



**Justice Center**

THE COUNCIL OF STATE GOVERNMENTS

**STEPPING UP FOR YOUTH:  
KANSAS STATE TASK FORCE ON IMPROVING  
BEHAVIORAL HEALTH SERVICES FOR YOUTH  
WITH JUSTICE EXPERIENCES**

June 7, 2024



# Justice Center

THE COUNCIL OF STATE GOVERNMENTS

We are a national nonprofit, nonpartisan organization that combines the power of a membership association, serving state officials in all three branches of government, with policy and research expertise to develop strategies that increase public safety and strengthen communities.



# We explicitly focus on improving public safety and outcomes for youth in the juvenile justice system.

July 2014

## Measuring and Using Juvenile Recidivism Data to Inform Policy, Practice, and Resource Allocation

### BACKGROUND

Juvenile arrest rates, including for violent crimes, fell by approximately 50 percent from 1997 to 2011, to their lowest level in more than 50 years.<sup>1</sup> In combination with this sharp drop in arrests, state and local reforms have had an extraordinary impact: from 1997 to 2011, youth confinement rates declined by almost half.<sup>2</sup> The juvenile justice field deservedly celebrates this success and continues to push for further reductions in confinement rates. Many states are also striving to ensure that youth who have been diverted from confinement, as well as those returning home after time spent in a facility, receive supervision and services that reduce recidivism and improve other youth outcomes. As such, policymakers are eager to know more about what happens to youth after they have been in contact with the juvenile justice system. What are their nearest and reincarceration rates? How do they fare in terms of education, employment, and other important outcome measures while they are under juvenile justice supervision and afterward? To understand to what extent states currently track recidivism data for youth involved in the juvenile justice system and use that information to inform policy and funding decisions, the Council of State Governments Justice Center, The Pew Charitable Trusts' Public Safety Performance Project,<sup>3</sup> and the Council of Juvenile Correctional Administrators surveyed juvenile correctional agencies in all 50 states.<sup>4</sup> This issue brief highlights the key findings of the survey and provides state and local policymakers with five recommendations for improving their approach to the measurement, analysis, collection, reporting, and use of recidivism data for youth involved with the juvenile justice system. In addition, examples are provided of how select states have translated these recommendations into policy and practice.

### The Importance of Measuring Outcomes beyond Recidivism for Youth Involved with the Juvenile Justice System

Juvenile justice systems can use a number of metrics to track outcomes for youth under system supervision, including educational attainment, behavioral health improvements, or skill development and employment, all of which are critical to ensuring a youth's long-term success. The survey focused primarily on the measurement of recidivism, and the recommendations presented here reflect that focus. The survey results did, however, indicate that only half of all state juvenile correctional agencies measure youth outcomes beyond whether youth commit future delinquent acts, and only 20 percent of states track these outcomes for youth after they are no longer on supervision. Policymakers and juvenile justice agency leaders should strongly consider including a priority set of positive youth outcomes in the evaluation of system success to determine not only whether the juvenile justice system is helping to prevent youth's subsequent involvement in the system, but also whether it is helping youth transition to a crime-free and productive adulthood.



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## CORE PRINCIPLES FOR REDUCING RECIDIVISM AND IMPROVING OTHER OUTCOMES FOR YOUTH IN THE JUVENILE JUSTICE SYSTEM



the NATIONAL REENTRY RESOURCE CENTER  
A program of the CSC Justice Center

MacArthur Foundation

BIA

Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention



# Transforming Juvenile Justice Systems

## to Improve Public Safety and Youth Outcomes

MAY 2018

Joah Weber, Deputy Director, Corrections & Reentry  
The Council of State Governments Justice Center

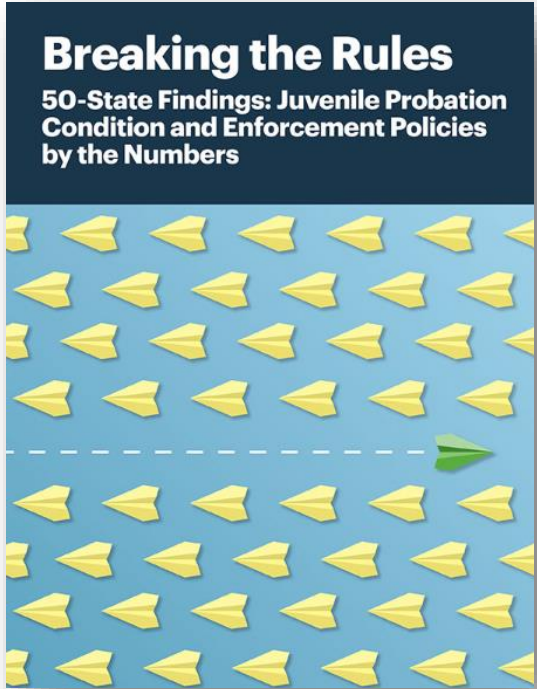
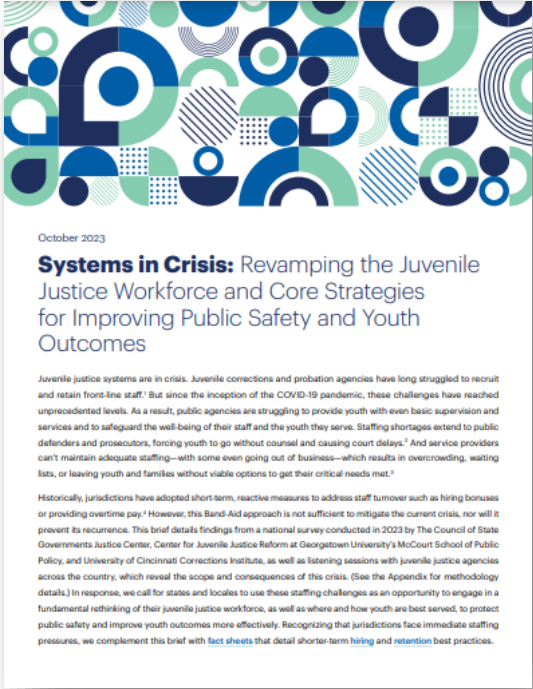
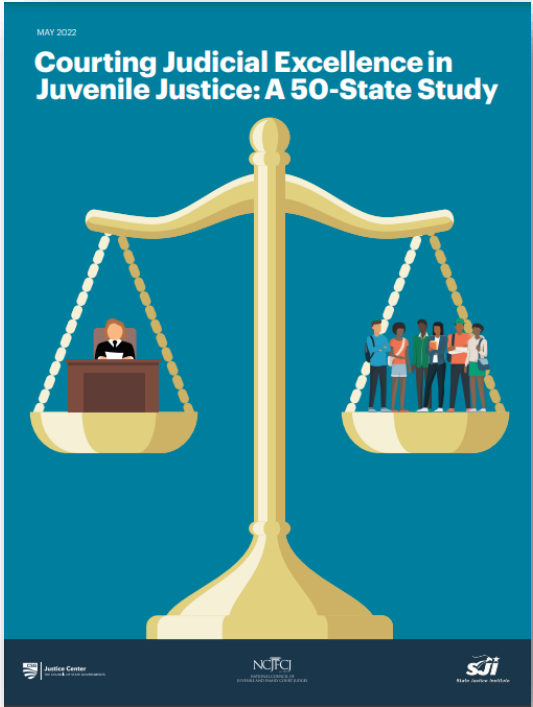
Michael Umpliere, Deputy Director  
Juvenile Justice System Improvement and Communications  
Center for Juvenile Justice Reform, Georgetown University

Shay Bilichik, Director  
Center for Juvenile Justice Reform, Georgetown University

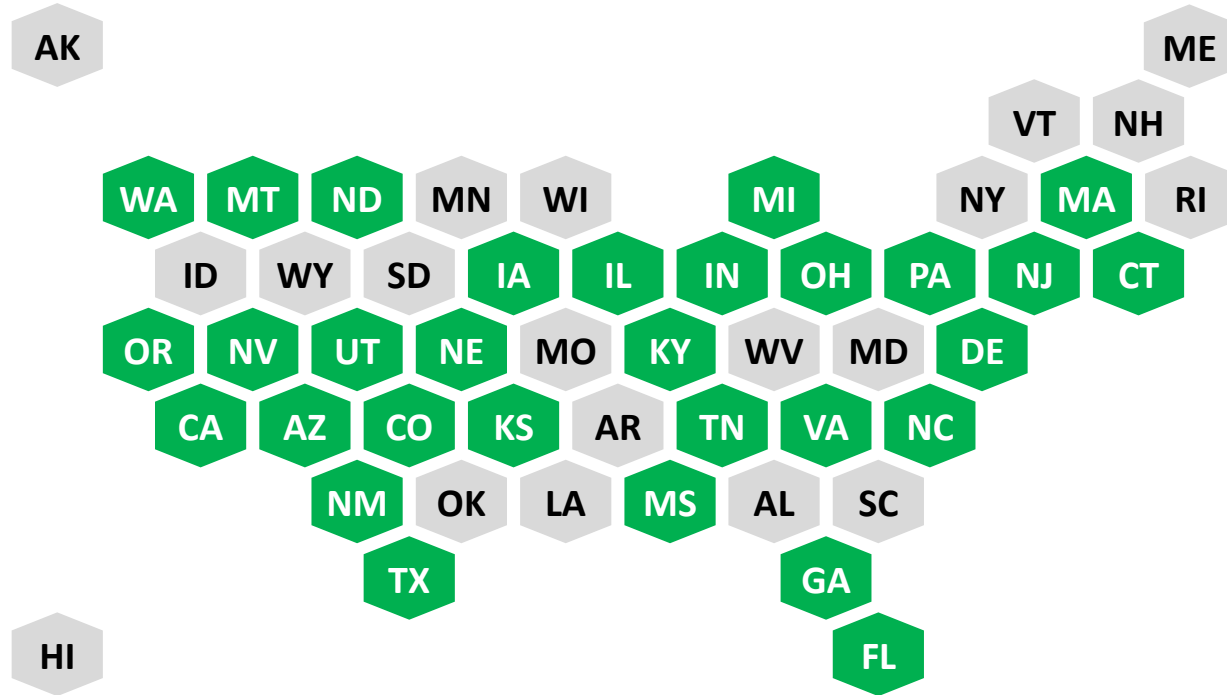


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# And our work responds to emerging issues and challenges in the field with research, best practices, and innovations.



# We've worked with an array of states and counties to facilitate improvements to their youth justice system.



# Behavioral Health Division (BHD) At-a-Glance

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- The BHD's mission is to support emerging and best practices for people with behavioral health needs who encounter the justice system or are in crisis
- Nearly 50 staff members all around the country
- BHD's portfolio areas touch all intercept points of the criminal justice and crisis systems
- Focus on advancing equity and involving people with lived experience in problem-solving crosses our portfolio areas

# Current Signature Projects

## Justice and Mental Health Collaboration Program



**STEPPINGUP**

**Judges  
Psychiatrists**  
Leadership Initiative



# BHD Teams and Portfolio Areas

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**Law  
Enforcement**

**Federal Grantee  
Training and  
Technical  
Assistance (TTA)**

**Expanding  
First  
Response**

**Medicaid  
Opportunities**

**Special  
Projects**

**Housing**

**Stepping Up**

**Behavioral  
Health  
Operations  
(BHOPs)**



# STEPPING UP

**Stepping Up** is a national initiative identifying, addressing, and reducing the overincarceration of people with mental illnesses in jails.



#StepUp4MentalHealth

[www.StepUpTogether.org](http://www.StepUpTogether.org)

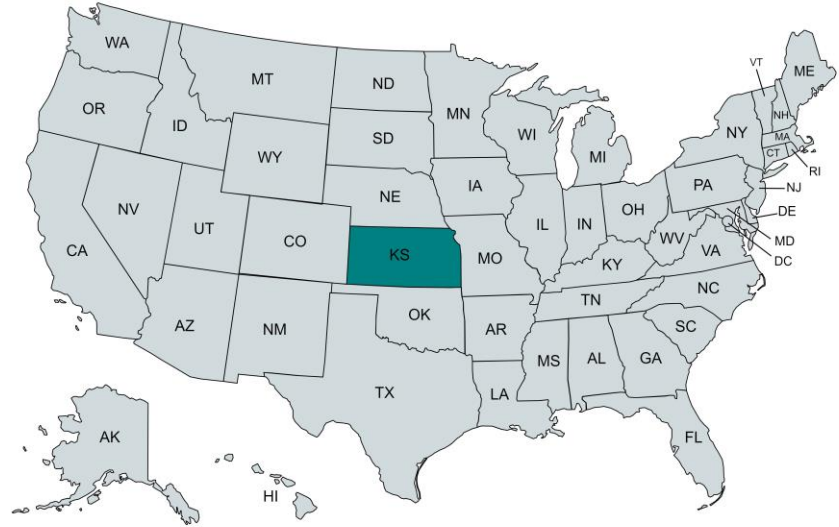
# Kansas is the FIRST state in the nation to launch a statewide Stepping Up initiative for youth.

This cross-system initiative is led by the:

Kansas Department of Corrections (KDOC)

Kansas Department for Aging and  
Disability Services (KDADS)

Kansas Department for Children and  
Families (DCF)



# **Stepping Up for Youth in Kansas: Initiative Overview**

# Stepping Up for Youth in Kansas

## Goal of this initiative:

- Identify, implement, and expand best practices centered on improving community-based services, cross system collaboration, the efficient use of resources, and outcomes for youth with behavioral health needs who experience the juvenile justice system.



# State and Local Components of Stepping Up for Youth in Kansas

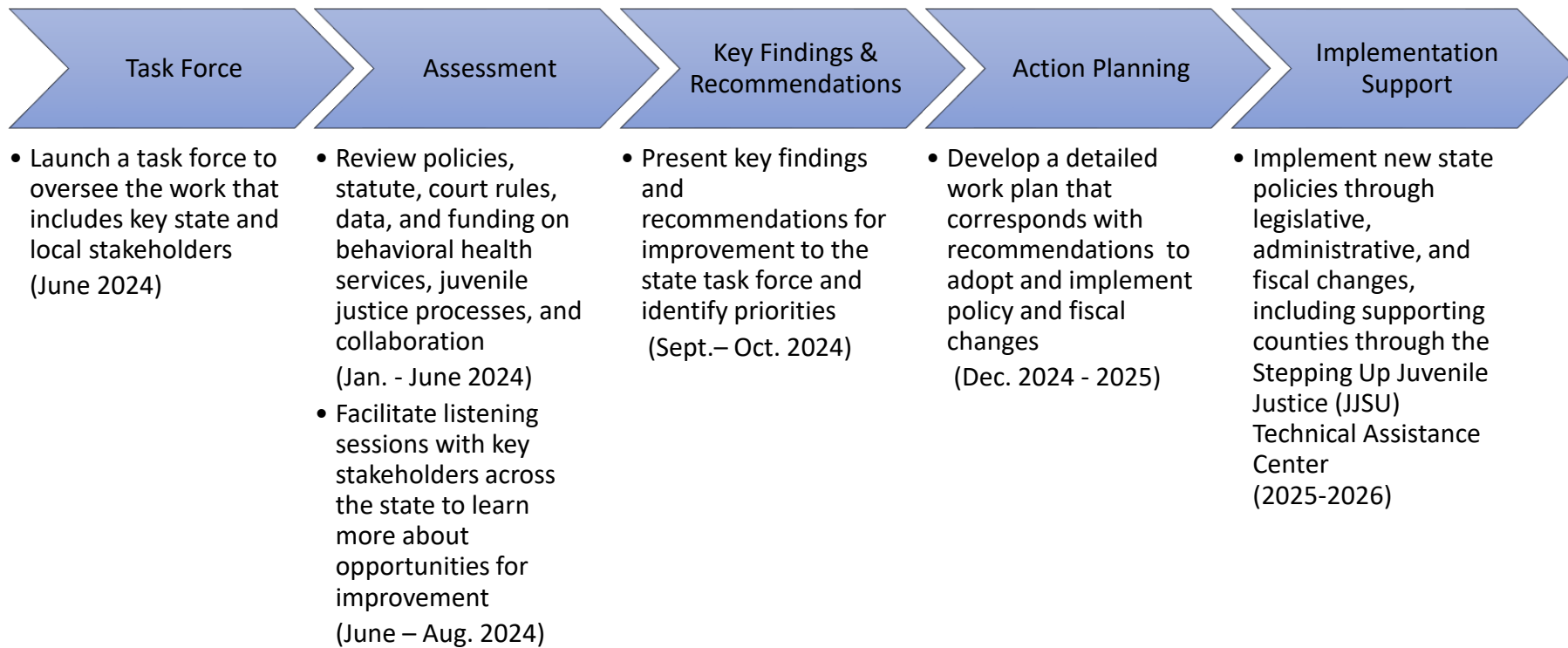
## State Task Force

- Objective: Align state policies to reduce statutory barriers, maximize funding, and increase cross systems collaboration and efficient use of resources.
- Results: Legislative, appropriation, and administrative recommendations for the 2025 legislative session, including agency policies and practices.

## Local Working Group

- Objective: Adapt and implement the Stepping Up model for the juvenile justice system.
- Results: Youth-centered framework, creating key metrics to track performance, and designing localized solutions with counties delivered through a technical assistance center.

# The state assessment has five key phases:



# Task Force will oversee the assessment and represents a diverse array of leaders committed to improving public safety and youth outcomes

Clay McCarter, Director of Special Projects, KDOC	Jeff Butrick, Director of Community-Based Services, KDOC	Gary Henault, Director of Children's and Prevention Services, KDADS	Destini Gillian, Justice Involved Services Coordinator, KDADS	Brenda Soto, Director of Medicaid and Children's Mental Health, DCF	Ashley Brown, Crossover Youth Policy and Practice Coordinator, DCF	Hon. Delia M. York, Wyandotte County District Court Judge
Rep. Stephen Owens	Rep. Angela Martinez	Rep. Brenda Landwehr	Rep. Susan Concannon	Sen. Molly Baumgardner	Sen. Ethan Corson	Don Hymer, Chief ADA, Juvenile Division, Johnson County; Chair of JJOC
Sheriff Bill Carr, Ford County	Trish Backman, School Mental Health Coordinator, KSDE	Dr. Sherrie Vaughn, Executive Director, NAMI Kansas	Mike Fonkert, Deputy Director, Kansas Appleseed	Angela McHardie, Director, Shawnee County Juvenile Detention Center	Dustin Browning, Director of 4 <sup>th</sup> Judicial District Community Corrections	Ann Sagan, Director of Special Projects, Kansas State Board of Indigents' Defense Services
Jennifer Zirkle, Intake Supervisor, NWKS Juvenile Service	Andrea Diaz Buezo, ACMHCK, Special Projects Coordinator	Marquetta Atkins, Executive Director, Progeny	Amy Raymond, Chief of Trial Court Services, Office of Judicial Administration	Zach Vincent, Deputy Director for Legislative Affairs, Governor's Office	DHE Medicaid TBD	



# Key Questions for the Task Force to Consider

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What behavioral health services are available to youth without justice involvement?

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What community-based supports exist to divert youth with behavioral health needs from detention and court?

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How do diversion policies account for behavioral health needs that might drive youth into the justice system?

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What behavioral health resources exist for youth with higher safety risks?

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How does justice involvement impact a youth's ability to access behavioral health services?

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What cross-system collaborations support effective planning and implementation?

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Are resources being utilized efficiently?

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What data are being collected and tracked?

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What quality assurance processes exist?





**Key Challenges and Opportunities Facing  
Youth Justice and Adolescent Service  
Systems Across the Country**

# States are facing increasing challenges in promoting adolescent wellbeing



Rise in adolescent loneliness, anxiety, depression, suicidal ideation, and in some locales, serious substance use, increasing the need for appropriate/effective services.



Staff hiring and retention crisis that has impacted every aspect of agency operations and performance, including supervision, services, fidelity, and modernization.



Residential and community-based service provider staffing/capacity crisis, exposing and deepening limited provider capacity and service infrastructure in most locales.



## In 2021, increase in adolescent mental health challenges, highlighting significant need for community-based services.



29% of high school students reported that “Their Mental Health Was Most Of The Time Or Always Not Good.”



55% reported experiencing emotional abuse by a parent or adult in the home and almost 12% reported physical abuse.



42% of all students and over 55% of females reported feeling “sad or hopeless” in the past year, compared to 29% in 2009.



20% “ever saw someone get physically attacked, beaten, stabbed, or shot in their neighborhood, including almost 30% of Black students.

CDC Youth Risk Behavior Surveillance System, 2021, <https://yrbs-explorer.services.cdc.gov>





## Staff hiring/retention crisis in local and state corrections agencies, impacting agency operations/performance.



More than 85% cite moderate/severe challenges in hiring facility line staff.



Approximately 90% reported moderate/severe challenges retaining facility line staff.



55% reported challenges are more severe than anytime in the past 5 or 10 years.



Less than 10% agree that there is a clear state-wide strategy for addressing the challenges.

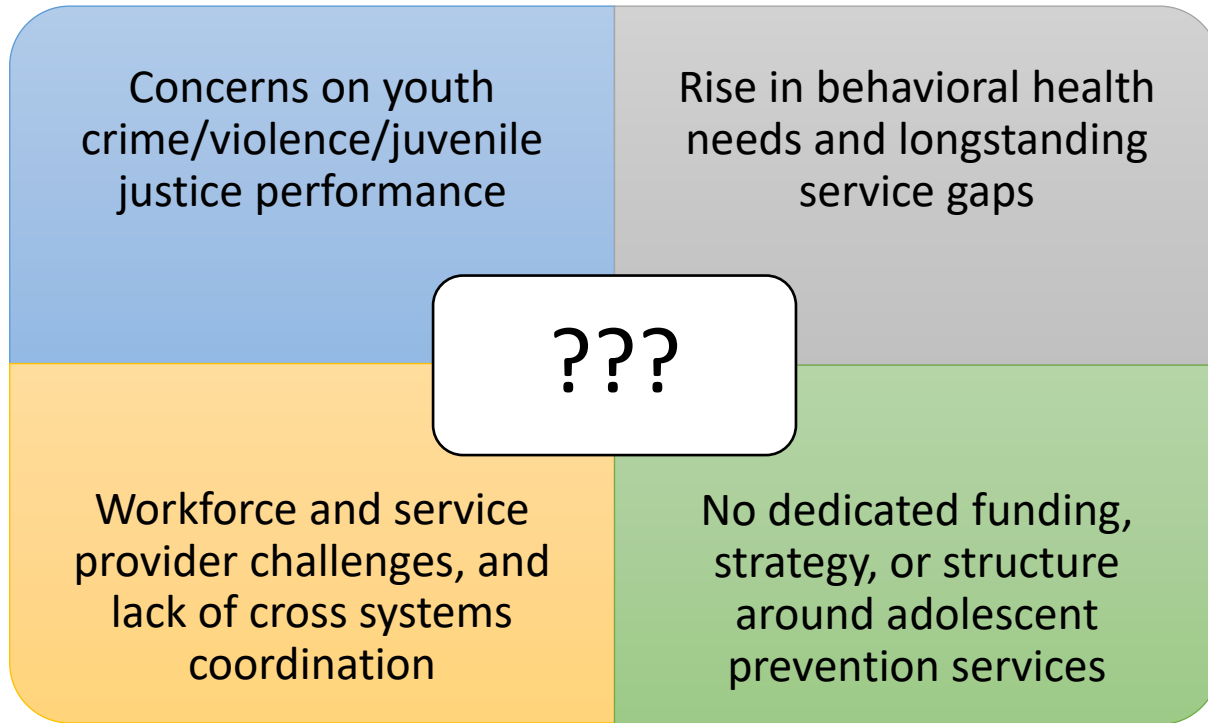


## Service provider staffing crisis, exposing and deepening limited service capacity and coordination in most locales.

More than 85% of agencies reported severe/moderate staffing challenges with service providers.

More than 80% reported staffing challenges have a moderate/severe impact on service availability.

# Many states are struggling to address these issues in comprehensive, integrated, research-based ways.



# Some states have started to adopt innovative approaches to address the current challenges.



ABOUT THE OFFICE ▾ NEWSROOM ▾ SERVING

## Governor Kelly Expands Mental Health Initiative to Kansas' Juvenile Justice System

Nov 8, 2023

## Governor Kelly Expands Mental Health Initiative to Kansas' Juvenile Justice System

~*Kansas is the First State in the Country to Implement the Stepping Up Initiative in the Juvenile Justice System*~

**TOPEKA** – Governor Laura Kelly announced today the launch of The Council of State Government's (CSG) Justice Center's Stepping Up Initiative in Kansas' juvenile justice system to reduce the over-incarceration of Kansans with mental illness and substance abuse

TUESDAY, MARCH 14, 2023

## Governor Cooper Signs Executive Order Establishing State Office of Violence Prevention

Office will coordinate with state and local leaders to reduce violence and increase public safety

Today, Governor Roy Cooper announced the creation of a statewide Office of Violence Prevention that will be located in the North Carolina Department of Public Safety.

## Governor Moore Signs Executive Order Establishing the Governor's Office for Children and Governor's Office of Crime Prevention and Policy

Published: 1/18/2024

**ANNAPOLIS, MD** — Governor Wes Moore today signed two executive orders reaffirming the Moore-Miller administration's commitment to fighting child poverty and public safety throughout Maryland. The executive orders establish the [Governor's Office for Children](#) and the [Governor's Office of Crime Prevention and Policy](#).

"Now is the time for us to say in one voice that we refuse to accept childhood poverty and that we refuse to accept cycles of crime for certain children in certain neighborhoods as a fact of life in the State of Maryland," said Gov.

**Moore.** "We are going to confront both of these challenges together and this is what these executive orders are all about. We are going to eradicate child poverty, we are going to break cycles of crime in our communities, and we are going to do it together. That is the legacy all of us will leave."



## Governor Newsom Unveils New Plan to Transform Kids' Mental Health

Published: Aug 18, 2022

In significant overhaul of state's mental health system, Governor's plan increases access to mental health services for all Californians ages 0-25

Master Plan for Kids' Mental Health invests \$4.7 billion to reimagine mental health and substance use services, adds 40,000 new mental health workers

**FRESNO** – With kids across California headed back to school, Governor Gavin Newsom today unveiled [California's Master Plan for Kids' Mental Health](#) to ensure all California kids, parents and communities have increased access to mental health and substance use services.

Nationally, kids are reporting symptoms of depression and anxiety at record rates and are considering or attempting suicide at historic levels. Here in California, about one-third of 7th and 9th graders and half of 11th graders experienced chronic sadness

## Lt. Governor Gilchrist Signs Bipartisan Bills Reforming Michigan's Juvenile Justice System

Aug 12, 2023

IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Aug 12, 2023

[press@michigan.gov](mailto:press@michigan.gov)

### Lt. Governor Gilchrist Signs Bipartisan Bills Reforming Michigan's Juvenile Justice System

Implements recommendations of Michigan Task Force on Juvenile Justice Reform

**LANSING, Mich.**—Today, Lieutenant Governor Garlin Gilchrist signed first of its kind, bipartisan legislation in transforming Michigan's juvenile justice system and investing in diversion and re-entry services to better position Michigan's youth for successful adulthood.

Author:

Executive  
Communications  
press@mi.gov



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# Research and State Examples



# Diverting youth with behavioral health needs from the juvenile justice system promotes better public safety

When youth are formally processed by the juvenile justice system, they experience far worse outcomes in the 5 years post-arrest than their matched peers that were diverted, including:

More likely to be re-arrested and incarcerated	More engagement in violence	More peers involved in delinquency	Lower school attainment and graduation rates	Less skills to manage their emotions	Lower perception of opportunity
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# Key Components of Strengthening Youth Behavioral Health: Create a Strong Foundation of Prevention

- 1. Develop a robust prevention and early intervention system
- 2. Conduct behavioral health screenings in appropriate settings
- 3. Invest in crisis responses, including respite, mobile, and stabilization services

# Key Components of Strengthening Youth Behavioral Health: Design Easily Accessible Services

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Implement mental health frameworks in school settings

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Create clear, barrier-free pathways for youth and families to access prevention and intervention services

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Include peer support services for youth and families

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Map eligibility criteria and locations to understand accessibility of services



# Key Components of Strengthening Youth Behavioral Health: Strengthen Systems to Promote Sustainability

Fund staffing to lead cross-system collaboration, planning, and implementation

Develop intentional off-ramps from the juvenile justice system to divert youth with behavioral health needs

Ensure Medicaid is being maximized and parity exists with private providers

Design strong quality assurance processes including data reviews, licensing standards, and contract requirements

# States in Action: Front-End Prevention Strategies

## Youth Mobile Crisis

- [Connecticut](#): Trained mental health clinicians are deployed to homes, schools and community locations to provide in-person crisis stabilization services and linkage to ongoing care for children.
- [Nevada](#): Rural Mobile Crisis Response allows children to be served in an appropriate crisis response setting instead of utilizing juvenile detention centers or hospitals.

## Assessment Centers & Crisis Stabilization Units

- [Oklahoma](#): Provides acute care services and connection to long-term care for youth in crisis.
- [Colorado](#): Statewide funding structure that requires assessments and performance metrics.

## School-based Diversion

- [Wisconsin](#): Implemented a statewide mental health framework to promote prevention and mental health supports throughout the school system to meet children's behavioral health needs without the presence of law enforcement.
- [Massachusetts](#): The School Mental Health Consortium provides comprehensive mental health services, supports, and responses to students.

# An Early Intervention System in Utah

Utah established a statewide “early intervention” approach to serving youth and families in need of services which is overseen by the Utah Department of Juvenile Justice and Youth Services but sits outside of the formal juvenile justice system.

- \$15 million a year in dedicated funding to serve 4000 youth and families annually through screenings, case management, and intensive evidence-based wrap around services, including respite and crisis supports

# An Early Intervention System in Florida

Florida has established a statewide system of services that is managed by the [Florida Network of Youth and Family Services](#), a community-based provider.

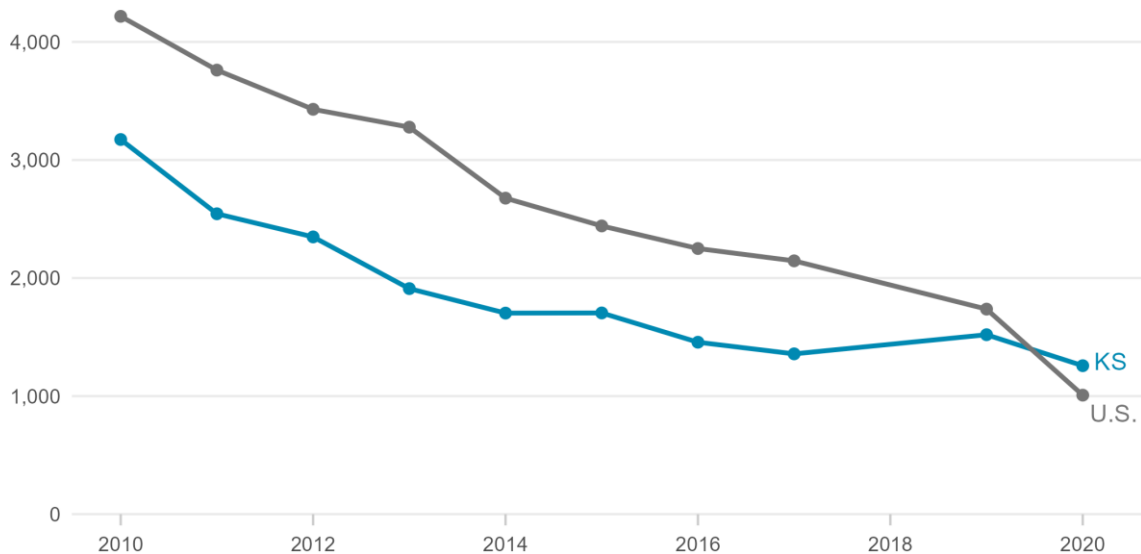
- \$40 million dollars are appropriated annually to serve almost 8000 youth and families, including assessments, case management, respite.
- The Florida Network assists by developing a specialized assessment tool for these youth, providing training for providers, offering a statewide data system for tracking referrals/services/outcomes, and instituting ongoing quality assurance activities.

# Defining the Problem and Identifying Opportunities for Improvement in Kansas



# The youth arrest rate in Kansas in 2020 was 60 percent lower than the arrest rate in 2010

Youth arrests per 100k residents



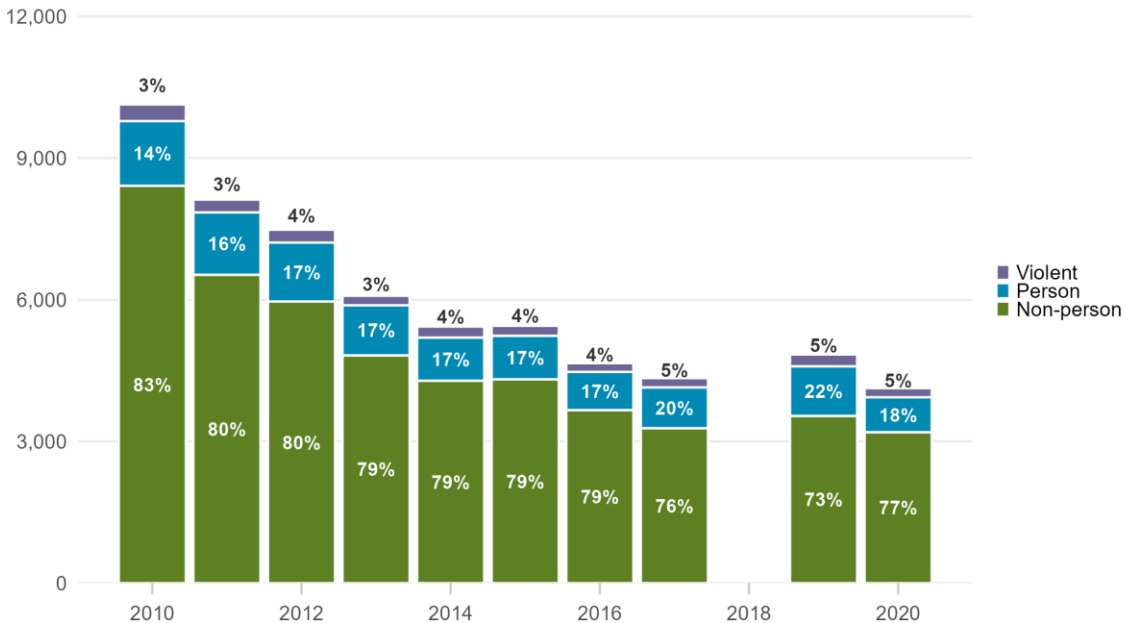
In 2020 in Kansas, 4,128 juveniles were arrested, a rate of 1,258 per 100,000 youth.

The Kansas arrest rate was 25 percent higher than the national average of 1,008 arrests per 100,000.

FBI Uniform Crime Reporting Program Summary Reporting System; Arrests by Age, Sex, and Race data set. Aggregated to the state-level from Jacob Kaplan's Concatenated Files; <https://doi.org/10.3886/E102263V15>

# In 2020, 77 percent of youth arrests in Kansas were for non-person offenses

Youth arrests per 100k residents by category, Kansas

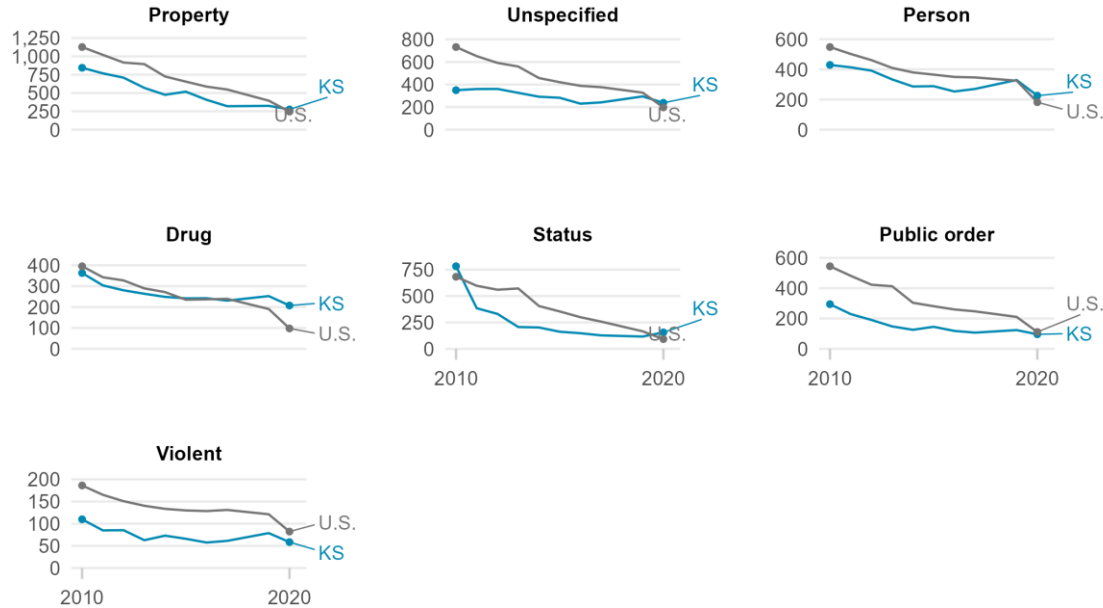


In 2020, nationally, 74% of all youth arrests were for non-person offense.

FBI Uniform Crime Reporting Program Summary Reporting System; Arrests by Age, Sex, and Race data set. Aggregated to the state-level from Jacob Kaplan's Concatenated Files; <https://doi.org/10.3886/E102263V15>

# The largest difference in arrest rates in 2020 between Kansas and the national average was in drug offenses

Youth arrests per 100k residents by offense category

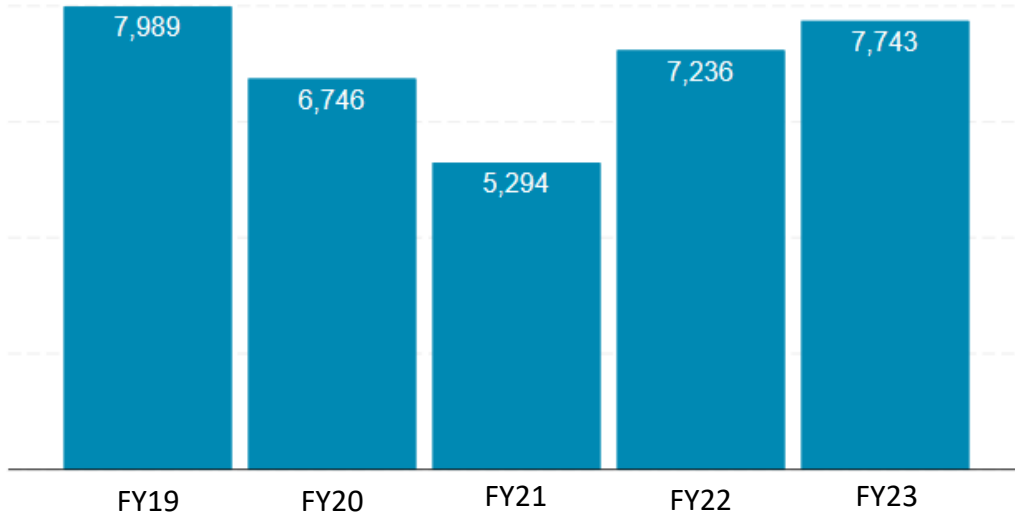


The youth arrest rate for person, property, drug, status, and unspecified offenses was higher in Kansas than the national average in 2020. The youth arrest rate for violent and public order offenses was lower in Kansas than the national average in 2020.

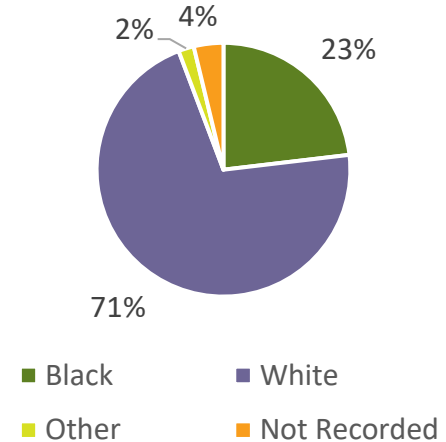
FBI Uniform Crime Reporting Program Summary Reporting System; Arrests by Age, Sex, and Race data set. Aggregated to the state-level from Jacob Kaplan's Concatenated Files; <https://doi.org/10.3886/E102263V15>

# Intakes for youth with delinquent offenses have increased since FY 2021 and have nearly reached the number of intakes in FY 2019.

## Intakes for Youth with Delinquent Offenses



## Race, FY 2023



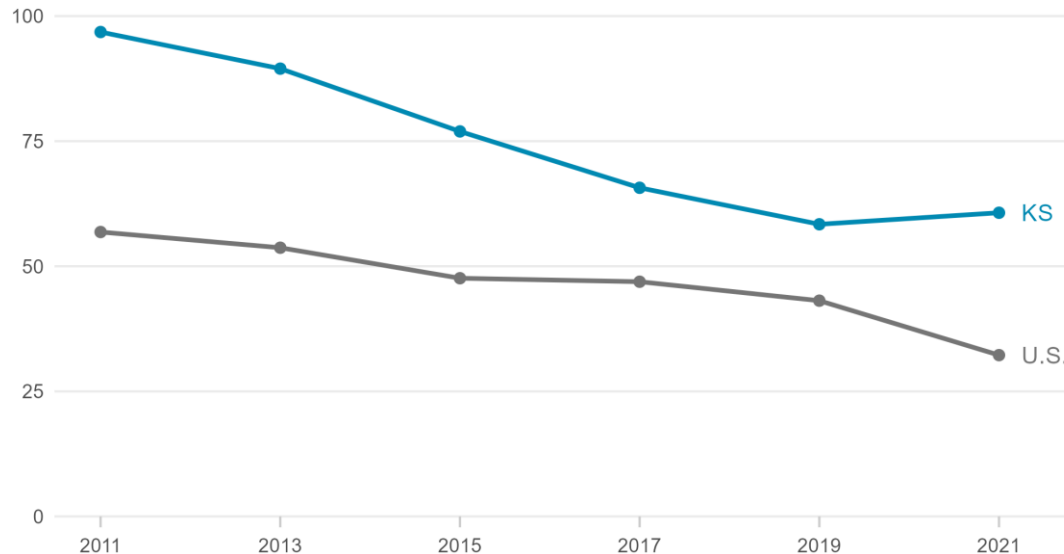
Source: JJOC Report Dashboard: Intakes by Race

Note: Intakes include "Juvenile Individual," "Both Flag," and "Both CINC and Juvenile Individual."



# In Kansas in 2021, the youth pre-adjudication detention rate was 61 per 100k.

Youth detained pre-adjudication per 100k residents



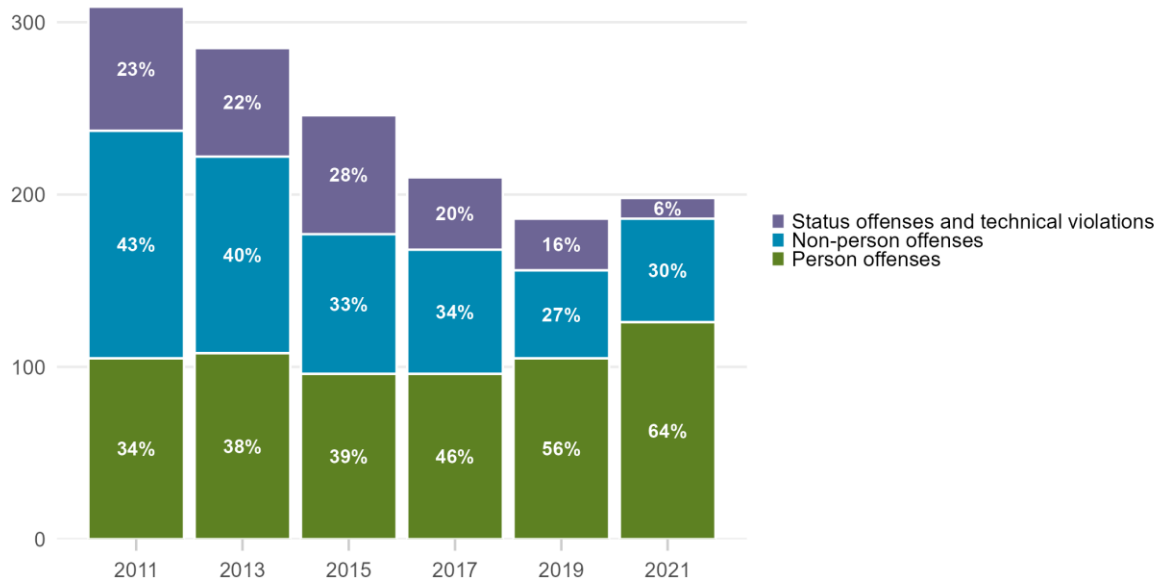
Census of Juveniles in Residential Placement, 2011-2021, <https://www.ojjdp.gov/ojstatbb/ezacjrp/>

The detention rate in 2021 was 37 percent lower than in 2011.

The Kansas pre-adjudication detention rate was 88 percent higher than national pre-adjudication detention rate in 2021.

# In Kansas in 2021, 36 percent of youth detained pre-adjudication were held for status, non-person offenses or technical violations.

Number of youth detained pre-adjudication by offense type, Kansas

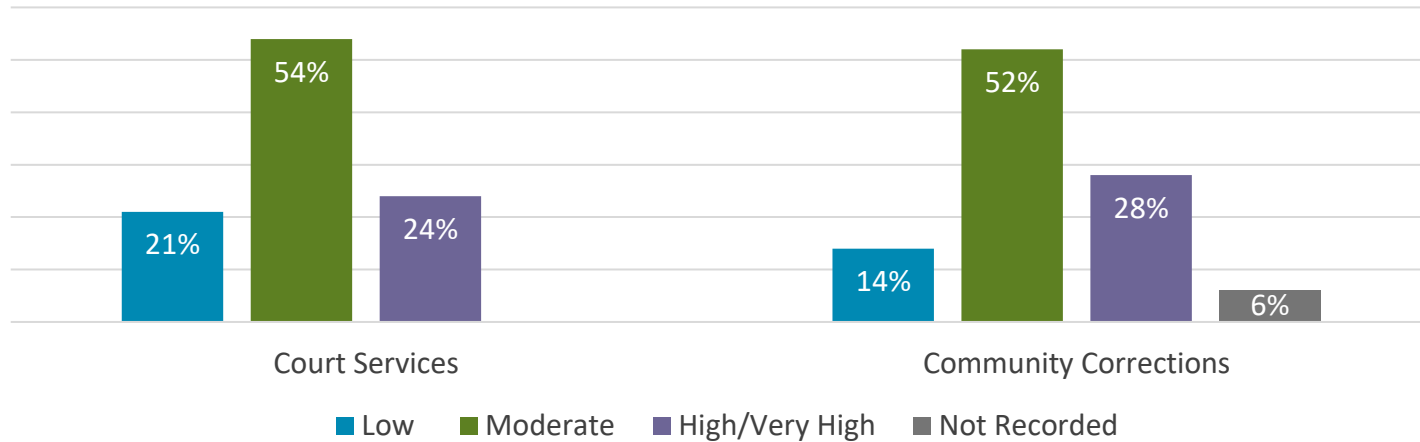


Census of Juveniles in Residential Placement, 2011-2021, <https://www.ojjdp.gov/ojstatbb/ezacrjpr/>

Compared to the national average, Kansas had a higher proportion of youth detained for person offenses and a lower proportion detained for status offenses and technical violations.

## In FY 2021 more than two-thirds of youth starting probation had low or moderate risks to reoffend.

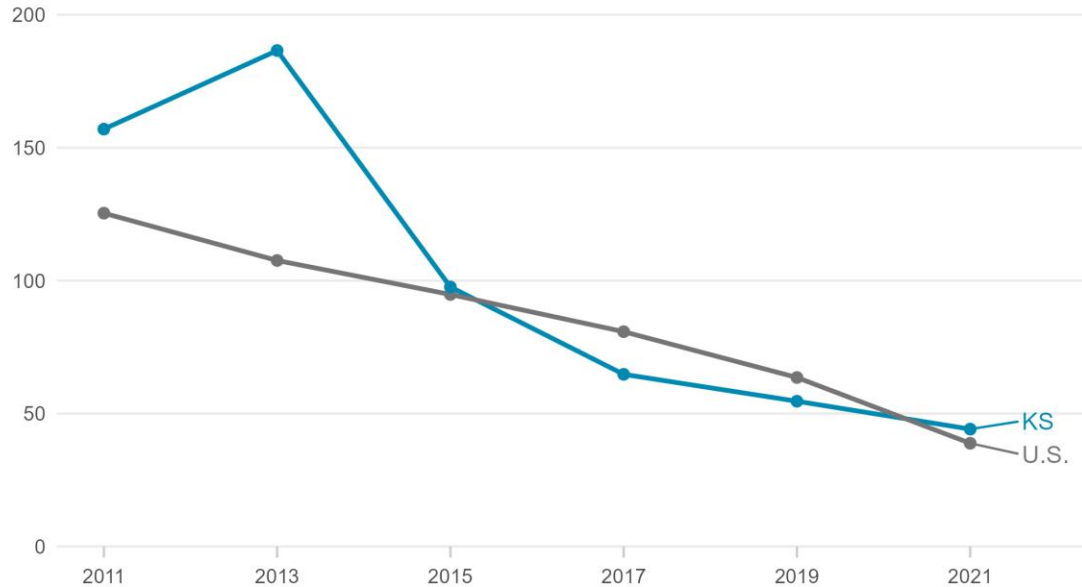
Risk Level of Youth on Probation, FY 2021



Source: Kansas Juvenile Justice Oversight Committee 2021 Annual Report, p. 15

## In Kansas in 2021, the youth commitment rate was 44 per 100k

Youth committed post-adjudication per 100k residents



The commitment rate in 2021 was 72 percent lower than in 2011.

The Kansas commitment rate was 14 percent higher than the national commitment rate in 2021.

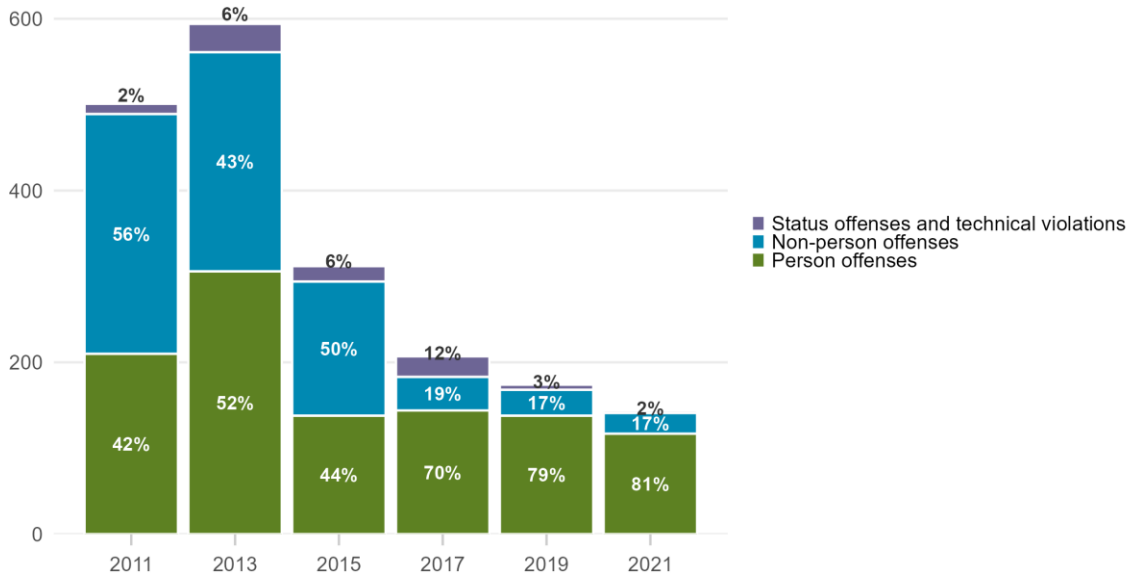
Census of Juveniles in Residential Placement, 2011-2021, <https://www.ojjdp.gov/ojstatbb/ezacjrp/>





# In Kansas in 2021, 19 percent of committed youth were convicted of status, non-person offenses or technical violations.

Number of youth committed post-adjudication by offense type, Kansas

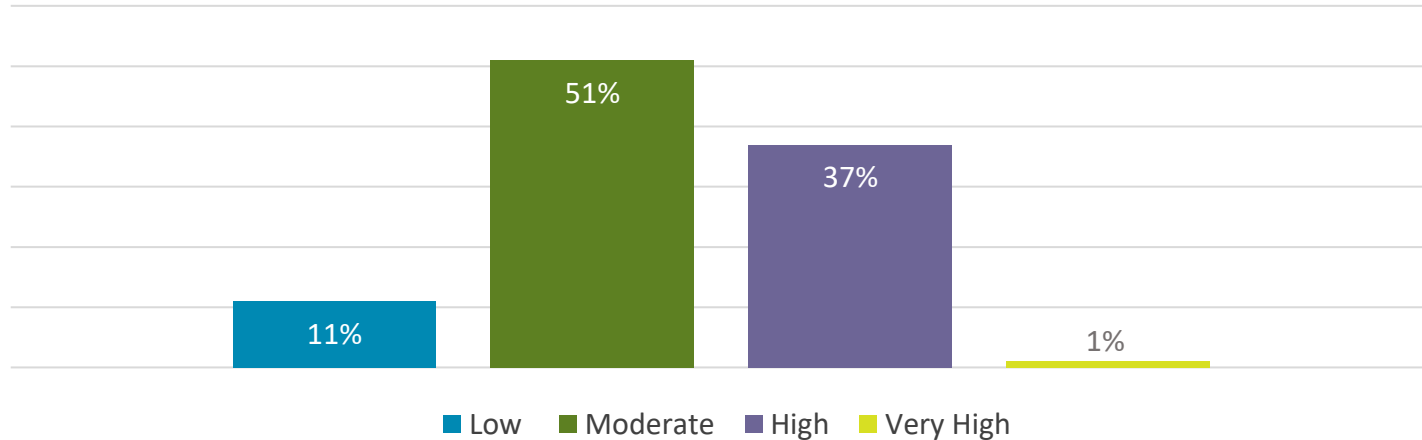


Census of Juveniles in Residential Placement, 2011-2021, <https://www.ojjdp.gov/ojstatbb/ezacjrp/>

In the United States in 2021, 54 percent of committed youth were placed due to status, non-person offenses or technical violations.

# In FY 2021 less than half of the youth placed in a Juvenile Correctional Facility (JCF) were at high risk to reoffend.

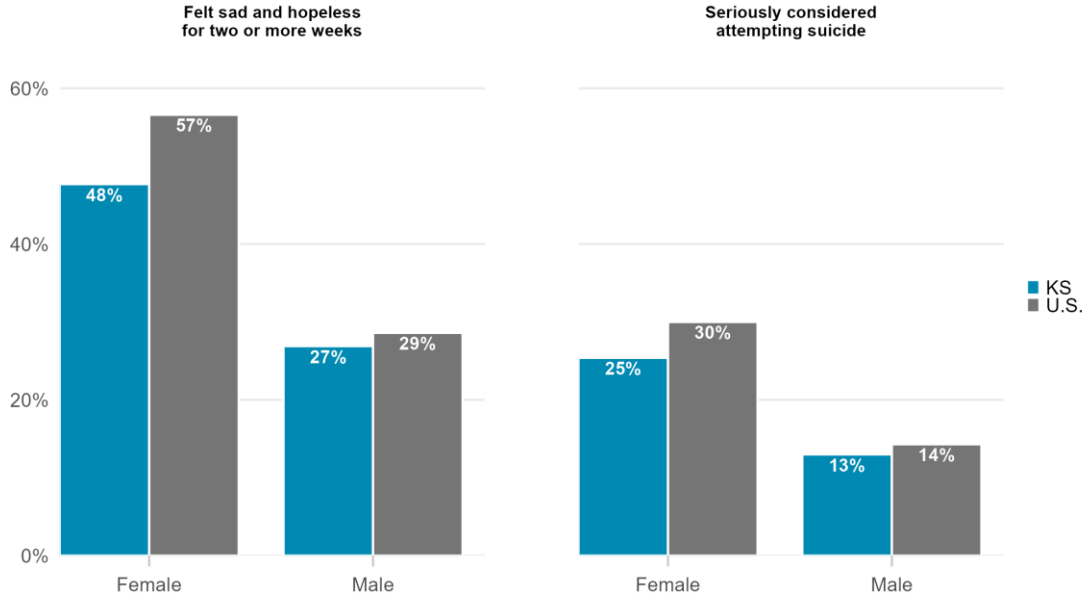
Risk Level of Youth Placed in a JCF, FY 2021



Source: Kansas Juvenile Justice Oversight Committee 2021 Annual Report, p. 17

# Behavioral health needs are a significant driver of juvenile justice involvement and have been increasing nationally and in Kansas.

Proportion of high school students who reported mental health challenges, 2021



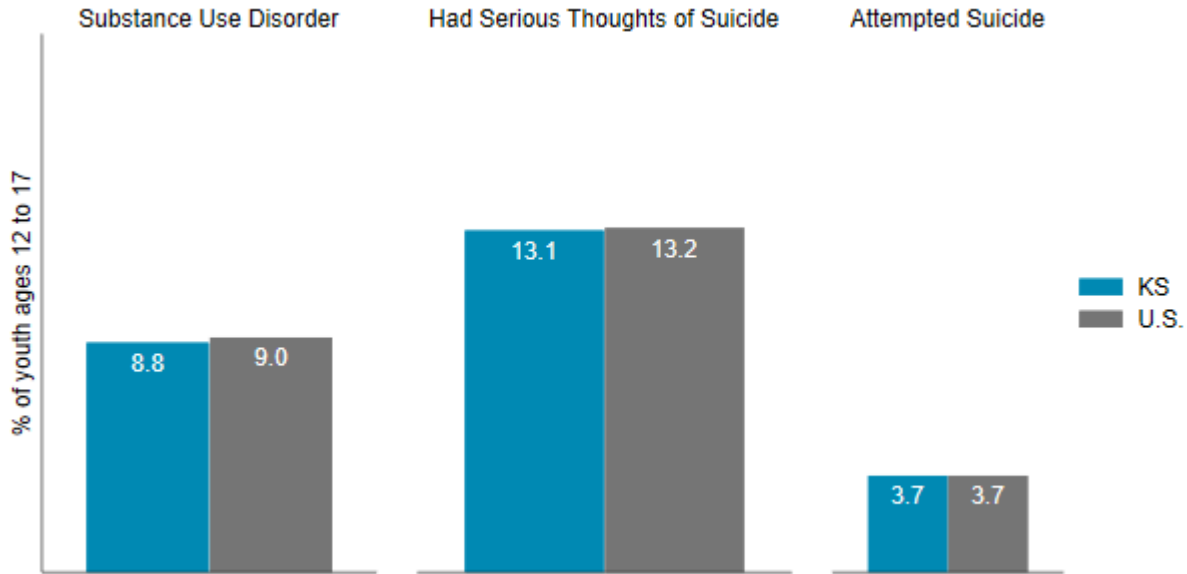
Kansas generally ranks about the same or better compared to other states on youth behavioral health treatment needs and access to services, but many youth are still struggling in Kansas with their mental health.

CDC Youth Risk Behavior Surveillance System, 2021, <https://yrbs-explorer.services.cdc.gov>



# Many youth in Kansas have behavioral health needs that place them at risk of needing crisis intervention.

## Youth Behavioral Health Needs



**10—12 percent** of youth ages 9 to 17 in Kansas have a **serious emotional disturbance (SED)**.

Sources: Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration. (2024). Behavioral Health Barometer, Region 7, Volume 7: Indicators as Measured in the 2021-2022 National Surveys on Drug; State-By-State Estimates Of Adults With Serious Mental Illness (SMI) And Children With Serious Emotional Disturbance (SED), 2022

# Kansas has a strong opportunity to advance youth behavioral health supports and produce better public safety outcomes



Develop a more robust early intervention system



Enhance the foundation of youth crisis supports, and other community-based services



Strengthen cross-system collaboration



Maximize federal funding for evidence-based programs



Build the capacity of service providers and the workforce, particularly in rural communities



Promote system accountability and track outcomes

# Discussion Questions

- What feedback or questions do you have on the process and methods?
- Who else should inform the initiative?
- Where are natural engagement points for early interventions with youth?
- What are the priorities for improvement?
- What are potential barriers and challenges to reform?

# Next Steps

# Next Steps

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Host a statewide webinar on the initiative

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Conduct listening sessions with stakeholders across the state

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Schedule and facilitate the next task force meeting in September to share key findings and recommendations from the assessment





# Justice Center

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