



Over-Representation of Minority Youth in Oregon’s Juvenile Justice System

Oregon’s Juvenile Justice System experiences over-representation of minorities throughout several decision points in the system. Oregon’s juvenile justice system comprises a continuum of services ranging from the entry point of first referral or contact with the system to the most restrictive dispositional option of Commitment to Oregon Youth Authority (OYA) for Youth Correctional Facility placement.

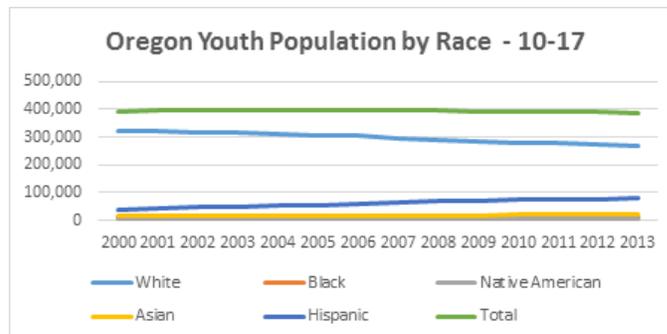
Juveniles are referred to the juvenile justice system primarily by law enforcement but other sources, such as schools, Department of Human Services, and families also make referrals. Youth are referred for a wide range of delinquency behaviors – ranging from status offenses like runaway to serious criminal behavior. The majority of the referrals are managed at the local juvenile department level either under informal juvenile department supervision or formal probation imposed by the juvenile court. The juvenile court may also commit youth to the OYA for Community Residential Placement in addition to Probation or to OYA for Youth Correctional Facility Placement. A very small number of youth are referred for crimes that are automatically transferred to the adult court.

Congress has identified disproportionate minority contact as one of four mandates in the Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention Act. The federal Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention in the US Department of Justice has developed a national model, called the Relative Rate Index (RRI), as a way to assess the level of disproportionate minority contact at various major stages of juvenile justice processing. The RRI is a means to compare the rates of juvenile justice contact experienced by different groups of youth and adjusting the basis for the rate at each consecutive decision point as youth move through the system. In other words, the model recommends that arrest and referral rates are computed based on the youth population for each minority group – but then uses the referral population as the basis for the next major decision point. The basis for the rate is recalibrated at each subsequent decision point.

While RRI is a useful model for identifying where in the system disparities exist at each decision point, it does not represent the total disparity experienced by youth of color. Therefore for the following analyses, the basis for the rates will be based on the 10-17 youth population in Oregon for each minority racial and ethnic group. In order to report youth in only one racial category, a reporting strategy has been used to count a youth as Hispanic if the ethnicity is Hispanic, otherwise to count them in their designated racial reporting category. 10% of the Hispanic youth population identify with a race other than white, so the estimates for each of the other minority categories is slightly under-represented.

Youth Population

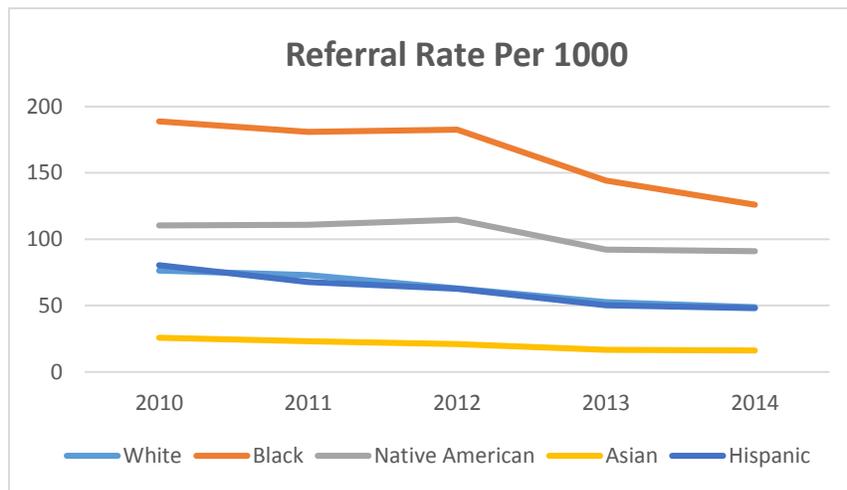
The total Oregon youth population ages 10-17 has remained relatively flat, ranging from a high of 398,216 in 2006 to a current low of 387,528.



With the exception of the Hispanic and white populations, the racial demographic also has remained constant. The proportion of Hispanic youth doubled from 10% in 2000 to 20% in 2013. The proportion of the white population declined from 81% in 2000 to just under 70% in 2013. Since 2014 population data is not yet available, all rates computed below use 2013 population data for both 2013 and 2014.

Juvenile Referrals

Referrals represent the first point of contact with the juvenile justice system. All referrals to county juvenile departments are entered into Oregon’s Juvenile Justice Information System (JJIS) and tracked through the juvenile department and, if appropriate, court process – through to final disposition of each allegation. Referrals for both criminal offenses and non-criminal violations have been steadily decreasing since data has been tracked in JJIS. The chart below displays the referral rate per 1000 youth in the 10-17 populations for each racial and ethnic demographic for the years 2010-2014.

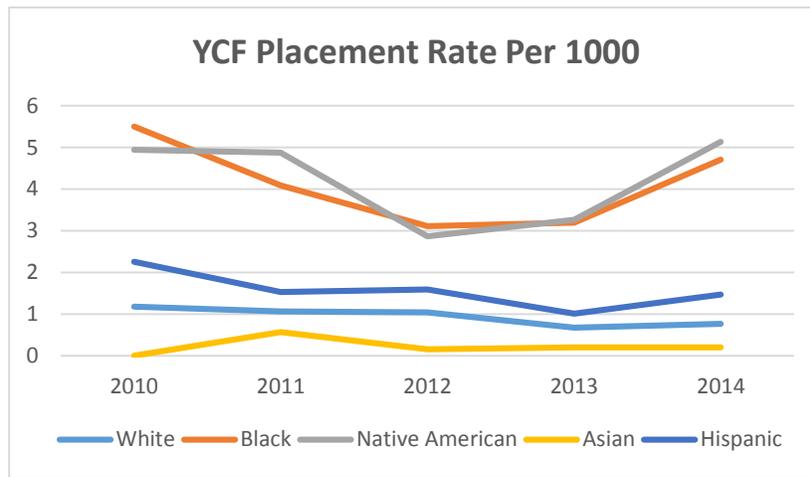


The overall juvenile referral rate has decreased 35% since 2010, however the referral rate disparity among some minority groups compared to white youth remains significant. In 2010 – the referral rate for white youth was about 2.5 times higher for black youth than white youth (76 per 1000 for white youth and 189 per 1000 for black youth). By 2014, the referral rates had declined for both white and black youth, but the disparity grew – the referral rate was about 2.6 times higher for black youth than white youth (49 per 1000 for white youth and 126 per 1000 for black youth). The referral rate for Native Americans is also considerably higher than white youth at nearly 2 times the white youth rate. Hispanic youth are referred at nearly the same rate as white youth. Only the Asian youth are referred at a rate lower than white youth.

YCF Placements

The most intense dispositional option available to the juvenile court is commitment to OYA for a youth correctional facility placement. Judges use this option for serious crimes, when a local community based option is not appropriate, or when a youth is no longer amenable and responsive to treatment at the local level. This data is tracked in JJIS as the disposition on the allegations on a referral.

The chart on the next page displays the rate of placement in a Youth Correctional Facility per 1000 youth in the 10-17 population for each racial and ethnic demographic for the years 2010-2014.



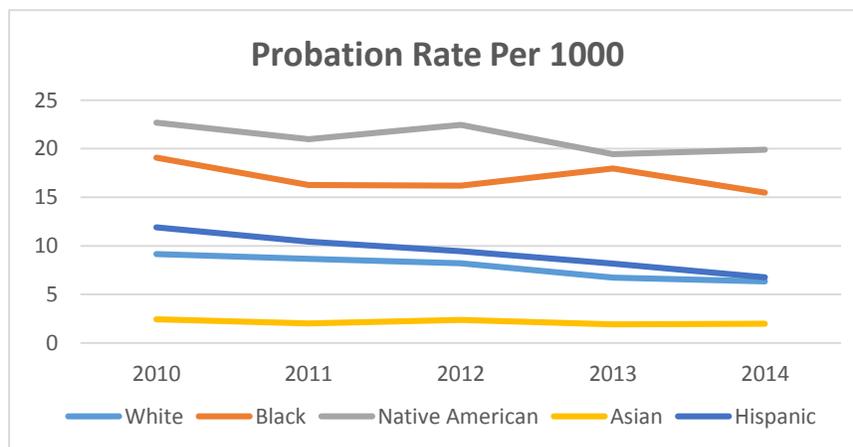
Since a small number of youth are committed to OYA for Youth Correctional Facility Placement, the rates per 1000 are very low. However, even with the small rate per thousand, the disparity in rates between the racial and ethnic populations are apparent. Black and Native American youth follow a similar pattern and are committed to OYA for YCF placement at significantly higher rates than white, Hispanic, and Asian youth.

The YCF commitment rate for white youth has stayed constant at about 1 per 1000 – while it has averaged around 5 per 1000 for black youth and for Native American youth. A black youth or Native American youth is about 5 times more likely to be committed to a youth correctional facility than a white youth. In 2014, Hispanic youth have a commitment rate of about 1.5 times higher than white youth. As with referrals, the rate for Asian youth is less than for white youth.

Juvenile Probation (includes County and OYA Probation)

Following juvenile court adjudication, a judge may order a youth placed on formal probation. The majority of youth on probation are supervised and provided services at the local county juvenile department level. The court may also order a youth committed to OYA for community placement in addition to Probation, if a youth also needs out of home placement in foster care or community residential treatment.

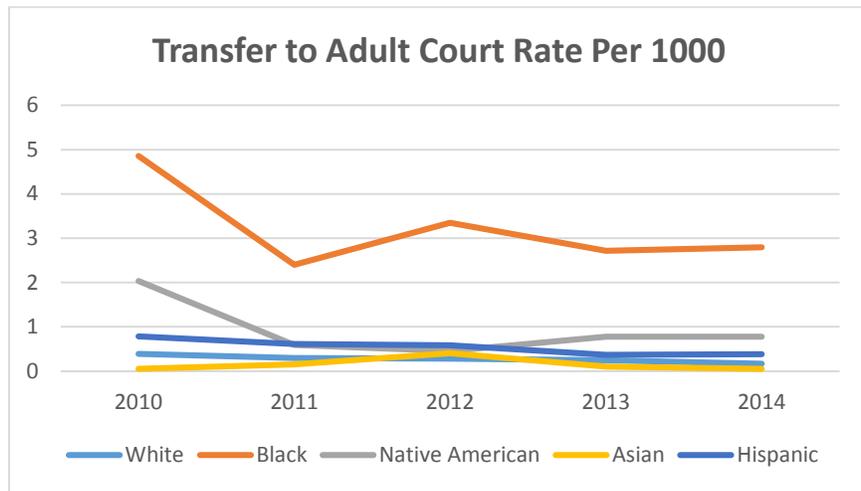
The chart below displays the combined county juvenile department and OYA Probation rate per 1000 youth in the 10-17 populations for each racial and ethnic demographic for the years 2010-2014.



Probation rates display similar differences between the racial and ethnic populations. However, for probation, the greatest disparity is represented in the Native American youth population. In 2010 the probation rate for Native American youth was about 2.6 times higher than for white youth, (9 per 1000 for white youth and 23 per 1000 for Native American youth). In 2014 the rates had dropped to 6 per 1000 for white youth and 20 per 1000 for Native Americans, but the difference had grown to 3.3 times higher than white youth. In 2014 the probation rate for black youth was 2.5 times higher than white youth. The Hispanic rate is close to white youth and the Asian rate is lower than white youth.

Automatic Transfer to Adult Court

Less than 1% of the youth referred for crimes are charged by the District Attorney with crimes serious enough to require an automatic transfer to adult court. The chart below shows the Adult Transfer rates for each racial and ethnic category.



The low volume of these types of referrals is reflected in the low rates, but the disparity between black youth and all other populations is apparent. The rates for white, Asian, and Hispanic youth are less than 1 per 1000, while the rates for black youth have varied from 3 to 5 per 1000. In 2010 a black youth was 5 times more likely to be transferred to adult court than a white youth; in 2014 a black youth was 3 times more likely to be transferred to adult court than a white youth.

Sources

Youth Population Data - Easy Access to Juvenile Populations - Developed and maintained by the [National Center for Juvenile Justice](http://www.ojjdp.gov/ojstatbb/ezapop/asp/profile_selection.asp), with funding from the [Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention](http://www.ojjdp.gov/ojstatbb/ezapop/asp/profile_selection.asp) (OJJDP), Office of Justice Programs, U.S. Department of Justice. http://www.ojjdp.gov/ojstatbb/ezapop/asp/profile_selection.asp

Referral, Commitment, Probation, Automatic Transfers - OYA, Juvenile Justice Information System – Relative Rate Index Reports.