



Juvenile Justice Trends in California

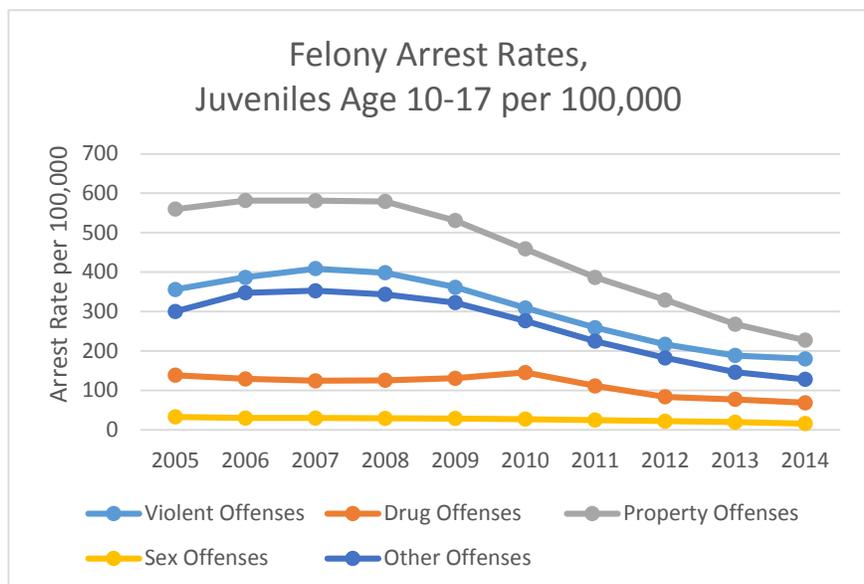
Youth are referred to California probation departments for a wide range of reasons, have a wide range of risk factors, and greatly varying degrees of severity. Some are at risk of being removed from the home, some have committed serious crimes, and some are at great risk of further entry in to the justice system. Others have made youthful mistakes, are battling addiction, or have mental health needs. Many youth on probation are dealing with multiple challenges. Probation’s role is to protect youth and prevent further delinquency or entry into the adult justice system. These goals are met by reducing juvenile recidivism, healing and reconnecting families, and responding to youth behavior with interventions that reduce delinquency.

Working upstream with community partners such as schools and other community outreach programs has reduced precursors to entry into the juvenile justice system. Pursuing this strategy has changed the nature and severity of those coming into the juvenile justice system. Collaborating with social services and justice system partners gives probation more options to address public safety risks, as well as the needs of youth referred to probation. With the declining number of youth arrested, referred, and granted wardship probation – the youth now placed on supervision are those with more severe risk levels. This population, with more acute needs and higher risk levels, requires smaller caseloads to properly and successfully supervise.

Mirroring the decline in overall California crime rates, juvenile arrests have fallen to a multi-year low, going from 232,000 felony juvenile arrests of youth age 10-17 in 2006, to 86,000 in 2014. These statistics represent a 54% decline.¹ When converted to a population adjusted rate, felony juvenile arrests have declined from 1,388 arrests per 100,000 youth age 10-17, to 621 arrests.

The juvenile violent crime arrest rate has declined 50% from 356 arrests to 180 per 100,000 youth age 10-17. A similar trend can be seen across all crime types.

In 2014, of the 101,000 juveniles referred to probation, 50% had petitions filed in juvenile court, with 35% of cases closed at intake, or diverted from further proceedings. Of the 50,000 petitions filed in juvenile court, 65% of the youth were made wards, 20% given informal supervision, and 15% dismissed.² With 32,000 youth



made wards of the court, probation must make targeted choices about how to best case manage these youth, as well as which ones to divert from the juvenile justice system.

As of June 2015, there are approximately 46,000 youth at varying levels of the county probation system, with 72% (33,000) being wards under Welfare and Institutions (W&I) Code 602 for felony and misdemeanor crimes.³ Reduction of juvenile detention and camp populations from 11,000 in 2005 to just over 6,000 in 2015, further shows that probation departments are using a range of responses in the community as alternatives to detention as well as a reflection of the decline in youth entering the system.⁴ For the 48% of the 33,000 W&I 602 Wards assessed as High or Moderate-High Risk, probation uses specialized caseloads to target specific needs as well as to case manage juveniles according to their risk to reoffend and their criminogenic needs.

Over the last 10 years, declines in juvenile arrests suggest that the development of programs and policies shown to reduce recidivism, as well as collaborative and diversionary community policies, have changed the composition and size of the juvenile justice system. Although probation practices cannot be credited in full, improvements in collaboration and implementation of evidence based programs demonstrated to reduce recidivism in youth play a role.

Risk and needs of youth in California probation departments are changing, and as more youth are

<u>Practices</u>	<u>Programs</u>
Identifying “Crossover” Youth	Juvenile Diversion
Risk-Needs-Responsivity	Multi-Systemic Therapy
Continuum of Care	Cognitive Behavioral Therapy
Specialized Caseloads	Mental Health Treatment
Wrap Around Process	Youth Treatment Programs
Least Restrictive Policies	Youth Drug Court

diverted from the system on the front end, the youth under probation’s responsibility have become more high risk to re-offend.⁵ This group possesses greater needs,⁶ which are addressed through targeted interventions. With the use of Risk and Needs assessment, case

planning and case management, CPOC believes the growth of evidence based practices in California and the development of systemic responses has had a positive overall effect in reducing juvenile delinquency, as well as on the overall number of juveniles in the justice system. Partnerships with judges, attorneys, behavioral health providers, and schools has led to improved community responses to delinquency.

Innovative Programs and Practices

Counties utilize a wide variety of practices and programs aimed at, either improved case management of youth under supervision, or cross-system interventions to address criminogenic needs of youth on probation. Basing these interventions on their risk to reoffend, probation departments have moved beyond just referring juveniles for services, to developers and advocates for high quality services and programming in their communities. Properly resourced probation departments with engaged county stakeholders are the key to successfully serving youth in the juvenile justice system.

¹ CA DOJ, 2014 Juvenile Arrests for All Youth Age 10-17

² CA DOJ, Juvenile Justice in California, 2014

³ 2014 CPOC Annual Survey

⁴ Board of State and Community Corrections, Juvenile Detention Survey

⁵ Static Risk is based on past crimes as way to best target youth most at risk for re-offense.

⁶ Needs Assessment are dynamic scores that change with the youth. Administered with the case plan, this tool can aid probation officers in identifying programming or treatment needs.