

2009 Rhode Island Kids Count Factbook: Juvenile Justice Indicators

The Rhode Island Family Court

- ◆ **In 2008, 5,242 youth were referred to the Rhode Island Family Court for 8,790 wayward and delinquent offenses.** Of these, 386 (4%) involved violent offenses, 242 (63%) of which occurred in the core cities. An additional 957 probation violations also came before the Family Court in 2008.
- ◆ In 2008, 2,229 juveniles were referred by schools to the **Truancy Court** and 232 juveniles who committed drug offenses or had highlighted drug issues were diverted to the Juvenile **Drug Court**.
- ◆ The Family Court also administers 30 **Juvenile Hearing Boards** that serve 32 communities, three of which were not active in 2007 (Providence, Exeter and Central Falls). Hearing Boards permit the diversion of juveniles accused of status offenses or misdemeanors. Sanction options in this process include community service, restitution and/or counseling. A total of 804 cases were heard before Juvenile Hearing Boards in 2007.
- ◆ In 2008, the **Attorney General's Office filed 28 motions to waive jurisdiction** to try juveniles as adults (7 mandatory and 21 discretionary waivers), up from 19 in 2007. A juvenile also may be "certified" allowing a court to sentence the juvenile beyond age 19 if there is otherwise an insufficient period of time in which to accomplish rehabilitation. There were two discretionary certifications in 2008, the same as in 2007. While the child is a minor, the sentence is served at the Training School. The youth can be transferred to an adult facility upon reaching age 19, if the court deems it appropriate.

The Rhode Island Training School

- ◆ The Rhode Island Department of Children, Youth and Families (DCYF) operates the Rhode Island Training School for Youth, the state's residential detention facility for adjudicated youth and youth awaiting trial. A total of **1,084 youth (81% male and 19% female) were in the care and custody of the Training School at some point during 2008.** On January 1, 2009, there were 159 youth on the grounds of the Training School.
- ◆ Of the 1,084 youth who were at the Training School at some point during 2008, **25% (258) had been admitted previously.** One-quarter (64) of the youth previously admitted had been at the Training School three or more times.
- ◆ Of the 305 adjudicated juveniles at the Training School on January 1, 2009, **35% were White, 34% were Black, 4% were Asian, 1% were Native American, 3% were multi-racial** and 24% were of unknown race. Of these youth, 29% were identified as Hispanic (Hispanic youth may also be of any race).
- ◆ **Of all admissions to detention at the Training School in 2007, 73% resulted in stays of seven days or less.** Of these short admissions, 24% led to adjudication to the Training School or Temporary Community Placements (TCP), while the remainder resulted in release.

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Risk Factors for Rhode Island Youth at the Training School

History of Child Abuse and Neglect

- ❖ More than two-fifths (42%) of the adjudicated youth in the care and custody of the Training School on January 1, 2009 had at some point in their childhood been victims of documented child abuse or neglect.

Behavioral Health Needs

- ❖ In 2008, all youth at the Training School received counseling as part of their service plans and 156 youth received mental health services for psychiatric diagnoses other than conduct disorders and substance abuse disorders.
- ❖ During 2008, 54 males participated in the six-month residential substance abuse treatment program at the Training School, designed specifically for youth offenders. Half of youth at the Training School during the week of January 10, 2008 were receiving outpatient substance abuse treatment.

Teen Pregnancy and Parenting

- ❖ Two of 13 adjudicated or detained females at the Training School during the week of January 10, 2008 were pregnant. Nine of the 110 adjudicated males at the Training School during this period reported already being a parent and two reported being an expectant parent.

Educational Attainment

- ❖ Of the 96 students at the Training School on January 15, 2008 with school records, 12 (13%) had failed all classes before entering the Training School. The average pre-test scores for both reading and math skills of youth at the Training School were at fifth grade levels. Approximately half of students at the Training School receive special education services.
- ❖ During the 2007-2008 school year, 78 adjudicated youth graduated from high school while serving a sentence at the Training School. Fifty-eight of these students graduated with a General Educational Development (GED) diploma and 20 graduated with a high school diploma.