



**Jackson County Family Court
2021
Statistical Report**

Cover artwork: ArtsTech

Table of Contents

Introduction.....	5
Current Demographic Picture	6
Referrals and Formal Filings	9
Child Welfare Referrals, Filings, and Open Cases	10
Status Offense Referrals and Filings	19
Delinquent and Technical Offense Referrals, Filings, and Open Cases.....	21
Delinquent and Technical Offense Filings by Race, Gender, Age, and City of Residence.....	24
Disposition and Intervention Services	31
Family Court Services – Delinquency.....	32
Commitments to the Division of Youth Services.....	38
Certification Cases.....	42
Family Court Services – Children and Families.....	45
COVID-19 Pandemic Monitoring.....	52
Conclusions.....	62

Introduction

This report provides statistical information about Jackson County Circuit Court – Family Court Division for 2021 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.

Last year, we introduced a section specifically to monitor trends related to the COVID-19 pandemic, and we included that section again this year. This includes numbers of open cases for our various case types, admission and population data for secure detention and detention alternatives, rates of re-offense and failure to appear for youth screened at detention and released to home to or detention alternatives, numbers of Court hearings, and the time to disposition for disposed cases.

It is still too early to tell whether many of the differences we have seen in the past two years reflect the special circumstances of the pandemic or broader trends that will extend to future years. We will continue to monitor these areas to determine what conclusions we can draw.

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. The current number of youth is now about 2% higher than it was a decade ago.

In 2020, the most recent year for which data were available, youth under the age of 18 represented 23% of the county population of 717,204. In Jackson County, 38% of youth were youth of color.¹

¹ Puzzanchera, C., Sladky, A. and Kang, W. (2020). "Easy Access to Juvenile Populations: 1990-2020." 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 1. Youth Population in Jackson County (Ages 0 to 17 years) by Race²

Year	Black	White	American Indian	Asian	Total
2014	51,344	107,324	1,627	4,181	164,476
2015	51,489	107,698	1,616	4,221	165,024
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

Table 2. Youth Population in Jackson County (Ages 10 to 17 years) by Race²

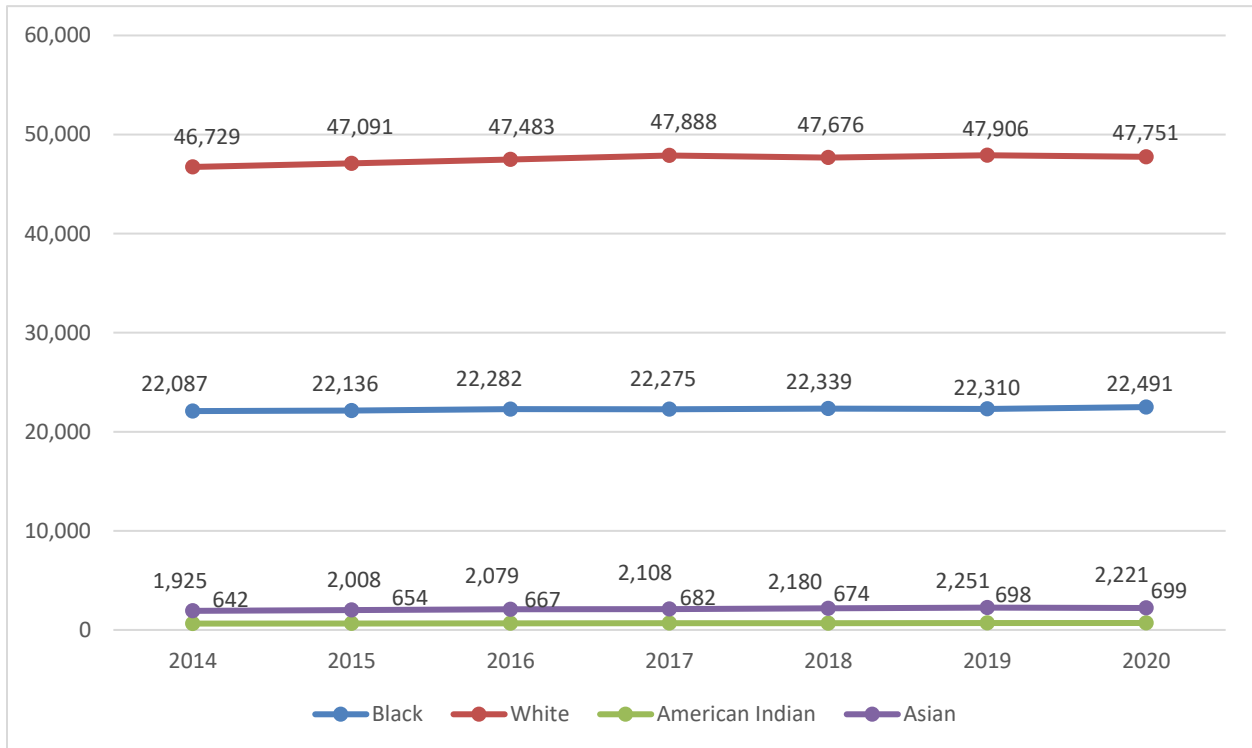
Year	Black	White	American Indian	Asian	Total
2014	22,087	46,729	642	1,925	71,383
2015	22,136	47,091	654	2,008	71,889
2016	22,282	47,483	667	2,079	72,511
2017	22,275	47,888	682	2,108	72,953
2018	22,339	47,676	674	2,180	72,869
2019	22,310	47,906	698	2,251	73,165
2020	22,491	47,751	699	2,221	73,162

Table 3. Youth Population in Jackson County (Ages 10 to 17 years) by Age²

Year	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	Total
2014	9,045	9,029	8,930	8,932	9,038	8,962	8,813	8,634	71,383
2015	9,110	9,107	8,999	8,943	8,915	9,021	8,954	8,840	71,889
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

² Puzzanchera, C., Sladky, A. and Kang, W. (2020). "Easy Access to Juvenile Populations: 1990-2020." Available: <http://www.ojjdp.gov/ojstatbb/ezapop/>. Population data from 2021 was not available at the time of this report.

Graph 1. Youth Population in Jackson County (Ages 10 to 17 years) by Race³



³ Puzzanchera, C., Sladky, A. and Kang, W. (2020). "Easy Access to Juvenile Populations: 1990-2020." Available: <http://www.ojjdp.gov/ojstatbb/ezapop/>. Population data from 2021 was not available at the time of this report.

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 declined for the fourth year in a row—down 6% from last year, belying the theory that referrals might increase in 2021 due to a pandemic-related backlog. The number of petitions and motions to modify for child abuse and neglect was virtually unchanged, indicating a slightly higher rate of filing for cases referred in 2021.

At the request of the Missouri Supreme Court, in 2015 Jackson County Family Court began a collaboration with Casey Family Programs to improve timeliness to permanency and safely reduce 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 most years since then. Hearing delays in the early months of the COVID-19 pandemic resulted in a clearance rate just above 100% in 2020, but the Court picked up the pace in 2021 and ended the year releasing 129% more cases than it received.

Table 4. Child Abuse and Neglect Referrals and Formal Filings

	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021
Referrals	1,256	1,168	1,387	1,501	1,408	1,337	1,097	1,030
% change	--	-7%	+19%	+8%	-6%	-5%	-13%	-6%
Rate per 1,000 ⁴	7.7	7.1	8.4	9.1	8.5	8.1	7.0	6.3

	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021
Open Cases December 31	2,364	2,072	2,020	2,019	2,056	1,888	1,891	1,727
New Cases	1,015	822	983	991	1,034	845	794	707
Releases	1,009	1,112	1,031	994	1,001	1,094	802	912
Clearance Rate	99%	135%	105%	100%	97%	129%	101%	129%

	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021
Petitions and Mot to Modify	1,452	1,298	1,423	1,277	1,304	1,228	983	976
% change	--	-11%	+10%	-10%	+2%	-6%	-20%	-1%

Table 5. Adoption and Termination of Parental Rights Formal Filings

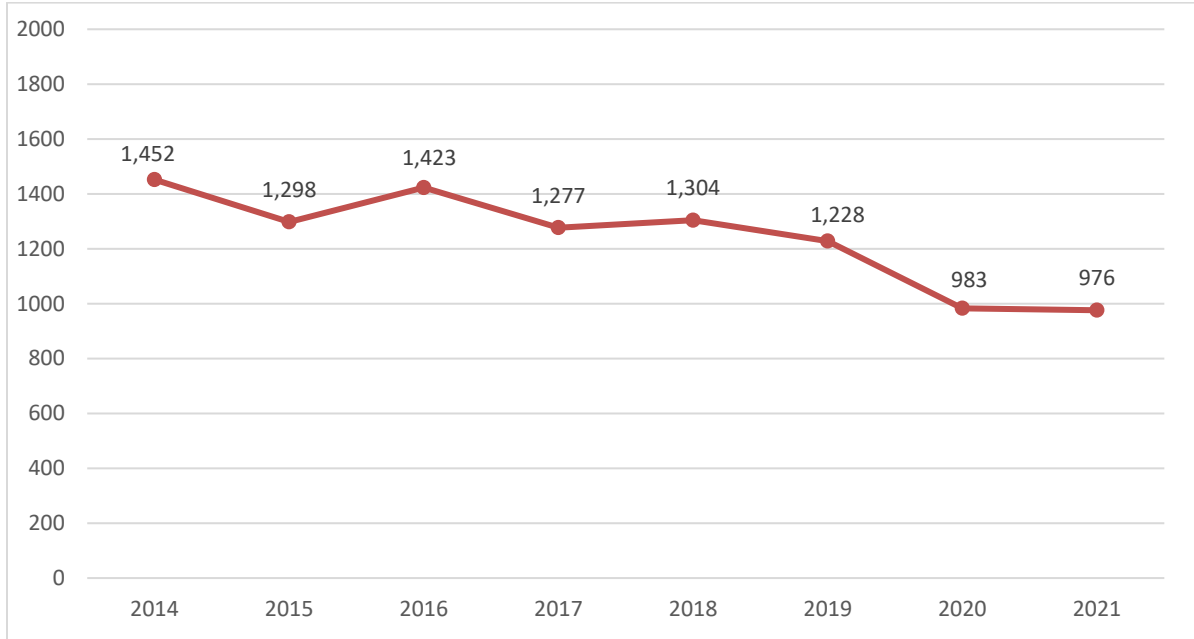
	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021
New Adoption Cases ⁵	340	290	294	299	348	335	257	256
New Termination of Parental Rights Cases	108	135	449 ⁶	368	335	310	210	113

⁴ Rates were calculated based on the number of children in Jackson County from birth to age 17.

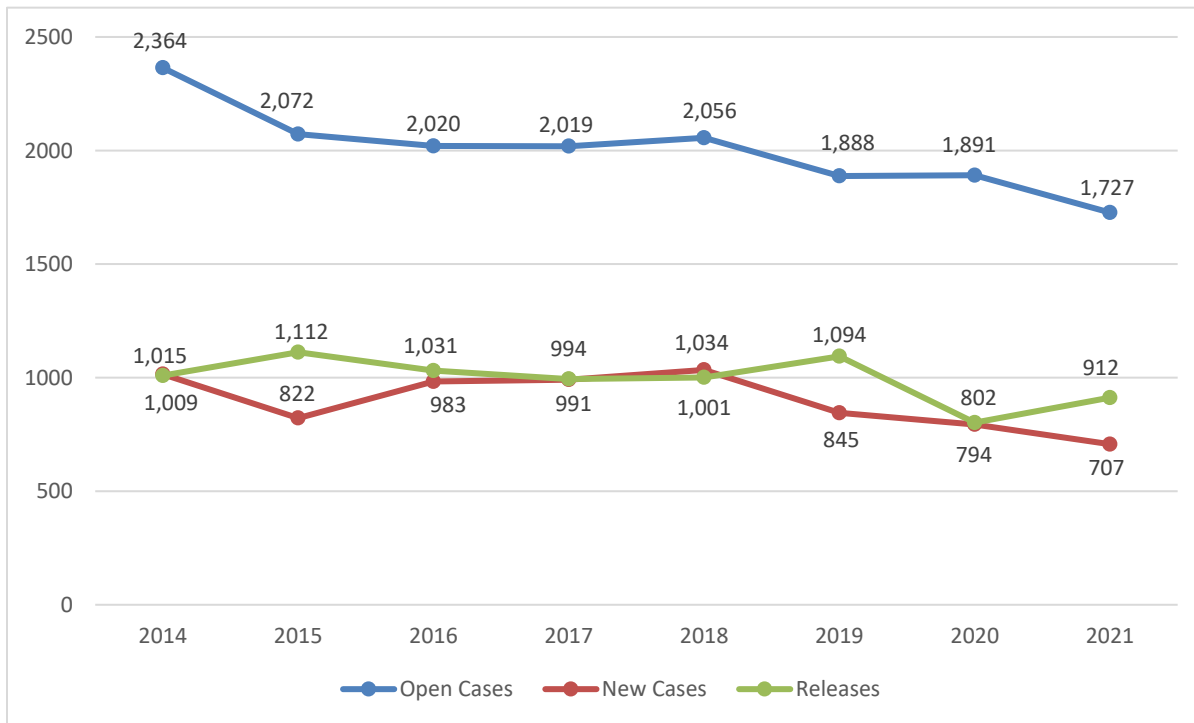
⁵ This table reports regular adoption cases and does not include stepchild or adult adoptions.

⁶ In Fall 2015, the Juvenile Officer identified a number of cases with a goal of TPR lacking a petition for termination. A special work plan was constructed, and these cases were filed in 2016, resulting in an unusually high number of TPR petitions filed.

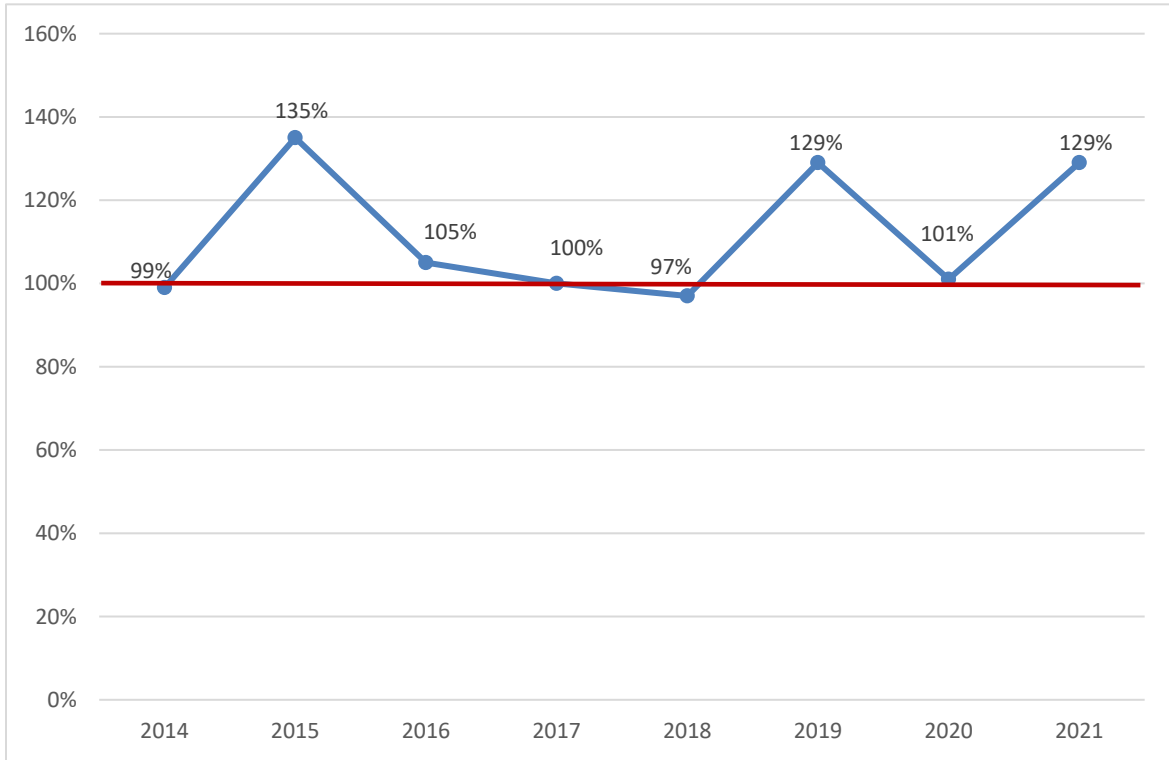
Graph 2. Child Abuse and Neglect Formal Filings by Year



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

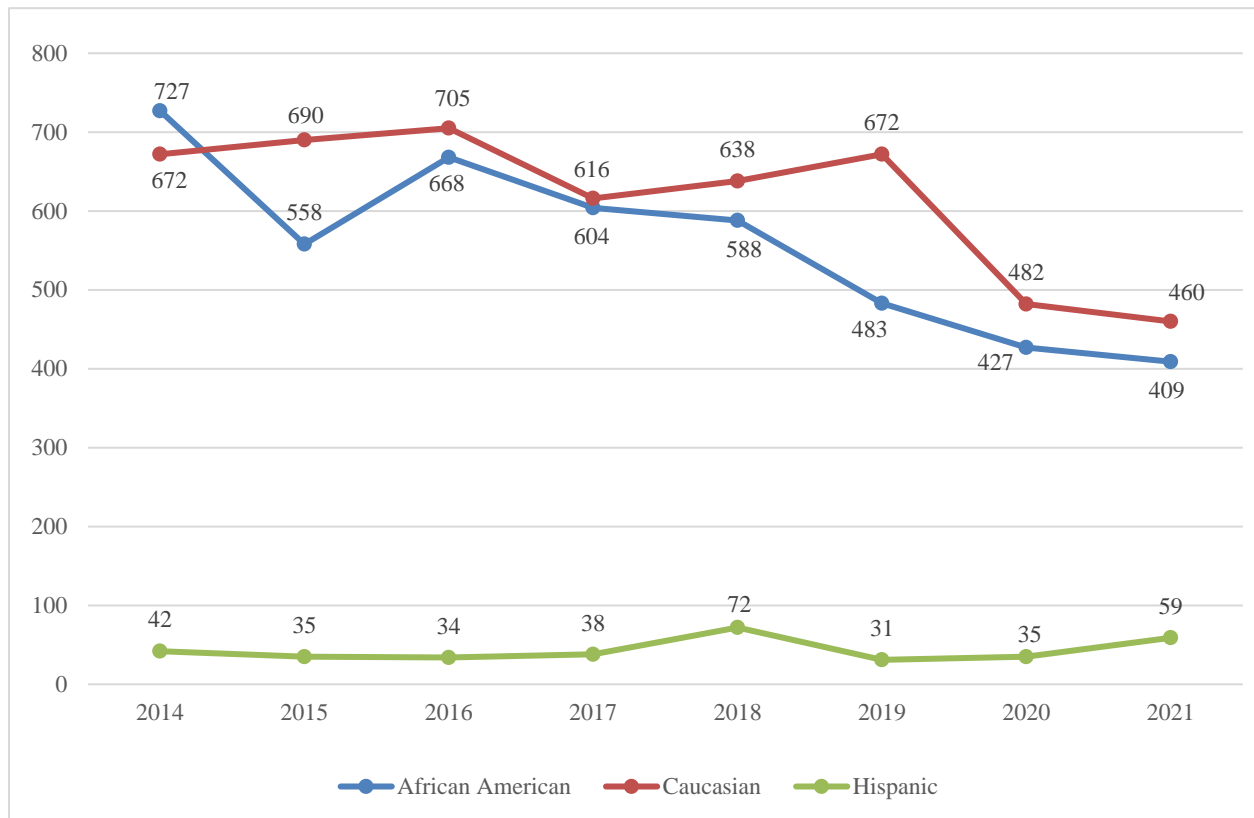


Graph 4. Clearance Rates in Child Abuse and Neglect Cases



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

Year	African American		Caucasian		Hispanic		Other		Unknown/ Missing	
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
2014	727	50%	672	46%	42	3%	13	1%	1	<1%
2015 ⁷	558	43%	690	53%	35	3%	15	1%	2	<1%
2016 ⁸	668	47%	705	50%	34	2%	13	1%	3	<1%
2017 ⁹	604	47%	616	48%	38	3%	19	1%	0	0%
2018 ¹⁰	588	45%	638	48%	72	5%	17	1%	1	<1%
2019 ¹¹	483	39%	672	55%	31	3%	9	1%	33	3%
2020 ¹²	427	43%	482	49%	35	4%	4	<1%	35	4%
2021 ¹³	409	42%	460	47%	59	6%	20	2%	28	3%



⁷ Race was unknown for 2 cases in 2015. One youth included in the African American category identified as biracial.

⁸ Race was unknown for 3 cases in 2016. Twenty-six youth included in the African American category identified as biracial.

⁹ Twenty-five youth included in the African American category in 2017 identified as biracial.

¹⁰ Race was unknown for 1 case in 2018. Twenty-nine youth included in the African American category identified as biracial.

¹¹ Race was unknown for 33 cases in 2019. Ten youth included in the African American category identified as biracial.

¹² Race was unknown for 35 cases in 2020. Twelve youth included in the African American category identified as biracial.

¹³ Race was unknown for 35 cases in 2020. 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.

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

Year	Males		Females	
	N	%	N	%
2014	741	51%	713	49%
2015	660	51%	640	49%
2016	706	50%	717	50%
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%

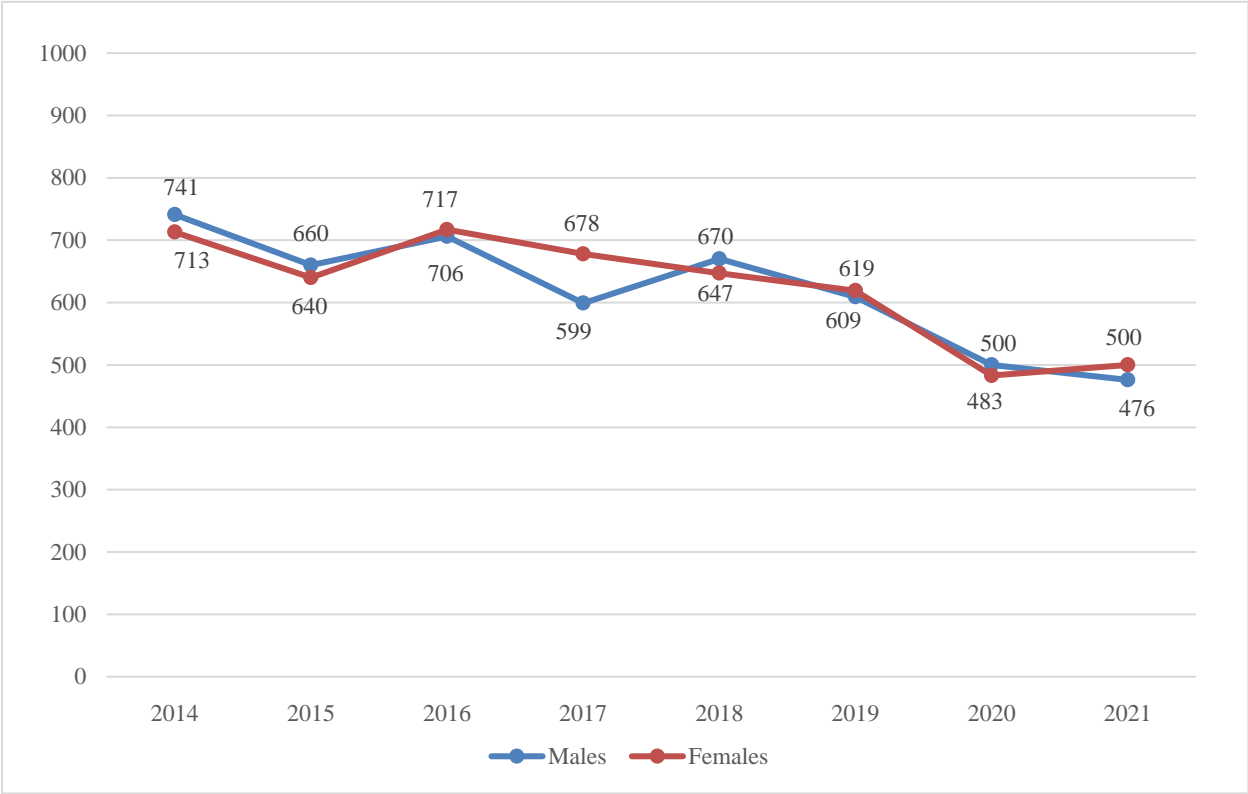
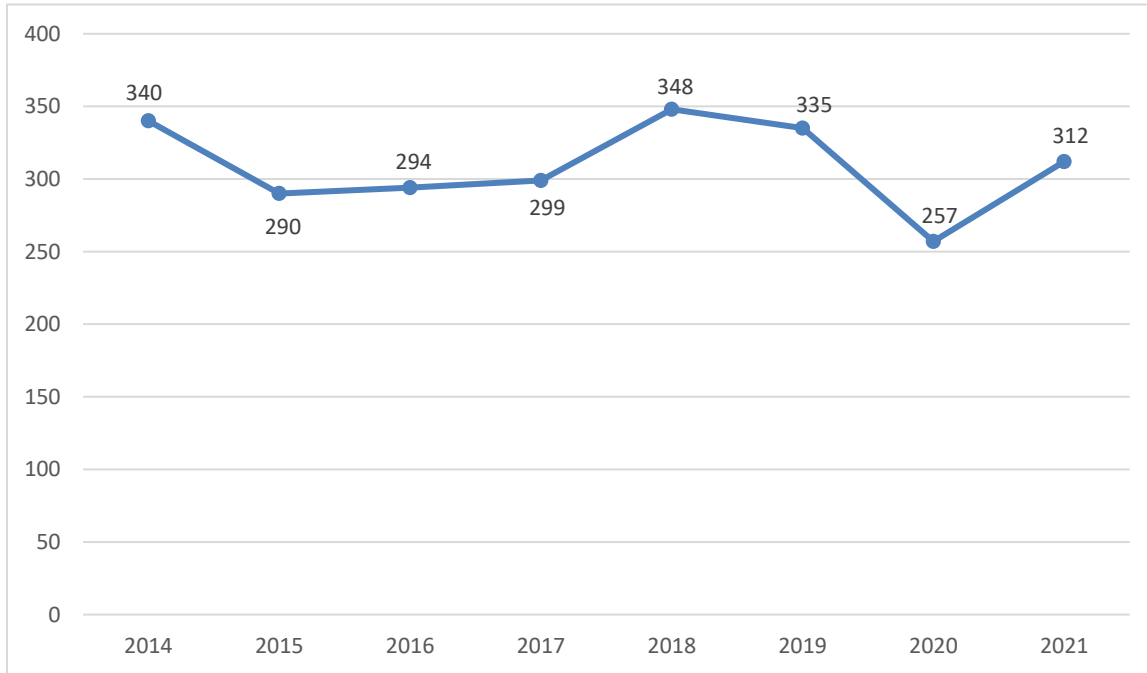


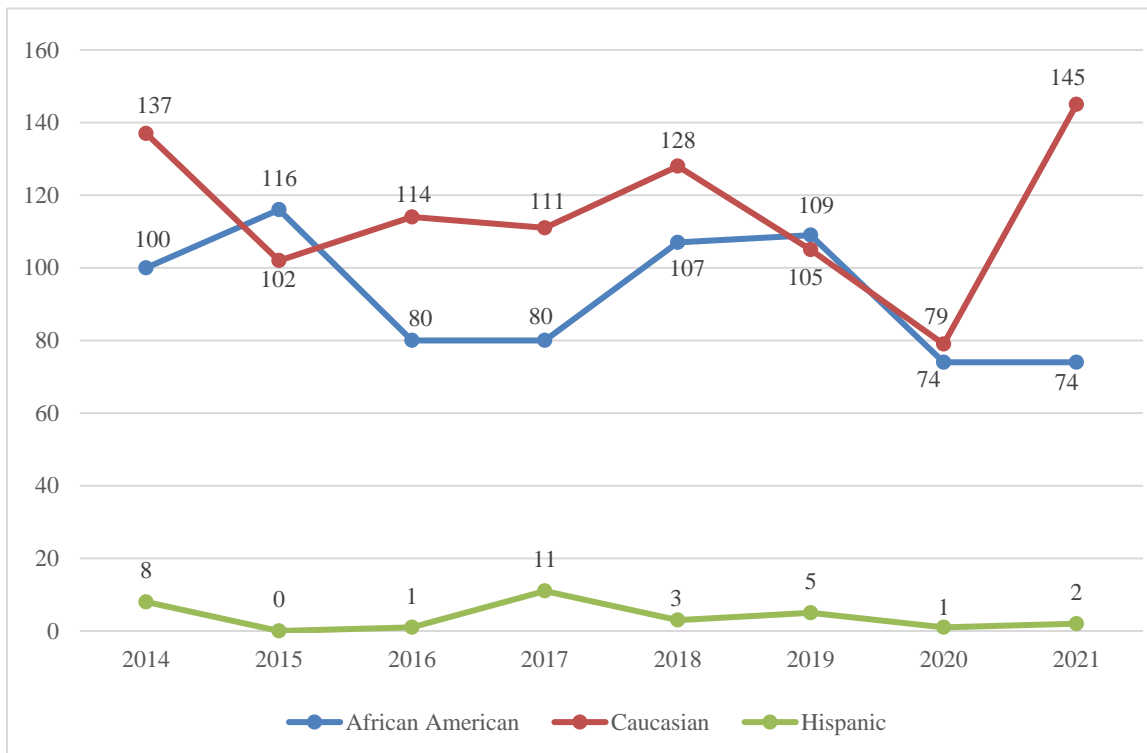
Table 8. Issues Identified in Child Abuse and Neglect Petitions

Issue	2007		2021	
	N	%	N	%
Physical Abuse	161	21%	189	25%
Sexual Abuse	85	11%	45	6%
Neglect (unsafe situation)	392	50%	166	22%
Neglect (living conditions)	174	22%	79	11%
Neglect (abandonment)	64	8%	148	20%
Neglect (CAN cases for siblings)	87	11%	137	18%
Neglect (w/o proper supervision)	103	13%	123	17%
Neglect (medical)	110	14%	76	10%
Neglect (educational)	49	6%	39	5%
Substance Abuse	370	48%	409	55%
Criminal Activity	154	20%	175	23%
Domestic Violence	149	19%	155	21%
Mental Health	127	16%	152	20%
Child Born Drug Exposed	122	16%	116	16%
Homelessness	41	5%	81	11%
Age of Parent	9	1%	0	0%
Cognitive Impairment	4	1%	10	1%
Other	4	1%	26	3%
Total Cases	777		745	
Avg. Issues Identified	2.8		2.9	

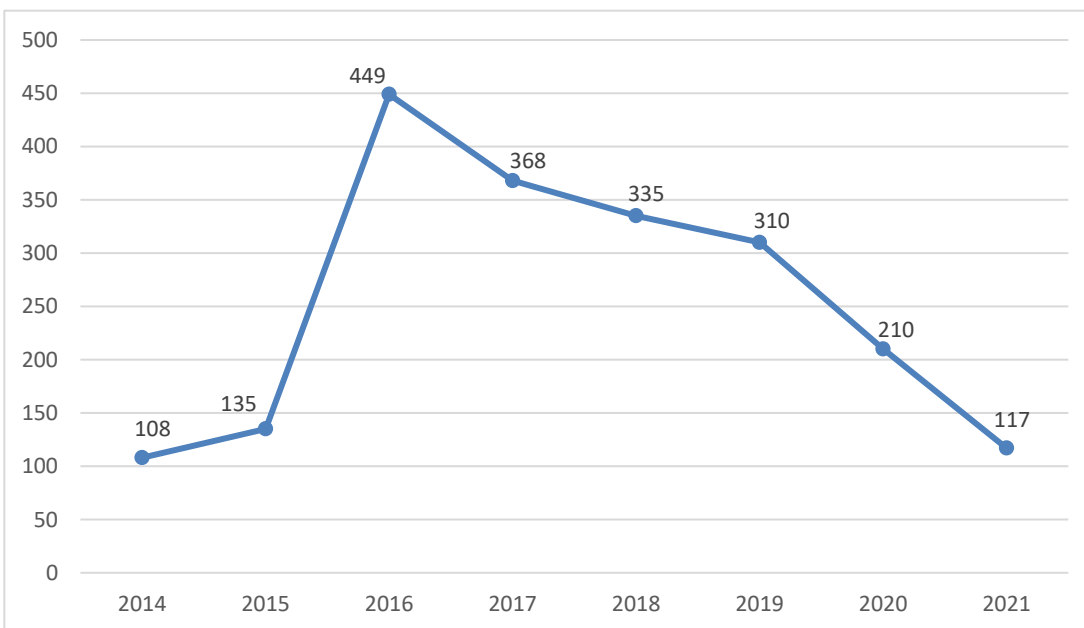
Graph 7. Adoption Cases Filed by Year



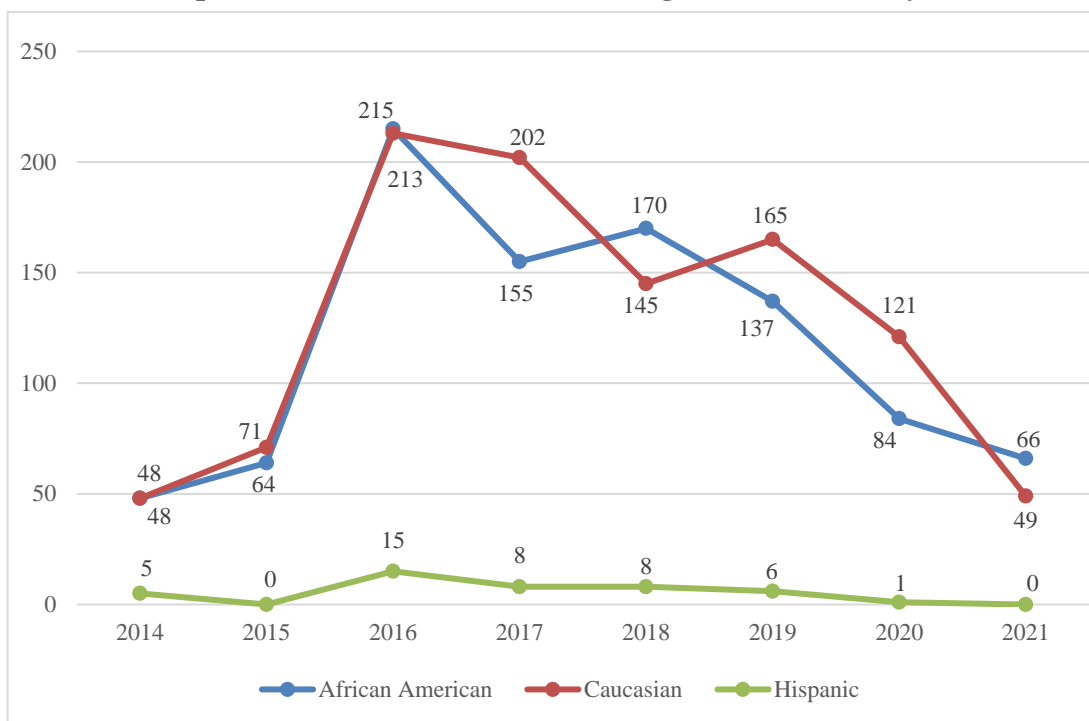
Graph 8. Adoption Cases Filed by Race



Graph 9. Termination of Parental Rights Cases Filed by Year¹⁴



Graph 10. Termination of Parental Rights Cases Filed by Race¹⁵



¹⁴ In Fall 2015, the Juvenile Officer identified a number of cases with a goal of TPR lacking a petition for termination. A special work plan was constructed, and these cases were filed in 2016, resulting in an unusually high number of TPR petitions filed.

¹⁵ Race was unknown for 7 youth in 2014, 1 youth in 2017, 3 youth in 2018, and 3 youth in 2020.

Status Offense Referrals and Filings

The number of status offense referrals decreased in 2021, halting a trend in rising referrals that had been occurring steadily since 2015.

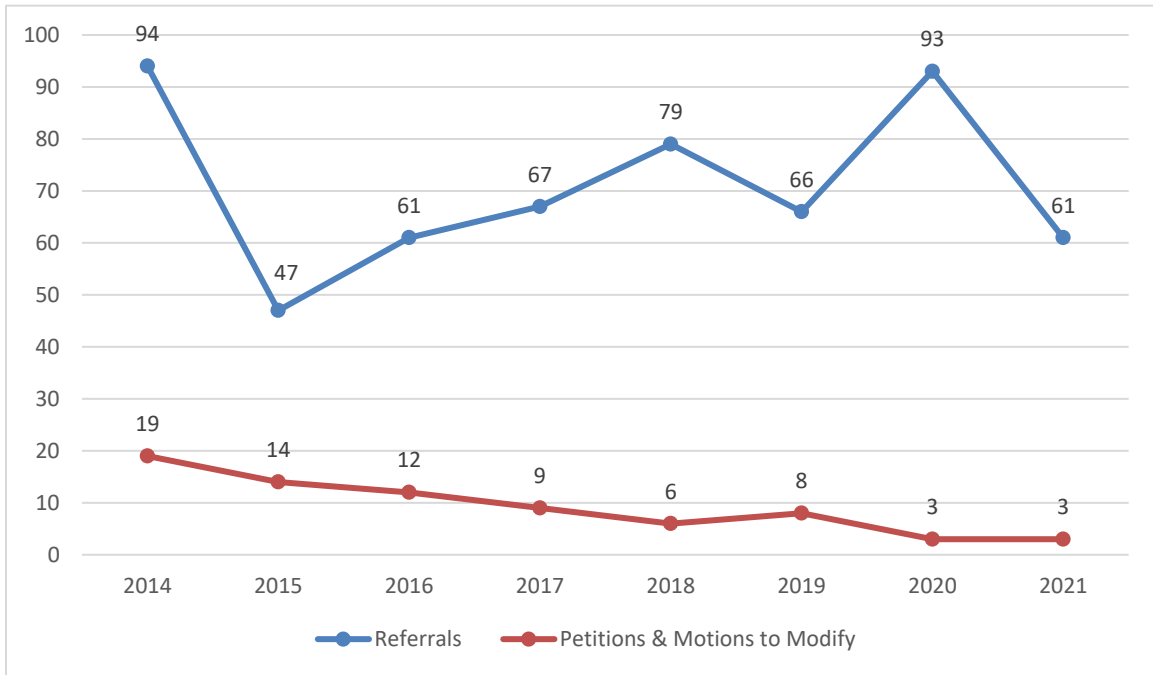
The rate of formal filings for status referrals has been steadily decreasing in recent years and remained low. Many referrals for status offenses accompany a delinquent, technical, or abuse/neglect referral, and formal filings for status offenses alone are rare. This is in line with Family Court Policy No. 630-06 (Process for Dispositional Recommendations) and the Court's Revised Dispositional Matrix, which indicate that a petition should typically be filed only for status offenses if the youth scores high risk on the Missouri Risk Assessment and has prior adjudicated offenses.

Table 9. Status Offense Referrals and Formal Filings

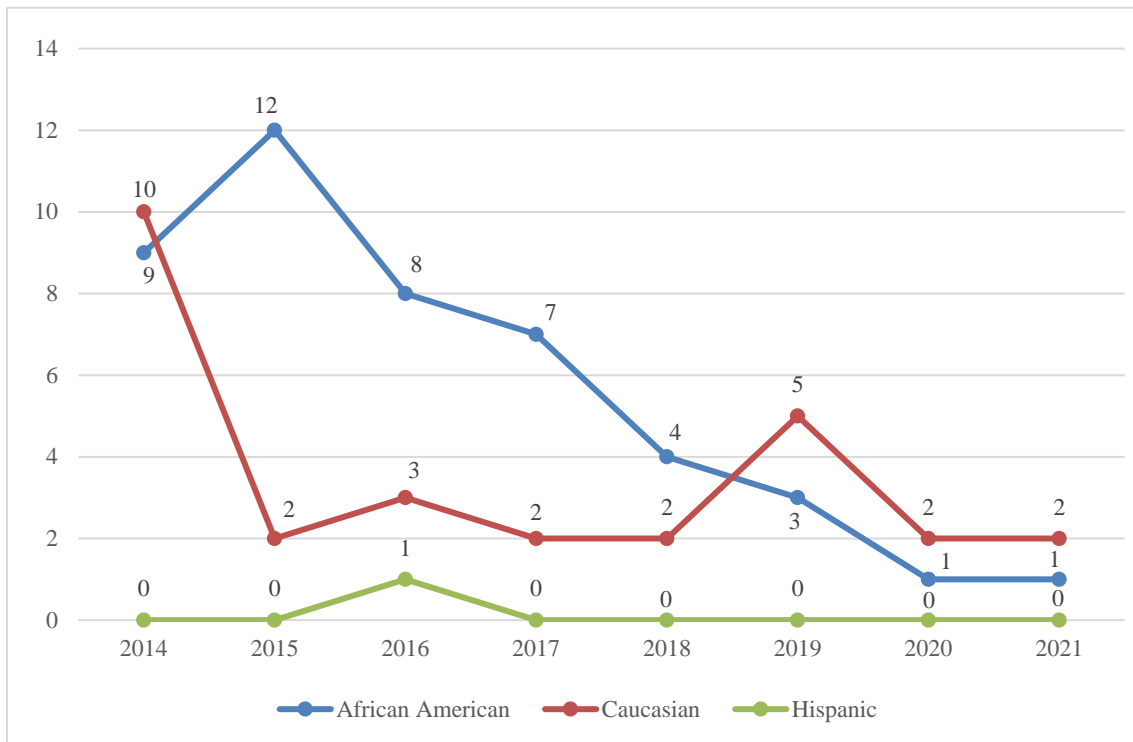
	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021
Referrals	94	47	61	67	79	66	93	61
% change	--	-50%	+30%	+10%	+18%	-16%	+41%	-34%
Rate per 1,000 ¹⁶	1.3	0.7	0.9	0.9	1.1	0.9	1.3	0.8
	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021
Petitions and Mot to Modify	19	14	12	9	6	8	3	3
% change	--	-26%	-14%	-25%	-33%	+33%	-63%	+0%

¹⁶ Rates were calculated based on the number of youth in Jackson County aged 10-17 years.

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

The numbers of referrals and formal filings for delinquent and technical offenses rose a bit in 2021 from the record low points in 2020, but they still remained lower than filings in any other recent year.

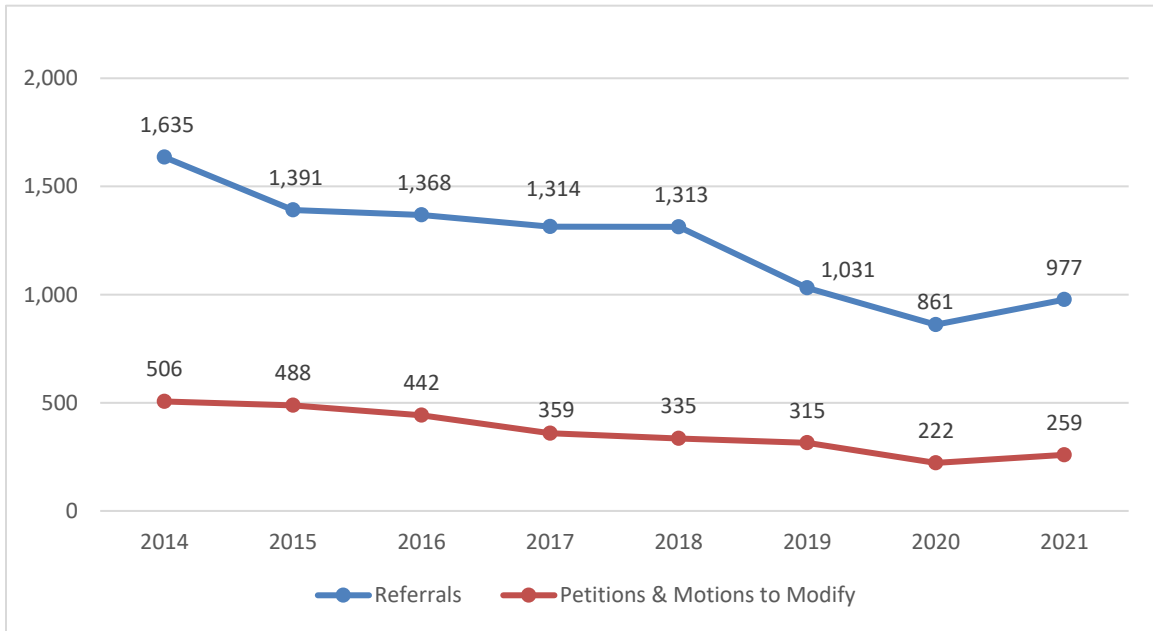
Since 2014, the rate of referral to the Court has dropped from about 23 referrals per 1,000 Jackson County youth to about 13 referrals per 1,000 youth.

Table 10. Delinquent and Technical Referrals and Formal Filings

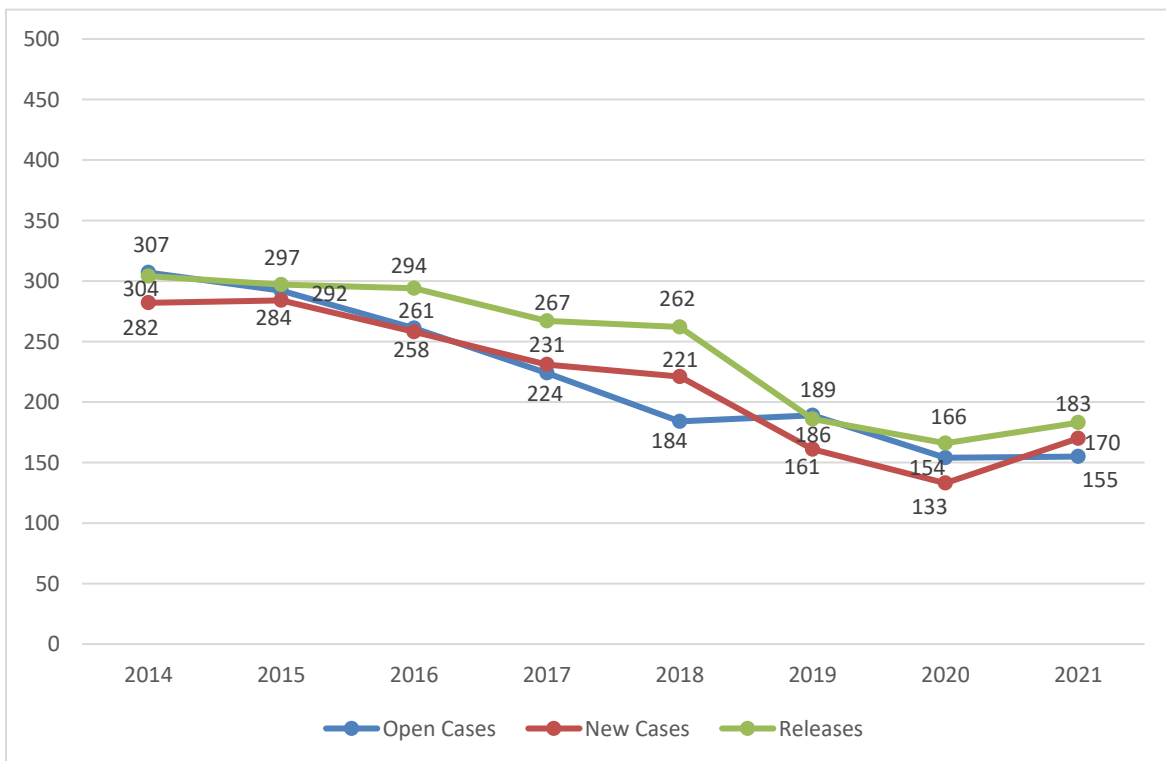
	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021
Referrals	1,635	1,391	1,368	1,314	1,313	1,031	861	977
% change	--	-15%	-2%	-4%	0%	-21%	-17%	+13%
Rate per 1,000 ¹⁷	23.1	19.6	19.1	18.1	18.0	14.1	11.7	13.4
	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021
Open Cases December 31	307	292	261	224	184	189	154	155
New Cases	282	284	258	231	221	161	133	170
Releases	304	297	294	267	262	186	166	183
Clearance Rate	108%	105%	114%	116%	119%	116%	125%	108%
	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021
Petitions and Mot to Modify	506	488	442	359	335	315	222	259
% change	--	-4%	-9%	-19%	-7%	-6%	-30%	+17%

¹⁷ Rates were calculated based on the number of youth in Jackson County aged 10-17 years.

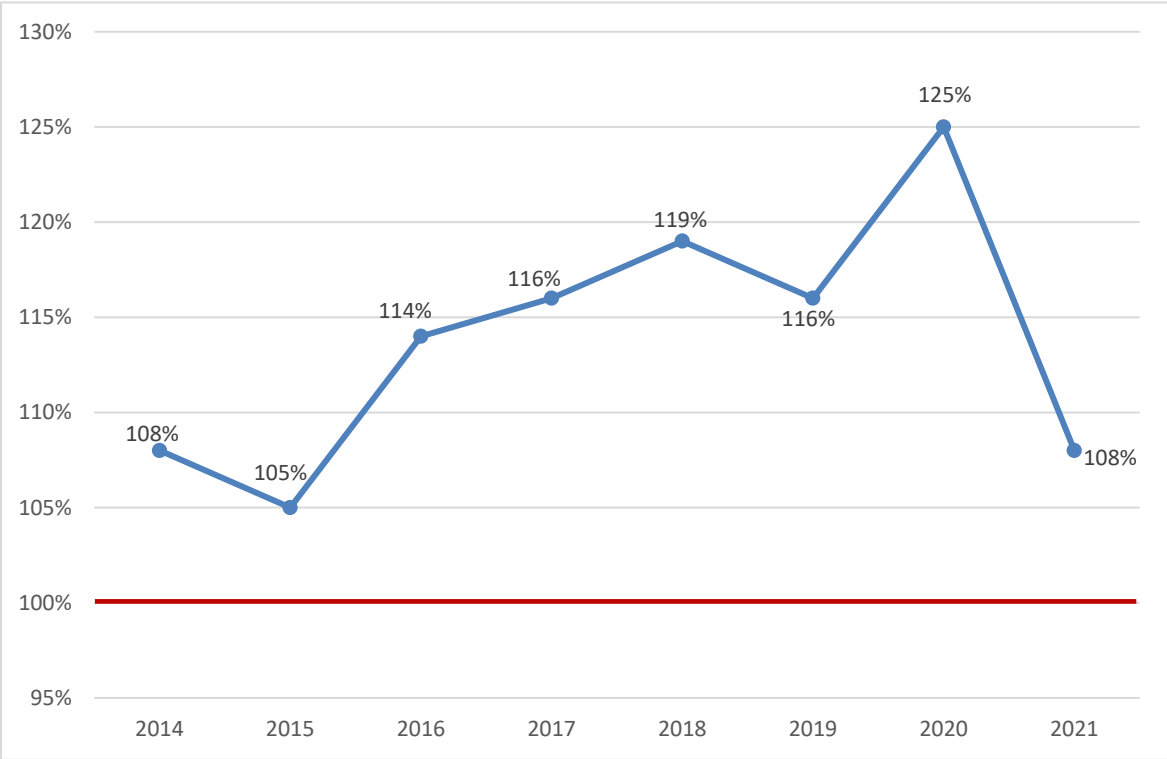
Graph 13. Delinquent and Technical Referrals and Formal Filings by Year



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



Graph 15. Clearance Rates for Delinquent and Technical Cases



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.

Seventy-one percent of the filings for delinquent and technical offenses in 2021 were for African-American youth. This percentage has seen a general downward trend in recent years from 74% in 2014. Just under a quarter of filings in 2021 were for Caucasian youth, and 5% were for Hispanic youth. African-American youth make up about 31% of the youth population in Jackson County, so the 71% filing rate is highly disproportionate to the population. Family Court Services is actively examining racial equity issues in its juvenile justice processes and programs.

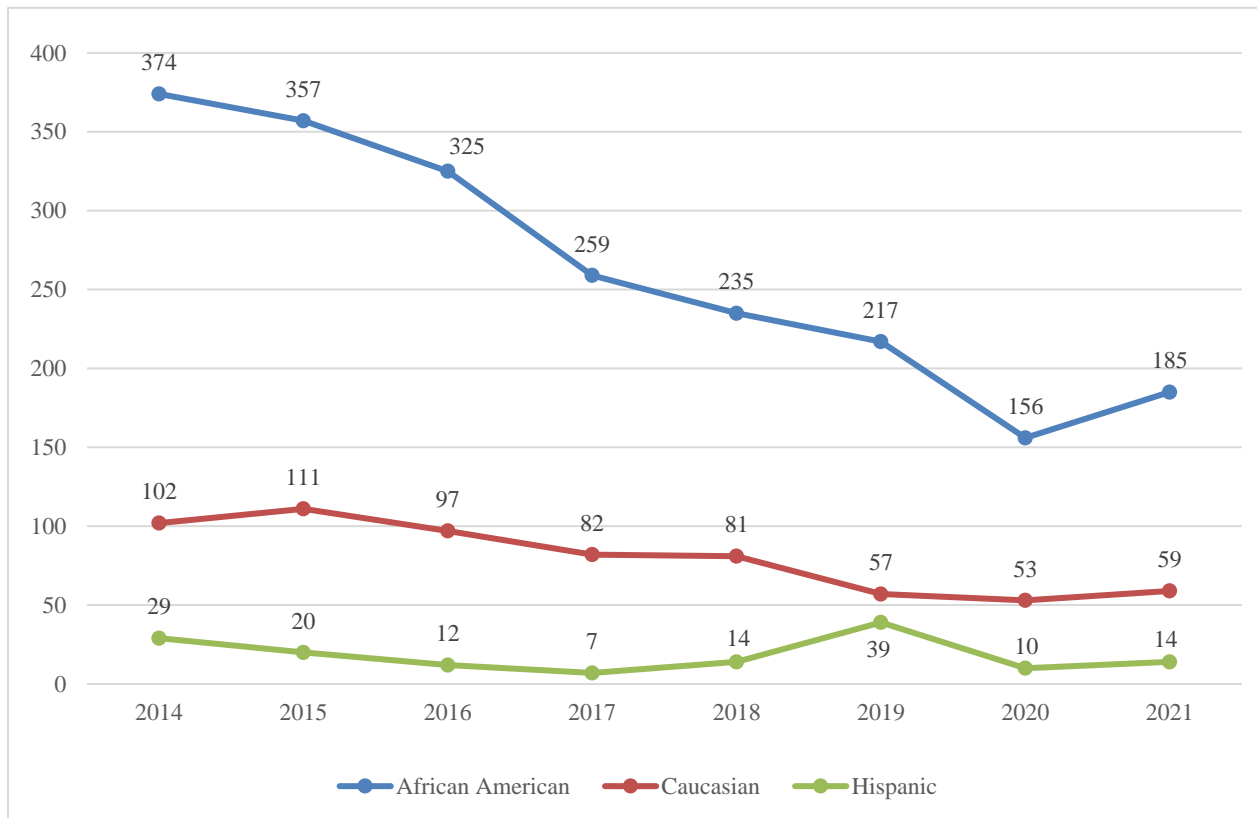
The percentage of filings for males has fluctuated around 82% for the last eight years and was in line with this rate in 2021 at 83%.

The age breakdown of youth charged with delinquent and technical offenses changed significantly in 2021 due to the Missouri law raising the age of juvenile jurisdiction to 17. Petitions for youth ages 17 and older made up 10% of petitions filed in 2020 but 31% of petitions filed in 2021.

Filings for youth residing in Kansas City have hovered between 63% and 65% in recent years, with an anomalous drop in 2020 to 57%. The percentage rose to 61% in 2021. The decrease in filings for youth from Kansas City is mostly offset by an increase in filings for youth from Independence.

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

Year	African American		Caucasian		Hispanic		Other	
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
2014	374	74%	102	20%	29	6%	1	<1%
2015	357	73%	111	23%	20	4%	0	--
2016 ¹⁸	325	74%	97	22%	12	3%	6	1%
2017 ¹⁹	259	72%	82	24%	7	2%	3	<1%
2018 ²⁰	235	72%	81	24%	14	4%	1	<1%
2019	217	69%	57	18%	39	12%	3	1%
2020 ²¹	156	70%	53	24%	10	5%	2	1%
2021	185	71%	59	23%	14	5%	1	1%



¹⁸ Race was unknown for 2 cases in 2016.

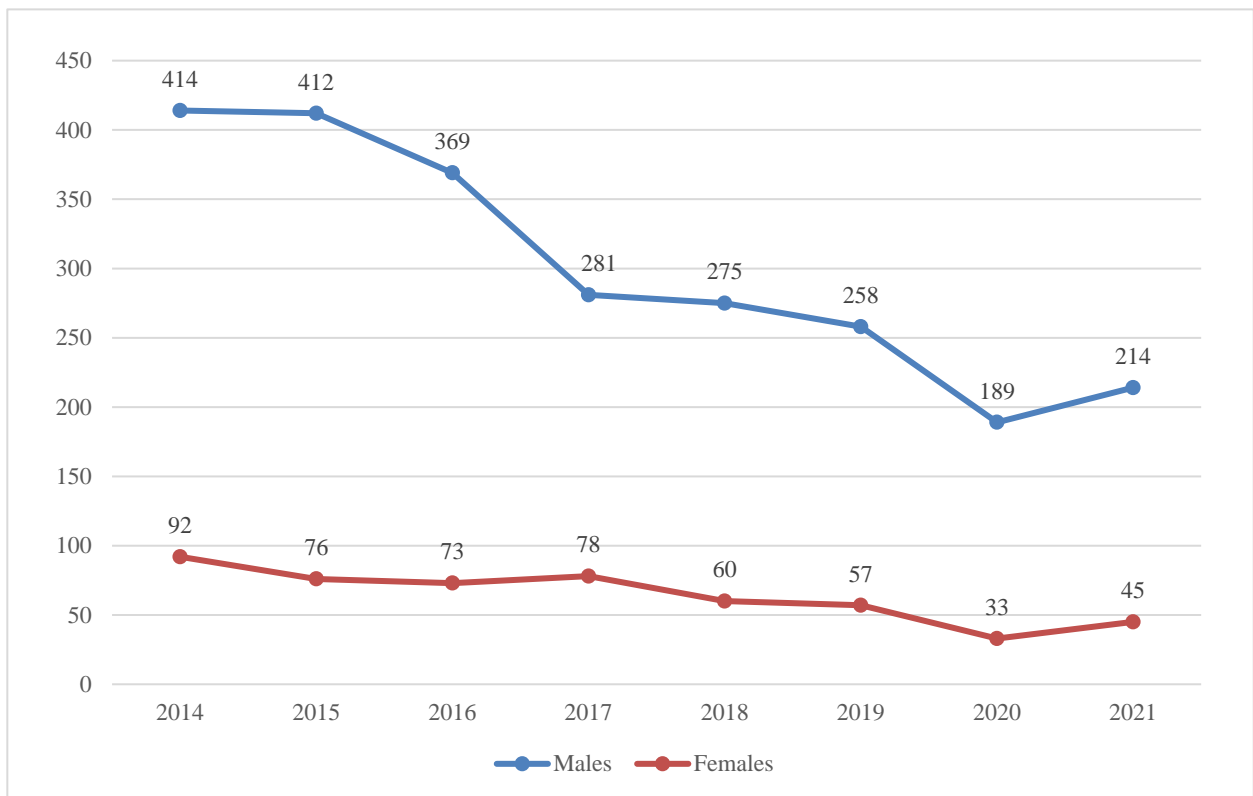
¹⁹ Race was unknown for 8 cases in 2017.

²⁰ Race was unknown for 4 cases in 2018.

²¹ Race was unknown for 1 case in 2020.

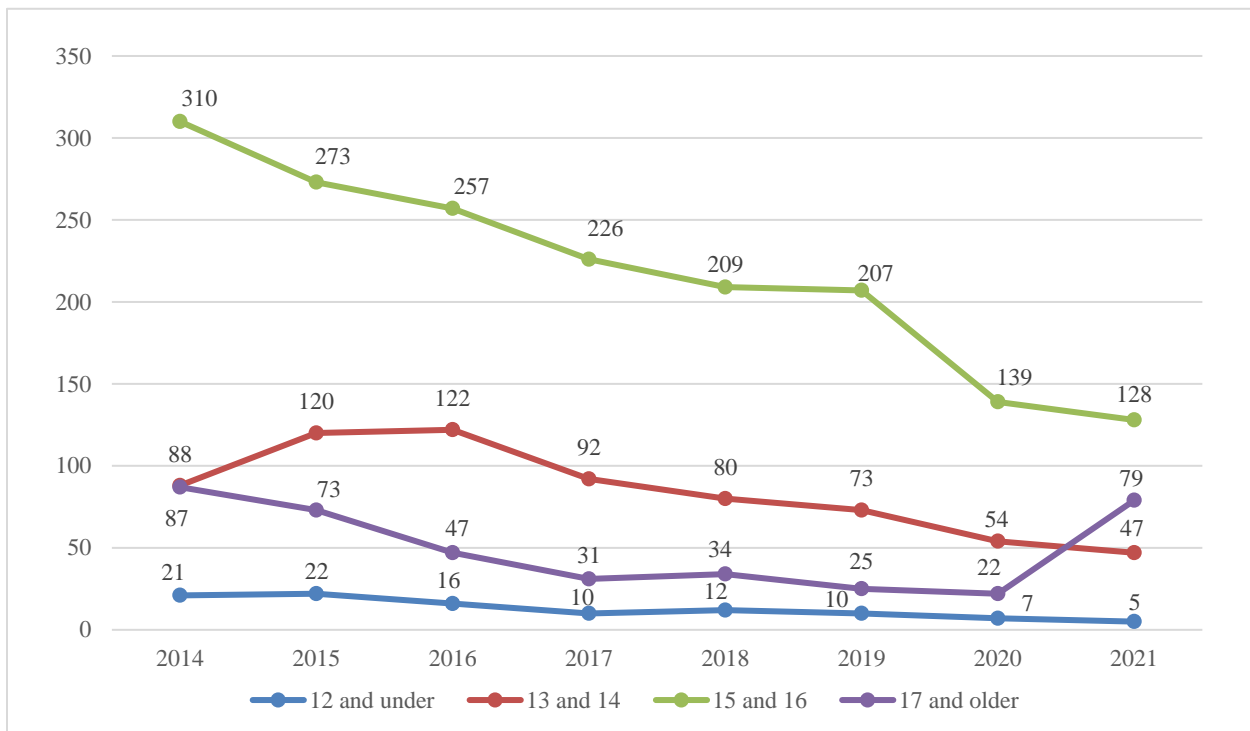
**Table 12 and Graph 17
Delinquent and Technical Formal Filings by Gender**

Year	Males		Females	
	N	%	N	%
2014	414	82%	92	18%
2015	412	84%	76	16%
2016	369	83%	73	17%
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%



**Table 13 and Graph 18
Delinquent and Technical Formal Filings by Age at Filing**

	≤11	12	13	14	15	16	17 ²²	≥18
2014	7 2%	14 3%	35 7%	53 10%	137 27%	173 34%	65 13%	22 4%
2015	1 <1%	21 4%	36 7%	84 17%	112 23%	161 33%	41 8%	32 7%
2016	5 1%	11 2%	40 9%	82 19%	118 27%	139 31%	31 7%	16 4%
2017	2 1%	8 2%	28 8%	64 18%	115 32%	111 31%	28 8%	3 1%
2018	2 1%	10 3%	29 9%	51 15%	84 25%	125 37%	24 7%	10 3%
2019	2 1%	8 3%	22 7%	51 16%	80 25%	127 40%	24 8%	1 <1%
2020	0 0%	7 3%	19 9%	35 16%	53 24%	86 39%	21 9%	1 1%
2021	1 <1%	4 2%	15 6%	32 12%	66 25%	62 24%	53 20%	26 10%



²² 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 14. Youth with Delinquent and Technical Formal Filings by City of Residence

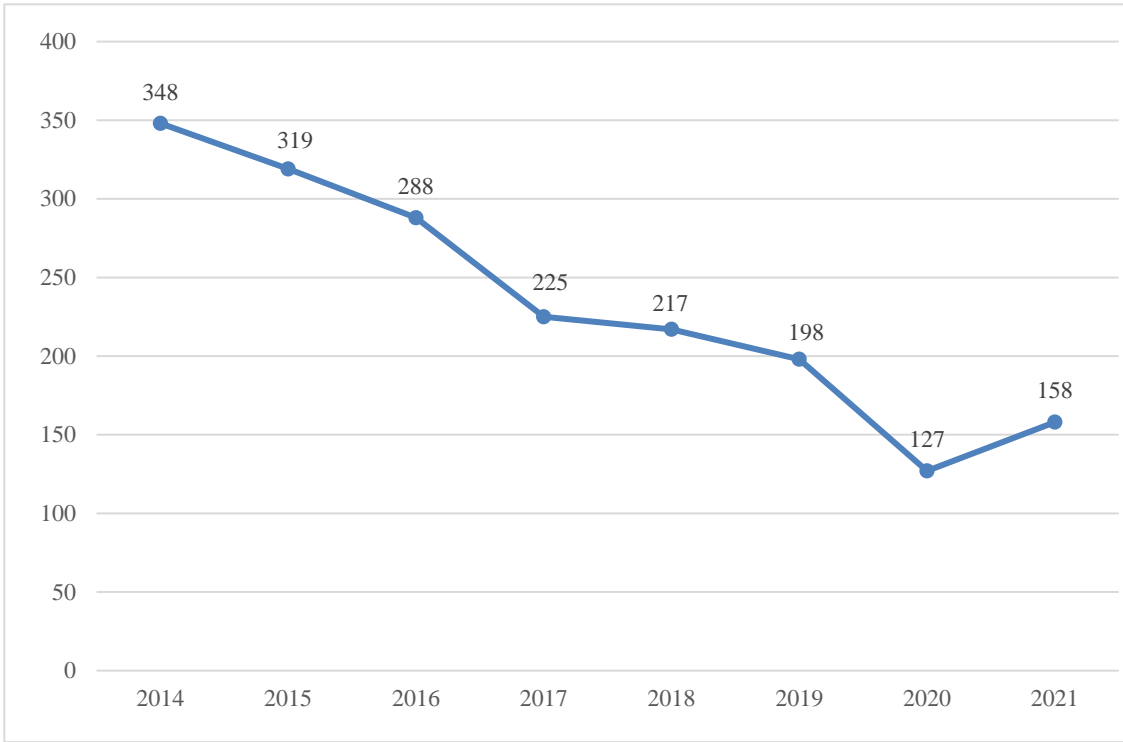
City	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021
Blue Springs	23 5%	20 4%	17 4%	11 3%	17 5%	10 4%	16 7%	13 5%
Grain Valley	4 <1%	4 <1%	5 1%	7 2%	2 1%	4 1%	2 1%	3 1%
Grandview	12 2%	15 3%	17 4%	20 5%	8 2%	8 4%	13 6%	6 2%
Greenwood	1 <1%	0	0	2 <1%	2 1%	3 3%	1 1%	1 <1%
Independence	37 7%	43 9%	46 10%	35 10%	31 9%	34 12%	33 15%	33 13%
Kansas City	348 69%	319 65%	288 65%	225 63%	217 65%	198 63%	127 57%	158 61%
Lee's Summit	19 4%	27 6%	25 6%	20 6%	11 3%	15 3%	12 5%	11 4%
Lone Jack	1 <1%	0	0	0	0	0	0	3 1%
Oak Grove	3 <1%	7 1%	1 <1%	1 <1%	3 1%	0	1 1%	0
Raytown	17 3%	13 3%	9 2%	12 3%	10 3%	10 2%	4 2%	7 3%
Sugar Creek	1 <1%	2 <1%	1 <1%	0	0	1 <1%	0	1 <1%
Other	29 6%	33 7%	20 4%	22 6%	25 7%	29 9%	11 5%	16 6%
Unknown	11 2%	5 1%	13 3%	4 1%	9 3%	3 <1%	2 1%	7 3%
Total	506	488	442	359	335	315	222	259

Table 15. Rate of Delinquent and Technical Formal Filings per 1,000 Youth in 2021 by City

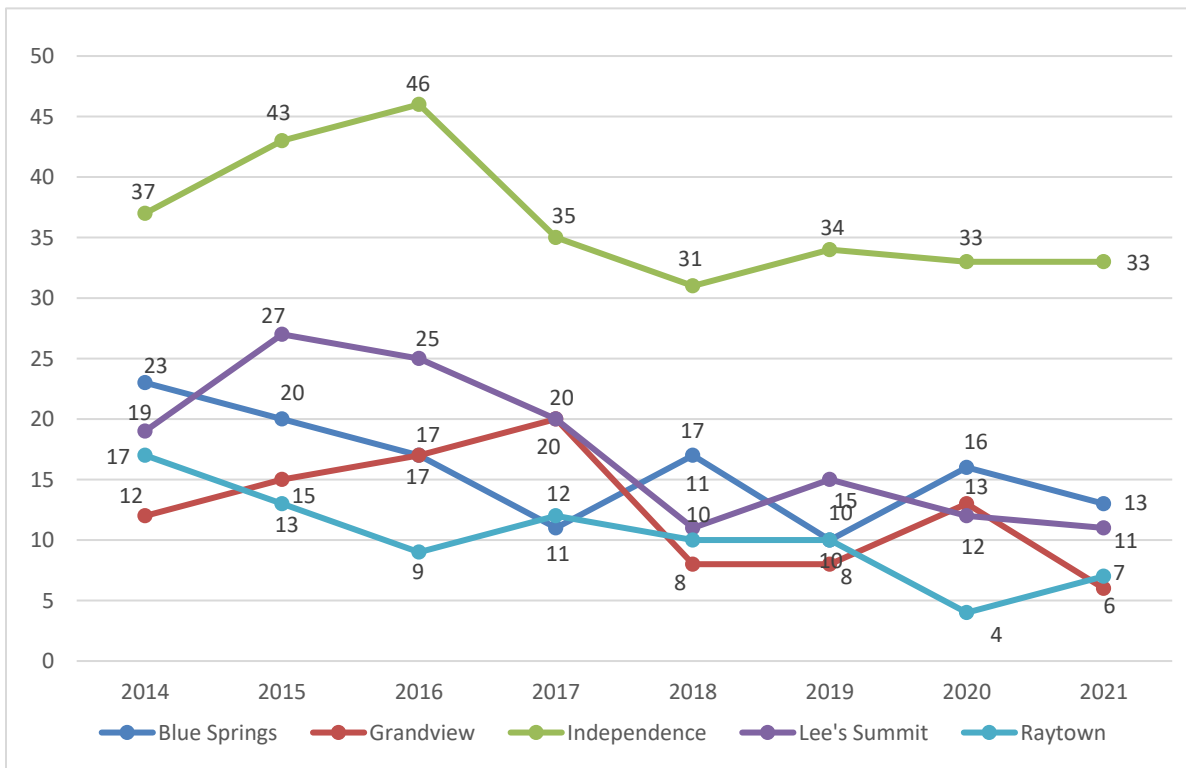
City	Number of Youth Ages 10-17 ²³	Rate of Filings per 1,000 Youth Ages 10-17
Blue Springs	6,858	1.9
Grandview	2,450	2.4
Independence	12,223	2.7
Kansas City	46,707	3.4
Lee's Summit	15,283	0.7
Raytown	2,955	2.4

²³ Number of youth in each city comes from the 2019 American Community Survey "Age and Sex" charts for individual cities available on United States Census Bureau website: <https://data.census.gov/cedsci/table>.

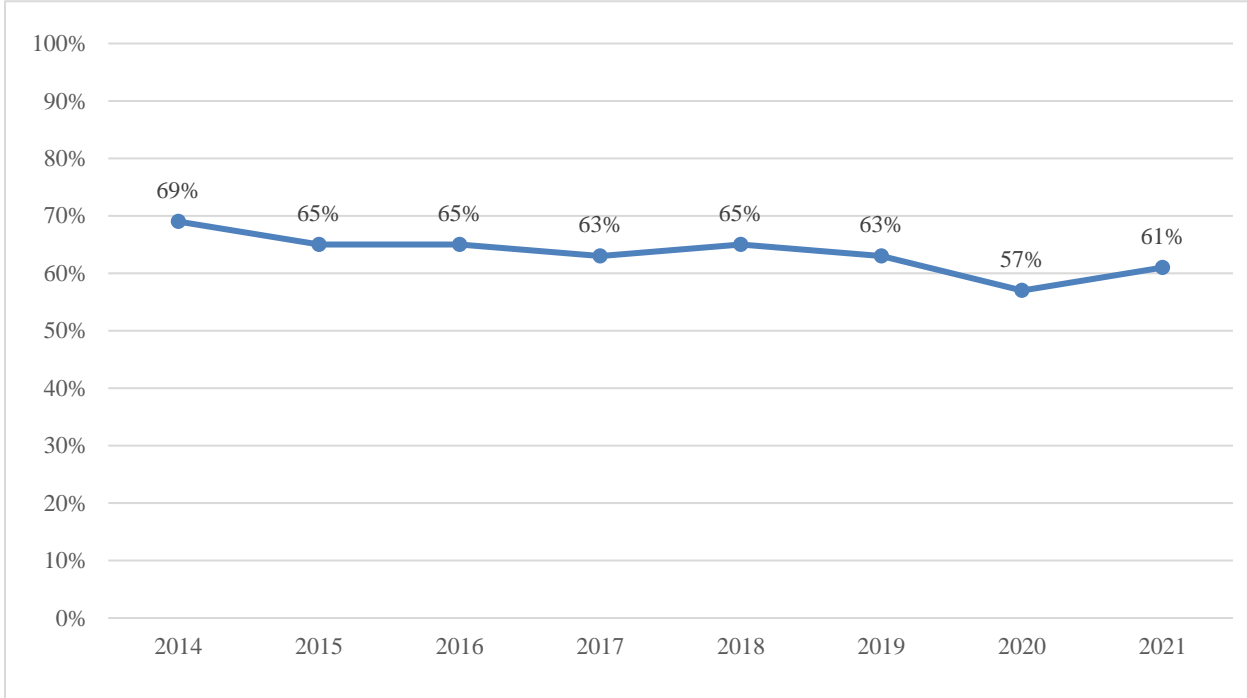
Graph 19. Youth Residing in Kansas City, Delinquent and Technical Formal Filings



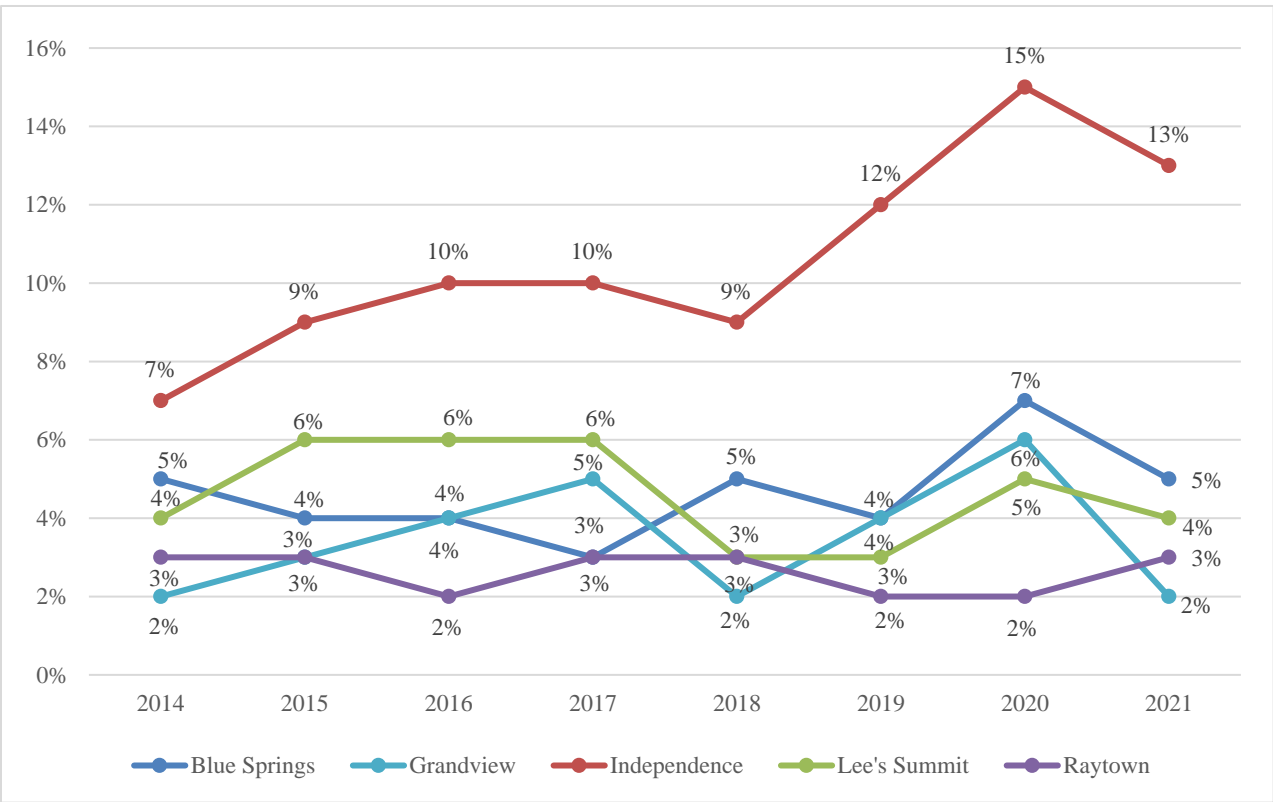
Graph 20. Youth Residing in Other Cities, Delinquent and Technical Formal Filings



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
- Child Protection & Permanency 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 annual number of youth detained in secure detention has declined 44% since 2014. The number of youth detained in non-secure detention has declined 67% in the same period.

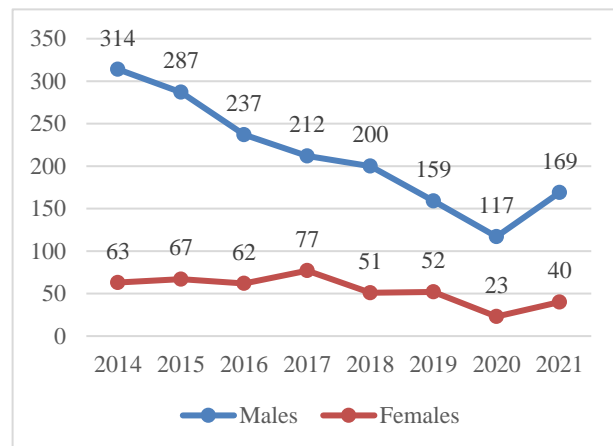
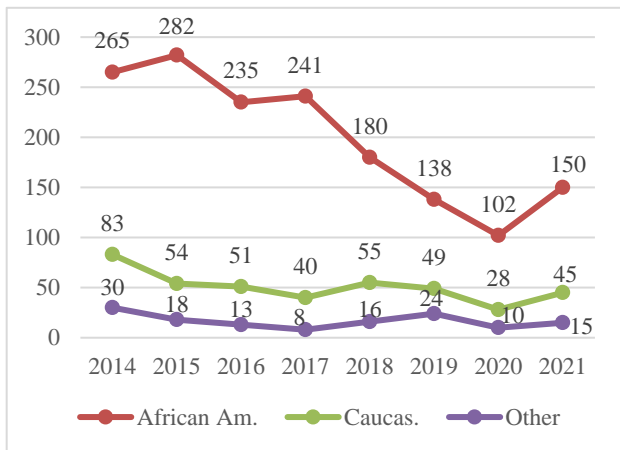
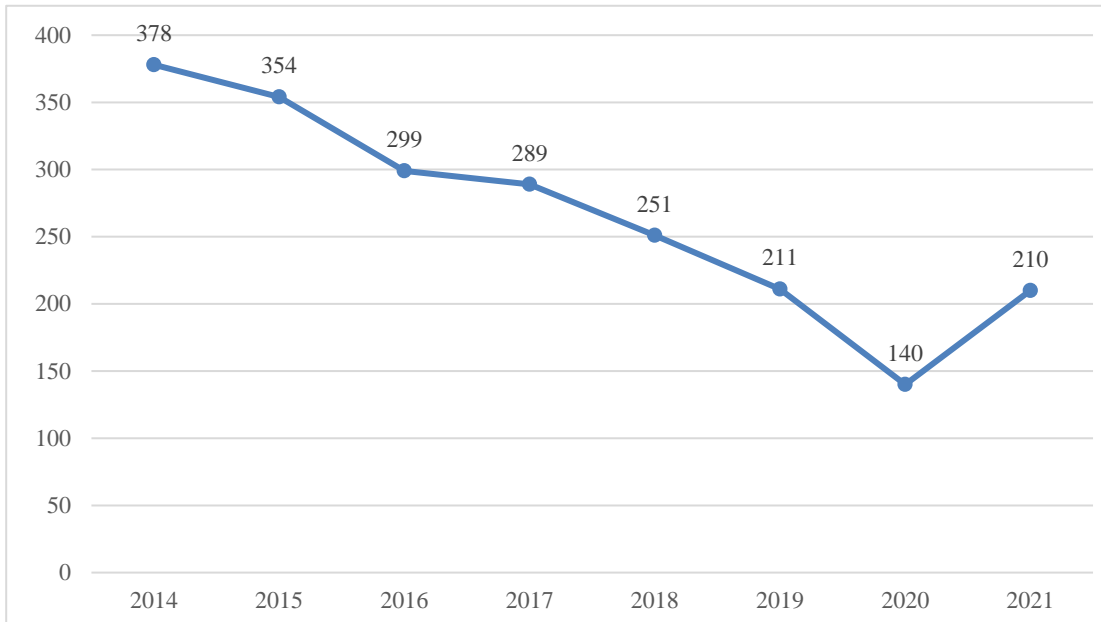
Prevention & Diversion. In 2021, the Juvenile Assessment Center served nearly 200 youth and their families through three channels (prevention, diversion, and care calls). The Court added another form of Diversion this year in the Emerging Adult Justice Unit, which serves youth who were 17 years old at the time of their alleged offense. In total, the Court served 223 on diversion, a 65% increase from 2020.

Probation & Residential Treatment. The number of youth ordered to Field Services supervision and committed to Hilltop Residential Center have declined quickly and steadily in recent years. The number of youth on probation is a little over half of what it was in 2019 and has declined 68% since 2014. These figures are very similar for Hilltop.

Table 16. Detainments in Secure Detention

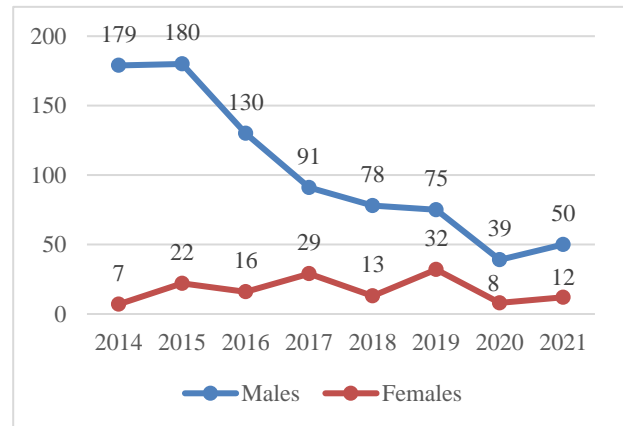
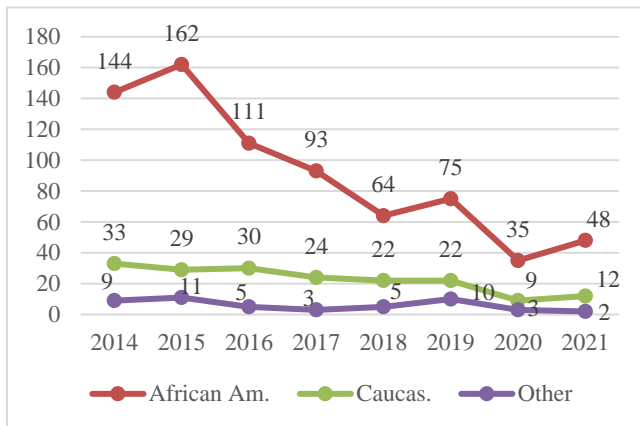
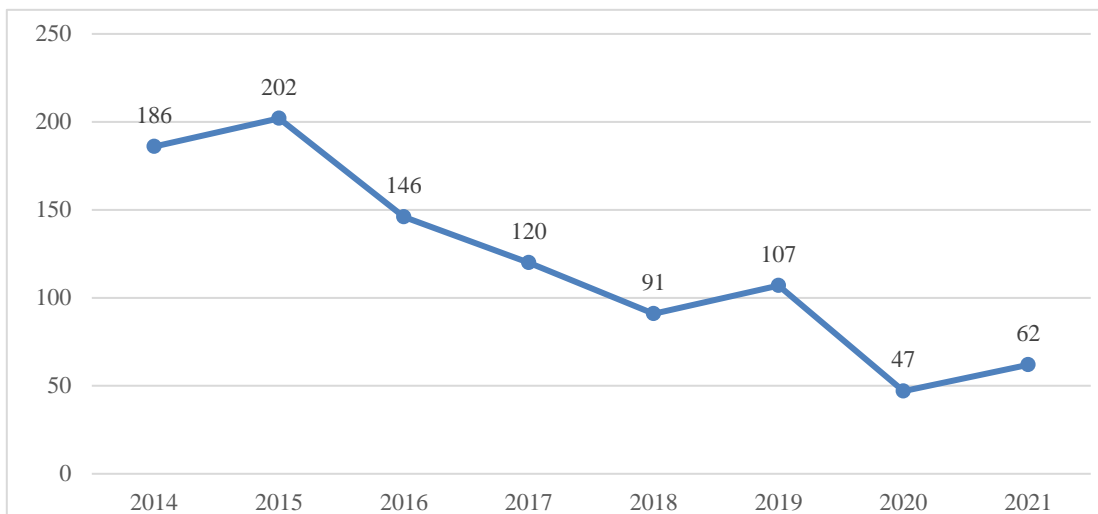
	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021
Detention	378	354	299	289	251	211	140	210
% change	--	-6%	-16%	-3%	-13%	-16%	-34%	+50%
Avg. Daily Population	21	19	23	23	23	18	14	17

Graphs 23-25. Youth Admitted to Detention



**Table 17 and Graphs 26-28
Detainments in Non-Secure Detention Facilities**

	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021
Jackson House	113	83	--	--	--	--	--	--
Community Reintegration Group Home ²⁴	58	84	116	61	14	--	--	--
Hilltop Residential Center	15	35	30	59	77	107	47	62
Total	186	202	146	120	91	107	47	62
% change	--	+9%	-28%	-18%	-24%	+18%	-56%	+32%



²⁴ 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 18. Prevention and Diversion Programs

Program	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021
ASSP (Alternative to School Suspension) ²⁵	91a/ 116y	50a/ 80y	18a/ 29y	--	--	--	--	--
Juvenile Assessment Center – Diversion Program ²⁶	276	112	94	65	40	34	29	34
Juvenile Assessment Center – Prevention ²⁷	--	--	--	--	--	22 ²⁸	42 ²⁹	73 ³⁰
Juvenile Assessment Center – Care Calls ³¹	212	181	164	153	199	202	55	84 ³²
Shoplifting Diversion	47	34	66	58	10	27	18	0
Success Court ³³	118	222	116	146	29	--	--	--
Informal Adjustment ³⁴	26	--	--	--	--	--	--	--
Emerging Adult Justice Unit ³⁵	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	35
Total	795	629	469	422	278	275	135	223
% change	--	-21%	-25%	-10%	-34%	-1%	-51%	+65%

²⁵ The row for ASSP reports the number of youth (y) impacted by the services provided to adults (a) by way of this program. Only the number of youth (not the number of adults) is included in the total number for the column.

The ASSP program has not been in operation since 2016.

²⁶ 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.

²⁷ The Juvenile Assessment Center began accepting cases on September 15, 2019.

²⁸ The JAC received 12 referrals from the Warrant Desk, 9 walk-ins, and 1 referral from KCPD in 2019.

²⁹ The JAC received 33 referrals from the Warrant Desk, 2 walk-ins, 1 referral from KCPD, and 6 referrals from the Case Assessment Unit in 2020. In addition, 16 care calls were directed to JAC – Prevention and are reflected in this total.

³⁰ The JAC received 45 referrals from the Warrant Desk, 10 referrals from KCPD and 2 referrals from the Case Assessment Unit in 2021.

³¹ Care calls became a function of the Juvenile Assessment Center in September 2019. They were previously handled by the Family Counseling Unit.

³² 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.

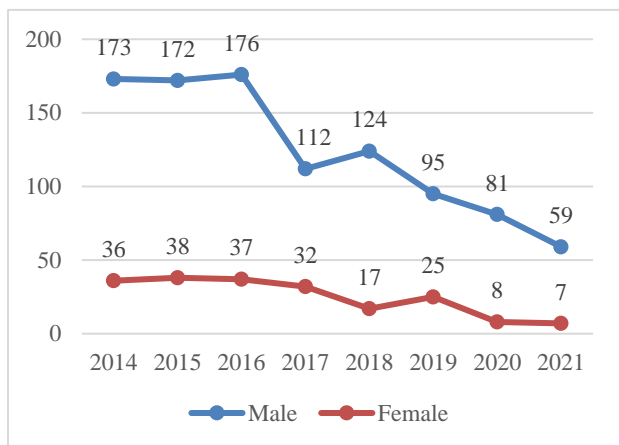
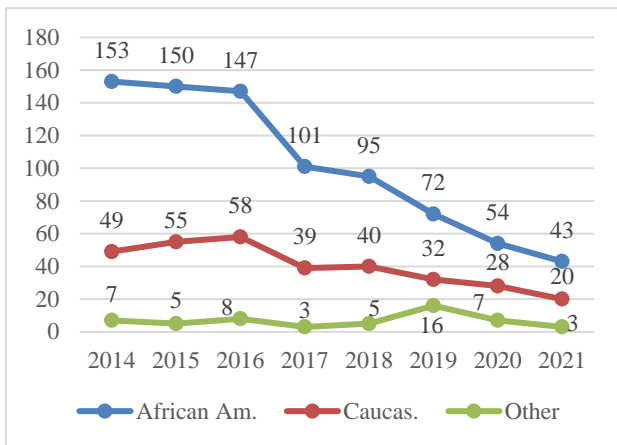
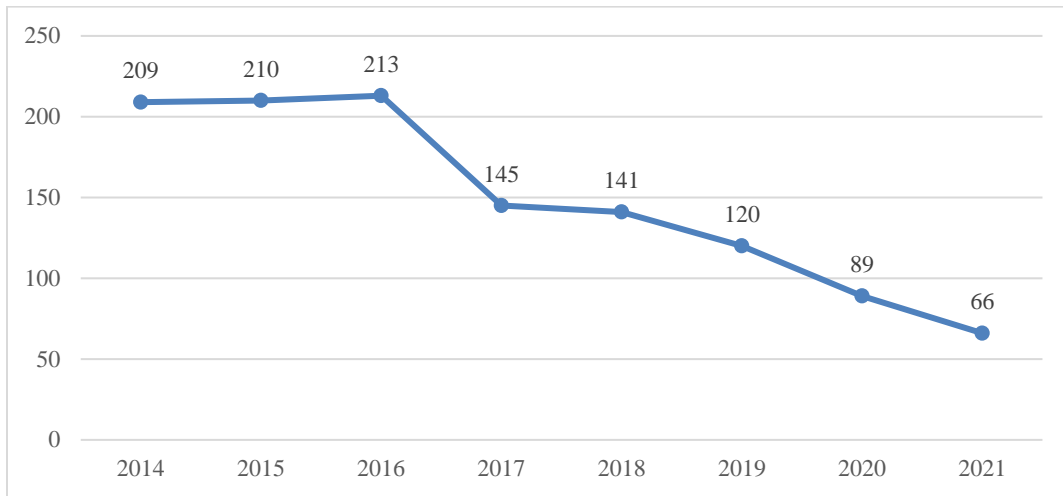
³³ This program was previously titled Truancy Court. It has not been in operation since 2018.

³⁴ The Informal Adjustment Program has not been in operation since 2014.

³⁵ The Emerging Adult Justice Unit began accepting cases referred to the Court on or after July 1, 2021.

**Table 19 and Graphs 29-31
Youth on Probation**

	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021
Youth Ordered to FCS Supervision ³⁶	209	210	213	145	141	120	89	66
% change	--	+0%	+1%	-32%	-3%	-13%	-26%	-26%

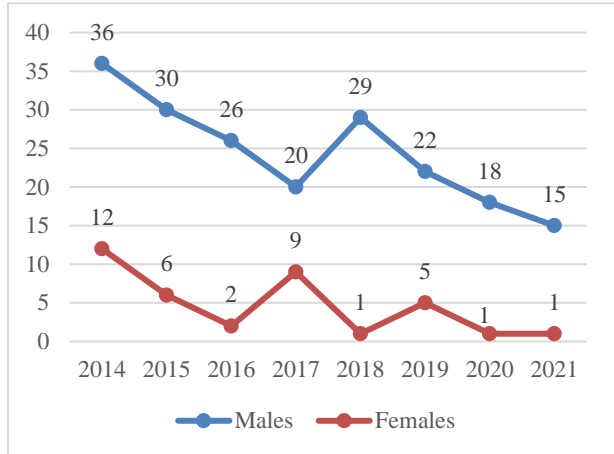
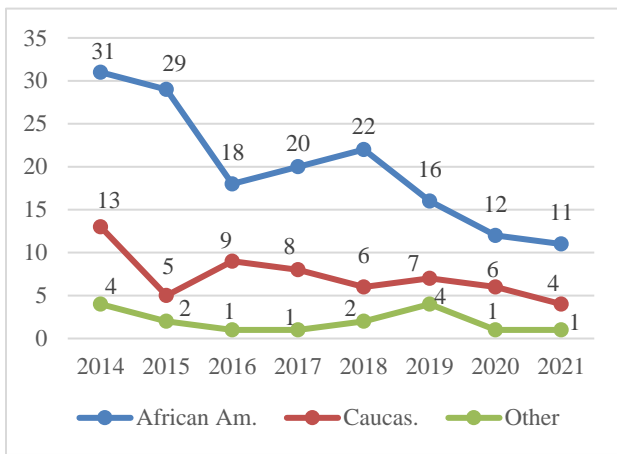
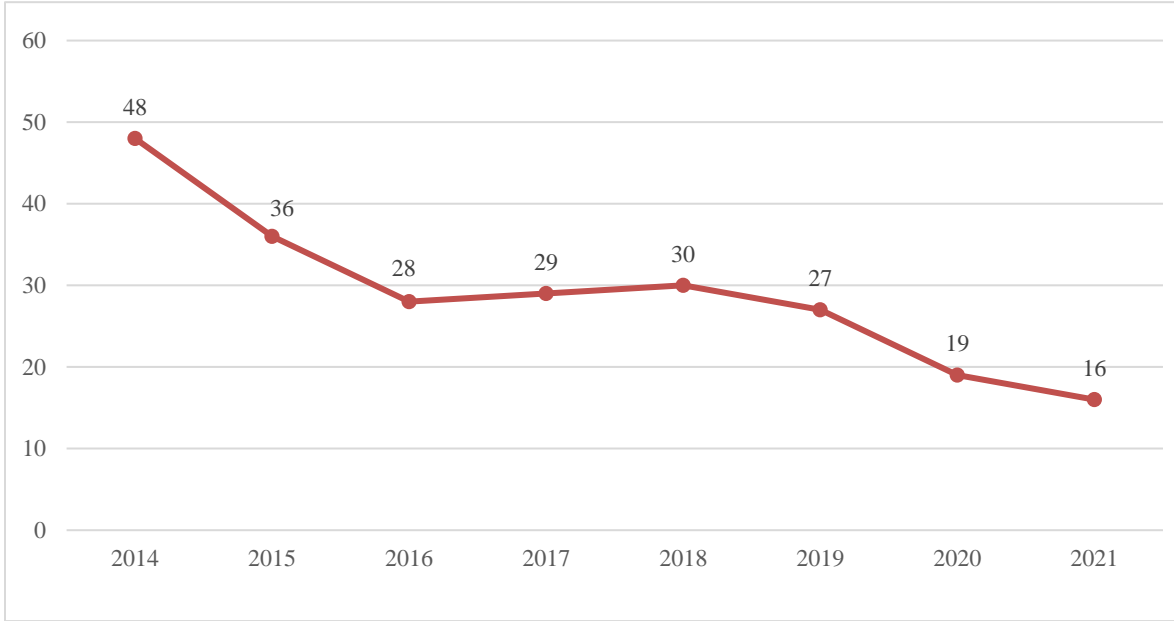


At the time of this report, race was unknown for one youth in 2017 and two youth in 2018.

³⁶ Youth ordered to Family Court Supervision includes youth on probation, at Hilltop Residential Center, and in private residential placements.

**Table 20 and Graphs 32-34
Commitments to Hilltop Residential Center**

	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021
Hilltop ³⁷	48	36	28	29	30	27	19	16
% change	--	-25%	-22%	+4%	+3%	-10%	-30%	-16%



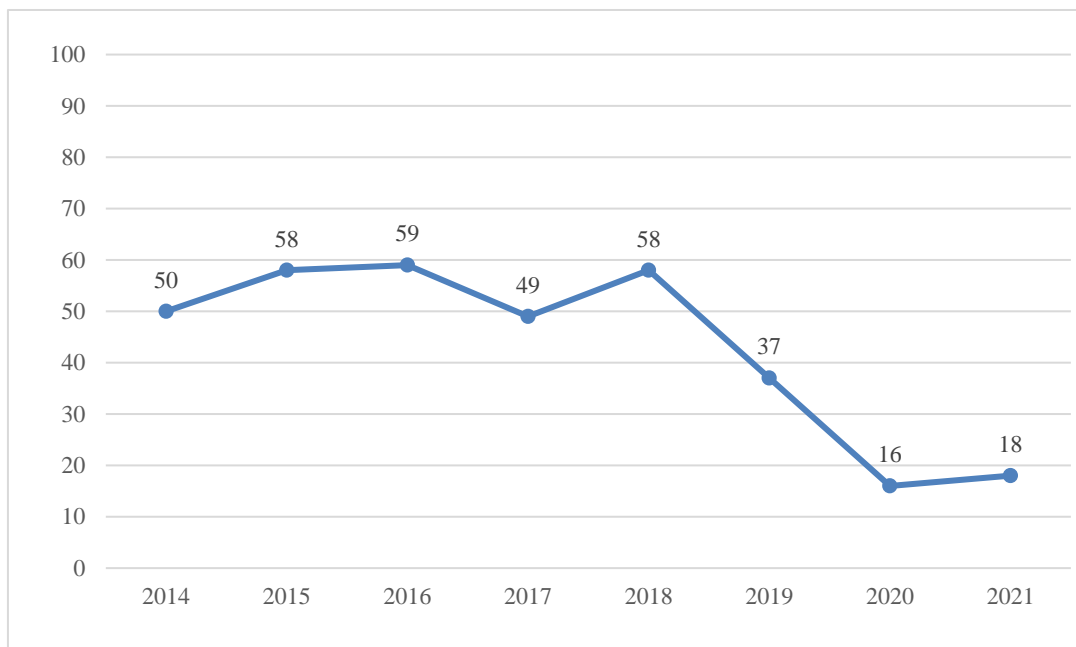
³⁷ Commitment figures capture initial commitment and do not include occasions when youth were returned to Hilltop after having been absent without leave or after being released on furlough.

Commitments to the Division of Youth Services

Commitments to the Missouri Division of Youth Services (DYS) have declined precipitously in the last three years; only about a third as many youth were committed to DYS in 2021 as were committed in 2018. Prior to this point, DYS commitments had remained fairly stable (at around 50-60 each year) since increasing in 2013 due to the closure of McCune Residential Center. The percentage of youth committed to DYS who were African American rose from last year but was at its second lowest point of the past 7 years. The decline in commitments, particularly among African-American youth, may be due to increased efforts to monitor racial disparities at the Court and avoid out-of-home placements when possible.

Table 21 and Graph 35
Commitments to the Division of Youth Services

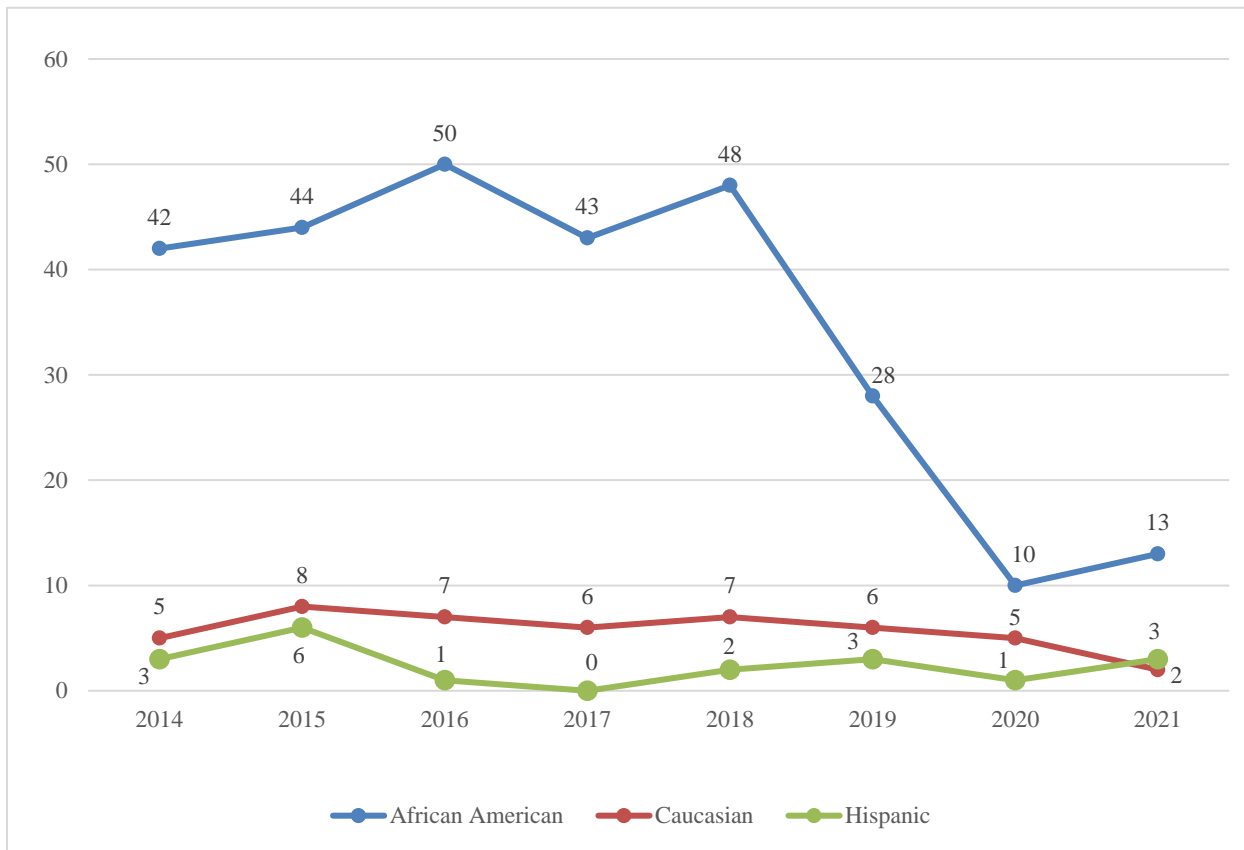
	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021
Number	50	58	59	49	58	37	16	18
% change	-26%	+16%	+2%	-17%	+18%	-36%	-57%	+13%
Rate per 1,000 youth ³⁸	0.7	0.8	0.8	0.7	0.8	0.5	0.2	0.2



³⁸ Rates were calculated based on the number of youth in Jackson County aged 10 to 17 years.

**Table 22 and Graph 36
Commitments to DYS by Race**

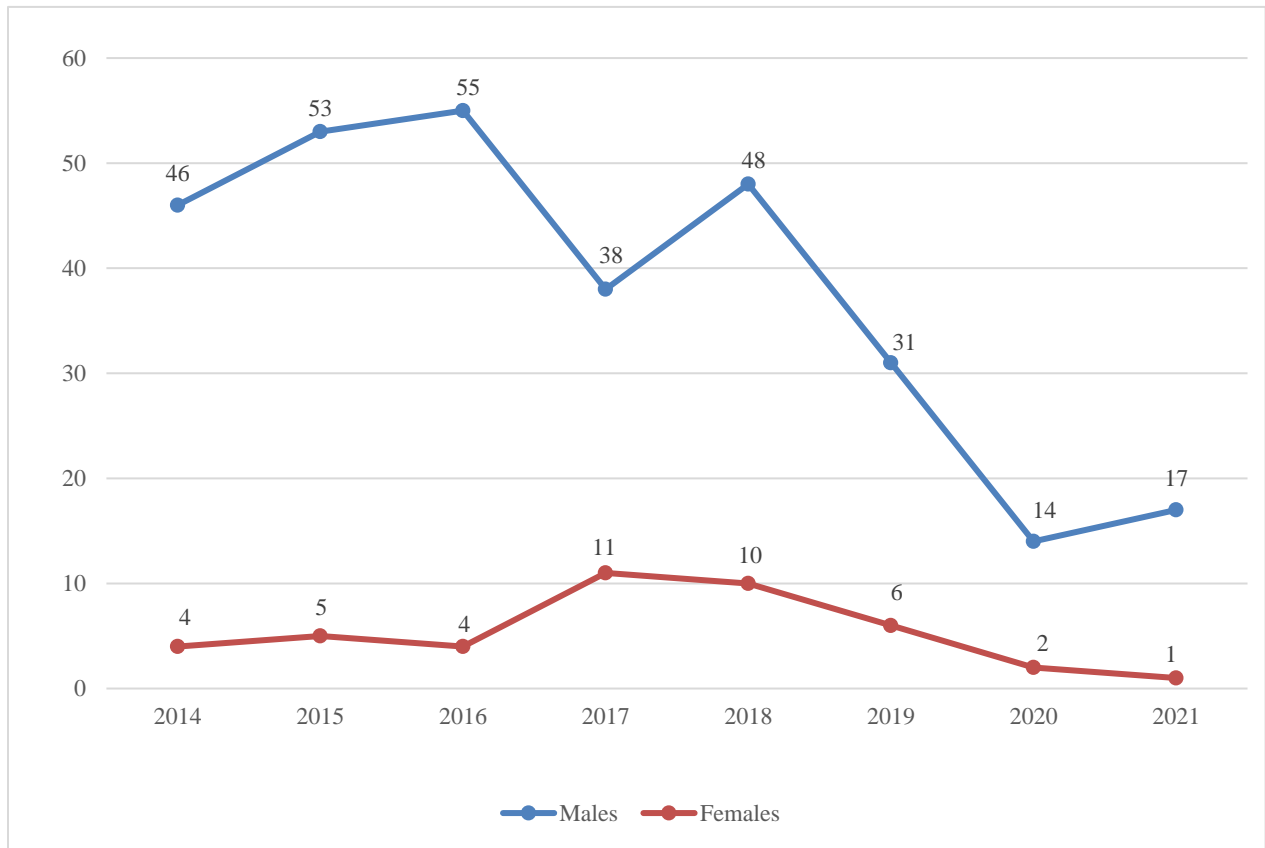
Year	African American		Caucasian		Hispanic	
	N	%	N	%	N	%
2014	42	84%	5	10%	3	6%
2015	44	76%	8	14%	6	10%
2016 ³⁹	50	85%	7	12%	1	2%
2017	43	88%	6	12%	0	--
2018	48	83%	7	12%	2	3%
2019	28	76%	6	16%	3	8%
2020	10	63%	5	31%	1	6%
2021	13	72%	2	11%	3	17%



³⁹ Race for one youth was designated other than African American, Caucasian, or Hispanic in 2016.

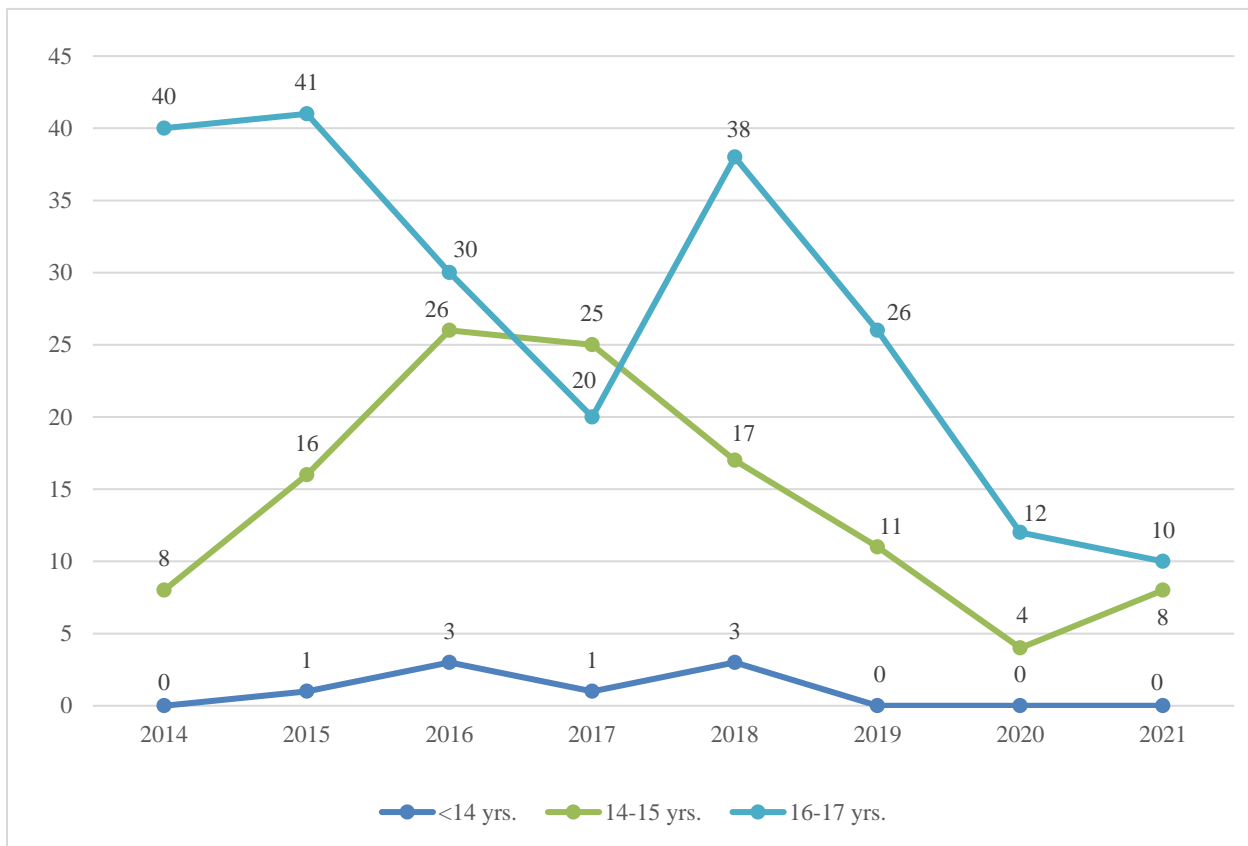
**Table 23 and Graph 37
Commitments to DYS by Gender**

Year	Males		Females	
	N	%	N	%
2014	46	92%	4	8%
2015	53	91%	5	9%
2016	55	93%	4	7%
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%



**Table 24 and Graph 38
Commitments to DYS by Age**

Year	<14 yrs.		14-15 yrs.		16-17 yrs.	
	N	%	N	%	N	%
2014 ⁴⁰	0	--	8	16%	40	80%
2015	1	1%	16	28%	41	71%
2016	3	5%	26	44%	30	51%
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%



⁴⁰ Two youth in 2014 were 18 at the time of DYS commitment.

Certification Cases

According to Missouri Statute:

“If a petition alleges that a child between the ages of 12 and 17 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 has committed an offense which would be considered first degree murder, second degree murder, first degree assault, forcible rape, forcible sodomy, first degree robbery, or distribution of drugs, 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.”⁴¹

The number of certification cases filed was higher in 2021 than in most recent years, but the number of youth certified was relatively low: Just 5 of the 59 youth with certification cases filed (8%) were certified. Since nearly all of the certification cases filed are mandatory (in most cases due to the type of offense), the high number of certification cases filed is a reflection of the high number of serious offenses charged. Raising the age of juvenile jurisdiction contributed to this rise as well: 23 of the 59 youth with certification cases filed (39%) were age 17 or older at the time of the alleged offense.

⁴¹ Missouri General Assembly. Revised Statute 211.071.

Table 25 and Graph 39
Certification Cases Filed and Youth Certified by Year

	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021
Cases Filed	46	54	47	48	51	41	34	59
% change	--	+17%	-13%	+2%	+6%	-20%	-17%	+74%
Rate per 1,000 youth ⁴²	0.6	0.8	0.7	0.7	0.7	0.6	0.5	0.8
Youth Certified ⁴³	3	9	15	9	9	10	1	5
% of cases filed	6%	17%	32%	19%	18%	24%	3%	8%



⁴² Rates were calculated based on the number of youth in Jackson County aged 10 to 17 years.

⁴³ Certifications are reported by year the case was filed rather than year certification took place.

Table 26. Certification Cases Filed in 2021 by Charge

Charge Category	Mandatory Filings (Offense ⁴⁴)	Mandatory Filings (Priors ⁴⁵)	Discretionary Filings
Assault ⁴⁶	14	1	2
Murder ⁴⁷	13	0	0
Sex Offense	2	0	1
Robbery	21	0	2
Burglary	--	0	1
Drug Offense	--	0	1
Unlawful Use of Weapon	--	1	0
Total	50	2	7

Table 27. Details for Youth Certified (of Youth with Certification Cases Filed in 2021)

Offense	Num of Filings	Filing Type	Age at Filing	Race	Gender
Murder 1 st	1	Mandatory	1 aged 16 yrs	1 African American	1 Male
Murder 2 nd	3	Mandatory	2 aged 17 yrs 1 aged 19 yrs	3 African American	3 Male
Assault 1 st	1	Mandatory	1 aged 17 yrs	1 Caucasian	1 Male
Total Certified in 2021	5	5 Mandatory	1 aged 16 yrs 3 aged 17 yrs 1 aged 19 yrs	4 African American 1 Caucasian	5 Male
Total with Certification Denied	54				

⁴⁴ MO Rev. Statute 211.071.1 reads: “If a petition alleges that a child between the ages of twelve and seventeen has committed an offense which would be considered a felony if committed by an adult and if a petition alleges that any child has committed an offense which would be considered first degree murder under section 565.020, second degree murder under section 565.021, first degree assault under section 565.050, forcible rape under section 566.030 as it existed prior to August 28, 2013, rape in the first degree under section 566.030, forcible sodomy under section 566.060 as it existed prior to August 28, 2013, sodomy in the first degree under section 566.060, first degree robbery under section 570.023, or distribution of drugs under section 579.055 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.” These offenses constitute the mandatory (offense) designation in this table.

⁴⁵ MO Rev. Statute 211.071.1 reads: “If a petition alleges that a child between the ages of twelve and seventeen has committed an offense which would be considered a felony if committed by an adult and the child 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.” These offenses constitute the mandatory (priors) designation in this table.

⁴⁶ Assault includes Assault 1st, Assault 2nd, and Domestic Assault 1st.

⁴⁷ Murder includes Murder in the 1st and 2nd degrees.

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 in Family Treatment Court has fluctuated over the past eight years, with an average around 95. In 2021, 80 individuals participated in FTC—an increase from 2020 but significantly lower than 2019. With protective custody hearings held virtually, not all cases are screened immediately, resulting in fewer cases admitted since the pandemic began.

Child Protection & Permanency Unit. In January 2019, the Court established the Child Protection & Permanency Unit with the goal of safely reducing time to permanency for children ages 0-3. So far, the program has seen positive results in a higher number of reunifications and shorter time under jurisdiction. Families in 37 CAN cases were admitted to the CPPU in 2021, down just slightly from 2020.

Parent Awareness Courses. Family Court Resource Services offers three parent awareness courses. Focus on Children in Separation (FOCIS) is a class for married but separated couples with children; Re-FOCIS is a refresher course; and Parenting Together Living Apart (PTLA) is a class for never-married parents. Enrollment in these courses declined considerably in 2020 due to the COVID-19 pandemic and remained low in 2021, in part because live classes were reinstated for adults only. A total of 1,525 parents were served in 2021, an increase of 12% from 2020.

Supervised Visitation. Supervised visitation is provided for cases with issues such as custodial access interference or parent-child estrangement. Therapeutic visitation may be ordered for non-custodial parents and their children to address child exposure to domestic violence, parent estrangement, and any other issue deemed appropriate by the court. Supervised visitation services increased some from 2020 but still remained much lower than 2019. This may be because some families had made other arrangements for visitation during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Mediation. Overall, mediators served 292 cases in 2021, a 15% increase from 2020. This figure does not include mediation conducted by court-approved private mediators.

**Table 28 and Graphs 40-42
Participants Entering the Family Treatment Court by Year**

	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021
FTC	97	90	96	76	133	115	72	80
% change	--	-7%	+7%	-21%	+75%	-14%	-37%	+11%

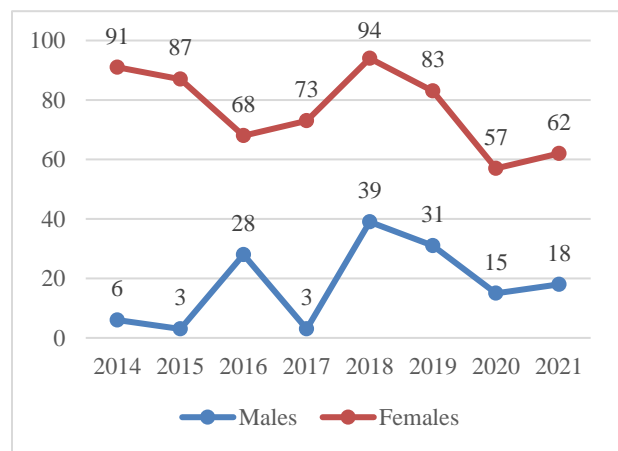
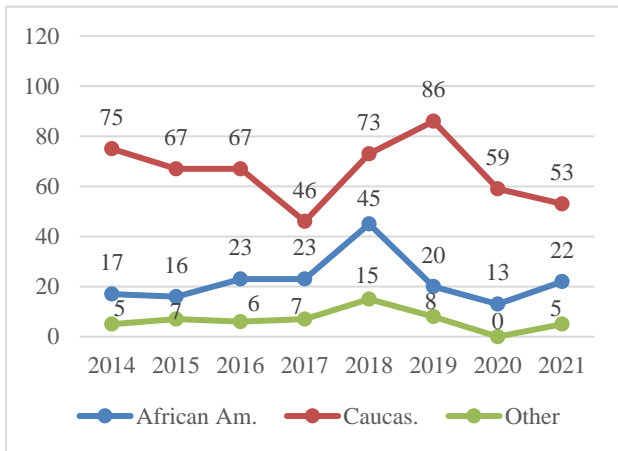
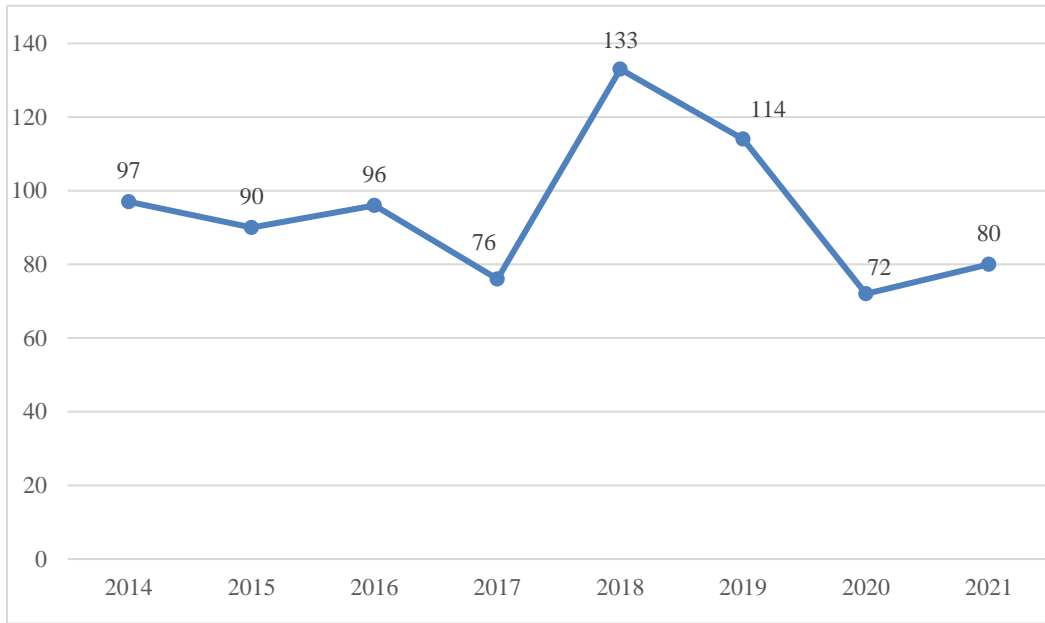
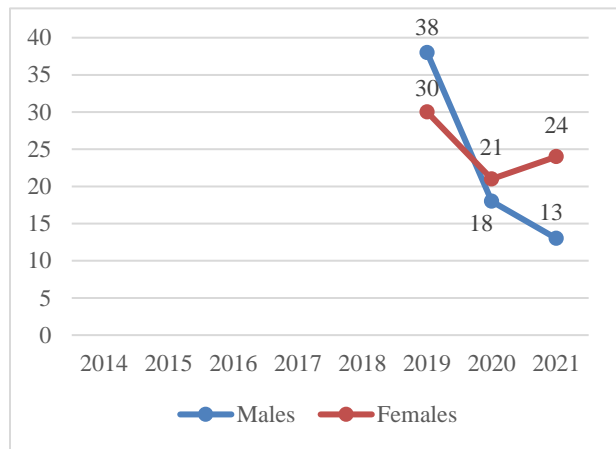
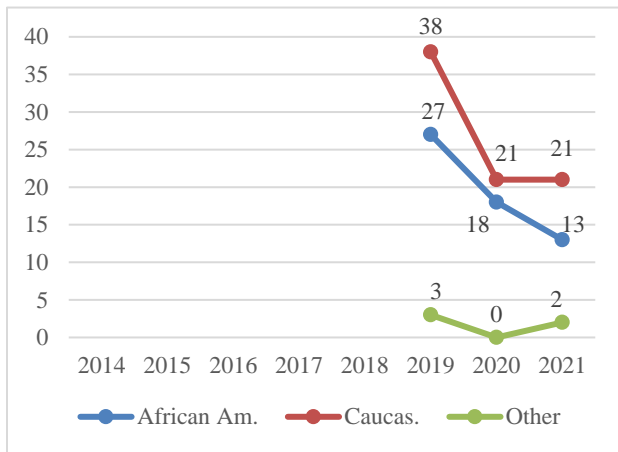
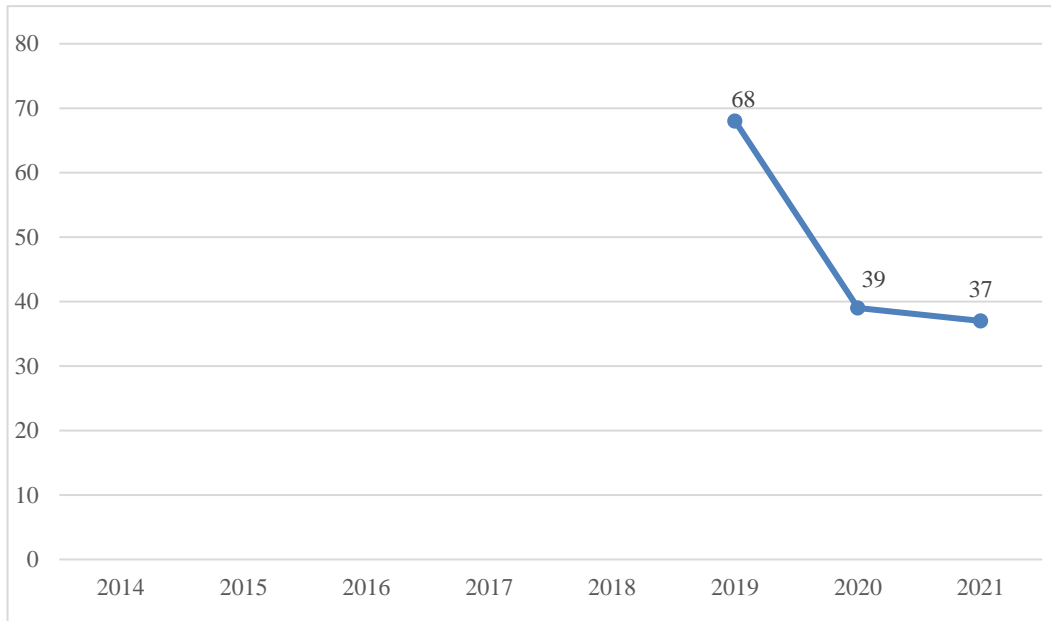


Table 29 and Graphs 43-45
Children with Cases Entering the Child Protection & Permanency Unit by Year

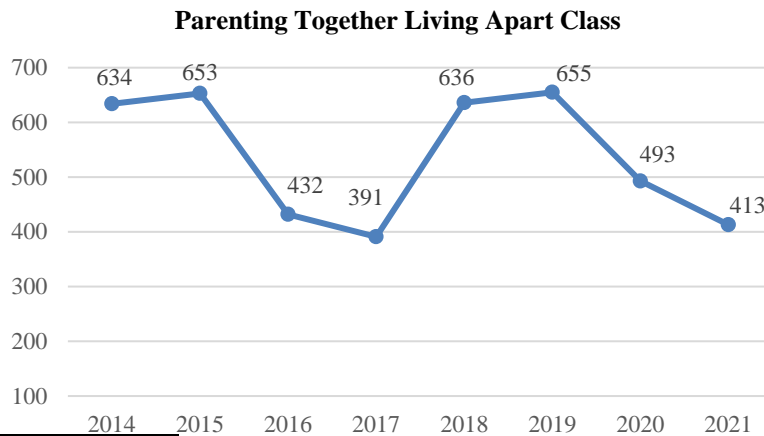
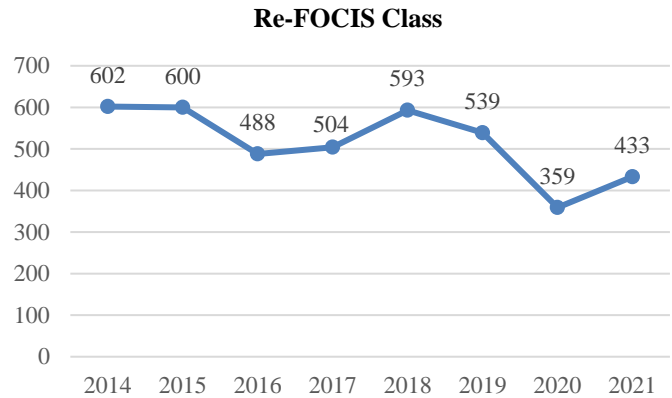
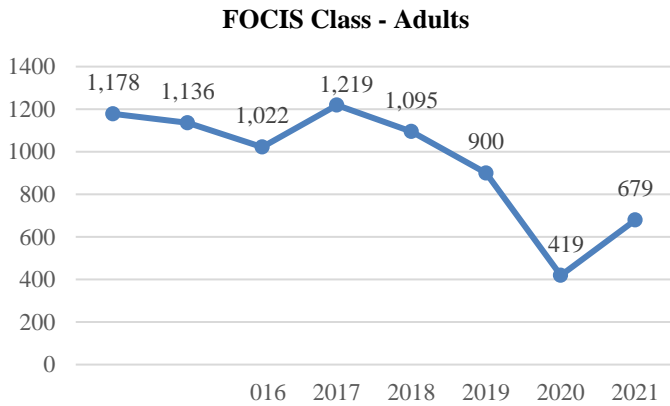
	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021
CPPU	--	--	--	--	--	68	39	37 ⁴⁸
% change	--	--	--	--	--	--	-43%	-5%



⁴⁸ Race was unknown for one youth in 2021.

**Table 30 and Graphs 46-48
Parent Awareness Courses**

Course	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020 ⁴⁹	2021 ⁵⁰
FOCIS								
Adults	1,178	1,136	1,022	1,219	1,095	900	419	679
Youth	783	859	738	779	834	797	92	0
FOCIS Total	1,961	1,995	1,760	1,998	1,929	1,697	511	679
Re-FOCIS	602	600	488	504	593	539	359	433
Parenting Together Living Apart	634	653	432	391	636	655	493	413
Grand Total	3,197	3,248	2,680	2,893	3,158	2,891	1,363	1,525
% change	--	+2%	-17%	+8%	+9%	-9%	-53%	+12%



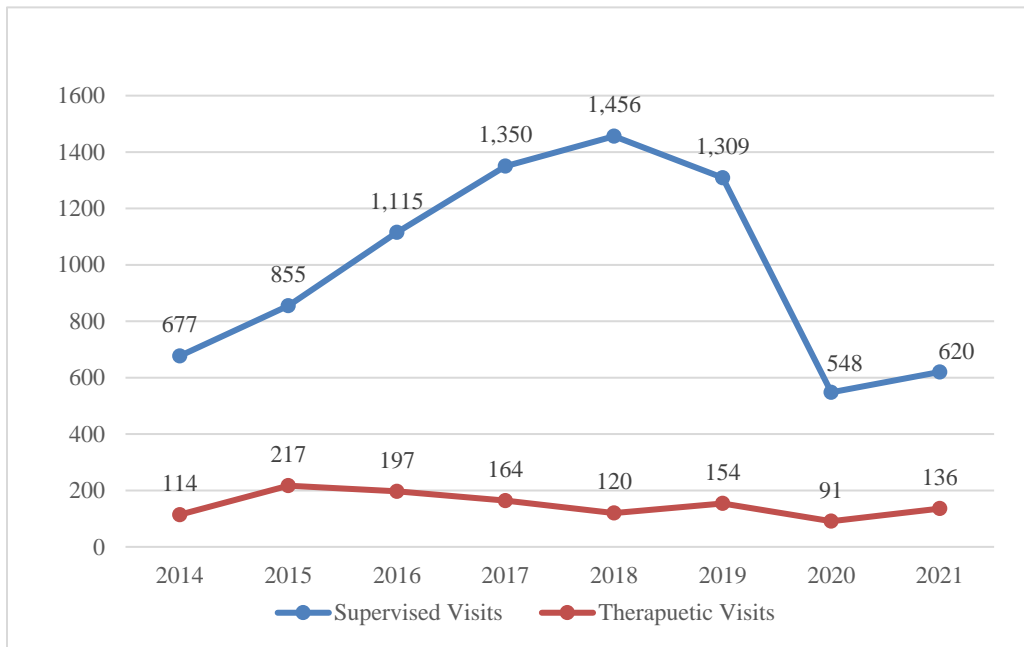
⁴⁹ For several months in 2020, all in-person classes were suspended, and class content was provided to parents in the form of packets sent through Civil Records. The number of packets sent out was not tracked. For a few months before packets were assembled, parents who would have attended FOCIS were sent to a similar online class. They are not reflected in the numbers presented in this table.

⁵⁰ 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 31. Connections Program Visits and Exchanges

	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020 ⁵¹	2021 ⁵²
Supervised Visits								
Scheduled Visits	1,039	1,308	1,643	1,876	2,144	1,889	1,118	921
Actual Visits	677	855	1,115	1,350	1,456	1,309	548	620
Therapeutic Visits								
Scheduled Visits	241	346	332	250	181	227	158	219
Actual Visits	114	217	197	164	120	154	91	136
Grand Total Visits								
Scheduled Visits	1,280	1,654	1,975	2,126	2,325	2,116	1,276	1,140
Actual Visits ⁵³	791	1,072	1,312	1,514	1,576	1,463	639	756
Monitored Exchanges								
Scheduled Exchanges	477	757	1,043	710	189	94	13	6
Actual Exchanges	286	449	786	561	100	49	4	5

Graph 49. Connections Program Visits Held



⁵¹ Visitation services were cancelled several times throughout 2020 due to concerns about safety during the COVID-19 pandemic.

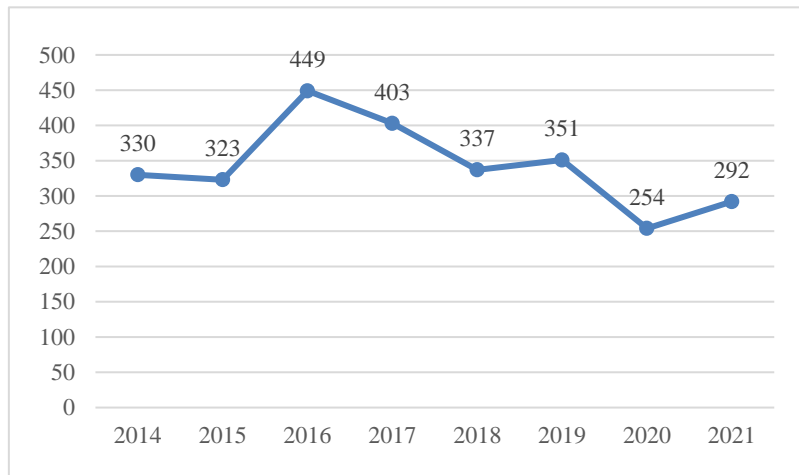
⁵² Visitation services reopened in February 2021, but the program lost many families that had previously participated in visits and exchanges as they had made other arrangements during the COVID-19 pandemic.

⁵³ Actual visits represent units of services. One unit of service equals one hour.

Table 32. Mediation Services

	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021
Mediation (Rule 68.12)								
Referrals	206	155	101	107	96	49	21	22
Mediations	-- ⁵⁴	--	--	--	--	--	--	--
Adult Abuse Mediation								
Referrals	182	200	202	161	115	141	41	72
Mediations	172	180	202	156	112	136	38	71
Child Dependency Mediation								
Referrals	100	157	276	238	249	229	180	287
Mediations	79	115	217	227	208	203	207 ⁵⁵	211
Other Domestic Relations Mediations⁵⁶								
Referrals	85	34	41	33	16	14	9	12
Mediations	79	28	30	20	17	12	9	10
Grand Total Mediations								
Referrals	573	546	620	539	476	432	251	393
Mediations	330	323	449	403	337	351	254	292

Graph 50. Total Mediations Held



⁵⁴ Local Rule 68.12 establishes the use of private mediators by child custodians to aid resolution of custody and visitation issues. The Family Court does not collect information about actual use of private mediators.

⁵⁵ Twenty-seven child-dependency mediations completed in 2020 were carried over from the previous year.

⁵⁶ 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 33. Victim Services Cases Served

	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021
Victim Services Cases	446	471	515	351	377	296	232	326
% change	--	+6%	+9%	-32%	+7%	-21%	-22%	+41%

COVID-19 Pandemic Monitoring

Family Court operations looked very different starting in March 2020, as the 16th Circuit made the decision to suspend most in-person hearings and programs and began delivering its services virtually. While some operations returned to normal in 2021, other services continued to be impacted by the need for social distancing. This section presents data from 2019, 2020, and 2021 in a few key areas of operation to paint a statistical portrait of how the COVID-19 pandemic contributed to trends at the Court. These include:

- Inventory of Open Cases
- Detention Admissions and Daily Populations
- Re-offense Rates
- Time to Disposition

In some areas, the pandemic had a clear and time-limited impact, but this was not always the case. We will continue to monitor these areas to determine whether conditions during the pandemic were anomalous or indicative of more persistent trends.

Referrals and Open Cases

The inventory of open delinquency cases increased slightly in the first month of the pandemic but has decreased steadily since to the lowest point in the past three years—below pre-pandemic levels. The number of open delinquency cases was 24% lower at the end of 2021 than it was at the end of 2019. Referrals for delinquent offenses in 2021 were higher than in 2020 but significantly lower than in 2019. The breakdown by offense type in the past two years was very similar and was largely similar to 2019 with two notable differences: about twice as many youth were referred for first- or second-degree assault in 2020 and 2021 as in 2019, and around half as many youth were referred for tampering with a motor vehicle.

In contrast to delinquency cases, the number of open child abuse and neglect cases rose steadily between March and November 2020 after a large drop over the course of 2019—likely due to the backlog of hearings generated during the first few months of the pandemic. This backlog has since cleared out, as evidenced by the falling number of open cases, which is now 4% lower than it was at the end of 2019.

The numbers of open TPR cases and children free for adoption both declined during the course of the pandemic, after some fluctuation in 2020. At the end of 2021, there were 41% fewer open TPR cases and 36% fewer children free for adoption than there were at the end of 2019. The low number of TPR cases appears to be due to staffing issues at the Family Court rather than factors more directly related to the pandemic.

Graph 51. Inventory of Open Delinquency Cases

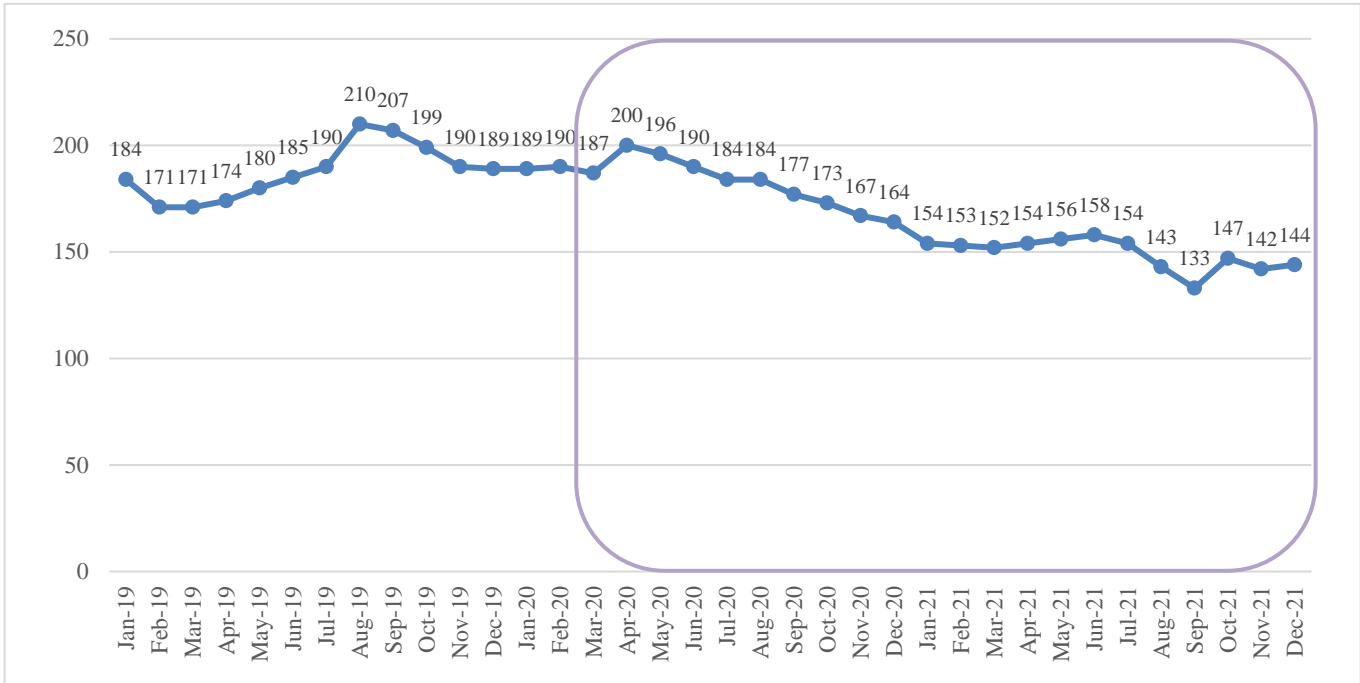
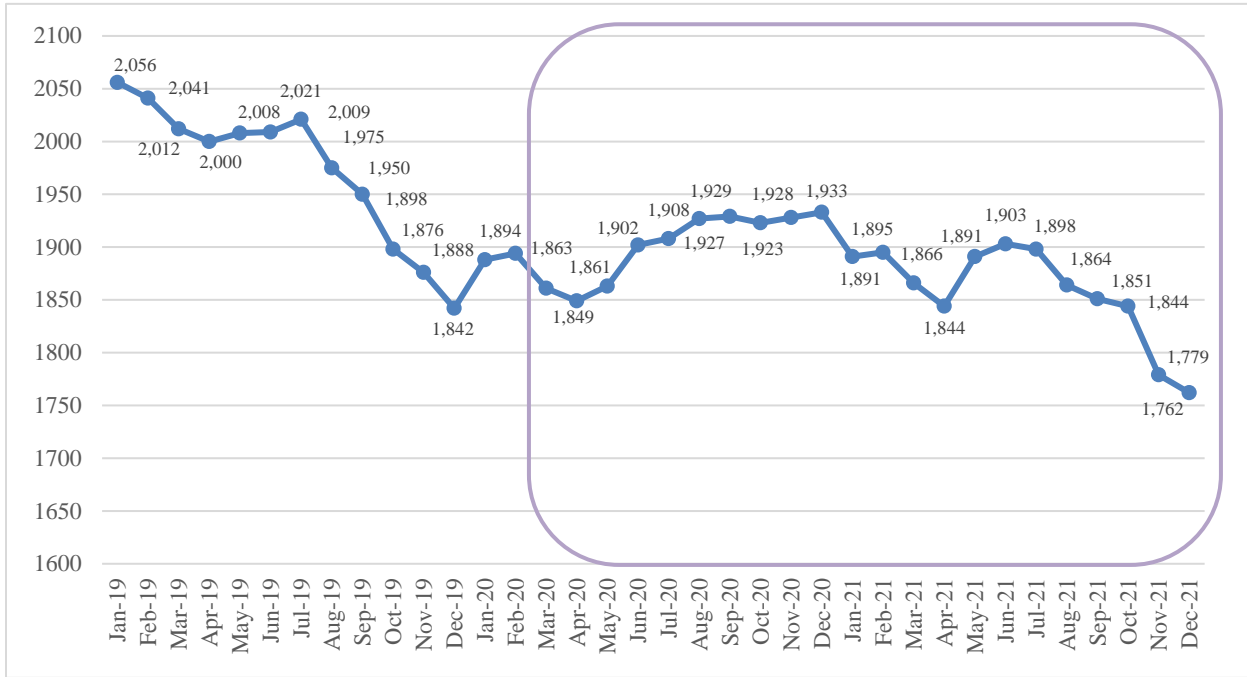


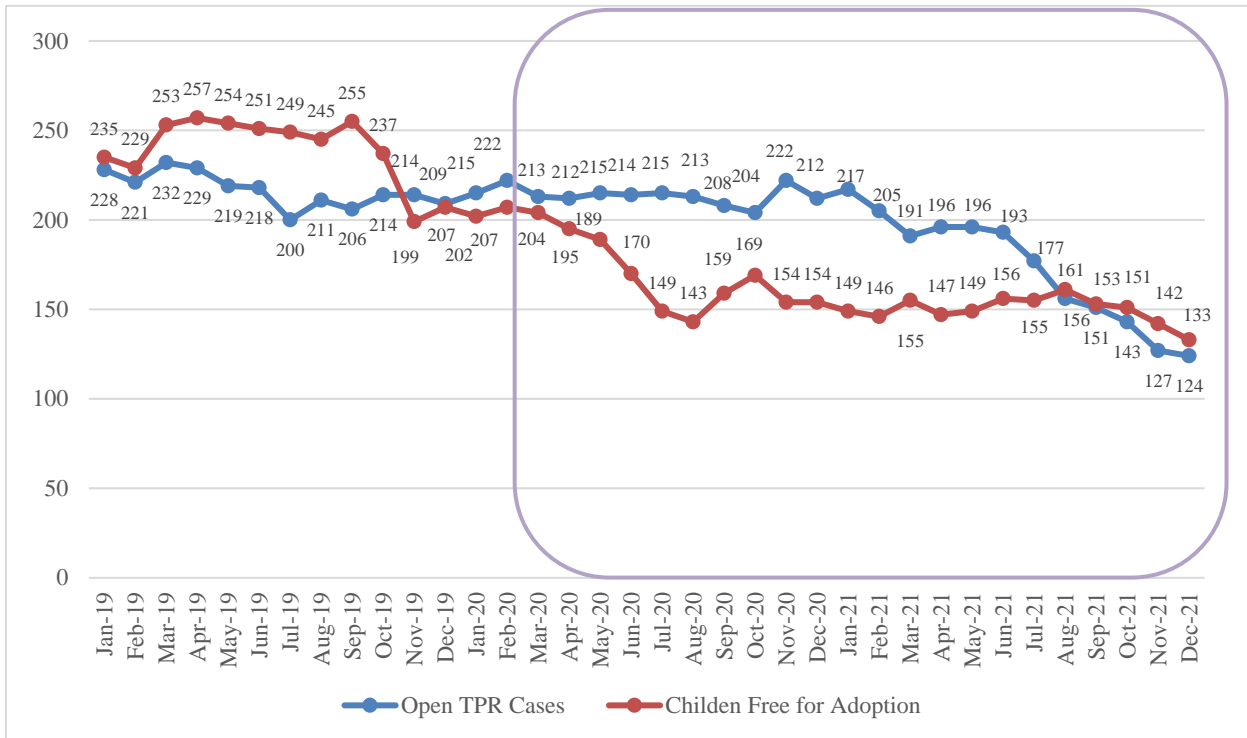
Table 34. Delinquent Referrals by Offense Type

	Assault 1st/2nd	Robbery 1st/2nd	Sex Offenses	Drug Offenses	Burglary/ Stealing	Tamper- ing	Weapons	Total
2019	45 (5%)	56 (7%)	99 (12%)	66 (8%)	136 (17%)	102 (12%)	17 (2%)	823
2020	88 (12%)	64 (9%)	104 (14%)	38 (5%)	140 (19%)	43 (6%)	20 (3%)	723
2021	99 (13%)	58 (8%)	114 (15%)	50 (7%)	113 (15%)	51 (7%)	19 (3%)	758

Graph 52. Inventory of Open Child Abuse & Neglect Cases



Graph 53. Inventory of Open TPR Cases and Children Free for Adoption



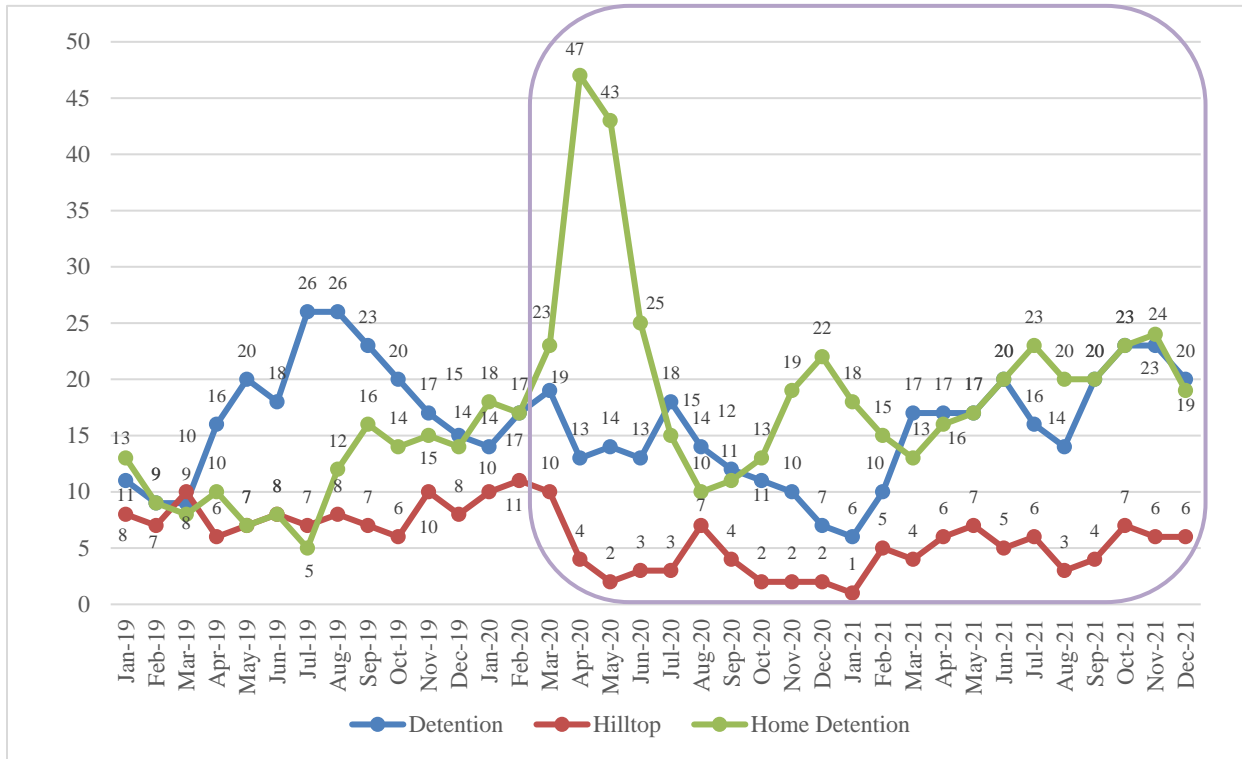
Detention and Probation

When the pandemic began in March 2020, many youth were released from detention facilities to home detention with electronic monitoring. The population of home detention thus spiked in April but dropped significantly through the spring and summer months before increasing again more steadily in the fall and winter. Hilltop and secure detention populations decreased over the second half of 2020 but rose again in 2021, corresponding with trends in the number of delinquent referrals.

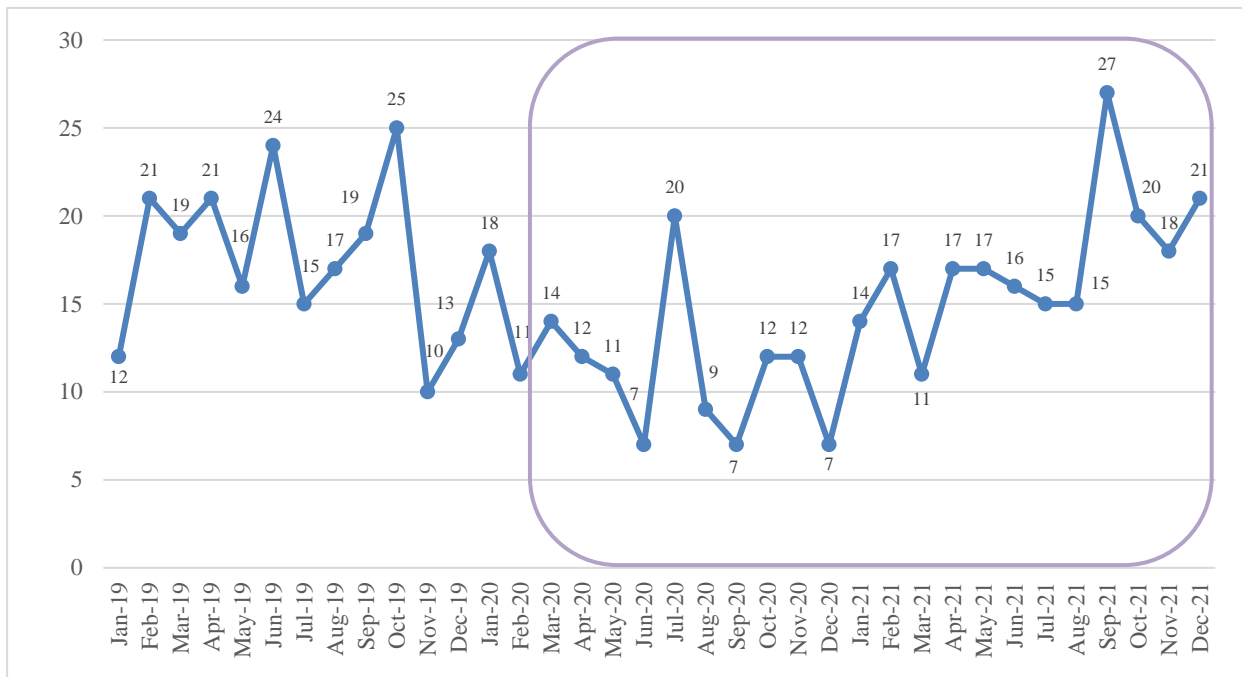
Changes in the racial breakdown of secure detention in the first year of the pandemic were somewhat reversed in 2021. The average daily population of Black youth went down significantly in 2020 but returned to the 2019 level in 2021. And the percentage of youth admitted to detention who were Black, which increased in 2020, dropped a bit this year. Both rates of admission and average daily population for Black youth are very similar to the rate of formal filing (71-72%).

Youth on probation were less likely to be referred for a new offense in 2020 and 2021 than they were in the year before the pandemic. In fact, the rates of youth on probation who received a new delinquent or technical referral in 2021 were half what they were in 2019. We will watch to see whether this pattern changes as pandemic restrictions relax over time.

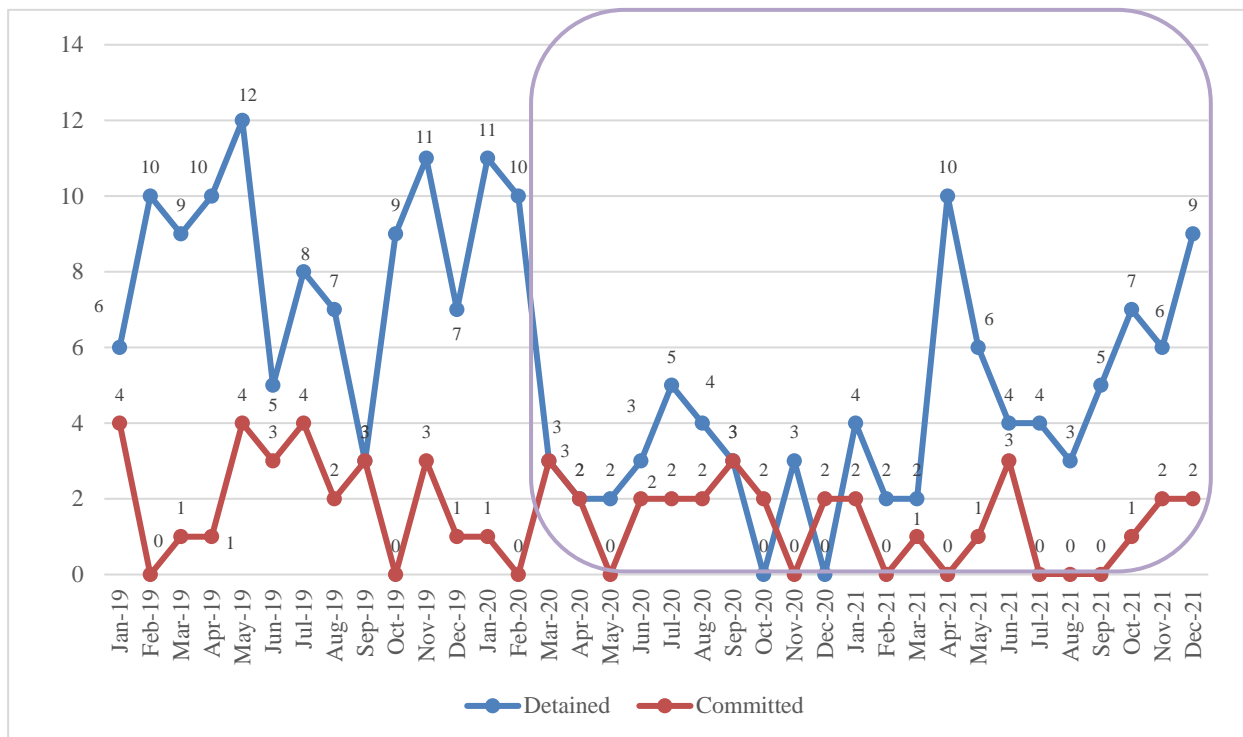
Graph 54. Average Daily Population – Secure Detention and Detention Alternatives



Graph 55. Admissions to Secure Detention



Graph 56. Admissions to Hilltop



Graph 57. Admissions to Home Detention

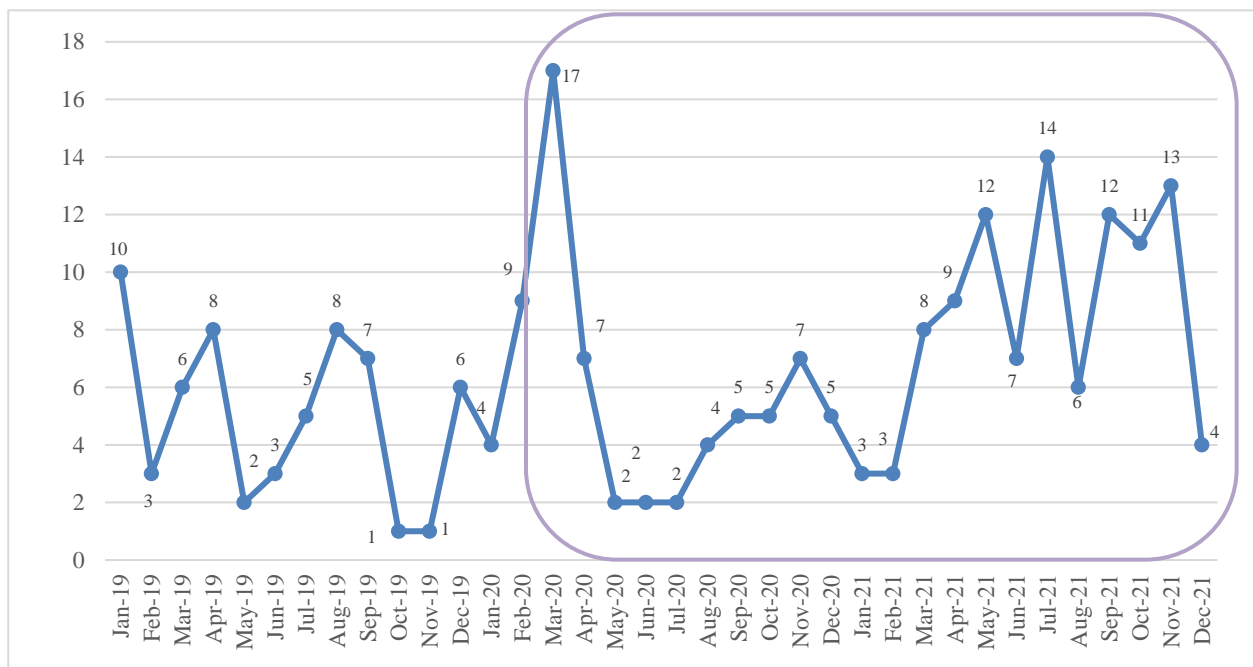


Table 35. New Referrals for Youth on Probation⁵⁷

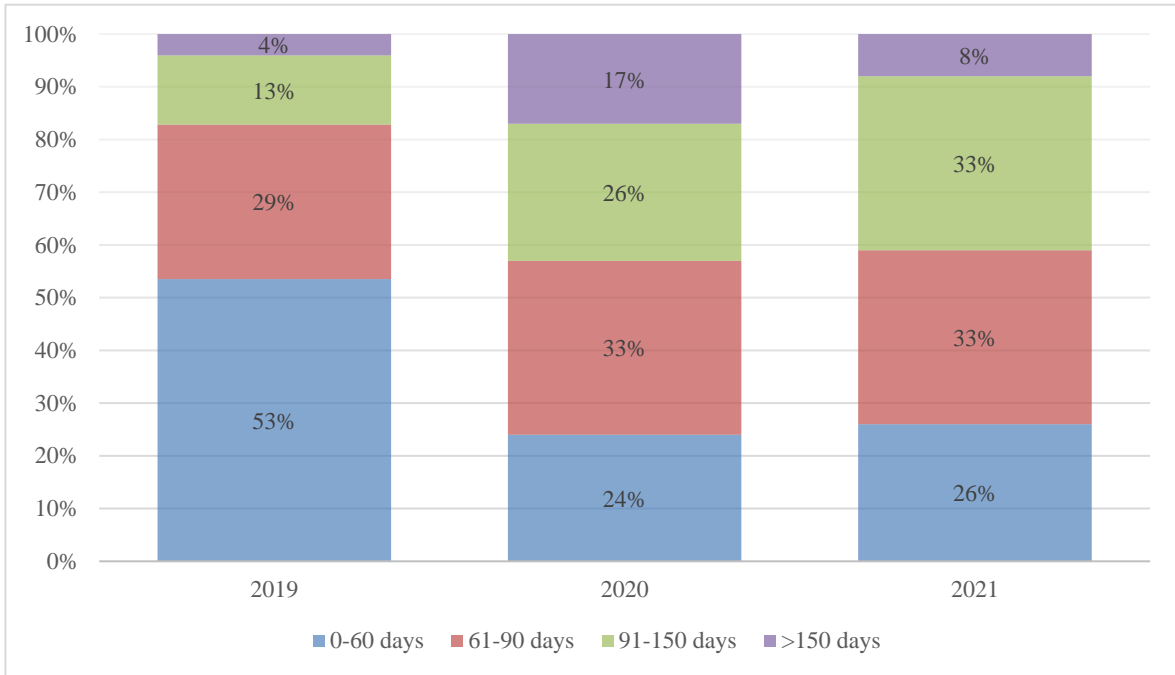
	Delinquent/Status Referral While on Probation in Given Year	Technical Referral While on Probation in Given Year	Any Referral While on Probation in Given Year
2019	33 (14% of 232 youth on probation)	28 (12% of 232 youth on probation)	49 (21% of 232 youth on probation)
2020	17 (8% of 218 youth on probation)	27 (12% of 218 youth on probation)	37 (17% of 218 youth on probation)
2021	12 (7% of 170 youth on probation)	10 (6% of 170 youth on probation)	20 (12% of 170 youth on probation)

⁵⁷ New referrals received while on probation in a given year for youth served on probation in that year.

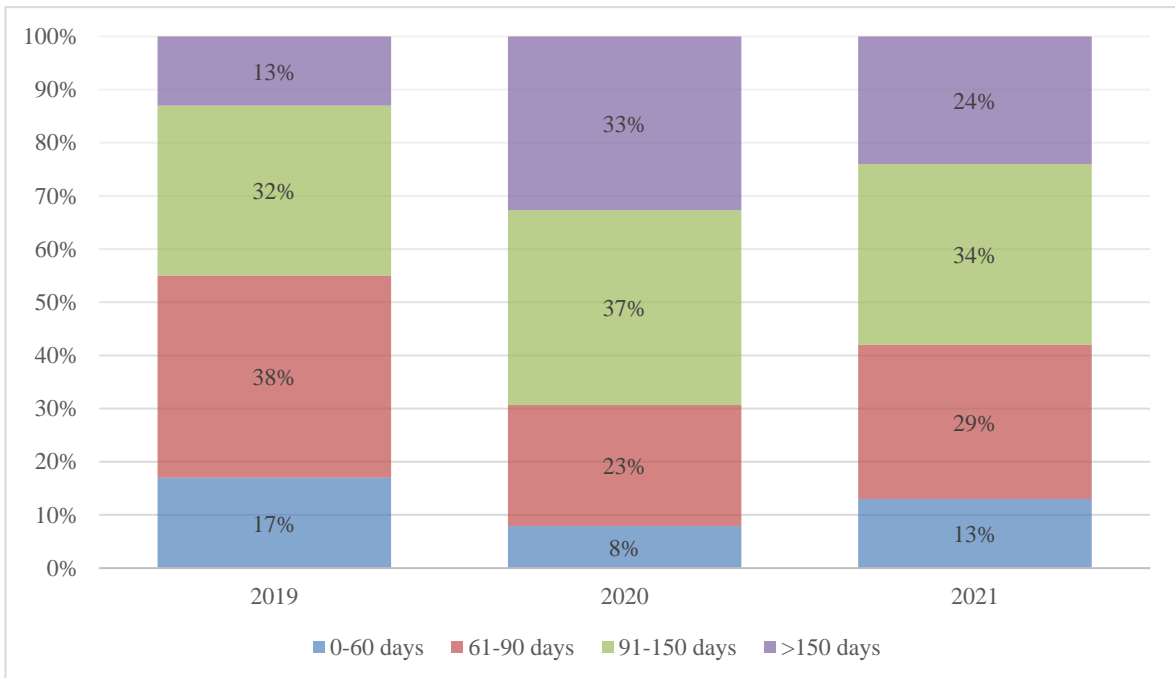
Time to Disposition

Time to disposition began to come down in 2021 after rising in 2020. Child abuse and neglect cases disposed in 2019 were disposed in an average of 99 days, compared to 125 days for cases disposed in 2020 and 121 days for cases disposed in 2021. Average time to disposition for delinquency cases rose from 64 days in 2019 to 99 days in 2020 but dropped to 89 days in 2021.

Graph 58. Time to Disposition for Delinquency Cases



Graph 59. Time to Disposition for Child Abuse and Neglect Cases



Conclusions

This report captured statistical information related to activities and selected outcomes for the 16th 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 2021 were 33% lower than in 2014, and it seems that the low number in 2020 was not merely a pandemic-related anomaly. Adoptions have fluctuated from year to year, but TPR filings have decreased each year since the high point in 2016, with about 100 fewer filings each year from 2019 to 2020 to 2021.

The number of youth aged 10-17 in Jackson County has increased by about 2% over the last eight years, but the number of delinquent and technical referrals to the Family Court declined 40% in that same period. The number of petitions and motions to modify filed for delinquent and technical offenses decreased by 49% since 2014.

African-American youth accounted for 71% of the delinquent and technical offense petitions and motions to modify filed in 2020. Caucasian youth accounted for 23%, and Hispanic youth accounted for 5%.

Youth residing in Kansas City continue to account for the largest share of delinquent and technical offense filings in Jackson County (61% 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 Blue Springs.

In the last eight years, the number of youth committed to the Division of Youth Services fluctuated between 50 and 60 commitments a year until 2019, when 37 youth were committed. This number dropped significantly to 16 youth in 2020 and stayed low at 18 youth committed in 2021. African-American youth represented 72% of all commitments to DYS in 2021—an increase from the low point in 2020 but below the average of 79% for the previous 7 years.

The number of certification cases filed was higher in 2021 than in other recent years, but relatively few youth have been certified. Eight percent of cases resulted in certification—a significantly lower share than in most of the past 8 years.

Family Court Services offered a broad range of prevention, intervention, and treatment services to youth in Jackson County. In 2021, the Court’s prevention and diversion programs served a total of 223 youth as well as their families. The number served was up 65% compared to 2020.

The number of youth starting probation has been dropping sharply each year since 2016 and is now 69% lower than it was at that point. Commitments to Hilltop have seen a sharp decline as well, from 48 in 2014 to 16 in 2021. Though up from last year’s exceptionally low totals, detainments have also decreased dramatically since 2014 (44% in secure detention and 67% at the non-secure facilities).

Family Treatment Court (formerly Family Drug Court) served 80 participants in 2021, an increase of 11% from 2020.

Family Court Resource Services offered a wide variety of services to court-involved families. A total of 1,525 parents and children were served by three parent awareness courses in 2020. The Connections Program provided 756 supervised and therapeutic visits and arranged 5 monitored exchanges. Mediators served 292 cases.

Starting in March 2020, the COVID-19 pandemic affected operations in every area of the Court. While many programs continue to be impacted, the Court has largely recovered from the shock to the system. In some areas, it seems that changes we saw in 2020 were due directly to the pandemic, and these trends have reversed. For example, the number of youth detained dropped significantly in 2020 but returned to 2019 levels in 2021. In other areas, changes we saw in 2020 have remained. DYS commitments, for example, dropped dramatically in 2020 and stayed low in 2021. Similarly, the rate of youth on probation who are referred for a new offense while under supervision dropped in 2020 and has remained lower than it was in 2019. We will continue to monitor areas such as these to determine whether the changes reverse as the pandemic ends or are the beginning of a new normal.

