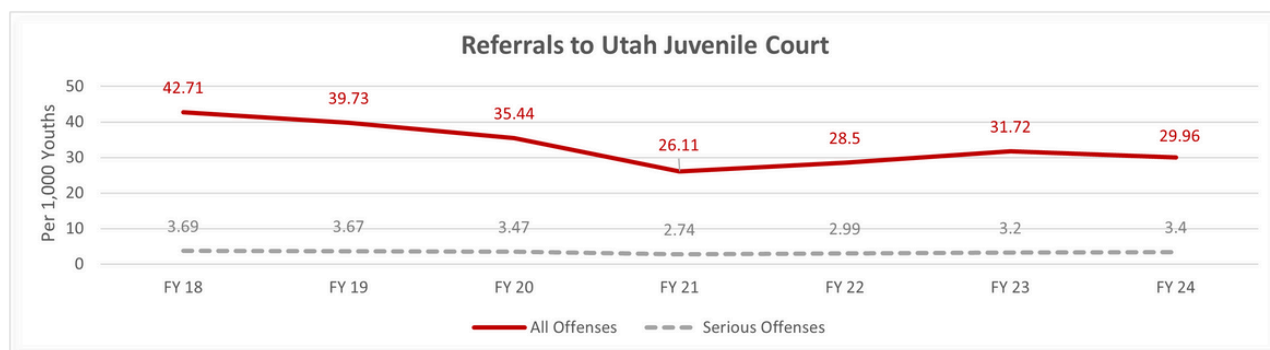


Prevalence



Utah Juvenile Justice Oversight Committee. (2024). 2024 Juvenile Justice Report.

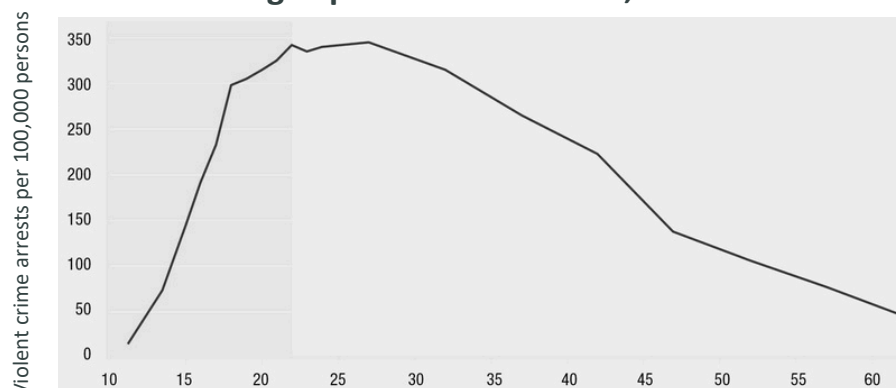
- In FY 24, youth were referred to the Utah Juvenile Court for serious offenses at a rate of 3.4 per 1,000 youth. Between FY18 and FY24, court referrals for all types of delinquency decreased from 42.71 to 29.6.¹
- The number of referrals to the Utah Juvenile Court decreased by 35% between FY 17 and FY 24, (4.65 down to 3 per hundred youth.)¹
- Between FY15 and FY24, the number of youth in Utah booked for firearm offenses doubled, increasing from 43 to 107.¹
- Utah incarcerates youth at one of the lowest rates in the country, with 37 incarcerated youth per 100,000 in 2021 compared to 74 per 100,000 nationally.²
- In 2022, youth accounted for 9.4% of violent crime arrests in the US, compared to 19% in 1994, a 78% decrease.³

Youth Development and Delinquency

Delinquent behavior peaks in adolescence and early adulthood. Even without formal intervention, delinquency naturally declines over the lifespan, a process called desistance.⁴

- Even among youth convicted of serious offenses (equivalent to a felony in the criminal justice system), less than 10% go on to have lengthy criminal careers. The vast majority of youth show reduced frequency and severity of delinquency 3 years after their first court involvement.⁵

Age-specific Arrest Rates, 2020



National Institute of Justice. (2024). Five things about youth and delinquency.

Youth and Gang Involvement

- Among youth in the US, gang membership is less than 2%, peaking at age 14 where approximately 5% of youth report gang involvement.⁶
- Annually, the number of youth who join gangs in the US (401,000) is similar to the number who leave gangs (378,000).⁶
- The risk factors for gang involvement are similar to those for delinquent behavior: problems with school and family, antisocial peers, and isolation from pro-social settings.⁷ However, rates of delinquency are higher for youth in gangs when compared to similar youth who are not in gangs.⁸

Characteristics of Effective Treatment

- The biggest reductions in youth delinquency happen in programs that are community-based, target multiple needs, and improve caregiver skills for communication and monitoring.⁹
- A leading modality for decreasing youth involvement in the juvenile justice system is multisystemic therapy, which targets criminogenic needs, family functioning, and schools and community support.¹⁰
- Formal punishments for delinquency can delay normative developmental processes in instances where the sanction serves to isolate youth from pro-social structures such as family, peers, and school.¹¹
- Cognitive Behavioral Therapy reduces anger and aggression in children and adolescents, which can help increase problem solving skills and self-control and decrease delinquency.¹²
- 94% of youth diverted from formal court processing in Utah successfully complete programming (nonjudicial adjustments) without further court involvement.¹

94%

of youth diverted from formal court processing in Utah successfully complete programming¹

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