

The Honorable Jalilah Otto Presiding Judge 16<sup>th</sup> Circuit Court

Bev Newman Court Administrator 16<sup>th</sup> Circuit Court

The Honorable Jennifer Phillips Administrative Judge Jackson County Family Court

The Honorable Nancy Alemifar Family Court Commissioner

The Honorable Daniel Berezoski Family Court Commissioner

The Honorable Katie Rooney Family Court Commissioner

The Honorable Michelle Dixon Family Court Commissioner

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#### Introduction

This report provides statistical information about Jackson County Circuit Court – Family Court Division for 2024 and the previous seven years. The report begins with a demographic overview of the Jackson County youth population. Next the report looks at referrals and formal filings to the Family Court for our various case types:

- Child abuse and neglect
- Adoption
- Termination of parental rights
- Status offense
- Delinquent and technical violation

The report considers disposition and intervention services, including the number of commitments to the Division of Youth Services, the number of youth certified to stand trial as an adult, and the number of youth and families participating in Family Court programs and services.

2024 was characterized by the continued decline of child abuse and neglect, adoption, and termination or parental rights filings and the slowing or flattening of increases we have seen in some delinquency-related areas in the past few years (referrals, formal filings, and detainments, for example).

In spite of these trends, more youth and families were served in Family Court Services programs than last year—particularly diversion, which saw a 79% increase compared to 2023. Probation numbers are at their highest point in at least eight years, and the Family Treatment Court and Child Protection and Permanency Unit/Safe Babies Court both saw increases in 2024 despite the decline in abuse and neglect cases overall.

### Current Demographic Picture

The number of youth between the ages of 10 and 17 who resided in Jackson County has increased over the last few years after a steady decline between 2002 and 2012. In 2022, the most recent year for which we have detailed population data, youth under the age of 18 represented 23% of the county population, and 35% of youth were youth of color.<sup>1</sup>

Table 1. Youth Population in Jackson County (Ages 0 to 17 years) by Race

Year	Black	White	American Indian	Asian	Total
2016	51,522	108,262	1,615	4,357	165,756
2017	51,246	108,588	1,644	4,462	165,940
2018	51,008	107,842	1,639	4,490	164,979
2019	50,556	107,662	1,672	4,482	164,372
2020	51,341	106,155	1,801	4,793	164,090
2021	51,889	107,075	1,958	4,814	165,736
2022	51,333	105,997	2,003	4,667	164,000

Table 2. Youth Population in Jackson County (Ages 10 to 17 years) by Race

Year	Black	White	American Indian	Asian	Total
2016	22,282	47,483	667	2,079	72,511
2017	22,275	47,888	682	2,108	72,953
2018	22,339	47,676	674	2,180	72,869
2019	22,310	47,906	698	2,251	73,165
2020	22,491	47,751	699	2,221	73,162
2021	23,310	49,484	761	2,239	75,794
2022	23,114	49,113	757	2,170	75,154

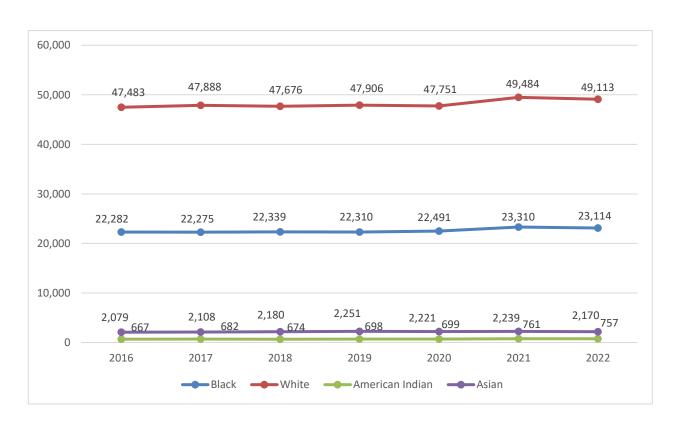
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<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1</sup> Puzzanchera, C., Sladky, A. and Kang, W. (2022). "Easy Access to Juvenile Populations: 1990-2022." Available: http://www.ojjdp.gov/ojstatbb/ezapop/. United States Census Bureau. Quick Facts: Jackson County, Missouri. Available: https://www.census.gov/quickfacts/fact/table/jacksoncountymissouri/PST045217. "Youth of color" refers to all youth other than those designated in the Census data as "white alone, not Hispanic or Latino."

Table 3. Youth Population in Jackson County (Ages 10 to 17 years) by Age

Year	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	Total
2016	9,333	9,125	9,173	9,005	8,984	8,905	9,060	8,926	72,511
2017	9,381	9,278	9,163	9,088	9,094	8,952	8,955	9,042	72,953
2018	9,344	9,315	9,247	9,152	9,068	8,993	8,902	8,848	72,869
2019	9,138	9,396	9,363	9,313	9,154	8,981	8,986	8,834	73,165
2020	9,173	9,083	9,353	9,261	9,293	9,122	8,976	8,901	73,162
2021	9,074	9,327	9,485	9,817	9,789	9,587	9,438	9,277	75,794
2022	9,027	9,068	9,266	9,524	9,736	9,714	9,543	9,276	75,154

Graph 1. Youth Population in Jackson County (Ages 10 to 17 years) by Race



# Referrals and Formal Filings

This section describes dispositions of referrals and petitions and motions to modify filed by year for (1) child abuse and neglect, adoption, and termination of parental rights cases; (2) status offenses; and (3) delinquent and technical offenses. Both referrals and formal filings listed for a given year were filed in that year. (Some petitions and motions to modify filed in a given year were based on referrals filed in prior years.)

This report uses the following definitions for status and technical offenses from the Missouri Department of Public Safety and the State Juvenile Justice Advisory Group:

**Status Offenses** – Non-criminal violations that apply only to juveniles, including truancy, runaway, beyond parental control, and behavior injurious to self.

**Technical Violations** – Violations of court orders including probation violations.

Delinquent and technical offense formal filings are analyzed by race, gender, and city of youth's residence.

Child Welfare Referrals, Filings, and Open Cases The number of child abuse and neglect referrals increased slightly for the first time since 2017, though they remain historically low at less than half the level from seven years ago. The number of petitions and motions to modify for child abuse and neglect continued its steep decline, dropping another 26% from last year, which had seen a similar decrease from the year before.

At the request of the Missouri Supreme Court, in 2015 Jackson County Family Court began a collaboration with Casey Family Programs to safely reduce time to permanency and the number of children in foster care. Our local initiative is focused on improving court systems for children in foster care to achieve safe, permanent homes for them. This is a multiyear project.

The clearance rate is the number of cases released from jurisdiction divided by the number of new formal filings. A number below 100% indicates more cases filed than released.

After several years of clearance rates below 100%, the rate increased in 2015 and has remained at or above 100% in nearly every year since. The clearance rate was very high in 2024 at 174%.

New adoption and termination of parental rights (TPR) filings are down as well. Adoption filings in 2024 were 25% lower than they were in 2023, and TPR filings declined by 16%.

Table 4. Child Abuse and Neglect Referrals and Formal Filings

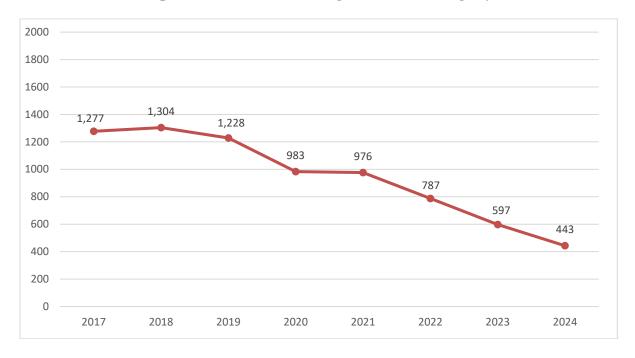
	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024
Referrals	1,501	1,408	1,337	1,097	1,030	771	645	717
% change	+8%	-6%	-5%	-13%	-6%	-25%	-16%	+11%
Rate per $1,000^2$	9.1	8.5	8.1	7.0	6.3	4.7	3.9	4.4
	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024
Open Cases December 31	2,019	2,056	1,888	1,891	1,727	1,507	1,259	1,017
New Cases	991	1,034	945	794	707	608	463	328
Releases	994	1,001	1,094	802	912	812	720	570
Clearance Rate	100%	97%	116%	101%	129%	134%	156%	174%
	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024
Petitions and Mot to Modify	1,277	1,304	1,228	983	976	787	597	443
% change	-10%	+2%	-6%	-20%	-1%	-19%	-24%	-26%

**Table 5. Adoption and Termination of Parental Rights Formal Filings** 

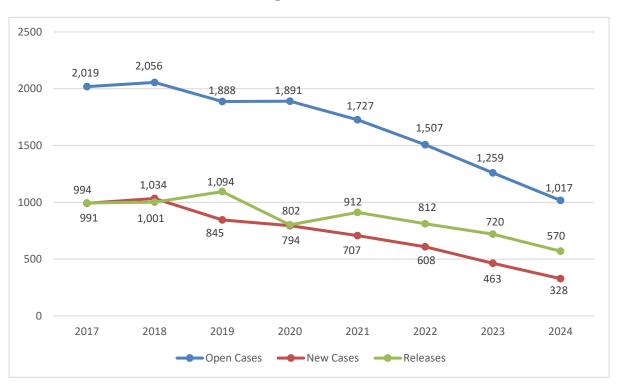
	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024	
New Adoption Cases <sup>3</sup>	299	348	335	257	256	241	188	141	
New Termination of Parental Rights Cases	368	335	310	210	113	127	77	65	

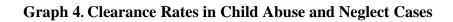
Rates were calculated based on the number of children in Jackson County from birth to age 17.
 This table reports regular adoption cases and does not include stepchild or adult adoptions.

Graph 2. Child Abuse and Neglect Formal Filings by Year



Graph 3. Child Abuse and Neglect New Cases, Releases, and Number of Open Cases on December 31





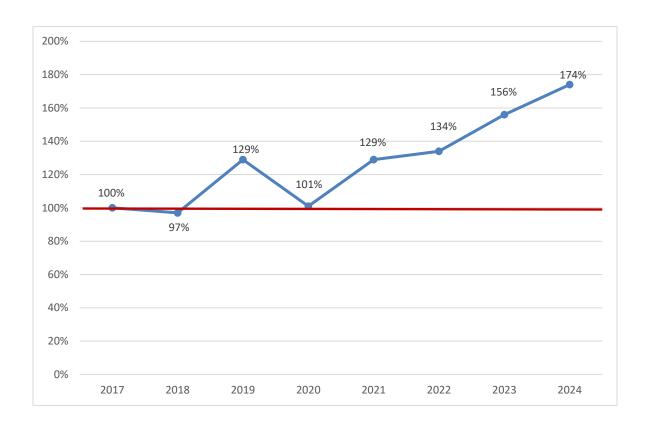
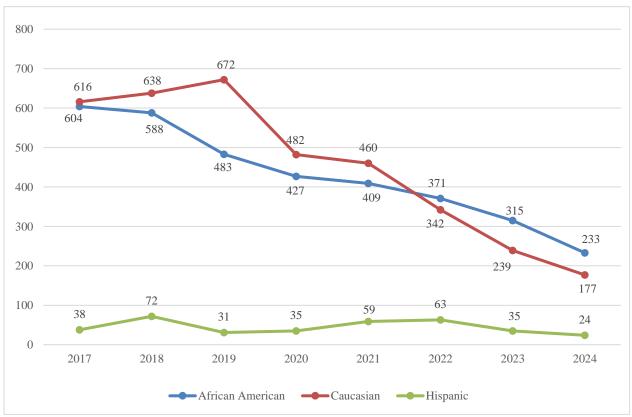


Table 6 and Graph 5 Child Abuse and Neglect Formal Filings by Race

Year		African American		Caucasian		Hispanic		Other		Unknown/ Missing	
	N	<b>%</b>	N	%	N	<b>%</b>	N	%	N	%	
$2017^{4}$	604	47%	616	48%	38	3%	19	1%	0	0%	
$2018^{5}$	588	45%	638	48%	72	5%	17	1%	1	<1%	
$2019^{6}$	483	39%	672	55%	31	3%	9	1%	33	3%	
$2020^{7}$	427	43%	482	49%	35	4%	4	<1%	35	4%	
$2021^{8}$	409	42%	460	47%	59	6%	20	2%	28	3%	
$2022^{9}$	371	47%	342	43%	63	8%	3	<1%	8	1%	
$2023^{10}$	315	53%	239	40%	35	6%	5	1%	3	1%	
$2024^{11}$	233	53%	177	40%	24	5%	2	<1%	7	2%	



<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>4</sup> Twenty-five youth included in the African American category in 2017 identified as biracial.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>5</sup> Twenty-nine youth included in the African American category identified as biracial.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>6</sup> Ten youth included in the African American category identified as biracial.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>7</sup> Twelve youth included in the African American category identified as biracial.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>8</sup> Four youth included in the African American category identified as biracial, including one youth who was African American and Hispanic. Five youth included in the Other category identified as biracial with race of the parents unknown.

<sup>9</sup> Two youth included in the African American category identified as biracial.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>10</sup> Eleven youth included in the African American category identified as biracial.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>11</sup> One youth included in the African American category identified as biracial.

Table 7 and Graph 6 Child Abuse and Neglect Formal Filings by Gender

Year	M	ales	Females		
	N	%	N	%	
2017	599	47%	678	53%	
2018	670	51%	647	49%	
2019	609	50%	619	50%	
2020	500	51%	483	49%	
2021	476	49%	500	51%	
2022	419	49%	367	51%	
2023	304	51%	293	49%	
2024	231	52%	212	48%	

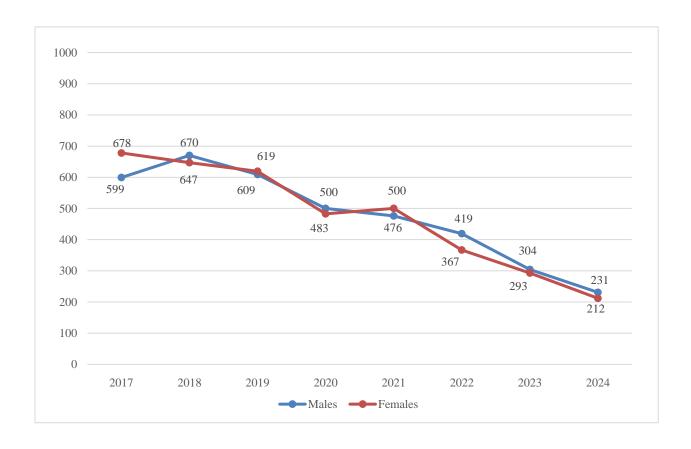
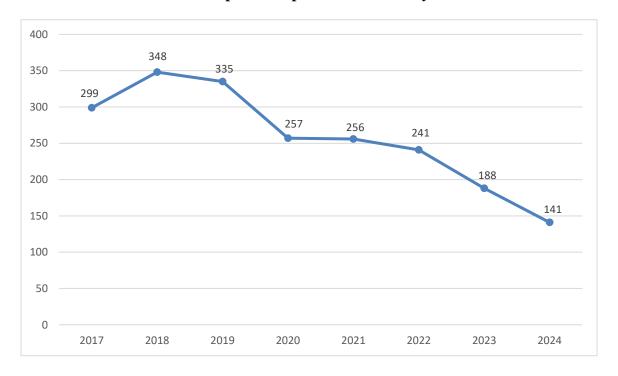


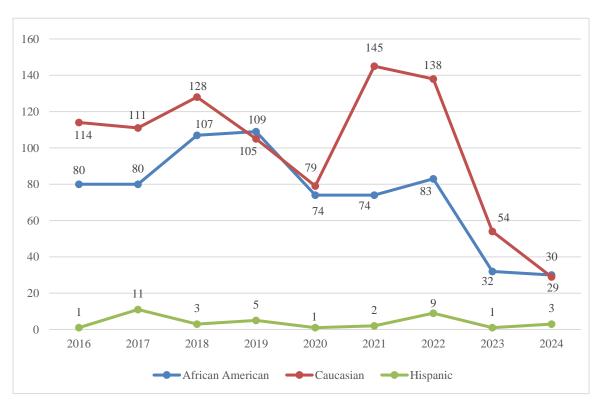
Table 8. Issues Identified in Child Abuse and Neglect Petitions

Issue	20	007	,	2023		2024		
	N	%	N	%	N	%		
Physical Abuse	161	21%	144	32%	76	23%		
Sexual Abuse	85	11%	33	7%	16	5%		
Neglect (unsafe situation)	392	50%	113	25%	39	12%		
Neglect (living conditions)	174	22%	48	11%	35	11%		
Neglect (abandonment)	64	8%	87	19%	71	22%		
Neglect (sibling case)	87	11%	96	21%	170	52%		
Neglect (w/o supervision)	103	13%	119	26%	39	12%		
Neglect (medical)	110	14%	34	8%	15	5%		
Neglect (educational)	49	6%	15	3%	11	3%		
Substance Abuse	370	48%	153	34%	126	38%		
Criminal Activity	154	20%	67	15%	45	14%		
Domestic Violence	149	19%	51	11%	23	7%		
Mental Health	127	16%	69	15%	58	18%		
Born Drug Exposed	122	16%	54	12%	54	16%		
Homelessness	41	5%	45	10%	36	11%		
Age of Parent	9	1%	1	<1%	2	1%		
Cognitive Impairment	4	1%	4	1%	2	1%		
Other	4	1%	26	6%	21	6%		
<b>Total Cases</b>		777	4:	52		329		
Avg. Issues Identified		2.8	2.	.5		2.6		

Graph 7. Adoption Cases Filed by Year

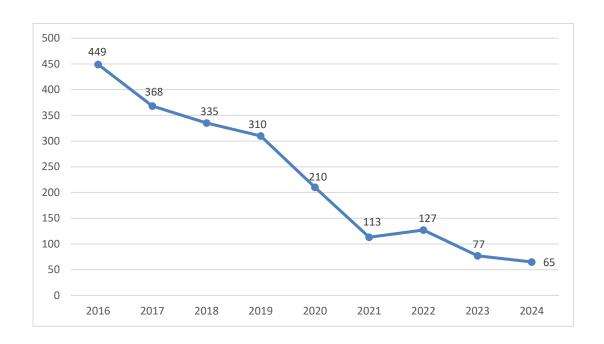


Graph 8. Adoption Cases Filed by Race<sup>12</sup>

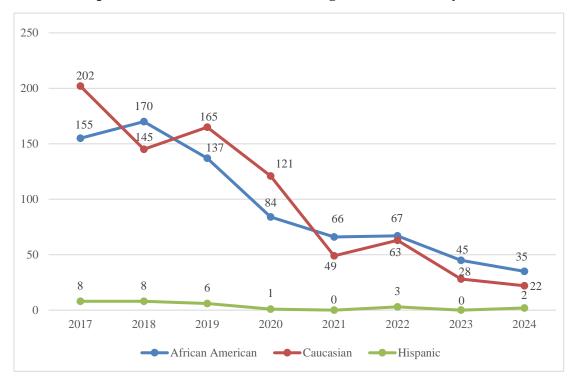


<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>12</sup> Race is unknown for a significant number of youth. Cases with multiple children of different races are coded for the race of the child named first on the petition.

Graph 9. Termination of Parental Rights Cases Filed by Year



Graph 10. Termination of Parental Rights Cases Filed by Race<sup>13</sup>



 $<sup>^{13}</sup>$  Race was unknown for 1 youth in 2017, 3 youth in 2018, 3 youth in 2020, 2 youth in 2021, 6 youth in 2022, 4 youth in 2023; and 6 youth in 2024.

## Status Offense Referrals and Filings

Mot to Modify

% change

The number of status offense referrals declined from 2023 but was still higher than most prior recent years. The jump in status referrals in the prior two years was largely due to an increase in referrals for firearm possession (from 2 referrals in 2022 to 15 referrals in 2024) and running away from home (from 16 referrals in 2022 to 43 referrals in 2024). In 2022, 25% of status referrals were for behavioral issues in the home, compared to 4% of referrals in 2024. The number of formal filings for status offenses was very similar to last year.

**Table 9. Status Offense Referrals and Formal Filings** 

	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024
Referrals	67	79	66	93	61	48	108	90
% change	+10%	+18%	-16%	+41%	-34%	-21%	+125%	-17%
Rate per 1,000 <sup>14</sup>	0.9	1.1	0.9	1.3	0.8	0.7	1.5	1.2
	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024
	2017	2010	2019	2020	2021	2022	2025	2024
Petitions and	9	6	8	3	3	19	12	13

+33%

-63%

+0%

+533%

-36%

-33%

-25%

17

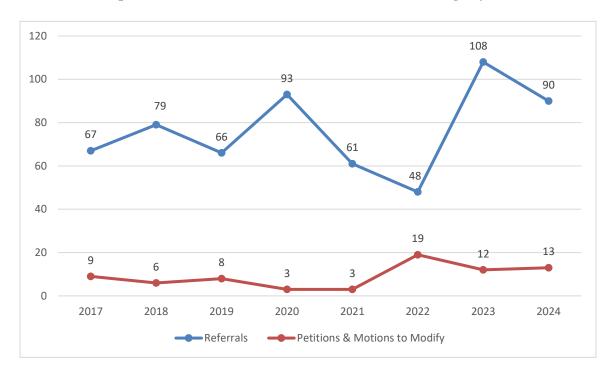
+8%

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>14</sup> Rates were calculated based on the number of youth in Jackson County aged 10-17 years.

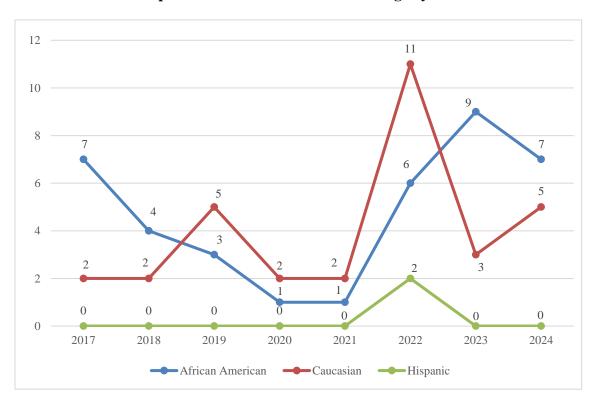
**Table 10: Reasons for Status Referrals** 

Reason	2023		2024	
	N	%	N	%
Alcohol/vaping	10	9%	5	6%
Behavior at home	5	5%	4	4%
Behavior at school	8	7%	3	3%
Drug possession	0	0%	1	1%
Fake ID	6	6%	0	0%
Firearm/Weapon	21	19%	15	17%
In stolen vehicle	2	2%	4	4%
Running away	39	36%	43	48%
Truancy	6	6%	5	6%
Other socially inappropriate behavior	9	8%	8	9%
Other welfare concerns	0	0%	2	2%
Unknown	2	2%	0	0%
<b>Total Cases</b>	108		90	

Graph 11. Status Offense Referrals and Formal Filings by Year



**Graph 12. Status Offense Formal Filings by Race** 



Delinquent and
Technical
Offense
Referrals,
Filings, and
Open Cases

After dropping significantly during the pandemic, delinquent and technical referrals and formal filings have returned to prepandemic levels. After dropping as low as 11.7 delinquent and technical referrals per 1,000 Jackson Count youth in 2020, the rate of referral has risen to 17.7 referrals, nearly matching the rate from 2018.

While referrals increased by 13% from 2023 to 2024, formal filings decreased by 14%, resulting in the lowest rate of formal filing in the past eight years.

After dropping below 100% in 2022 and 2023, the clearance rate rose again in 2024 to the highest point in at least eight years—129%. This is a dramatic jump from last year's rate of 77%.

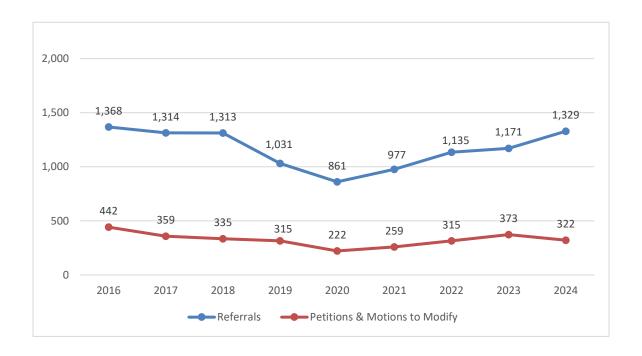
Table 10. Delinquent and Technical Referrals and Formal Filings

	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024
Referrals	1,314	1,313	1,031	861	977	1,135	1,171	1,329
% change	-4%	0%	-21%	-17%	+13%	+16%	+3%	+13%
Rate per 1,000 <sup>15</sup>	18.1	18.0	14.1	11.7	13.4	15.5	16.0	17.7
	2015	2010	2010	2020	2021	2022	2022	2024
	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024
Open Cases December 31	224	184	189	154	155	215	272	210
New Cases	231	221	161	133	170	215	270	219
Releases	267	262	186	166	183	156	209	282
Clearance Rate	116%	119%	116%	125%	108%	73%	77%	129%
	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024
Petitions and Mot to Modify	359	335	315	222	259	315	373	322
% change	-19%	-7%	-6%	-30%	+17%	+22%	+18%	-14%

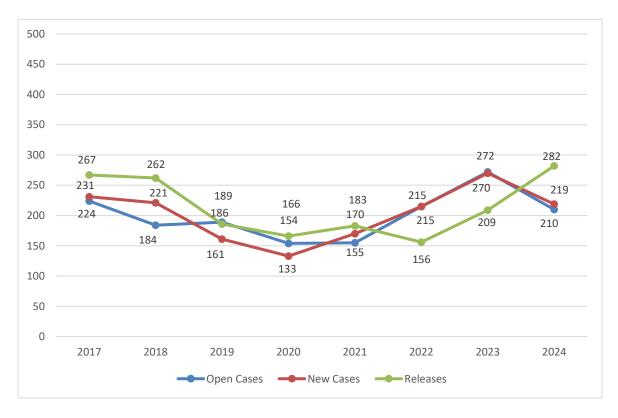
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<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>15</sup> Rates were calculated based on the number of youth in Jackson County aged 10-17 years.

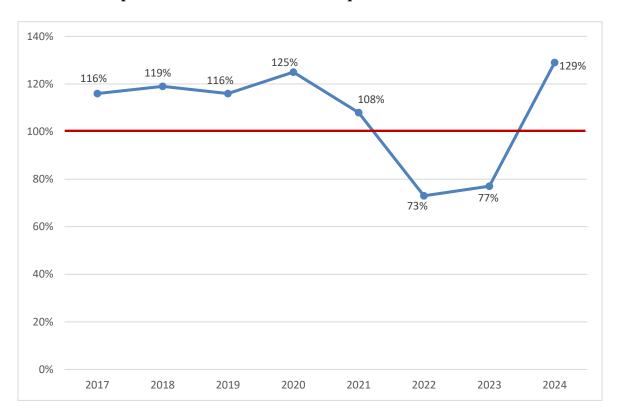
Graph 13. Delinquent and Technical Referrals and Formal Filings by Year



Graph 14. Delinquent and Technical New Cases, Releases and Number of Open Cases on December 31







Delinquent and
Technical
Offense Filings
by Race,
Gender, Age,
and City of
Residence

This section examines delinquent and technical filings by race, gender, age, and the areas of Jackson County where youth charged with these offenses reside. As filings have declined, the distribution of filings by demographic characteristics and geography have remained fairly consistent but changed slightly over the past eight years.

The share of delinquent and technical filings for African American youth dropped to 76% from a high of 81% in 2023 but was still the second-highest rate in the past eight years. The share of filings for Caucasian youth was exceptionally low, and the rate for Hispanic youth was a bit higher than average. Family Court Services is actively examining racial equity issues in its juvenile justice processes and programs.

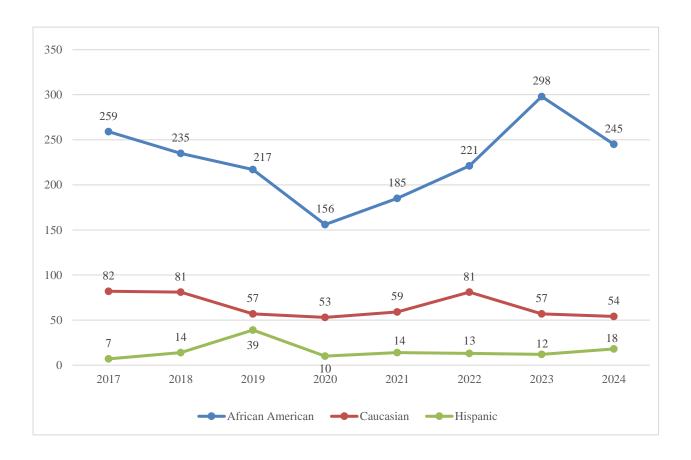
The percentage of filings for males has fluctuated around 82% for the last eight years and met this rate exactly in 2024.

The age breakdown of youth charged with delinquent and technical offenses was very similar in 2024 to 2023, with a slight tick up for youth age 14 and decrease in youth age 18 or above. Petitions for youth ages 17 and older made up just over a quarter of petitions filed in 2024.

The share of youth residing in Kansas City was just above the eight-year average at 62%. The rate of youth from Independence fell back to the typical rate of 12% after rising to 15% in 2023.

Table 11 and Graph 16 **Delinquent and Technical Formal Filings by Race** 

Year	<b>African American</b>		Caucasian		Hispanic		Other	
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
$2017^{16}$	259	72%	82	24%	7	2%	3	<1%
$2018^{17}$	235	72%	81	24%	14	4%	1	<1%
2019	217	69%	57	18%	39	12%	3	1%
$2020^{18}$	156	70%	53	24%	10	5%	2	1%
2021	185	71%	59	23%	14	5%	1	1%
2022	221	70%	81	26%	13	4%	0	
$2023^{19}$	298	81%	57	15%	12	3%	2	1%
$2024^{20}$	245	76%	54	17%	18	6%	4	1%



 $<sup>^{16}</sup>$  Race was unknown for 8 cases in 2017.  $^{17}$  Race was unknown for 4 cases in 2018.

<sup>18</sup> Race was unknown for 1 case in 2020.

19 Race was unknown for 4 cases in 2023.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>20</sup> Race was unknown for 1 case in 2024.

Table 13 and Graph 17 Delinquent and Technical Formal Filings by Gender

Year	Male	S	Females				
	N	%	N	%			
2017	281	78%	78	22%			
2018	275	82%	60	18%			
2019	258	82%	57	18%			
2020	189	85%	33	15%			
2021	214	83%	45	17%			
2022	263	83%	52	17%			
2023	302	81%	71	19%			
2024	263	82%	59	18%			

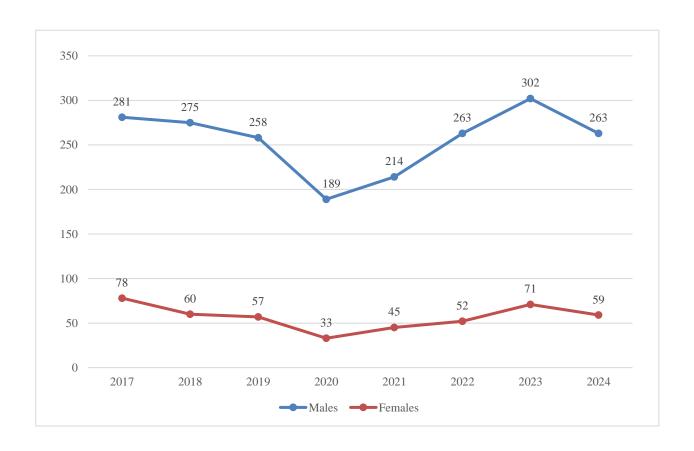
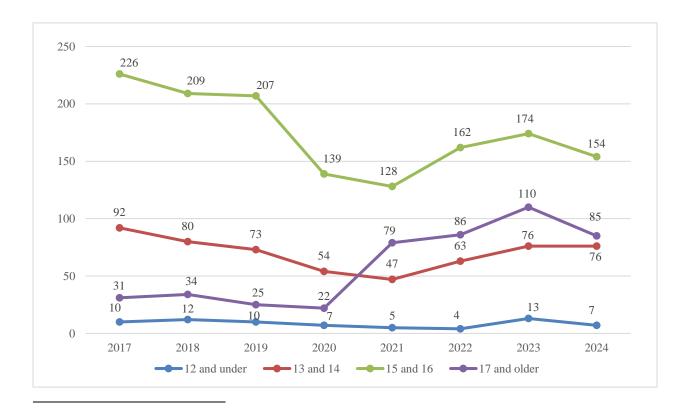


Table 14 and Graph 18 Delinquent and Technical Formal Filings by Age at Filing

	≤11	12	13	14	15	16	$17^{21}$	≥18
2017	2	8	28	64	115	111	28	3
2017	1%	2%	8%	18%	32%	31%	8%	1%
2018	2	10	29	51	84	125	24	10
2018	1%	3%	9%	15%	25%	37%	7%	3%
2019	2	8	22	51	80	127	24	1
2019	1%	3%	7%	16%	25%	40%	8%	<1%
2020	0	7	19	35	53	86	21	1
2020	0%	3%	9%	16%	24%	39%	9%	1%
2021	1	4	15	32	66	62	53	26
2021	<1%	2%	6%	12%	25%	24%	20%	10%
2022	0	4	16	47	87	75	81	5
2022	0%	1%	5%	15%	28%	24%	26%	2%
2023	3	10	29	47	80	94	96	14
2023	1%	3%	8%	13%	21%	25%	26%	4%
2024	1	6	23	53	70	84	81	4
2024	<1%	2%	7%	16%	22%	26%	25%	1%



<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>21</sup> Prior to 2021, filings for youth 17 and older were for offenses that took place when the youth was under age 17. Starting in 2021, the age of juvenile court jurisdiction was raised to 17, so filings for 17-year-olds includes offenses that took place when the youth was age 17.

Table 12. Youth with Delinquent and Technical Formal Filings by City of Residence

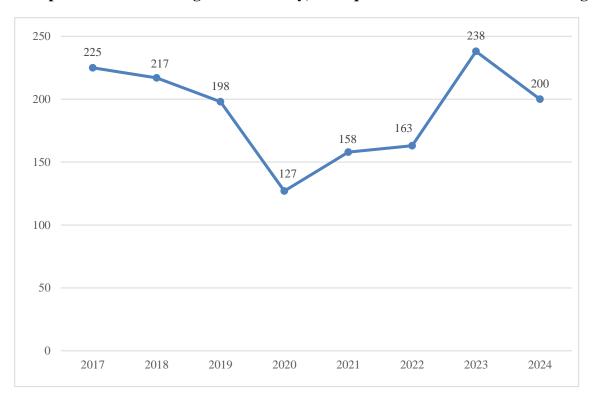
City	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024
Dlug Chrings	11	17	10	16	13	20	14	16
Blue Springs	3%	5%	4%	7%	5%	6%	4%	5%
Grain Valley	7	2	4	2	3	9	2	1
Grain vancy	2%	1%	1%	1%	1%	3%	1%	<1%
Grandview	20	8	8	13	6	21	11	8
Grandview	5%	2%	4%	6%	2%	7%	3%	2%
Greenwood	2	2	3	1	1	1	0	3
Greenwood	<1%	1%	3%	1%	<1%	<1%	U	1%
Independence	35	31	34	33	33	38	56	39
macpendence	10%	9%	12%	15%	13%	12%	15%	12%
Kansas City	225	217	198	127	158	163	238	200
Kansas City	63%	65%	63%	57%	61%	52%	64%	62%
Lee's Summit	20	11	15	12	11	25	18	23
Lee's Summit	6%	3%	3%	5%	4%	8%	5%	7%
Oak Grove	1	3	0	1	0	0	1	3
Oak Giove	<1%	1%		1%			<1%	1%
Raytown	12	10	10	4	7	9	11	17
Raytown	3%	3%	2%	2%	3%	3%	3%	5%
Sugar Creek	0	0	1	0	1	1	3	0
Sugar Creek	-		<1%	-	<1%	<1%	1%	
Other	22	25	29	11	19	23	19	12
Other	6%	7%	9%	5%	7%	7%	5%	4%
Unknown	4	9	3	2	7	5	0	0
CHKHOWH	1%	3%	<1%	1%	3%	2%	U	U
Total	359	335	315	222	259	315	373	322

Table 13. Rate of Delinquent and Technical Formal Filings per 1,000 Youth in 2024 by City

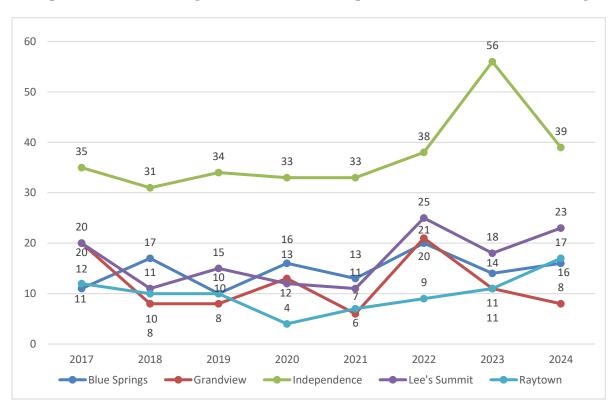
City	Number of Youth Ages 10-17 <sup>22</sup>	Rate of Filings per 1,000 Youth Ages 10-17
Blue Springs	7,330	2.2
Grandview	2,601	3.1
Independence	12,992	3.0
Kansas City	46,678	4.3
Lee's Summit	14,666	1.6
Raytown	2,789	6.1

<sup>22</sup> Number of youth in each city comes from the 2023 American Community Survey "Age and Sex" charts for individual cities available on United States Census Bureau website: https://data.census.gov/cedsci/table.

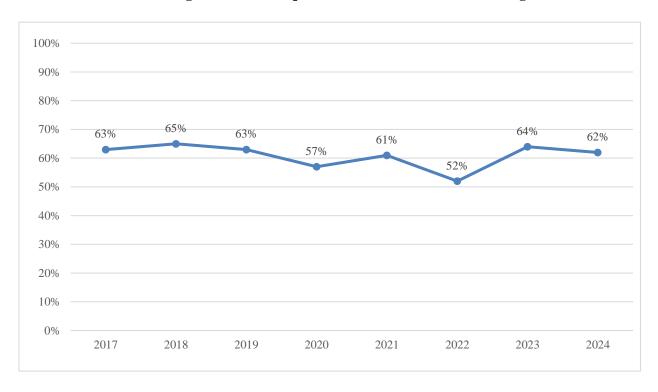
Graph 19. Youth Residing in Kansas City, Delinquent and Technical Formal Filings



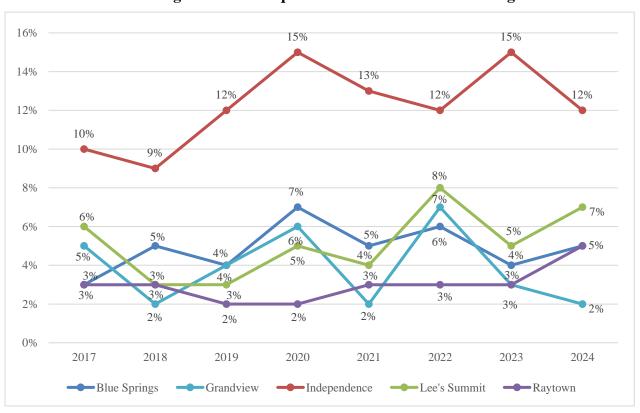
Graph 20. Youth Residing in Other Cities, Delinquent and Technical Formal Filings



Graph 21. Youth Residing in Kansas City with Delinquent and Technical Formal Filings as Percentages of All Delinquent and Technical Formal Filings



Graph 22. Youth Residing in Other Cities with Delinquent and Technical Formal Filings as Percentages of All Delinquent and Technical Formal Filings



### Disposition and Intervention Services

This report section describes the youth served by Family Court Services programs, youth considered for certification, and youth committed to the Division of Youth Services (DYS).

Family Court Services offers a broad range of prevention, intervention, and treatment programs and services to youth in Jackson County. This includes programming for delinquent youth, including:

- Detainment (secure and non-secure)
- Prevention and Diversion Services
- Probation Services
- Residential Treatment

In addition to its delinquency programming, Family Court Services offers interventions for youth and families with child abuse and neglect cases, families who are affected by divorce and separation, and victims of offenses by juveniles. These include:

- Family Treatment Court
- Safe Babies Court (formerly Child Protection and Permanency Unit)
- Emerging Adult Justice Unit
- Parent Awareness Courses
- Supervised Visitation and Monitored Exchanges
- Victim Services

# Family Court Services – Delinquency

This section covers disposition and intervention services provided by the Family Court for youth who are adjudicated as well as those diverted from prosecution.

**Detainment (Secure & Non-Secure).** The number of youth detained in secure detention in 2024 dropped for the first year since 2020, returning to the 2022 level. While the number of admissions was comparable to 2022, the average daily population was notably lower, at 18 youth compared to 22 youth in 2022 and an eight-year average of 20 youth. This indicates that many youth spent just a short time in detention but were not detained long-term. The rate of detention for African-American youth was 77%—in line with the share of delinquent filings for African Americans (76%).

The number of youth detained in non-secure detention dropped a bit as well in 2024, though only by about half the rate as the drop for secure detention. Just over half as many youth were detained in non-secure detention as in the secure facility.

Prevention & Diversion. In 2024, the Juvenile Assessment Center served 280 youth and their families through three types of programming (prevention, diversion, and care calls). The Emerging Adult Justice Unit, which started in 2021 to serve youth who were 17 years old at the time of their alleged offense, served an additional 99 youth. One additional youth attended a shoplifting seminar. In total, the Court served 380 youth in diversion programs in 2024—a 79% increase from the previous year.

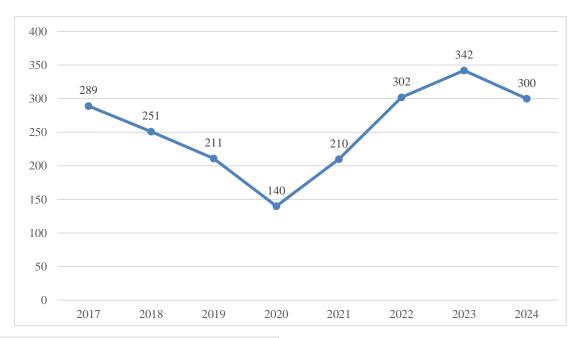
**Probation & Residential Treatment.** The number of youth ordered to probation increased just slightly from 2023, appearing to stabilize from the sharp drop then increase in the years surrounding the pandemic. Of 170 youth ordered to probation in 2024, 28 youth were age 17 at the time of their charge. The number of youth 16 and younger is in line with probation populations from 2017 and 2018.

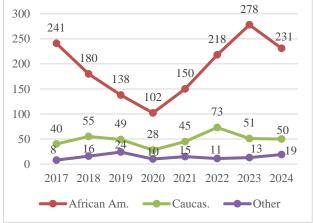
Hilltop commitments declined a bit in 2024. At 24 youth committed, the total was below most non-pandemic years and just under the eight-year average.

**Table 14. Detainments in Secure Detention** 

	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024
Detention	289	251	211	140	210	302	342	300
% change	-3%	-13%	-16%	-34%	+50%	+44%	+13%	-12%
Avg. Daily Population	23	23	18	14	17	22	24	18

**Graphs 23-25. Youth Admitted to Detention** 





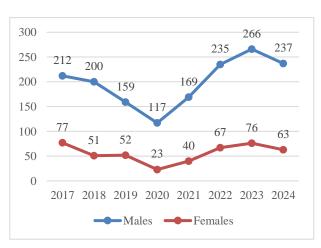
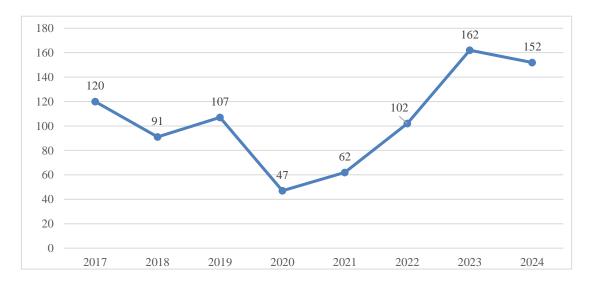
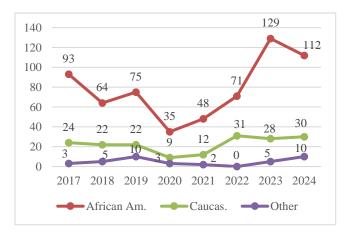
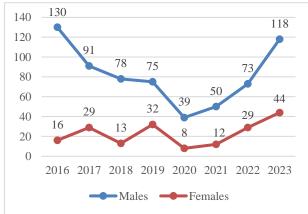


Table 15 and Graphs 28-28 Detainments in Non-Secure Detention Facilities

	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024
Community								
Reintegration Group	61	14						
Home <sup>23</sup>								
Hilltop Residential	59	77	107	47	62	102	162	152
Center	37	, ,	107	7/	02	102	102	132
Total	120	91	107	47	62	102	162	152
% change	-18%	-24%	+18%	-56%	+32%	+65%	+59%	-6%







<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>23</sup> The Community Reintegration Group Home (CRGH) began housing Jackson House youth in 2015 as a temporary measure due to staffing shortages in Detention. CRGH closed on March 13, 2018; staff and residents were relocated to Hilltop.

**Table 16. Prevention and Diversion Programs** 

Program	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024
Juvenile Assessment Center – Diversion Program <sup>24</sup>	65	40	34	29	34	14	15	52
Juvenile Assessment Center – Prevention <sup>25</sup>			$22^{26}$	$42^{27}$	$73^{28}$	67 <sup>29</sup>	$45^{30}$	135 <sup>31</sup>
Juvenile Assessment Center – Care Calls <sup>32</sup>	153	199	202	55	84 <sup>33</sup>	79	65	93
Shoplifting Diversion	58	10	27	18	0	2	0	1
Success Court <sup>34</sup>	146	29						
Emerging Adult Justice Unit <sup>35</sup>					40	107	87	99
Total	422	278	285	144	231	269	212	380
% change	-10%	-34%	+3%	-49%	+60%	+16%	-21%	+79%

<sup>24</sup> The Juvenile Assessment Center Diversion Program previously operated as the Juvenile Diversion Court. It became a function of the Juvenile Assessment Center in September 2019.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>25</sup> The Juvenile Assessment Center began accepting cases on September 15, 2019.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>26</sup> In 2019, the JAC received 12 referrals from the Warrant Desk, 9 walk-ins, and 1 referral from law enforcement.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>27</sup> In 2020, the JAC received 33 referrals from the Warrant Desk, 2 walk-ins, 1 referral from law enforcement, and 6 referrals from the Case Assessment Unit.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>28</sup> In 2021, the JAC received 45 referrals from the Warrant Desk, 10 referrals from law enforcement and 2 referrals from the Case Assessment Unit. In addition, 16 care calls were directed to JAC – Prevention and are reflected in this total

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>29</sup> In 2022, the JAC received 44 referrals from the Warrant Desk, 17 referrals from law enforcement, 5 walk-ins, and 1 referral from another source.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>30</sup> In 2023, the JAC received 28 referrals from the Warrant Desk, 14 referrals from law enforcement, 2 walk-ins, and 1 referral from another source.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>31</sup> In 2024, the JAC received 93 referrals from the Warrant Desk, 20 referrals from law enforcement, 7 walk-ins, 6 referrals from the Case Assessment Unit or resulting from the informal adjustment conference, 2 referrals from schools, and 7 referrals from another source.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>32</sup> Care calls became a function of the Juvenile Assessment Center in September 2019. They were previously handled by the Family Counseling Unit.

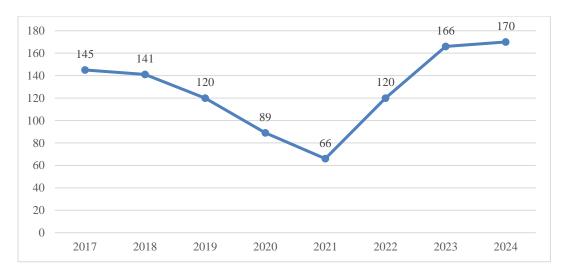
<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>33</sup> The number of care calls reported in 2021 does not include 16 care calls directed to JAC – Prevention for referral to services. Those are included in the total for JAC – Prevention.

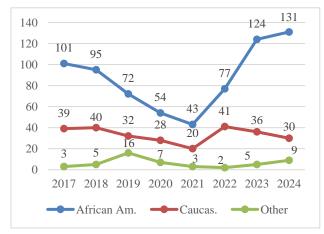
<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>34</sup> This program was previously titled Truancy Court. It has not been in operation since 2018.

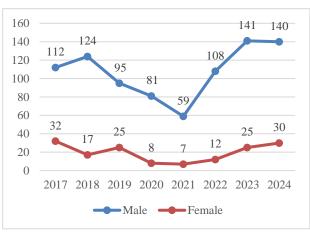
<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>35</sup> The Emerging Adult Justice Unit began accepting cases referred to the Court on or after July 1, 2021.

Table 17 and Graphs 33-31 Youth on Probation

	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024
Youth Ordered to FCS Supervision <sup>36</sup>	145	141	120	89	66	120	166	170
% change	-32%	-3%	-13%	-26%	-26%	+82%	+38%	+2%





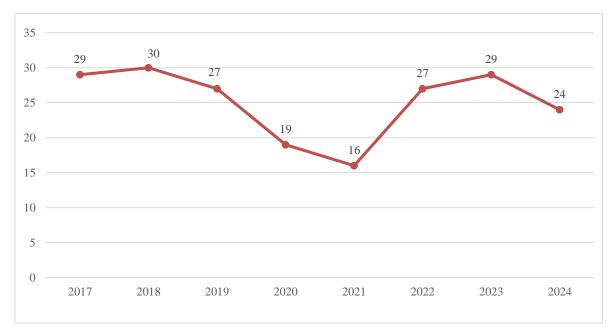


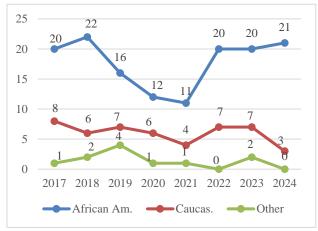
Race was unknown for one youth in 2017, two youth in 2018, one youth in 2023.

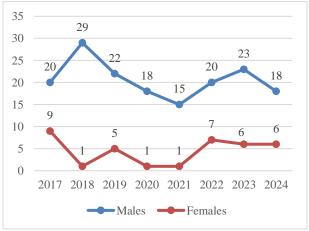
<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>36</sup> Youth ordered to Family Court Supervision includes youth on probation, at Hilltop Residential Center, and in private residential placements.

Table 18 and Graphs 38-34 Commitments to Hilltop Residential Center

	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024
Hilltop <sup>37</sup>	29	30	27	19	16	27	29	24
% change	+4%	+3%	-10%	-30%	-16%	+69%	+7%	-17%







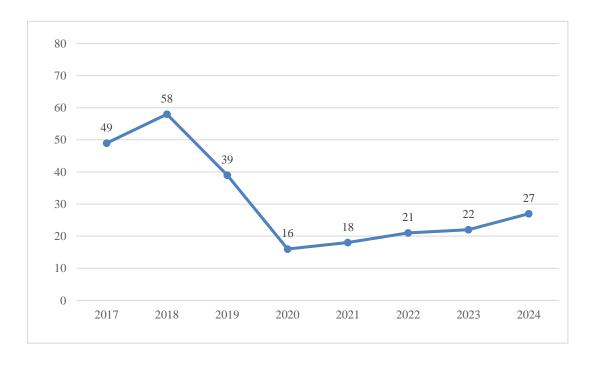
<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>37</sup> Commitment figures capture initial commitment and do not include occasions when youth were returned to Hilltop after having been absent without leave or after being released on furlough.

Commitments to the Division of Youth Services

Commitments to the Missouri Division of Youth Services (DYS) have inched up slightly since the low point in 2020 but are still down by 45% compared to the 2017-2019 average. The percentages of youth committed to DYS who were African American and male were very high in 2024 (89% African American and 96% male). These rates were 10-11 percentage points higher than average for the past eight years. The decline in commitments overall may be due to increased efforts to serve youth in the community and avoid out-of-home placements when possible.

Table 19 and Graph 43 Commitments to the Division of Youth Services

	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024
Number	49	58	39	16	18	21	22	27
% change	-17%	+18%	-33%	-59%	+13%	+17%	+5%	+23%
Rate per 1,000 youth <sup>38</sup>	0.7	0.8	0.5	0.2	0.2	0.3	0.3	0.4

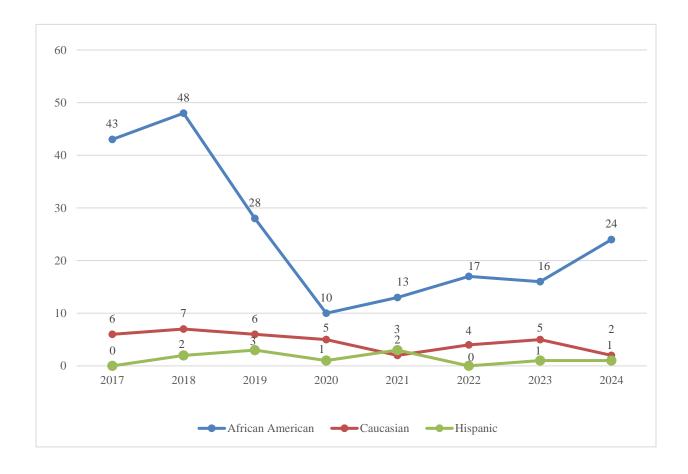


37

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>38</sup> Rates were calculated based on the number of youth in Jackson County aged 10 to 17 years.

Table 20 and Graph 44 Commitments to DYS by Race

Year	Afric	an American	merican Caucasian		Hispanic		
	N	%	N	%	N	%	
2017	43	88%	6	12%	0		
2018	48	83%	7	12%	2	3%	
2019	28	76%	6	16%	3	8%	
2020	10	63%	5	31%	1	6%	
2021	13	72%	2	11%	3	17%	
2022	17	81%	4	19%	0	17%	
$2023^{39}$	16	73%	5	23%	1	5%	
2024	24	89%	2	7%	1	4%	



<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>39</sup> One youth included in the African American category identified as biracial.

Table 21 and Graph 45 Commitments to DYS by Gender

Year	$\mathbf{M}_{i}$	ales	Females				
	N	%	N	<b>%</b>			
2017	38	78%	11	22%			
2018	48	83%	10	17%			
2019	31	84%	6	16%			
2020	14	88%	2	13%			
2021	17	94%	1	6%			
2022	17	81%	4	19%			
2023	19	86%	3	14%			
2024	26	96%	1	4%			

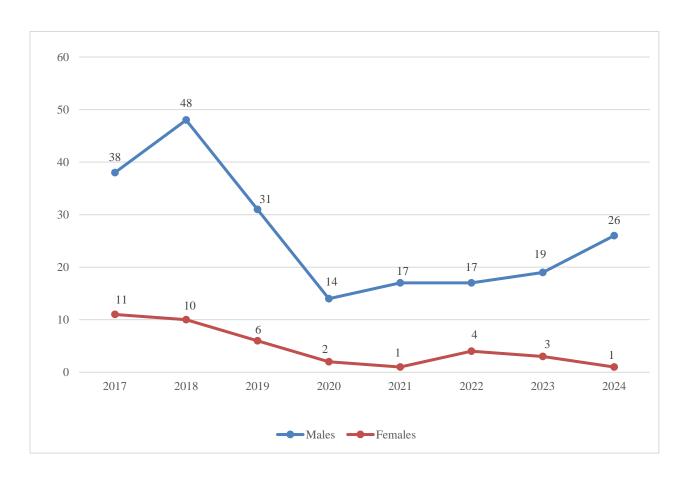
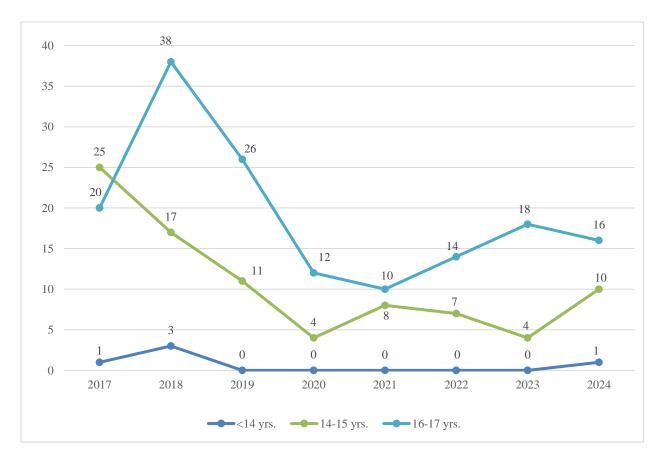


Table 22 and Graph 46 Commitments to DYS by Age

Year	<14	yrs.	14-1	5 yrs.	16-17 yrs.	
	N	%	N	%	N	%
2017	1	2%	25	51%	23	47%
2018	3	5%	17	29%	38	66%
2019	0		11	30%	26	70%
2020	0		4	25%	12	75%
2021	0		8	44%	10	56%
2022	0		7	33%	14	67%
2023	0		4	18%	18	82%
2024	1	4%	10	37%	16	59%



# Certification Cases

#### According to Missouri Statute:

"If a petition alleges that a child between the ages of fourteen and eighteen has committed an offense which would be considered a felony if committed by an adult, the court may, upon its own motion or upon motion by the juvenile officer, the child or the child's custodian, order a hearing and may, in its discretion, dismiss the petition and such child may be transferred to the court of general jurisdiction and prosecuted under the general law; except that if a petition alleges that any child between the ages of twelve and eighteen has committed an offense which would be considered first degree murder . . . second degree murder . . . first degree assault . . . rape in the first degree . . . sodomy in the first degree . . . robbery in the first degree . . . or the manufacturing of a controlled substance . . . any felony involving the use, assistance, or aid of a deadly weapon, or has committed two or more prior unrelated offenses which would be felonies if committed by an adult, the court shall order a hearing, and may in its discretion, dismiss the petition and transfer the child to a court of general jurisdiction for prosecution under the general law."40

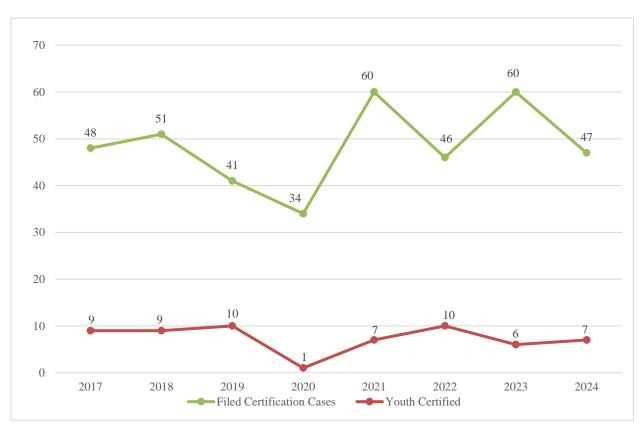
The number of certification cases filed in 2024 was just below average for the past eight years at 47 cases. So far, six of those cases have resulted in certification, and 17 remain undisposed. We will update this section of the report once all cases have been disposed.

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<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>40</sup> Missouri General Assembly. Revised Statute 211.071.

Table 23 and Graph 47 Certification Cases Filed and Youth Certified by Year

	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024
Cases Filed	48	51	41	34	60	46	60	47
% change	+2%	+6%	-20%	-17%	+76%	+22%	+30%	-22%
Rate per 1,000 youth <sup>41</sup>	0.7	0.7	0.6	0.5	0.8	0.6	0.8	0.6
Youth Certified <sup>42</sup>	9	9	10	1	7	10	6 <sup>43</sup>	$7^{44}$
% of cases filed	19%	18%	24%	3%	12%	22%	10%	15%



 $<sup>^{41}</sup>$  Rates were calculated based on the number of youth in Jackson County aged 10 to 17 years.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>42</sup> Certifications are reported by year the case was filed rather than year certification took place.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>43</sup> One case filed in 2023 was undisposed at the time of this report. The report will be updated once all cases are disposed.

disposed.

44 Fourteen cases filed in 2024 were undisposed at the time of this report. The report will be updated once all cases are disposed.

Table 24. Certification Cases Filed in 2024 by Charge

<b>Charge Category</b>	Mandatory Filings (Offense <sup>45</sup> )	Mandatory Filings (Priors <sup>46</sup> )	Discretionary Filings
Assault 1 <sup>st</sup> /2 <sup>nd</sup>	8	0	0
(incl. Domestic)			-
Murder 1 <sup>st</sup> /2 <sup>nd</sup>	11	0	0
Sex Offense	0	0	2
Robbery 1 <sup>st</sup> /2 <sup>nd</sup>	18	0	0
Unlawful Use Of	4	0	2.
Weapon	4	U	L
Vehicle Hijacking	0	1	0
Involuntary	0	0	1
Manslaughter	0	0	1
Total	41	1	5

Table 25. Details for Youth Certified (of Youth with Certification Cases Filed in 2024)

Offense	Num of Filings	Filing Type	Age at Filing	Race	Gender
Murder 2 <sup>nd</sup>	5	Mandatory	2 aged 16 yrs 3 aged 17 yrs	4 African American 1 Caucasian	5 Male
Invol Manslaughter	1	Discretionary	1 aged 18 yrs	1 African American	1 Male
Statutory Rape 1st	1	Discretionary	1 aged 19 yrs	1 Caucasian	1 Male
Total Certified in 2024	7	5 Mandatory 2 Discretionary	2 aged 16 yrs 3 aged 17 yrs 1 aged 18 yrs 1 aged 19 yrs	5 African American 2 Caucasian	7 Male
Total with Certification Denied	26				
Undisposed at the time of this report <sup>47</sup>	14				

<sup>47</sup> This report will be updated once all cases have been disposed.

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<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>45</sup> "Mandatory Filings (Offense)" refers to certification cases filed because the youth's offense was one indicated in MO Rev. Statute 211.071.1 (quoted at the beginning of this section of the report).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>46</sup> "Mandatory Filings (Priors)" refers to certification cases filed because the youth had committed two or more prior unrelated offenses as indicated in MO Rev. Statute 211.071.1 (quoted at the beginning of this section of the report).

## Family Court Services – Children and Families

This section covers Family Court Services interventions and resources for families with child welfare cases, families experiencing separation or divorce, and individuals who have been the victims of offenses committed by youth.

Family Treatment Court. The number of participants entering Family Treatment Court increased a bit in 2024 but remained in line with the last two years, in which populations have been much lower than they were in 2017-2021. This is likely due to the decline in child abuse and neglect cases overall as well as the formation of the Child Protection and Permanency Unit (now Safe Babies Court), which has accepted some cases that may previously have been served by FTC.

Safe Babies Court. The Safe Babies Court (formerly Child Protection & Permanency Unit [CPPU]) seeks to safely reduce time to permanency for children ages 0-3. Families in 44 CAN cases were admitted to this specialty court in 2024—more cases than any year since the CPPU began operating.

Parent Awareness Courses. Family Court Resource Services offers three parent awareness courses. Focus on Children in Separation (FOCIS) and Re-FOCIS are for married but separated couples with children, and Parenting Together Living Apart (PTLA) is a class for never-married parents. Enrollment in each of these courses is lower than it was eight years ago. A total of 1,551 parents were served in 2024, a decrease from 2023 but very similar to the number served in 2021 and 2022.

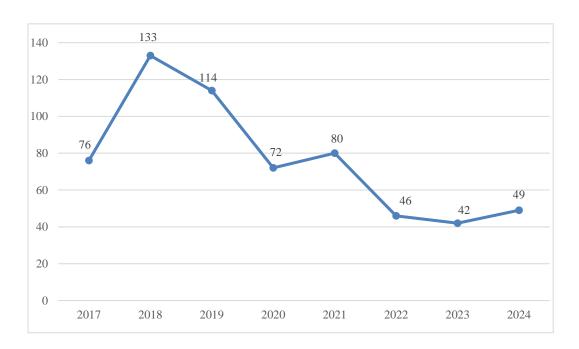
Supervised Visitation. Supervised visitation is provided for cases with issues such as custodial access interference or parent-child estrangement. Therapeutic visitation may be ordered to address child exposure to domestic violence, parent estrangement, and any other issue deemed appropriate by the court. Visitation services have been trending back upward since dropping considerably during the pandemic, but only therapeutic visits have returned to pre-pandemic levels.

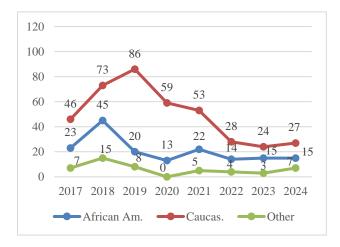
*Mediation*. Overall, mediators served 373 cases in 2024. A decrease from 2023's high point and increase from the pandemic-era lows, this was in line with levels from 2017-2019.

*Victim Services.* Three hundred cases were served by victim services in 2024—right around average for the past several years.

Table 26 and Graphs 48-42 Participants Entering the Family Treatment Court by Year

	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024
FTC	76	133	115	72	80	46	42	49
% change	-21%	+75%	-14%	-37%	+11%	-43%	-9%	+17%





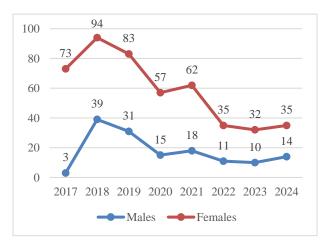
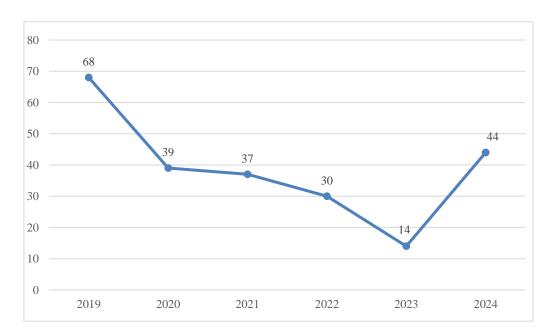
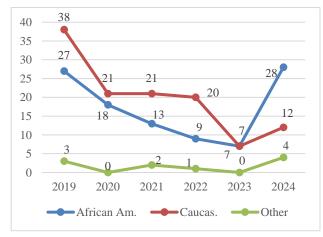
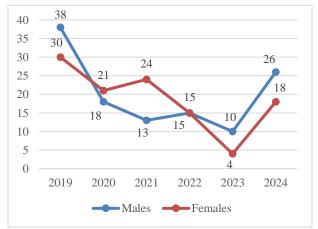


Table 30 and Graphs 53-45 Children with Cases Entering the Child Protection & Permanency Unit/Safe Babies Court by Year

	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024
CPPU/SBC <sup>48</sup>	68	39	37	30	14	$44^{49}$
% change		-43%	-5%	-19%	-53%	+214%







Race was unknown for 1 youth in 2021.

 $<sup>^{48}</sup>$  Safe Babies Court began accepting cases on July 1, 2024. Until this time, cases for children age 0-3 were served by the Child Protection and Permanency Unit.

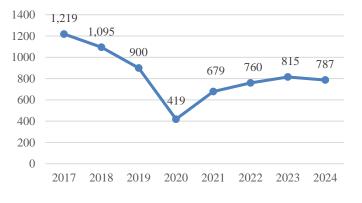
<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>49</sup> In 2024, 16 cases entered the CPPU, and 29 cases entered Safe Babies Court.

Table 31 and Graphs 58-48
Parent Awareness Courses

Course	2017	2018	2019	$2020^{50}$	202151	2022	2023	2024
FOCIS								
Adults	1,219	1,095	900	419	679	760	815	787
Youth	779	834	797	92	0	0	0	0
<b>FOCIS Total</b>	1,998	1,929	1,697	511	679	760	815	<b>787</b>
Re-FOCIS	504	593	539	359	433	319	430	334
Parenting Together Living Apart	391	636	655	493	413	469	493	430
<b>Grand Total</b>	2,893	3,158	2,891	1,363	1,525	1,548	1,738	1,551
% change	+8%	+9%	-9%	-53%	+12%	+2%	+12%	-11%

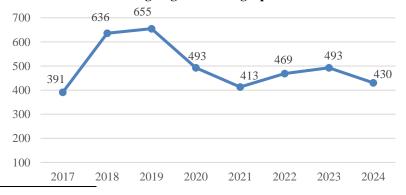


#### **Re-FOCIS Class**





#### **Parenting Together Living Apart Class**



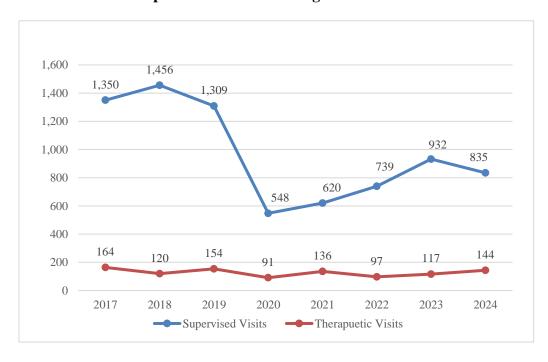
<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>50</sup> For several months in 2020, all in-person classes were suspended, and class content was provided to parents in the form of packets sent through Civil Records. The number of packets sent out was not tracked. For a few months before packets were assembled, parents who would have attended FOCIS were sent to a similar online class. They are not reflected in the numbers presented in this table.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>51</sup> Live classes were reinstated in 2021 but were available for adults only. Children were prohibited from attending in-person classes due to the COVID-19 pandemic. Adults were also given the opportunity to participate in classes via Webex for Re-FOCIS and Parent Together Living Apart.

**Table 27. Connections Program Visits and Exchanges** 

	2017	2018	2019	$2020^{52}$	2021 <sup>53</sup>	$2022^{54}$	2023	2024
<b>Supervised Visits</b>								
Scheduled Visits	1,876	2,144	1,889	1,118	921	1,276	1,565	1,402
Actual Visits	1,350	1,456	1,309	548	620	739	932	835
Therapeutic Visits								
Scheduled Visits	250	181	227	158	219	185	217	254
Actual Visits	164	120	154	91	136	97	117	144
<b>Grand Total Visits</b>								
Scheduled Visits	2,126	2,325	2,116	1,276	1,140	1,461	1,782	1,656
Actual Visits <sup>55</sup>	1,514	1,576	1,463	639	756	836	1,049	979
<b>Monitored Exchanges</b>								
Scheduled Exchanges	710	189	94	13	6	31	74	78
Actual Exchanges	561	100	49	4	5	23	43	47

**Graph 63. Connections Program Visits Held** 



<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>52</sup> Visitation services were cancelled several times throughout 2020 due to concerns about safety during the COVID-19 pandemic.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>53</sup> Visitation services reopened in February 2021, but the program lost many families that had previously participated in visits and exchanges as they had made other arrangements during the COVID-19 pandemic.

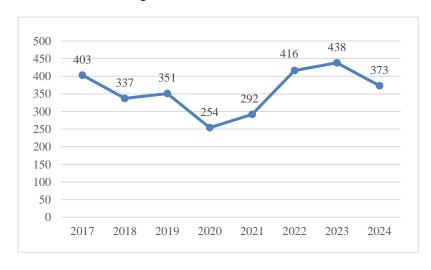
<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>54</sup> Visitation services did not occur in January and February 2022 due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>55</sup> Actual visits represent units of services. One unit of service equals one hour.

**Table 28. Mediation Services** 

	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024
Mediation (Rule 68.12)								
Referrals	107	96	49	21	22	17	<sup>56</sup>	
Mediations						$2^{57}$		
<b>Adult Abuse Mediation</b>								
Referrals	161	115	141	41	72	175	231	200
Mediations	156	112	136	38	71	173	231	200
Child Dependency Mediation								
Referrals	238	249	229	180	287	284	257	165
Mediations	227	208	203	$207^{58}$	211	234	200	173
Other Domestic Relations Mediations <sup>59</sup>								
Referrals	33	16	14	9	12	9	7	0
Mediations	20	17	12	9	10	7	7	0
<b>Grand Total Mediations</b>								
Referrals	539	476	432	251	393	485	495	365
Mediations	403	337	351	254	292	416	438	373

**Graph 64. Total Mediations Held** 



<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>56</sup> Rule 68.12 mediations were discontinued in 2023.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>57</sup> Two Rule 68.12 mediations were conducted by Family Court staff; fifteen were conducted by outside mediators.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>58</sup> Twenty-seven child-dependency mediations completed in 2020 were carried over from the previous year.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>59</sup> This includes mediations related to modifications of custody and visitation, Family Access motions, and mediations previously reported under Mediation (IV-D)/Paternity and Victim-Offender Mediation. In 2013, a Missouri Appellate Court decision (DSK, MO App Western District 76789, Dec 31, 2013) substantially reduced the number of paternity mediations referred to FCRS, resulting in a sharp decline in referrals for this service.

**Table 29. Cases Referred to Victim Services** 

	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024
Victim Services Cases	351	377	296	232	326	60	240	218
% change	-32%	+7%	-21%	-22%	+41%		-26%	-9%

 $^{60}$  The number of Victim Services cases from 2022 is unknown because some data from the year was lost and could not be recovered.

### Conclusions

This report captures statistical information related to activities and selected outcomes for the 16<sup>th</sup> Circuit Court – Family Court Division and Family Court Services. The goal of the annual report is to provide complete, accurate, and helpful information to enable the Family Court to better serve the youth, families, and community of Jackson County.

Over the last eight years, the number of referrals filed for child abuse and neglect has trended fairly steadily downward. Referrals in 2024 were 52% lower than in 2017. Adoptions and TPR filings have fallen considerably as well. Adoption filings were 53% lower in 2024 than in 2017, and TPR filings were 82% lower.

The number of youth aged 10-17 in Jackson County has increased by around 3% since 2017, but the number of delinquent and technical referrals to the Family Court has fallen by 1% in that same period. The number of petitions and motions to modify has decreased by 10%. These are particularly positive trends given the increase in the county's youth population.

African-American youth accounted for 76% of the delinquent and technical offense petitions and motions to modify filed in 2024. Caucasian youth accounted for 17%, and Hispanic youth accounted for 6%.

Youth residing in Kansas City continue to account for the largest share of delinquent and technical offense filings in Jackson County (62% of all delinquent and technical offense petitions and motions to modify). Youth from Independence made up the next largest share of filings, followed by youth from Lee's Summit.

The number of youth committed to the Division of Youth Services each year fell dramatically between 2018 and 2020 (from 58 commitments to 16). It has been inching back up since then but is still nowhere near pre-pandemic levels. Twenty-seven youth were committed to DYS in 2024, 89% of whom were African American. This was an exceptionally large share (eleven percentage points higher than average for the last 8 years).

The number of certification cases filed in 2024 was right in line with the eight-year average. So far, seven youth have been certified, but at the time of this report, 14 cases remain undisposed. We will update this figure once all cases have been disposed.

Family Court Services offered a broad range of prevention, intervention, and treatment services to youth in Jackson County. In 2024, the Court's prevention and diversion programs served a total of 380 youth as well as their families. This was a 79% increase over 2023.

The number of youth starting probation dropped dramatically during the COVID pandemic but has since risen to above pre-pandemic levels. The number of youth on probation is up 158% from the low point in 2021 and 17% above the total from 2017. This is due in part to the increase in the age of juvenile jurisdiction to 17, making more youth eligible for Family Court supervision. Commitments to Hilltop in 2024 declined a bit to 24 youth—just below average for the past eight years.

Detainments at Hilltop and in secure detention both decreased in 2024 after having risen each year since 2020. Compared to 2017, detainments in secure detention were up just 4%, while non-secure detainments increased by 27%, indicating greater use of non-secure alternatives.

Family Treatment Court admitted 49 participants in 2024, an increase of 17% from 2023.

Family Court Resource Services offered a wide variety of services to court-involved families. A total of 1,551 people were served by three parent awareness courses in 2024. The Connections Program provided 979 supervised and therapeutic visits and arranged 47 monitored exchanges. With the exception of therapeutic visits, these figures are much lower than they were eight years ago. Mediation numbers have remained somewhat more stable over the past eight years, as have the number of cases served by Victim Services.