



COVID-19 Data Snapshot

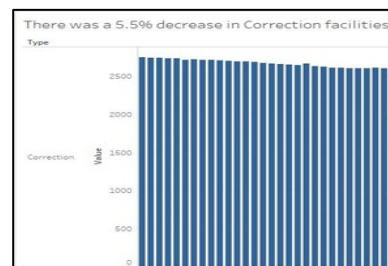
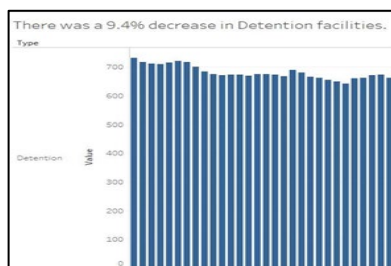
Average Daily Population and Race and Ethnicity
July 2020

America's juvenile justice systems have been working for decades to reduce the number of youths placed in secure correction facilities and detention centers with the hopes that fewer youths would also lead to fewer racial disparities. Youths of color make up about two-thirds of the youths in custody but only about one-third of the total adolescent population¹. The most recent national data as reported in the [2017 Census of Juveniles in Residential Placement](#) showed that about 40 percent of the youths in placement were black, about 33 percent were white and 21 percent were Hispanic. In the subset of facilities who participate in [Performance-based Standards](#) (PbS)², the racial make-up in 2020 is similar: 38 percent of the youths were black, 36 percent were white and 15 percent were Hispanic.

The COVID-19 pandemic led to an increased scrutiny of our nation's reliance on locking up youths as a response to delinquency and renewed calls to reduce the numbers of incarcerated youths. It forced re-thinking by juvenile justice agencies about who needs to be incarcerated and who can be served in the community. It required new practices to keep the youths in secure facilities safe and keep the facility staff and their families safe. The pandemic created a defining moment in time and opportunity to move into a new era. PbS offers its data to help inform and create a better future for juvenile justice.

The PbS data shows a 50% reduction in the average daily population of youths in detention centers over the last six months. In October 2019, the average daily population in detention centers participating in PbS was 41; in April 2020 it was reduced to an average of 20 youths. The PbS data supports other evidence of reducing detention populations such as the [Annie E. Casey Foundation survey](#) that showed a 52% drop in admissions during March and April 2020 resulting in about one-third fewer youths in detention.

From only April 1- 30, 2020, detention centers participating in PbS saw a 9.4% decrease in average daily population and correction facilities saw a 5.5% decrease.



¹ As retrieved from: <https://www.macfound.org/press/press-releases/macarthur-action-networks-to-address-racial-and-ethnic-disparities-and-mental-health-in-juvenile-justice/>

² A total of 87 correction, 44 detention and nine assessment centers and 26 community residential programs in 34 states voluntarily participate in PbS and commit to using data to improve conditions of confinement, facility quality of life and outcomes for youths. The data presented here reflects a snapshot of the youths in correction and detention facilities as was reported in administrative records of the youths who left the facilities from Nov. 1, 2019 - April 30, 2020. Some facilities reported on all youths who left throughout the course of the year, others reported the minimum random sample required of 30 youth records. The data in this brief comes from 2,066 youth records submitted in April 2020 except as noted.

The average daily population in correction facilities increased from 40 youths in October 2019 to 50 youths in April 2020. The increase would have been more except the trend reversed in April and the population numbers fell.

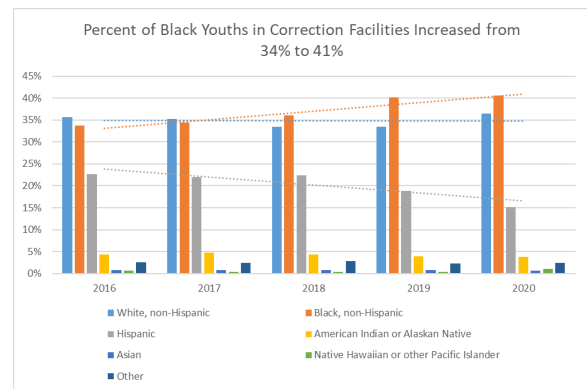
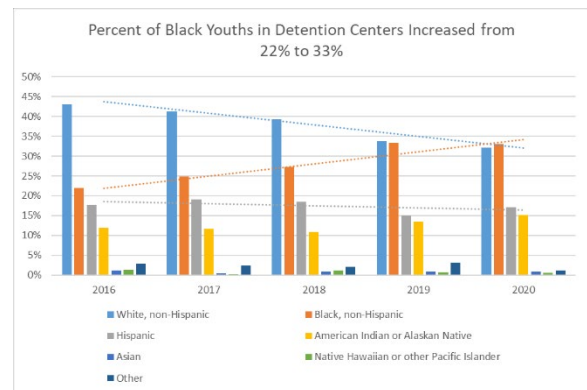
Over the past 20 years, juvenile justice systems have worked to reduce the total number of young people in residential placements (correction facilities, detention centers, community residential programs) in the United States from a peak of 107,493 youths in 1999 to 43,580 youths - less than half in 2017, the most recent data available³.

However the data does not show reducing the population has resulted in fewer racial disparities.

The last five years of demographic data describing the youths in facilities participating in PbS shows the percentages of black youths has been increasing while the percentages of white, non-Hispanic youths and Hispanic youths has been decreasing.

PbS data comes from a subset of all facilities across the country who volunteer and commit to improving youth outcomes and striving to meet PbS’ vision that all youths in custody are treated like one of our own. While a subset of all the secure placement facilities across the country that house youths in contact with the juvenile justice system, the data point to the need for continued, increased efforts to reduce the disparate number of youths of color in juvenile justice system custody.

For more information please visit the [PbS Website](https://www.pbstandards.org) or send an email to: help@pbstandards.org



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³ Sickmund, M., Sladky, T.J., Kang, W., & Puzanchera, C. (2019). “Easy Access to the Census of Juveniles in Residential Placement.” Available: <https://www.ojjdp.gov/ojstatbb/ezacjrp/>