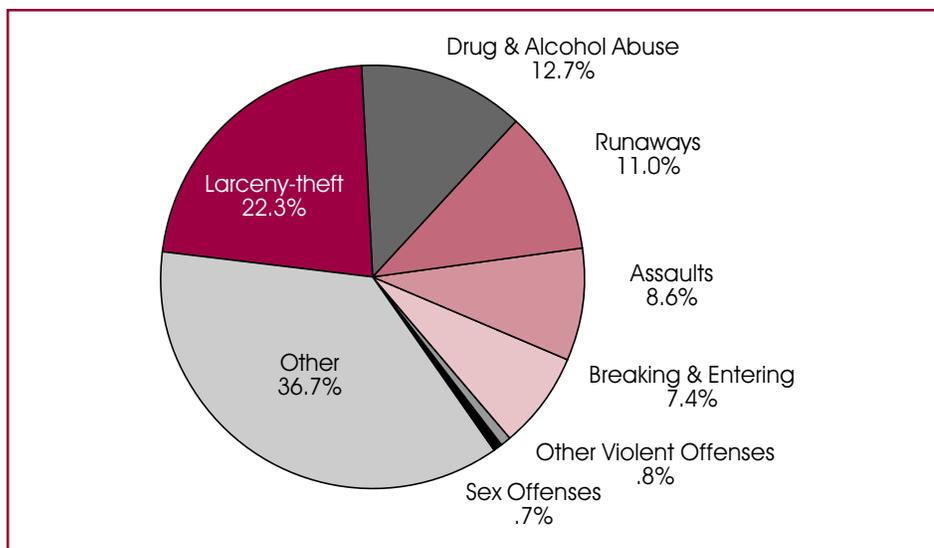
The most frequently committed offense by juveniles during 1998, as well as over the ten-year period, was larceny theft. There were 1,400 juvenile arrests for larceny theft during 1998, down 12.4% from the previous year. On average, there were 1,598 juvenile arrests each year for this offense during the ten-year period.

Nationally there were 300,033 juvenile arrests for larceny theft in 1998. West Virginia ranked 39th among the 48 states reporting that year.

Runaway offenses also decreased during 1998 to 750 from 808 the previous year. The average number of runaways per year between 1989 and 1998 was 786, making it the second most frequent juvenile arrest offense.

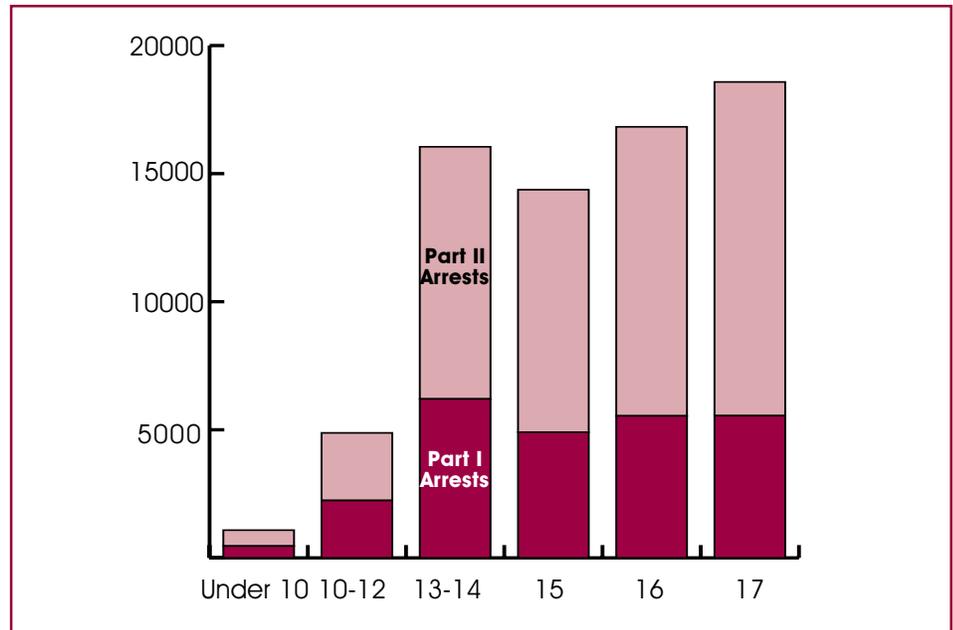
Graph 3

1989 - 1998 Average Annual Juvenile Arrests by Offense



Graph 2

1989 - 1998 Total Part I & II Arrests by Age



An average of 616 arrests per year for felonious and other assaults occurred from 1989 to 1998. Felonious assaults increased by 12.2% from 1997 to 1998 while other (Part II) assaults decreased slightly from 656 to 651.

Breaking and entering was the fourth most frequent juvenile arrest offense, averaging 529 arrests annually during the ten-year period. Arrests for this offense did fall to their lowest point of the period (469) during 1998.

Manslaughter was the least likely Part I offense for juveniles, with just 9 arrests in ten years. Murder arrests continued the decline which began after a peak at 17 arrests in 1995. There was only 1 juvenile arrest for murder during 1998.

There were 1,470 juvenile arrests for murder and nonnegligent manslaughter in the United States during 1998.

After reaching a high of 65 in 1997, robbery arrests decreased by 58.5% to 27 during 1998. Robbery offenses have not been this low since 1990 (24).

Graph 3 shows the average percentage of juvenile arrests by offense for the ten-year period. The top four offenses, as discussed above, were included individually. The remaining offenses were categorized to show other relevant offense groups.

The Drug and Alcohol Abuse category includes drug abuse violations, liquor laws, drunkenness and driving under the influence. Murder, manslaughter and robbery are the Other Violent Offenses. The Sex Offenses include forcible rape, Part II sex offenses and prostitution and commercialized vice.

The UCR system uses a special category called "All Other, Except Traffic." These include any Part I or Part II arrests that cannot be categorized elsewhere and are not traffic violations. This category accounts for the almost half of the Other arrests in Graph 3.

Total juvenile drug arrests decreased by 10.9% in 1998, the first decline since 1992. However, drug arrests are still 296.4% greater than in 1989. There were a total of 2,702 juvenile drug offense arrests between 1989 and 1998.

The drug violations included in this study are possession, sale and manufacturing of marijuana, opium and cocaine, synthetic narcotics and other dangerous non-narcotic drugs.

When compared to other states, juvenile drug offenses in West Virginia are still low, despite the dramatic increase that has occurred over the last ten years. Only Montana, Vermont, North Dakota, South Dakota, Delaware and New Hampshire reported fewer drug arrests than West Virginia in 1998. Nationally there were 146,394 juvenile drug abuse violations in 1998.

Marijuana was involved in 71.1% (1,921) of all juvenile drug offense arrests in West Virginia between 1989 and 1998. Of these arrests, 1,689 were for possession while 232 were for sale and manufacturing. Overall, marijuana related arrests increased by 287.8% from 1989 to 1998.

Marijuana related arrests fell to 318 in 1998 a decrease of 14.1% from 1997, the peak for this ten year period.

Arrests involving opium, cocaine and their derivatives totaled 558 (or 20.7% of all juvenile drug offense arrests) between 1989 and 1998. There were 383 arrests for possession and 175 for sale and manufacturing. Cocaine related arrests declined by 11.8% between 1997 and 1998. Overall, juvenile arrests involving cocaine have been fairly stable since 1994.

The number of DUI arrests among juveniles peaked during 1996 at 146 after a period of relative stability. DUI arrests then began decreasing in 1997 by 15.8% and again in 1998 by 4.1%

The 118 juvenile DUI arrests in 1998 account for less than one percent of the 14,501 national arrests. Twelve of the 48 states reporting in 1998 had fewer DUI arrests than West Virginia.

Juvenile Arrests by County

Berkeley, Cabell, Kanawha and Wood counties have consistently been among the top five counties reporting the greatest number of juvenile arrests since 1989. The remaining spot has belonged to Raleigh County since 1993. Prior to that, Fayette and Ohio counties each made the top five at least once. The top five counties represent about 48% of all reported juvenile arrests annually in West Virginia.

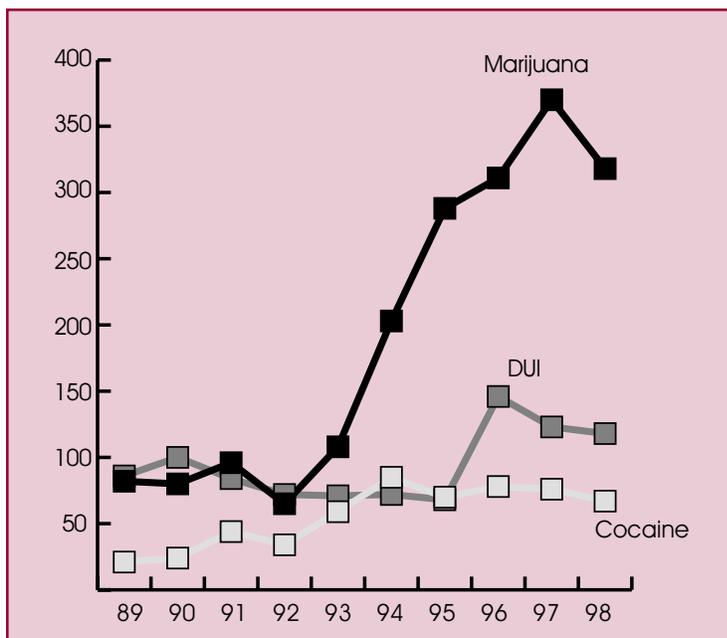
Conversely, counties reporting some of the lowest number of arrests during the ten-year period included Clay, Doddridge, Gilmer, Pleasants, Summers and Webster. Each of these counties experienced 10 or fewer arrests during at least 4 of the years.

A decrease in arrests for 29 (52.7%) of West Virginia's 55 counties was observed in 1998. Though still making the top five, Cabell County fell 24.0% to reach its lowest level (522) in ten years. Another notable decrease for the period was Fayette County. The number of arrests dropped from a high of 493 in 1991 to only 92 in 1998.

The most notable increase in arrests from 1997 to 1998 occurred in Calhoun County where arrests more than doubled, from 31 to 64. Calhoun County started the period with only 14 arrests in 1989. Arrests in Nicholas County grew to their highest level in ten years with 105 during 1998. Nicholas County started the period with 62 arrests in 1989 and fell to as low as 39 arrests in 1994.

Graph 4

Marijuana, Cocaine & DUI Arrests: 1989 - 1998



Acknowledgments

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1998 Juvenile Arrest Rates By County

Juvenile Population	Juvenile Offenders	Rate	Juvenile Population	Juvenile Offenders	Rate	Juvenile Population	Juvenile Offenders	Rate			
WV	195,036	7,368	3.78%	Nicholas	3,403	105	3.09%	Barbour	1,829	28	1.53%
Tyler	1,084	149	13.75%	Roane	1,909	55	2.88%	Hardy	1,156	17	1.47%
Wood	8,810	1,049	11.91%	Gilmer	686	17	2.48%	Wayne	4,801	66	1.37%
Berkeley	7,269	594	8.17%	Mason	2,961	73	2.47%	Doddridge	890	12	1.35%
Marshall	3,772	279	7.40%	Jefferson	4,186	101	2.41%	Brooke	2,664	34	1.28%
Upshur	2,540	180	7.09%	Lincoln	2,837	68	2.40%	Logan	5,605	69	1.23%
Calhoun	926	64	6.91%	Tucker	811	19	2.34%	Braxton	1,466	16	1.09%
Mineral	2,853	191	6.69%	Morgan	1,289	30	2.33%	Monroe	1,417	15	1.06%
Cabell	8,684	522	6.01%	Wirt	650	15	2.31%	Pocahontas	909	9	0.99%
Hancock	3,450	200	5.80%	Ritchie	1,133	26	2.29%	Clay	1,386	12	0.87%
Ohio	4,321	247	5.72%	Lewis	1,911	42	2.20%	Pleasants	855	6	0.70%
Monongalia	6,244	327	5.24%	Jackson	2,988	64	2.14%	Mingo	4,470	31	0.69%
Harrison	7,505	386	5.14%	Marion	5,643	115	2.04%	Putnam	5,704	24	0.42%
Randolph	2,978	153	5.14%	Wetzel	1,967	40	2.03%	Hampshire	2,059	7	0.34%
Raleigh	9,748	461	4.73%	Wyoming	3,761	72	1.91%	Summers	1,456	3	0.21%
Mercer	6,948	277	3.99%	Greenbrier	3,633	67	1.84%	Boone	3,414	7	0.21%
Kanawha	19,804	765	3.86%	Taylor	1,588	26	1.64%	Preston	3,475	7	0.20%
Grant	1,235	44	3.56%	Fayette	5,723	92	1.61%	Webster	1,288	0	0.00%
Pendleton	758	24	3.17%	McDowell	4,184	66	1.58%				

1998 estimated Census figures were used for the juvenile population numbers. Arrest numbers include all juveniles age 17 and under; however, only juveniles age 10 to 17 are included in the population numbers. Arrests of juveniles under ten are rare, only 107 (1.5%) of the 7,368 juvenile offenders in 1998 fell into this age group. Including the population figures for this age group in the calculations would cause the arrest rates to be underrepresented.

Total 1998 Juvenile Arrests in WV

Source: WV UCR Data

