



# Juvenile Court of Memphis & Shelby County System Assessment Report

The Crime and Justice Institute

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# Acknowledgments

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## About the Crime and Justice Institute

The Crime and Justice Institute (CJI), a division of Community Resources for Justice, bridges the gap between research and practice with data-driven solutions that drive bold, transformative improvements in adult and youth justice systems. With a reputation built over many decades for innovative thinking, a client-centered approach, and impartial analysis, CJI assists agency leaders and practitioners in developing and implementing effective policies that achieve better outcomes and build stronger, safer communities. CJI works with local, state, tribal, and national justice organizations to provide nonpartisan policy analysis, implementation consulting, capacity-building assistance, and research services to advance evidence-based practices and create systems-level change.

To learn more about the work of CJI's youth justice team, please visit: [www.cjinstitute.org/our-work/juvenile-justice/](http://www.cjinstitute.org/our-work/juvenile-justice/)



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# Introduction

The intended purpose of the youth justice system is to maintain public safety by balancing accountability with rehabilitation and provide youth with opportunities that foster positive development and long-lasting behavior change.<sup>1</sup> Over the past two decades, youth justice systems across the country have shifted their approach, embracing community-based alternatives to more costly, harmful, and unavailing carceral responses to youth behavior.<sup>2,3</sup> Increasingly, leaders recognize effective, evidence-based approaches to minimize justice system exposure by diverting young people from formal system involvement when possible,<sup>4</sup> limiting out-of-home placement to only the most serious cases,<sup>5</sup> and connecting young people with resources, services, and supports in their own communities.<sup>6</sup>

To enhance staff-client interactions and reduce a youth's likelihood to re-offend, youth-serving systems are leveraging research to incorporate evidence-based and data-driven practices into every aspect of the system. When used effectively, these practices establish the foundation for improving long-term success for the youth they serve. Using individualized approaches informed by research on adolescent development, tailored to a youth's identified needs, emphasizing strengths, and holistically involving their family and community, as well as holding youth accountable in developmentally appropriate manners fosters a young person's growth, and creates opportunities for positive behavior change.<sup>7</sup> To effectively make this shift, youth justice systems are taking a comprehensive look at their policies, practices, and data to gain a better understanding of the youth being served and the impact of the various system responses. That information is then utilized to inform policy changes, training needs, and strategies for system improvement.

## Background

Shelby County is Tennessee's largest county in population and size. Its county seat, the City of Memphis, is the second most populated city, behind Nashville. According to the 2022 Census figures, the population estimate of Shelby County is 926,440 people,<sup>8</sup> while Memphis makes up approximately 68 percent of the County's population.<sup>9</sup> The largest racial group, representing just over half of the population in Shelby County, is Black or African

American (54%), followed by white (37%).<sup>10</sup> Almost 25 percent of the population in Shelby County is under 18 years of age,<sup>11</sup> with nearly 24 percent of the children in this age group living in households with incomes below the poverty level, higher than the percentage of children in poverty overall in Tennessee.<sup>12</sup> During the last decade (2012 to 2022), Shelby County was among Tennessee's 10 counties that saw the largest declines in the overall crime rate for youth under age 18, but the current rate is still higher than the Tennessee crime rate for the same group.<sup>13</sup> In 2022, 3,301 Shelby County children ages 10 to 17 were referred to court for delinquent, status, and / or unruly offenses.<sup>14</sup> According to the most up-to-date figures, the rate at which Black or African American children under the age of 18 were brought into court for the same offenses was significantly higher than the rate for white youth.<sup>15</sup> It should be noted that the 2020 rate for Black or African American youth brought into court in JCMSC was 19.1 per 1,000 youth, while the rate for white youth was 6.1 from the same population.

The mission of the Juvenile Court of Memphis and Shelby County (JCMSC) is to provide interventions that result in positive outcomes for families and children, by addressing family matters with dignity and respect, and when necessary, holding youth accountable in developmentally appropriate ways.<sup>16</sup> In August 2022, after nearly a decade of his predecessor's leadership, the Honorable Judge Tarik B. Sugarmon was elected to serve as the new juvenile court judge. A transition team was established to support Judge Sugarmon, his leadership staff, and their goals of having a more data-driven, trauma-informed court. To further support this transition, JCMSC established an implementation team (a subgroup of the transition team) and solicited the Crime and Justice Institute (CJI) for assistance. In October 2023, JCMSC requested CJI to conduct a comprehensive system assessment of their Court Services Division which encompasses the following Bureaus: Children's Services, Youth Services, Evaluation and Referral, and Detention Services as well as the Youth Court Program. The Court Services Division serves the community by working with children under the age of 18 who are court-involved and alleged to be delinquent, unruly, and/or dependent and neglected. The purpose of this system assessment is to understand the Court Services Division's current practices, the impact of

those practices, and inform recommendations for court improvement, as well as implementation strategies for meeting JCMSC’s mission and improving outcomes for justice-involved youth in Memphis and Shelby County. At the time of the system assessment, Shelby County Sheriff’s Office provided oversight to Detention Services; therefore, limited analysis was completed as it pertains to the interworking of this Bureau.

## System Assessment

To better determine where the Court Services Division should focus its improvement efforts, CJI used a systematic, multi-pronged approach to perform a system assessment, including a qualitative assessment and quantitative data analysis. This process allowed CJI to thoroughly evaluate the Court Services Division’s policies and practices and their impact on outcomes relevant to the youth justice population, thus helping inform research-based considerations for system improvement in court processes, data collection practices, and supervision practices. The following sections describe CJI’s system assessment methodology.

### Qualitative Assessment

To complete the qualitative assessment, CJI reviewed relevant statutes and court policies and conducted stakeholder interviews to gather a broad range of perspectives on the youth justice system in Shelby County. This process allowed CJI to better understand the application of the Court Services Division’s policies, and whether current practices were aligned with policies and evidence-based practices in youth justice. JCMSC provided policies and training manuals, internal process guides, court forms, and relevant reports concerning three of the four Bureaus of the Court Services Division with which CJI conducted a thorough review. The qualitative process also encompassed a total of 23 interviews with JCMSC staff and community stakeholders. Staff interviews included tenured members of the Court Services Division’s leadership and supervisory team within the Children’s Services Bureau, Youth Services Bureau (YSB), Evaluation and Referral Bureau, and the Youth Court program. CJI also had the privilege to interview the juvenile court judge and magistrate, representatives from the district attorney and public defender’s offices, and education and advocacy groups. And importantly, CJI met with Lived Experience Experts<sup>17</sup> to incorporate the voices of youth

and family into this process by interviewing individuals who are currently involved or have been impacted by the youth justice system in Memphis and Shelby County.



#### **Lived Experience Experts:**

*individuals who have been directly or indirectly impacted by the justice system and are most uniquely positioned to be involved in system change by providing their insight, perspectives, and ideas.*

## Qualitative Assessment Findings

The results of the qualitative assessment process provided insight into the internal workings of the Court Services Division and provided some context for the quantitative data findings. A review of the written materials combined with stakeholder interviews revealed five distinct themes. It is important to note that the themes and supporting findings are not inclusive of all input gathered throughout the qualitative assessment.

### **Theme 1:**

**The Court Services Division’s administrative, managerial, and supervisory team has a positive attitude toward the current aspirations of the Court’s leadership, which includes organizational restructuring to invest in staff professional development and revitalization of JCMSC’s purpose.**

Although this is a new court administration, most of Court Services’ Bureau administrators, managers, and supervisors have nearly a decade or more of employment with the Court and many years in Tennessee’s child welfare and youth justice system. That level of institutional knowledge coupled with the motivation to create an environment conducive to the success of the frontline staff and the youth they serve can be leveraged to foster innovation and meaningful change. Those interviewed were forthcoming, sharing concerns about being extremely short-staffed and describing struggles affecting staff carrying high caseloads which has resulted in supervisory staff carrying caseloads. It was consistently expressed that the overall morale amongst frontline staff is low for a number of reasons but mainly due to a lack of pay increases over several years and perceptions of court improvements that have not come to fruition.

Leadership recognizes these concerns and is utilizing this as an opportunity to improve the inner workings of the Court Services Division through organizational restructuring, revitalizing the Court's purpose, and investing in staff. In response to these challenges, the leadership team has begun increasing communication, collaboration, and transparency within the Division through implementing regular leadership meetings and retreats, strategic planning sessions, staff surveys, staff strength-finder assessments, wellness programs, and soliciting technical assistance and training. Additionally, the Court created a Youth Development Specialist position to replace the existing Juvenile Services Specialist position. It is important to note that in 2011, the probation supervisory position, Probation Officer title was changed to encompass Juvenile Services Counselors and Juvenile Services Specialists. As a result of these title changes, pay grades and pay increases were significantly impacted and contributed to low staff morale. The new Youth Development Specialist position is a positive step towards addressing staff pay concerns and the staff's interest in professional development. JCMSC is slated to hire 26 additional staff to fill this role which is guided by research and best practices; prioritizing relationship-building and collaboration with youth and families and providing direct services through creating and implementing customized case plans to help youth change their behaviors. Despite the challenges they face, this group is optimistic about the Court's future and eager to implement strategies that are grounded in best practices, improve the well-being of staff, and have a positive impact on the youth and families they serve.

## **Theme 2:**

**Overwhelmingly, Court Services Division's leadership team and staff, system stakeholders, and community partners expressed a desire to expand community-based programs and services.**

It was conveyed that more community-based programs and services available for youth being diverted away from the court, youth adjudicated, and youth on formal supervision are of great need. Court Services' program options for youth are outsourced and limited, and there are no internal intervention options for youth. At the time of the system assessment, Court Services had four primary programs (Juvenile Intervention and Faith-Based

Follow Up, Pursuit Center, Youth Villages, and Ceasefire) that they would refer to which have generally remained the only options over the last decade.<sup>18</sup>

From the interviews, two important concerns were raised:

▶ **Youth may not be appropriately matched to the programming to which they were referred.**

Court Services administers the Child and Adolescent Needs and Strengths (CANS) assessment to support decision-making in service planning for youth in the justice system by assessing an individual's needs and strengths.<sup>19</sup> It was expressed that following the implementation of the CANS, staff lacked booster trainings and coaching on how to administer the CANS, interpret the results, and utilize results to guide supervision and intervention. As a result, concerns were expressed that youth are not being matched to programs aligned with their assessed risk and identified needs. This is further exacerbated due to the limited available community-based programs. For instance, youth who are assessed as high-risk are utilizing the same type of programming and receiving the same dosage of service as youth assessed as low-to medium-risk. While each assessed youth can thrive with access to community-based programming, the type and dosage of programming can impact each youth's success.

▶ **There is a limited understanding of the effectiveness of the programs to which youth are being referred.**

While the primary programs to which Court Services refers to have likely influenced youth, the Court cannot show the impact on youth success through data and documentation. At the time of the system assessment, there were no set criteria or requirements to be considered as a partner of JCMSC, no oversight in what services are provided and how long youth are participating in the programs, no performance metrics to monitor the use of each program and how youth are progressing, and no documentation of the youth and family experience. Additionally, staff expressed the need to expand the Evaluation and Referral Bureau's capacity to provide in-house services, build stronger connections with youth and families, and not rely on outsourcing for every case.

### Theme 3:

**Evidence-based trainings designed to provide staff with the ability to effectively promote positive development and long-term behavior change, especially for working with adolescents and justice-involved youth and families are limited.**

To support professional development, it was shared that Court Services' staff have access to Human Resources-related training such as workplace civility, dress code, and an overview of the Court's organizational structure. Additionally, Bureaus within the Court Services Division provide peer-to-peer, on-the-job training that focuses solely on performing administrative job duties. As part of JCMSC's transition, the Court Administration wants to establish a shared approach across the Court Services Division where staff can benefit from hands-on tools to put knowledge into practice. To aid in that transition, JCMSC wants to increase staff skillsets by incorporating evidence-based and best practices proven to improve staff-client engagement and reduce recidivism.

### Theme 4:

**Effective communication and collaboration within the Court Services Division, and externally with youth and their families and community stakeholders are limited.**

The Court Services Division is currently in the process of transitioning from a bifurcated system to a unified system. As outlined previously, the current bifurcated structure for the Court Services Division comprises of four bureaus and one diversionary program (see [Table 1](#)). The impact of their current structure contributed to the lack of uniformity in policies across the Bureaus, leading to bureaus struggling to effectively communicate with each other, even when cases may overlap. Staff described Court Services as "siloed" and reported there is not a shared vision across the Court. Due to a lack of communication between the Bureaus, the creation and/or revision of policies led to duplicative processes being implemented separately and differently. Staff similarly described multiple Bureaus monitoring the same youth's supervision as well as coordinating referrals to external programs with little to no communication or collaboration with the assigned Bureaus; consequently, causing duplication of processes and confusion to the youth and their families. To mitigate these challenges,

JCMSC is in the process of organizational restructuring to better streamline court processes and supports and move away from a more administrative, court-facing system to a youth and family-centered system. This effort includes the Court's current process of transitioning from the existing Court Services Division and the associated Bureaus to the following Divisions: 1) Administration, 2) Youth Justice, and 3) Child Welfare. JCMSC's goal is to incorporate an additional Division to address the dual system youth population during Fiscal Year 2026.

As currently structured, Court Services staff are tasked with more administrative duties than rehabilitative approaches; therefore, there is limited involvement with youth and their families. According to Lived Experience Experts and supported by staff, building relationships and connections are seen as a missing piece to rehabilitation that can be expanded through more meaningful engagement and the use of a multi-systemic approach. As part of the disconnect in engagement, it was shared that there are limited partnerships and effective communication with community stakeholders; therefore, many staff were unaware of or demonstrated unfamiliarity with other resources in the community that could potentially fill programming gaps.



*Photo: Shelby County Juvenile Court*

**Table 1. Bureaus within JCMSC’s current Court Services Division<sup>20,21</sup>**

Bureau	Department	Description
Children’s Services	Corrective Services	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Pre-adjudicatory services and non-judicial dispositions</li> <li>• Determines referrals needed and recommends disposition</li> <li>• Also oversees truancy program, electronic monitoring, and community service</li> </ul>
	Protective Services	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Screens complaints alleging children to be dependent and neglected, abused, or abandoned</li> <li>• Makes non-judicial dispositions and referrals to other agencies as necessary</li> </ul>
Youth Services	Case Management	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Post-adjudicatory services</li> <li>• Home confinement program that utilizes various levels of monitoring, including GPS</li> <li>• Refers youth to programs and monitors court requirements</li> </ul>
	Intensive Case Management	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Post-adjudicatory services</li> <li>• Same as Case Management, but this program is for youth in need of heightened supervision, where staff work with the youth and family through visiting the home and school</li> <li>• Makes referrals to programs as needed</li> </ul>
Evaluation and Referral	N/A	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Pre-and post-adjudicatory services</li> <li>• Identifies the needs of court-involved youth</li> <li>• Refers youth to community service providers</li> <li>• Supports participation in services</li> </ul>
Detention Services	Shelby County Sheriff’s Office	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Administers detention services at the Youth Justice and Education Center for youth identified as a danger to themselves or the community or a flight risk</li> <li>• Comprised of three units: Boy’s Detention, Girl’s Detention, and Central Detention Control</li> <li>• Partnered with the Annie E. Casey Foundation to develop alternatives to detention through the Juvenile Detention Alternatives Initiative (JDAI)</li> </ul>



## Theme 5:

**Court Services places a heavy focus on monitoring compliance with supervision conditions, which are often unrelated to a youth’s individual circumstances or needs and carry severe consequences for youth misbehavior.**

Electronic monitoring and Global Positioning System monitoring (EM/GPS) conditions include strict home confinement and zero tolerance zones with severe consequences including revocation for violating home confinement conditions, failing to charge the device, and/or tampering with the device. It was reported that the Children’s Bureau uses EM/GPS as a detention alternative for most youth released on bond in pre-adjudication cases and the Youth Services Bureau requires the use of EM/GPS automatically in post-adjudicatory cases for youth assessed as moderate- and high-risk on the Youth Services Bureau Assessment Tool. The assessment is a consensus-based tool that contains 12 questions about mostly static risk factors and determines the appropriate level of supervision within the Youth Services Bureau. The higher the assessed risk, the higher level of supervision and monitoring. It was shared that using EM/GPS for youth on formal supervision requires use of the device for the full length of their supervision, which can be several months. Within the Court’s pre- and post-adjudicatory services, this response’s policy and practice lacks varying levels of intensity, placing more emphasis on surveillance and revocations for any intentional or unintentional compliance issues over behavior change strategies.

Current policies and practices leave little room for error or individualization as monitoring is often assigned automatically as a condition for youth. While the use of EM/GPS can be an effective alternative to incarceration, various court and system staff agreed that there are stark inconsistencies between policy and practice when utilizing this response. For example, how long the device holds a charge in the written guidance versus what staff are instructing the youth or how long the device actually holds a charge varies and commonly contributes to youth violating the terms of their agreement; therefore, pushing youth deeper into the system.

## Quantitative Analysis

CJI’s quantitative analysis examined JCMSC’s Court Services Division data (hereafter referred to as Court Services data) from calendar years 2009 through 2023, specifically focusing on dependent and neglected, unruly,

and delinquent complaints filed in JCMSC. The goals of the quantitative analysis were threefold: 1) examine trends in both child welfare-related and youth justice-related complaints over time, determining what factors drive JCMSC complaints in Shelby County, 2) understand the proportion of justice-involved youth that are also present in the child welfare system, and 3) explore outcomes of complaints involving delinquent allegations.

### Data Sample

The quantitative analysis was performed on a sample of closed complaints filed between January 1, 2009, and December 31, 2023, containing allegations of delinquency, unruliness, or dependence and neglect among youth aged 17 and under at the time of complaint filing. It should be noted that 2023 figures may be undercounted due to limiting the analysis sample to closed complaints. CJI conducted a two-level analysis of the data files: 1) youth level, and 2) complaint level. The data were analyzed this way as some outcomes were more appropriately understood based on a distinct number of youth (such as the proportion of justice-involved youth that first entered the system as child welfare cases), while others were more appropriately understood per complaint (such as number of complaints filed over time).

Over the analysis timeframe, CJI identified 148,035 unique complaints among 72,603 unique youth. Among the sampled complaints, 35,724 involved a dependent and neglected allegation, 17,084 involved an unruly allegation, and 98,930 involved a delinquent allegation. As some complaints were associated with more than one allegation, the total number of allegations exceeded the unique number of complaints in the sample. **Figure 1** provides an overview of the data structure.

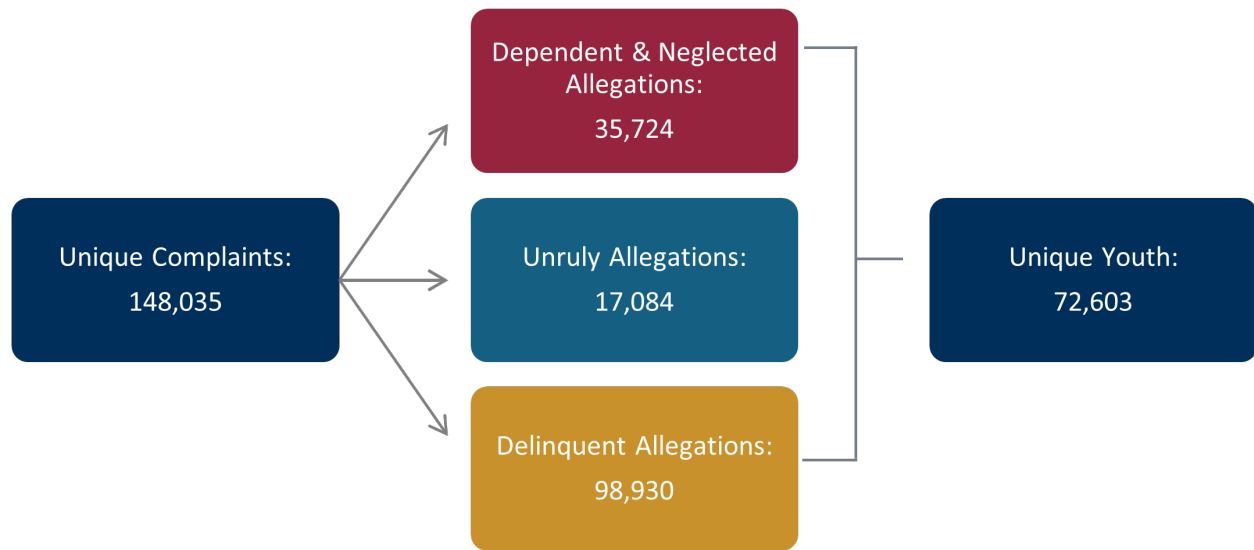
### Analysis Methods

CJI used various methods to achieve the goals of the quantitative analysis, which primarily included tabulations and independent samples t-tests.<sup>1</sup> See **Appendix A for the list of data points utilized to achieve the three analysis goals.**

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<sup>1</sup> Tabulations examine the distribution of at least two variables, such as the number of delinquent complaints per year. Independent samples t-tests compare means (or averages) of two separate groups for a specific variable to determine whether those means are significantly different. For example, independent samples t-tests may be used to examine whether the average length of time in detention is significantly different for boys vs. girls or white vs. Black youth.

**Figure 1. JCMSC’s Court Services Division Data Structure**



**Note:** Unless otherwise noted, results of all analyses reflect sampled complaints and/or youth. Total of dependent and neglected, unruly, and delinquent allegations will exceed 148,035 as some youth had more than one type of allegation associated with the same complaint. “Unique” indicates that each complaint and each youth among the samples are distinct. In other words, no two complaints (or youth) are the same.

## Quantitative Analysis Findings

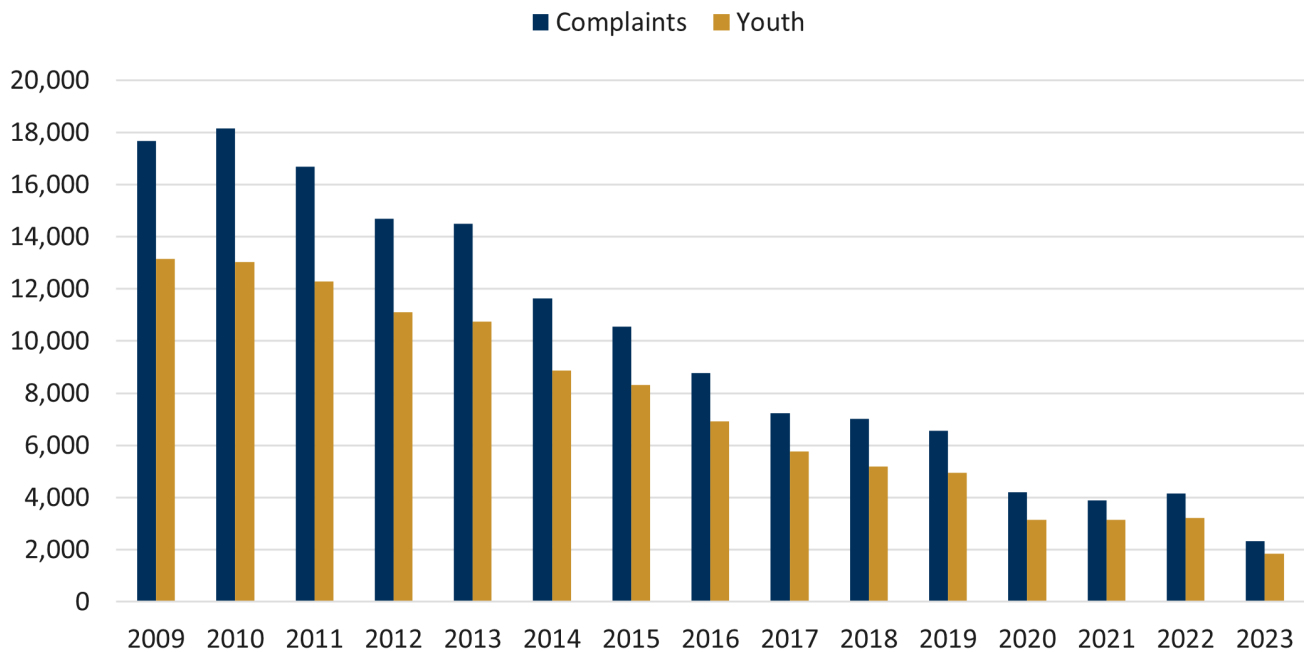
The quantitative analysis process provided insight into the three analysis goals previously described. The quantitative findings should be interpreted with the consideration that the analysis timeframe included years in which a rare event occurred (i.e., the COVID-19 pandemic).<sup>22</sup> This may impact quantitative figures between 2020 and 2021, considering that COVID-19 partially accounted for the decrease in the number of cases handled by juvenile courts during that time.<sup>23</sup> The following sections describe the quantitative analysis findings as associated with each analysis goal.

### Analysis Goal 1:

**Examine trends in child welfare-related and youth justice-related complaints over time, determining what factors drive JCMSC complaints in Shelby County.**

Figure 2 displays the yearly distribution of all complaints from 2009 through 2023, as well as the distribution of youth who had a complaint filed in each year. Most youth (72 percent) cycled through JCMSC multiple times and may be represented in different years, while 28 percent presented only once. Complaints decreased by 77 percent from a high of 18,143 complaints in 2010 to 4,151 complaints in 2022. The narrowing gap between complaints and youth per year also suggests that the number of youth with more than one complaint filed in the same year has decreased. The number of complaints and youth per year may be found in [Appendix B](#).

**Figure 2. Number of Complaints and Number of Youth with a Complaint Filed Per Year**



**Notes:**

1. Total youth will exceed the unique youth sample size of 72,603, as some youth had complaints filed in multiple years.
2. Quantitative figures for 2023 may be under-counted due to limiting the sample to closed complaints.

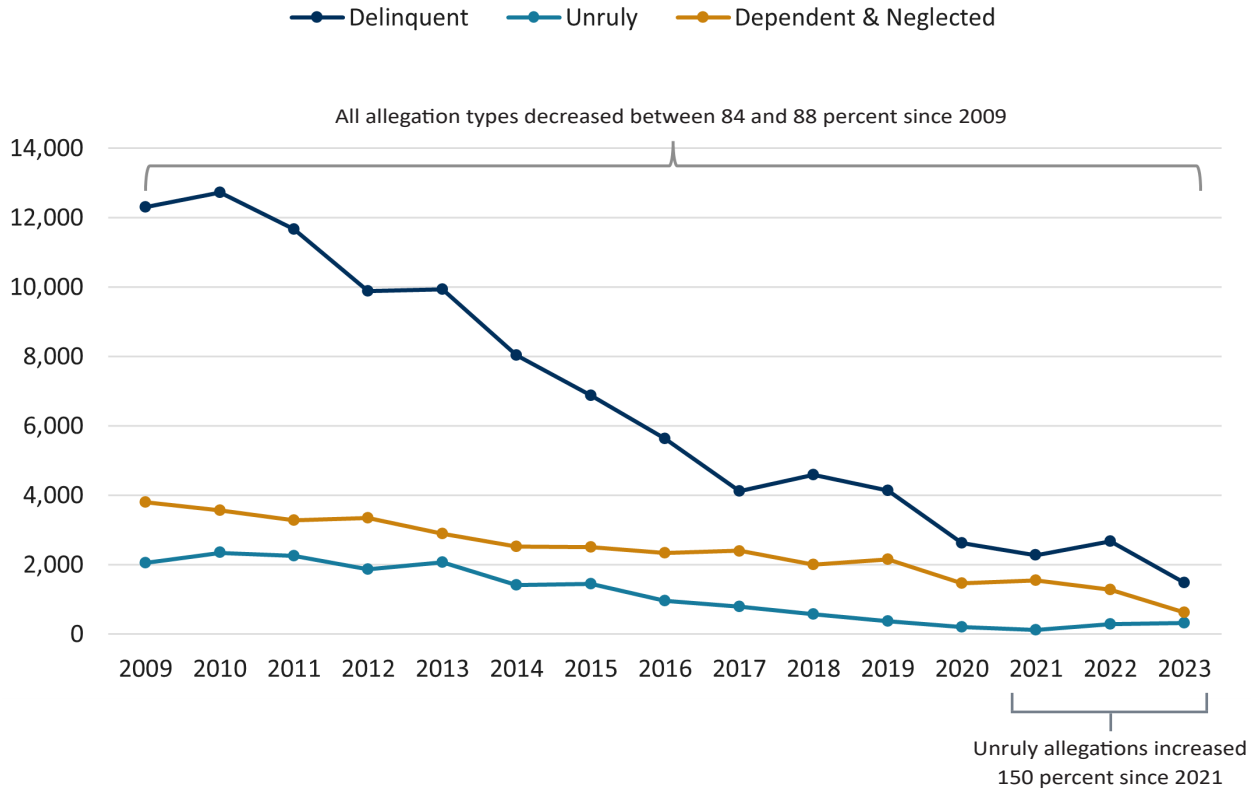
JCMSC complaints are defined by allegation types (or the type of case associated with a complaint); these allegation types include delinquent, unruly, and/or dependent and neglected. **Figure 3** displays the number of allegations associated with the sampled complaints by allegation type from 2009 through 2023. Since the same complaint could be associated with more than one allegation type, such as a complaint filed with both delinquent and unruly allegations, the total number of allegations will exceed the unique complaint sample.

Between 2009 and 2023, delinquent allegations decreased 88 percent, unruly allegations decreased 85 percent, and dependent and neglected allegations decreased 84 percent. However, unruly allegations have increased almost 150 percent since 2021, coinciding with a decrease in both delinquent and dependent and neglected complaints by 34 percent and 60 percent since 2021, respectively. As a percentage of total allegations per year, unruly allegations made up three percent of the

total allegations in 2021 compared to 13 percent in 2023, suggesting a fairly large uptick in the number of unruly allegations associated with complaints filed in JCMSC since 2021. The number of allegations per year by type may be found in **Appendix C**.

Additionally associated with complaints and allegation types are referral reasons, which describe the type of offense or incident for which a youth is referred to JCMSC. For example, within the same complaint, a youth may be referred for a status offense (which is tied to an unruly allegation), a person offense (which is tied to a delinquent allegation), and a dependent and neglected incident (which is tied to a dependent and neglected allegation). Referral reasons provide more specific information regarding the circumstances leading to a youth’s involvement with JCMSC; which then presents opportunities to evaluate trends in specific offense types or child welfare-related incidents associated with JCMSC involvement.

**Figure 3. Number of Allegations Associated with Complaints Per Year by Allegation Type**



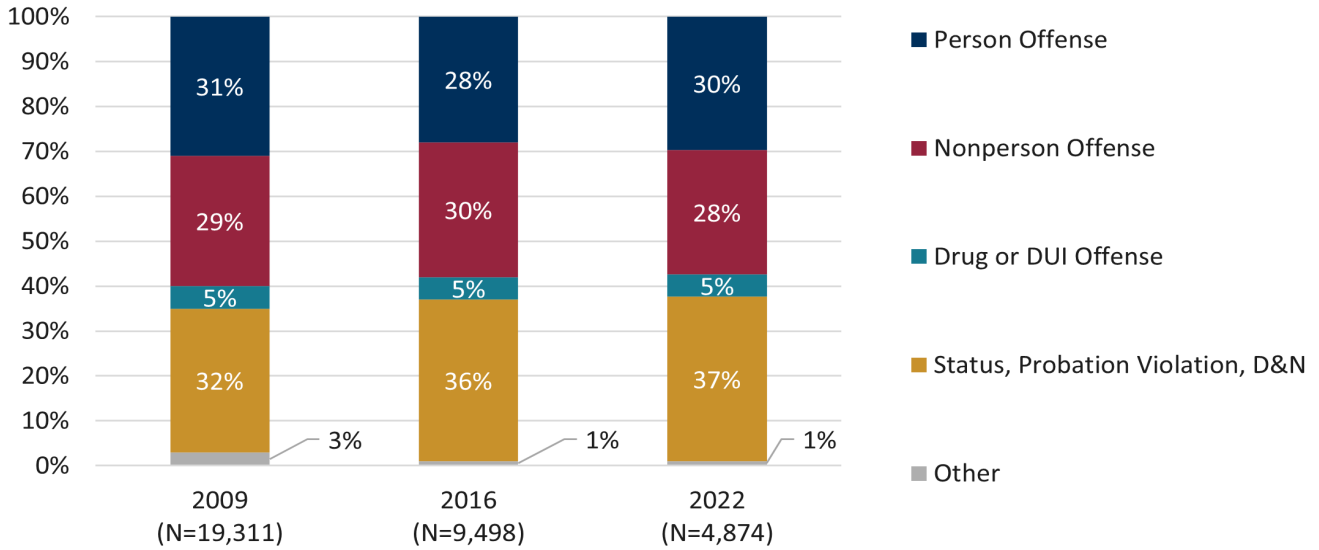
**Notes:**

1. Total allegations will exceed unique complaint total of 148,035 as some youth had more than allegation type associated with the same complaint.
2. Quantitative figures for 2023 may be under-counted due to limiting the sample to closed complaints.

Figure 4 displays the percentage of referrals for all complaints in the sample by reason for the referral, comparing 2009 to 2016 to 2022. Percentages in most referral categories have generally remained stable since 2009; however, the proportion of referrals for status offenses, probation violations, and dependent and neglected-related incidents have increased, comprising over one-third of all referrals in 2022.

When examining the yearly distributions of referrals specifically for status offenses, probation violations, and dependent and neglected-related incidents, findings also demonstrate that status offense referrals increased 153 percent from 2021 through 2023, as displayed in Figure 5. This finding is consistent with Figure 3, demonstrating an increase in unruly complaints since 2021. The number of referrals for sampled complaints by reason for the referral per year may be found in Appendix D.

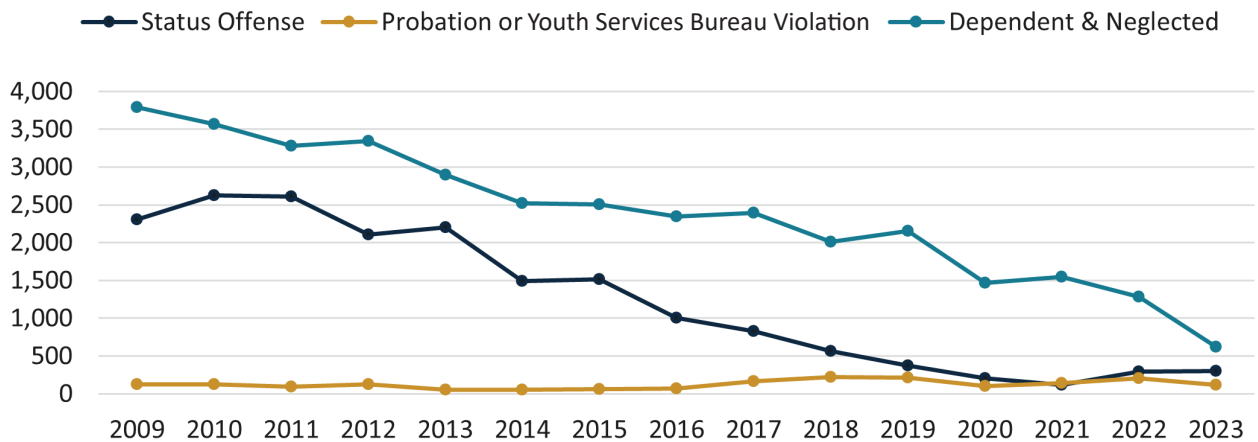
**Figure 4. Percentage of Referrals Associated with Complaints by Reason for the Referral, 2009 vs. 2016 vs. 2022**



**Notes:**

1. Percentages may exceed 100% due to rounding.
2. Totals (N) per year will exceed total complaints per year as some complaints were associated with more than one referral reason.
3. "Status, Probation Violation, D&N" denote status offenses, probation or YSB violations, or dependent & neglected-related incidents.
4. The years 2009, 2016, and 2022 are used for comparison as they represent the beginning, middle, and end points of the analysis timeframe (using 2022 as the endpoint as 2023 figures may be undercounted due to limiting the sample due to closed complaints).

**Figure 5. Number of Referrals Associated with Complaints by Status Offenses, Probation Violations, and Dependent and Neglected-Related Incidents Per Year**



**Note:** Quantitative figures for 2023 may be under-counted due to limiting the sample to closed complaints.

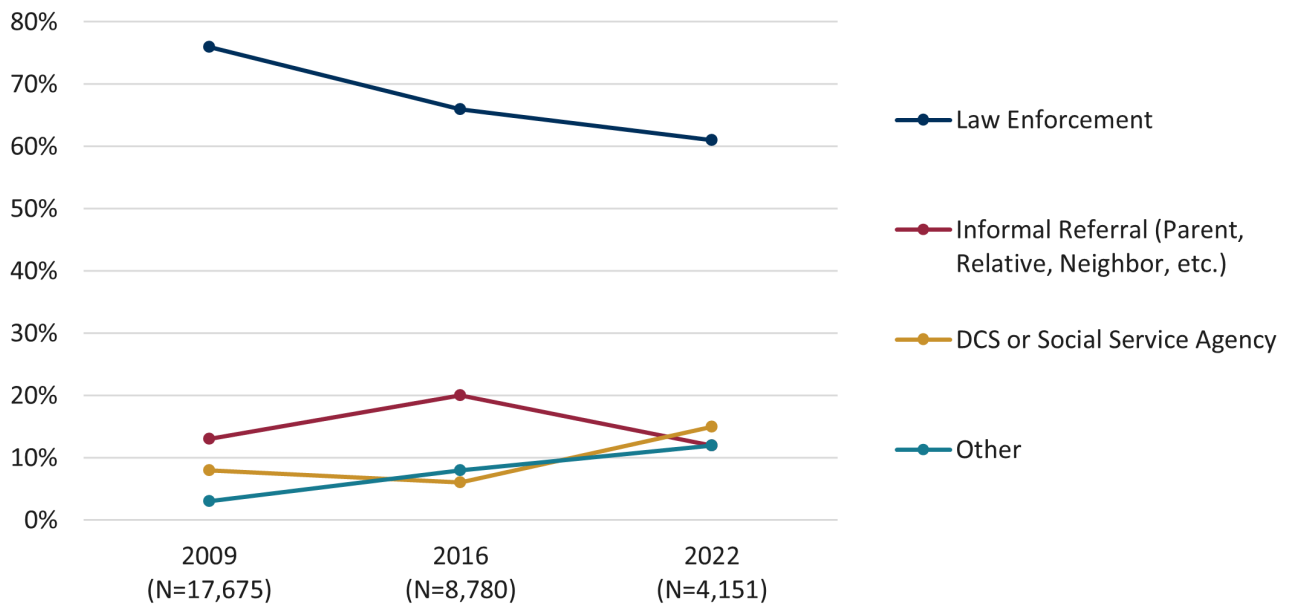
Tied to referral reasons are referral sources, which describe the agency or person(s) referring a youth to JCMSC. It should be noted that a single youth could have been referred to JCMSC by more than one source within the same complaint. For example, a youth may have been referred by the Tennessee Department of Children’s Services (DCS) or other social service agency for a dependent and neglected referral (which is tied to a dependent and neglected allegation), as well as by law enforcement for a status offense referral (which is tied to an unruly allegation) within the same complaint.

Figure 6 displays the percentage of referrals by referral source for all complaints, comparing 2009 to 2016 to 2022. While law enforcement made the bulk of referrals to JCMSC, the percentage of law enforcement referrals

decreased 57 percent between 2016 and 2022. However, coinciding with that decrease was a 17 percent increase in referrals by DCS or other social service agencies between 2016 and 2022. This trend suggests that youth are increasingly being pushed from the child welfare system to the youth justice system in Shelby County.

Additional analyses demonstrate that of the 1,979 referrals made by staff providing probation supervision, 87 percent were for probation or Youth Services Bureau violations. Referrals for probation or Youth Services Bureau violations have fluctuated over time (see Figure 5), increasing 80 percent between 2009 and 2018, decreasing 54 percent from 2018 through 2020, and since increasing by 12 percent. The number of referrals for sampled complaints by referral source per year may be found in Appendix E.

**Figure 6. Percentage of Referrals Associated with Complaints by Referral Source for Complaints, 2009 vs. 2016 vs. 2022**

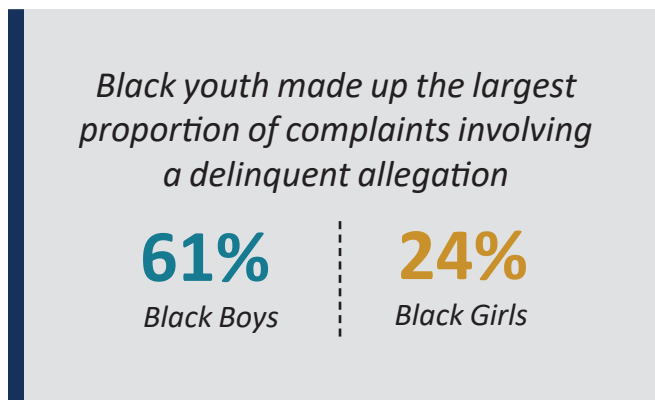


**Note:** “Other” includes referral sources of school, probation officer, private attorney, district attorney’s office, other court, and other source.

Obtaining a fuller picture of the factors driving JCMSC complaints in Shelby County also involved examining the distribution of key data points by demographic factors including gender and race. Analyses demonstrated the following findings:

- Boys and Black youth made up most of the sampled complaints, at 66 percent and 83 percent, respectively.
- Boys made up larger proportions of delinquent and unruly allegations (72 percent and 69 percent, respectively), while girls made up just over half (51 percent) of dependent and neglected allegations.
- Black youth made up the largest shares of all allegation types: 84 percent of delinquent allegations, 75 percent of unruly allegations, and 79 percent of dependent and neglected allegations. Black girls made up the largest proportion of dependent and neglected allegations (40 percent), followed by Black boys (39 percent).
- Black boys made up the largest proportion of complaints involving a delinquent allegation (61 percent), followed by Black girls (24 percent). Black boys and girls also comprised the largest proportions of referrals from law enforcement (61 percent and 23 percent, respectively).
- Boys and Black youth made up greater proportions of all referral types associated with sampled complaints.

Figures associated with the above findings can be found in [Appendix F](#).



## Analysis Goal 2:

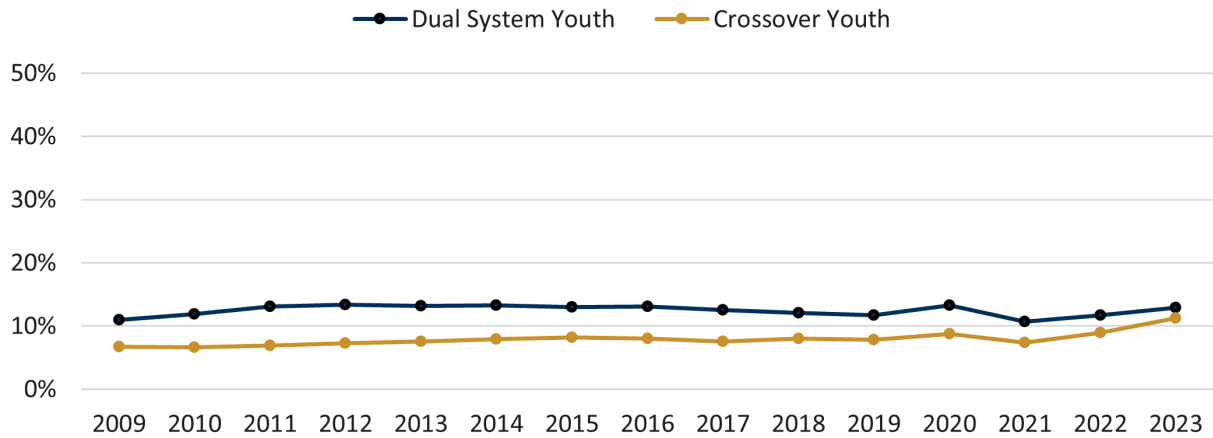
### Understand the proportion of justice-involved youth that are also present in the child welfare system.

JCMSC was also interested in understanding the proportion of dual system and crossover youth that make up Shelby County’s youth justice population. While sometimes used interchangeably, dual system and crossover youth have different meanings.<sup>24</sup> Per JCMSC, dual system youth are defined as youth identified as being present in both child welfare and youth justice systems, regardless of system entrance order. In other words, these youth have had cases filed in both systems at some point during the analysis timeframe. Crossover youth are defined as youth entering the child welfare system first and subsequently entering the youth justice system. The order of system entry therefore distinguishes crossover youth from dual system youth.

**Figure 7** displays the distribution of dual system and crossover youth as a percent of all youth represented per year from 2009 through 2023. The data show that dual system youth represented no more than 15 percent of the youth justice population in Shelby County during this time period, and trends in the proportion of dual system youth have remained stable over time except for an increase in 2020 followed by a sharp decrease in 2021. Until 2023, crossover youth made up less than 10 percent of the youth justice population in Shelby County. However, the steady increase in crossover youth beginning in 2021 suggests that youth are being pushed from the child welfare system to the youth justice system.

For this analysis, having both allegation reasons of “dependent and neglected” and “delinquent” were the criteria used to identify dual system and crossover youth. However, JCMSC also identifies youth as dual system or crossover based on additional allegation reasons such as child support and educational neglect, in addition to having a delinquency allegation. Due to this, the percentages of dual system and crossover youth reported in **Figure 7** are likely undercounted.

**Figure 7. Dual System and Crossover Youth as a Percentage of All Youth Per Year**



**Notes:**

1. Quantitative figures for 2023 may be under-counted due to limiting the sample to closed complaints.
2. Total youth per complaint year are as follows: 13,156 (2009); 13,024 (2010); 12,274 (2011); 11,109 (2012); 10,744 (2013); 8,874 (2014); 8,308 (2015); 6,917 (2016); 5,774 (2017); 5,194 (2018); 4,944 (2019); 3,139 (2020); 3,146 (2021); 3,210 (2022); and 1,842 (2023).

**Analysis Goal 3:**


**Explore outcomes of complaints involving delinquent allegations.**

The final portion of the quantitative analysis involved specifically focusing on a subsample of complaints involving delinquent allegations.


**Demographic Trends Among Complaints Involving Delinquent Allegations**

As shown in **Figures 8-10**, complaints involving delinquent allegations in Shelby County from 2009-2023 were primarily filed among boys, Black youth, and youth ages 15 to 17. Data findings also determined that 95 percent of complaints involving delinquent allegations were filed among youth who were non-Hispanic, which is consistent with Census data demonstrating that approximately 93 percent of Shelby County’s population is non-Hispanic.<sup>25</sup> The number of complaints involving delinquent allegations per year by gender, race, and age may be found in **Appendix G**.


*Complaints involving delinquent allegations in Shelby County from 2009-2023 were primarily filed among:*



Boys



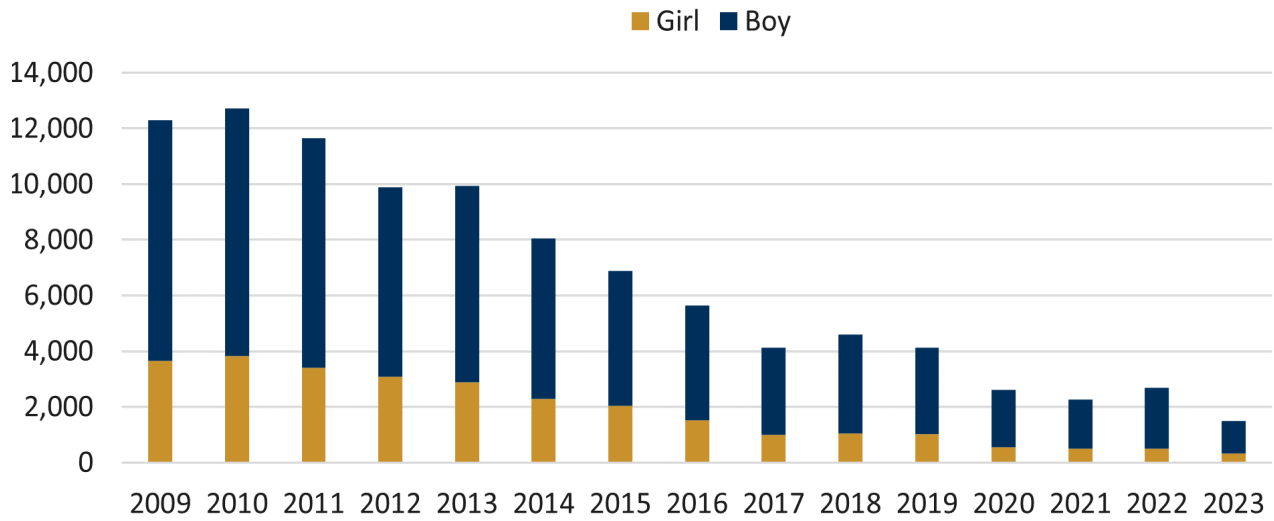
Black Youth



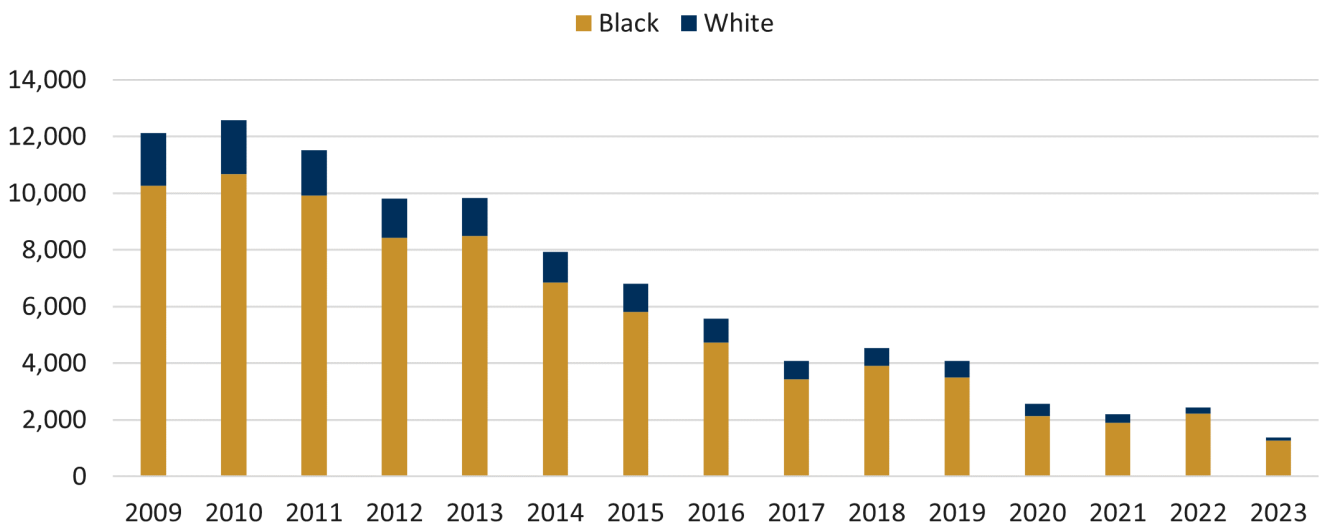
Youth Ages 15-17



**Figure 8. Number of Complaints Involving a Delinquent Allegation (N=98,930) by Gender**

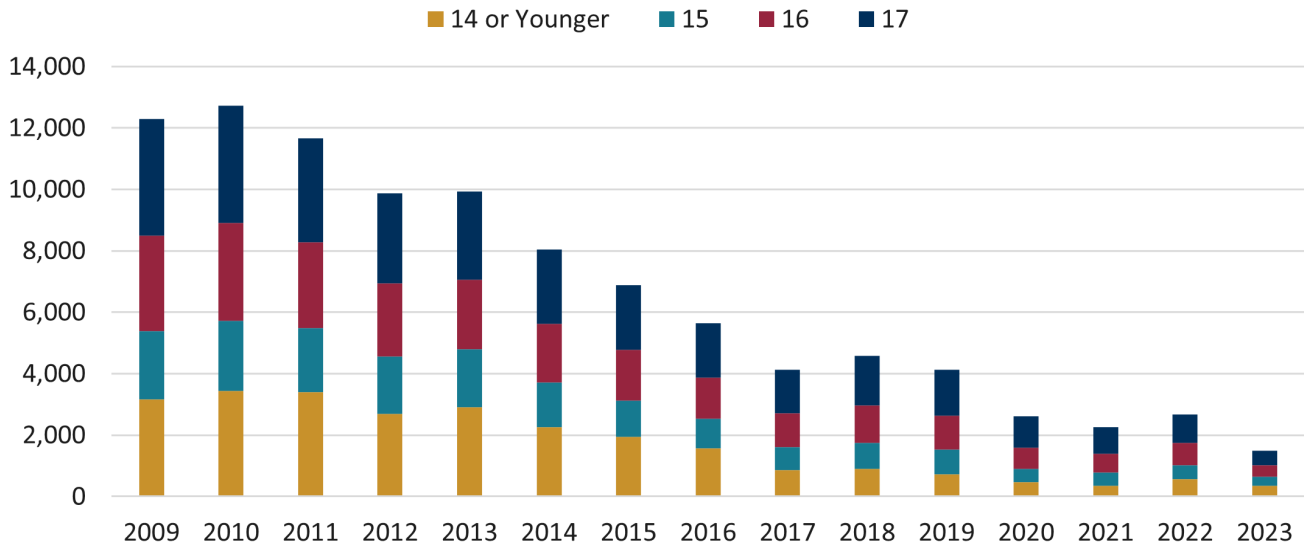


**Figure 9. Number of Complaints Involving a Delinquent Allegation (N=98,930) by Race**



**Note:** The number of complaints involving a delinquent allegation among Asian or Pacific Islander youth, Indigenous youth, and youth of more than one race may be found in [Appendix G](#).

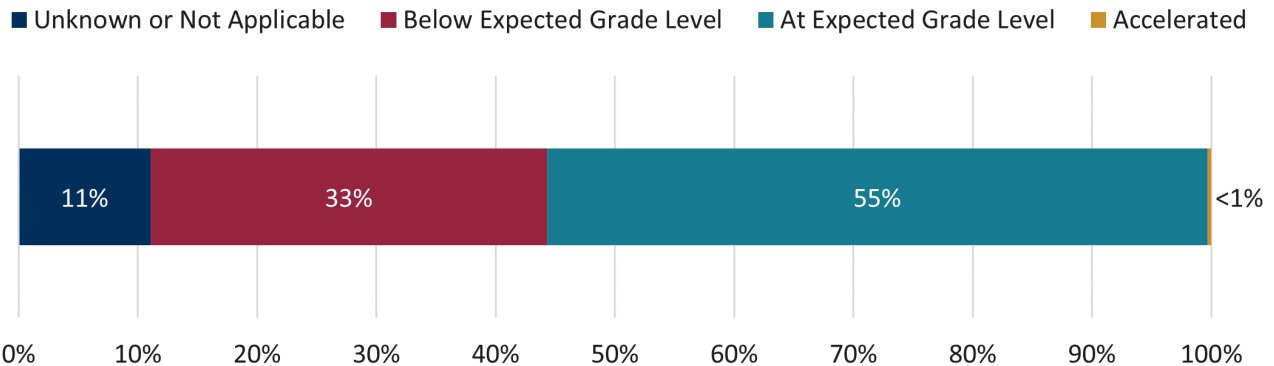
**Figure 10. Number of Complaints Involving a Delinquent Allegation (N=98,930) by Age**



Additionally, race findings demonstrate that Black youth are disproportionately represented among complaints involving delinquent allegations filed in Shelby County. According to U.S. Census figures,<sup>26</sup> Shelby County’s population ranged from 51 percent Black in 2010 to 54 percent Black in 2022; however, Black youth have comprised between 81 and 86 percent of complaints involving delinquency allegations filed in Shelby County since 2009.

Other demographic findings in **Figure 11** show that from 2009 through 2023, 33 percent of complaints involving a delinquent allegation were filed among youth performing below the expected grade level in school. However, only five percent of complaints involving a delinquent allegation were filed among youth who had an individualized education plan (IEP) and only eight percent among youth who were in special education programming.

**Figure 11. Distribution of Complaints Involving a Delinquent Allegation by School Performance Level (N=92,287)**



**Notes:**

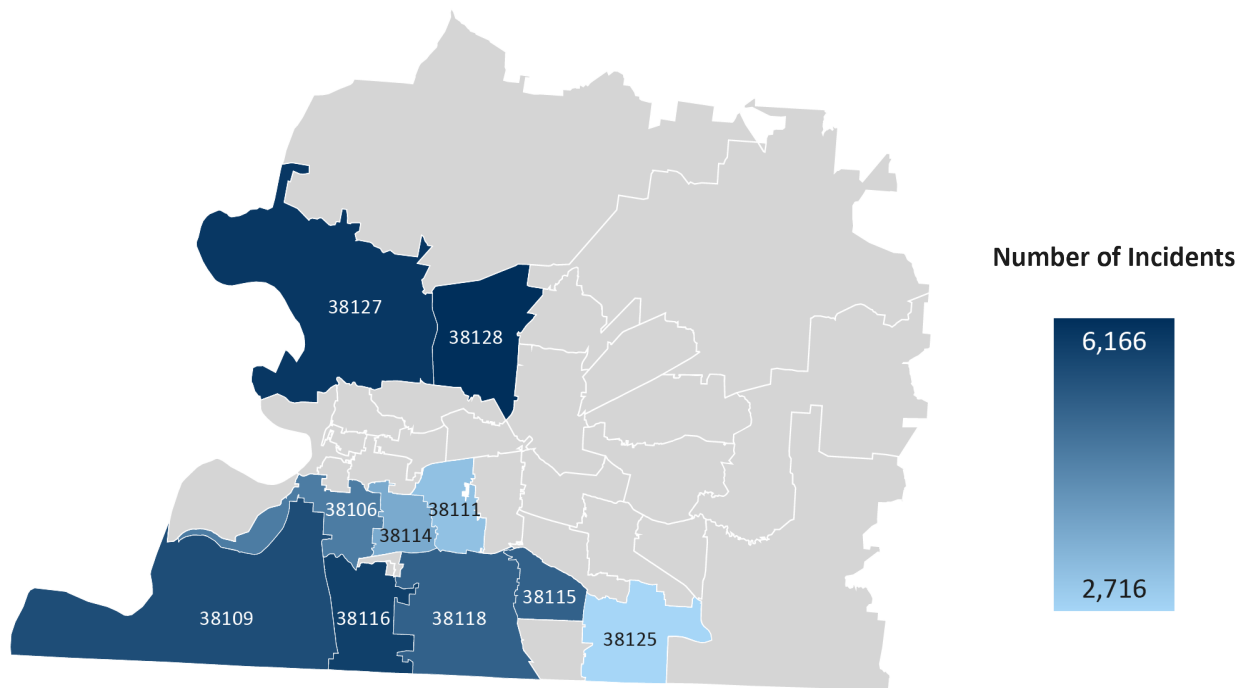
1. Total percent may not equal 100 due to rounding.
2. School performance level was not documented for some complaints involving delinquent allegations, constituting “missing” data.

Furthermore, 15 percent of complaints involving a delinquent allegation were filed among youth who lived somewhere other than their own home (e.g., relative, foster family, group home) and 73 percent of complaints involving a delinquent allegation were filed among youth who lived under the federal poverty line (\$30,000 in 2023)<sup>27</sup> for a family of four. According to recent U.S. Census figures, 24 percent of children in Shelby County lived in households with incomes below the federal poverty line in 2022;<sup>28</sup> this suggests that complaints involving delinquent allegations are overwhelmingly filed among youth living in poverty in Shelby County.

**Geographic Trends Among Complaints Involving Delinquent Allegations**

The Court Services Division was also interested in understanding the geographical distribution of incidents related to delinquent complaints in Shelby County. **Figure 12** displays the top 10 zip codes by number of incidents (i.e., alleged offenses) related to delinquent complaints from 2009 through 2023. Incidents range from a high of 6,166 in the 38128 zip code to a low of 2,716 in the 38125 zip code. These figures are likely an undercount due to data entry errors. For example, some zip codes in the data contain six or more numbers and thus were not utilized in this analysis.

**Figure 12. Top 10 Zip Codes in Shelby County by Number of Incidents Related to Complaints Involving a Delinquent Allegation, 2009-2023**



Furthermore, most incidents related to complaints involving a delinquent allegation occurred in a different zip code from where the youth lived. Among the 62,293 complaints involving a delinquent allegation where both the incident zip code and a youth’s physical residence zip code were available, 59 percent of incidents occurred in a different zip code than a youth’s residence at the time of complaint filing.

**Court-Related Outcomes Among Complaints Involving Delinquent Allegations**

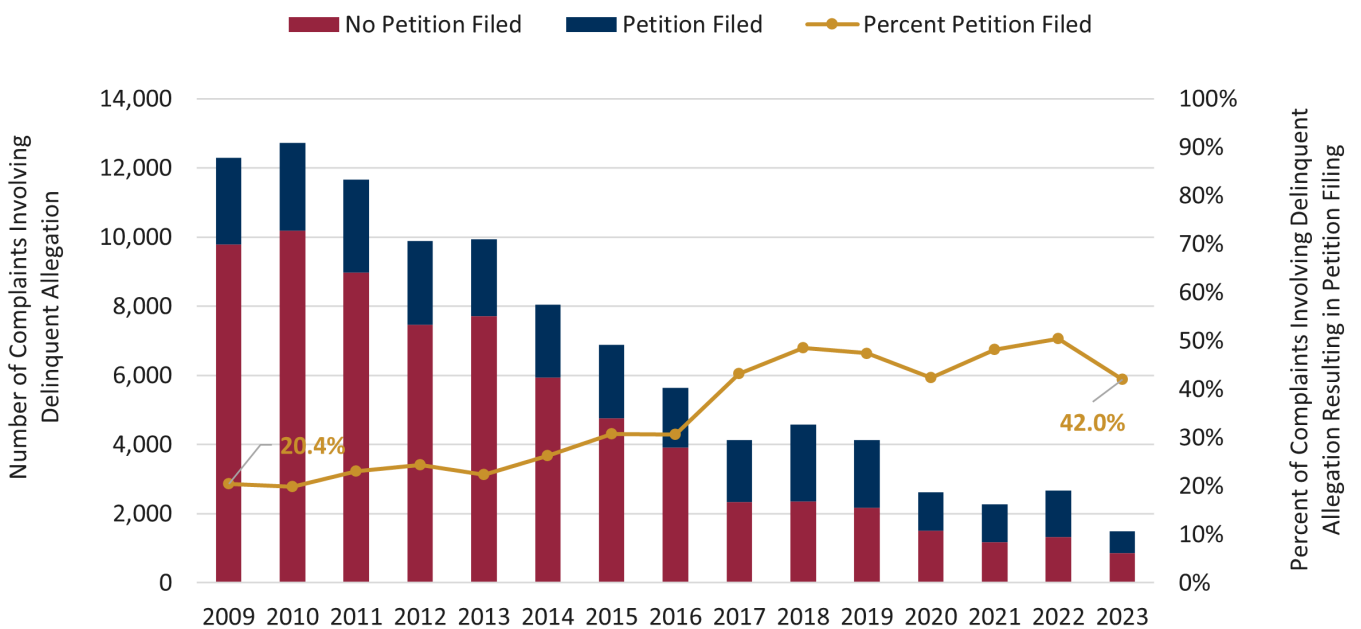
The Court Services data provided opportunities to explore outcomes of complaints involving delinquent allegations, specifically related to petition filings, electronic monitoring (EM) or Global Positioning System (GPS) monitoring, length of placement after detention hearings, and disposition decisions. The following sections discuss findings related to each of these outcomes.

**Petition Filings**

Figure 13 displays the proportion of complaints involving a delinquent allegation that resulted in a petition filing from 2009 through 2023. These figures are based on whether a complaint had an associated petition filing date, regardless of what that date was. A review of the data determined that the years of some petition filing dates were entered incorrectly by JCMSC. Findings show

that the proportion of petition filings among complaints involving delinquent allegations increased sharply since 2016, indicating that more complaints involving delinquent allegations are being handled formally by the Court Services Division.<sup>29</sup> The number of complaints involving delinquent allegations that did and did not result in a petition filing per year may be found in **Appendix H**.

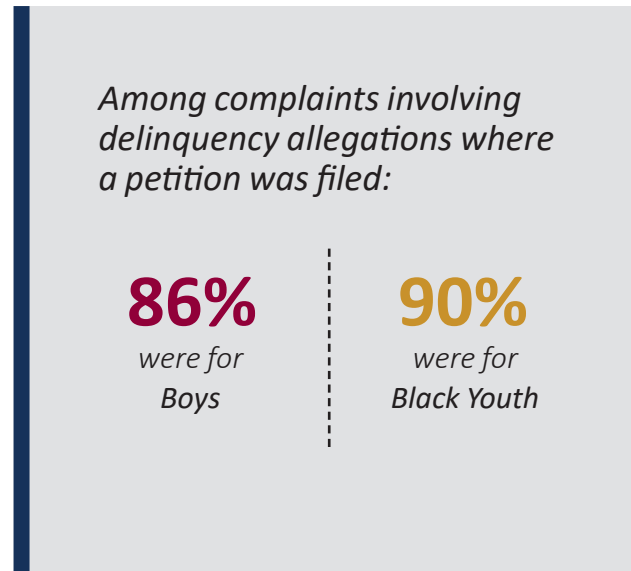
**Figure 13. Proportion of Petition Filings Among Complaints Involving a Delinquent Allegation (N=98,930)**



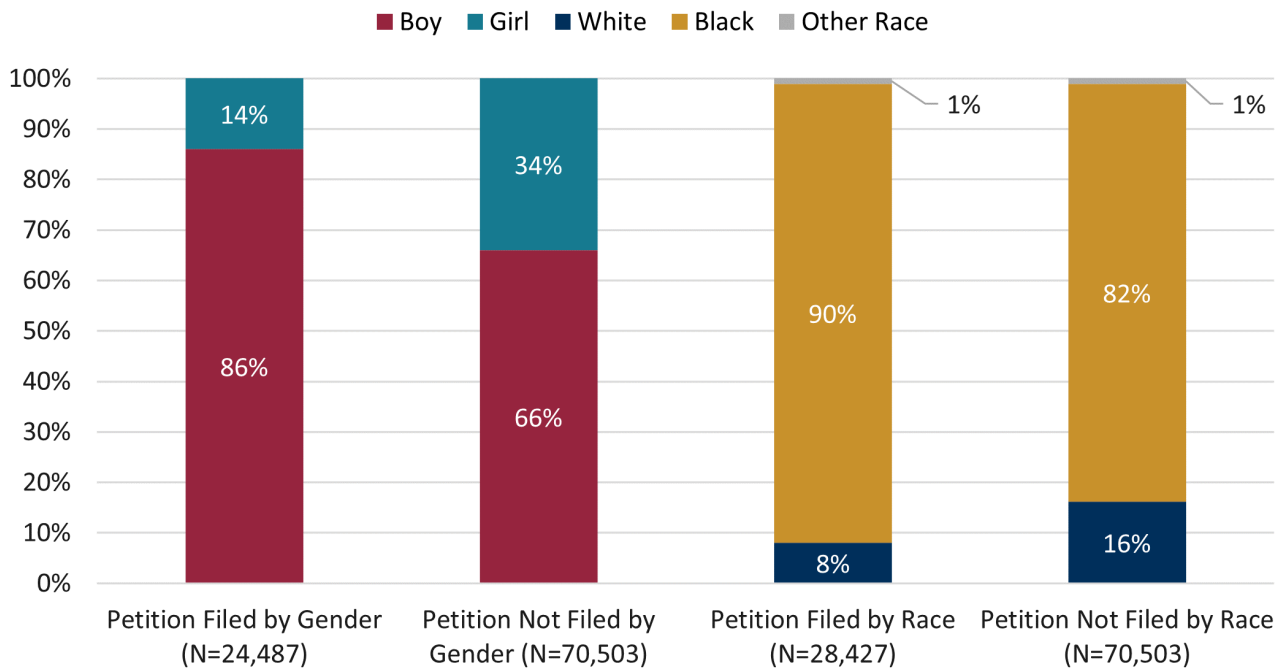
**Notes:**

1. The axis on the left (ranging from 0 to 14,000) corresponds with the graph bars, indicating the number of complaints involving a delinquent allegation that did or did not result in a petition filing.
2. The axis on the right (ranging from 0% to 100%) corresponds with the graph line, indicating the percentage of complaints involving a delinquent allegation resulting in a petition filing out of the total complaints involving a delinquent allegation per year.
3. Quantitative figures for 2023 may be under-counted due to limiting the sample to closed complaints.

As displayed in **Figure 14**, findings show that most complaints involving a delinquent allegation that resulted in a petition filing occurred among boys and Black youth. Additionally, 85 percent of complaints involving a delinquent allegation that resulted in a petition filing occurred among youth living in households with incomes below the federal poverty line. Findings also suggest that complaints involving a delinquent allegation among boys and Black youth are slightly more likely to result in petition filing than no petition filing (86 vs. 66 percent and 90 vs. 82 percent, respectively); whereas complaints involving a delinquent allegation among girls and white youth are slightly less likely to result in petition filing than no petition filing (14 vs. 34 percent and 8 vs. 16 percent, respectively). These findings indicate that both gender and race imbalances among formal petition filings may exist among complaints involving delinquent allegations.



**Figure 14: Percentage of Petition Filings Among Complaints Involving a Delinquent Allegation by Gender and Race, 2009-2023**



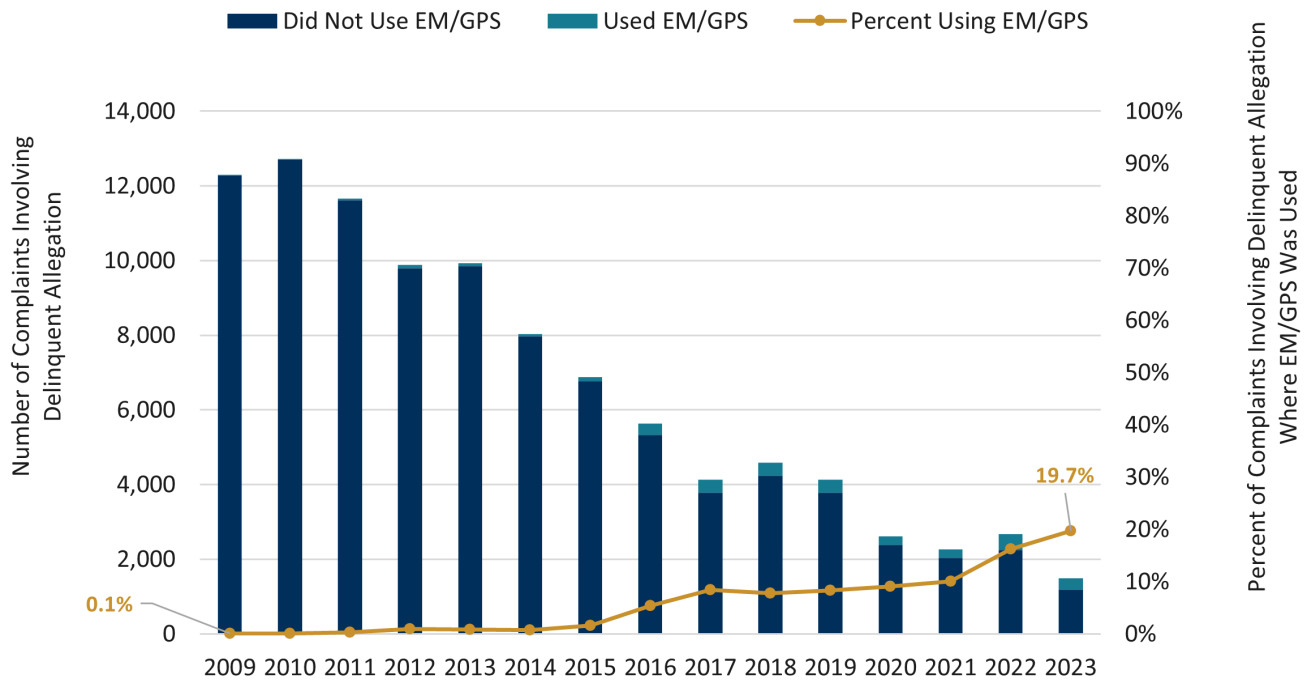
**Note:** Some complaints did not have race information documented; therefore, total percentages for race may not equal 100 percent.

**Electronic Monitoring (EM) or Global Positioning System (GPS) Monitoring**

Figure 15 demonstrates that Court Services’ use of EM/GPS has also increased over time. In 2023, EM/GPS was used in about one in five complaints involving a delinquent allegation, compared to one in ten only a few years prior. This corresponds with qualitative findings that

in certain situations such as being released on bond pre-adjudication, youth are placed on EM/GPS regardless of their individual circumstances. The number of complaints involving delinquent allegations that did use EM/GPS per year may be found in Appendix I.

**Figure 15: Proportion of EM/GPS Usage Among Complaints Involving a Delinquent Allegation (N=98,930)**



**Notes:**

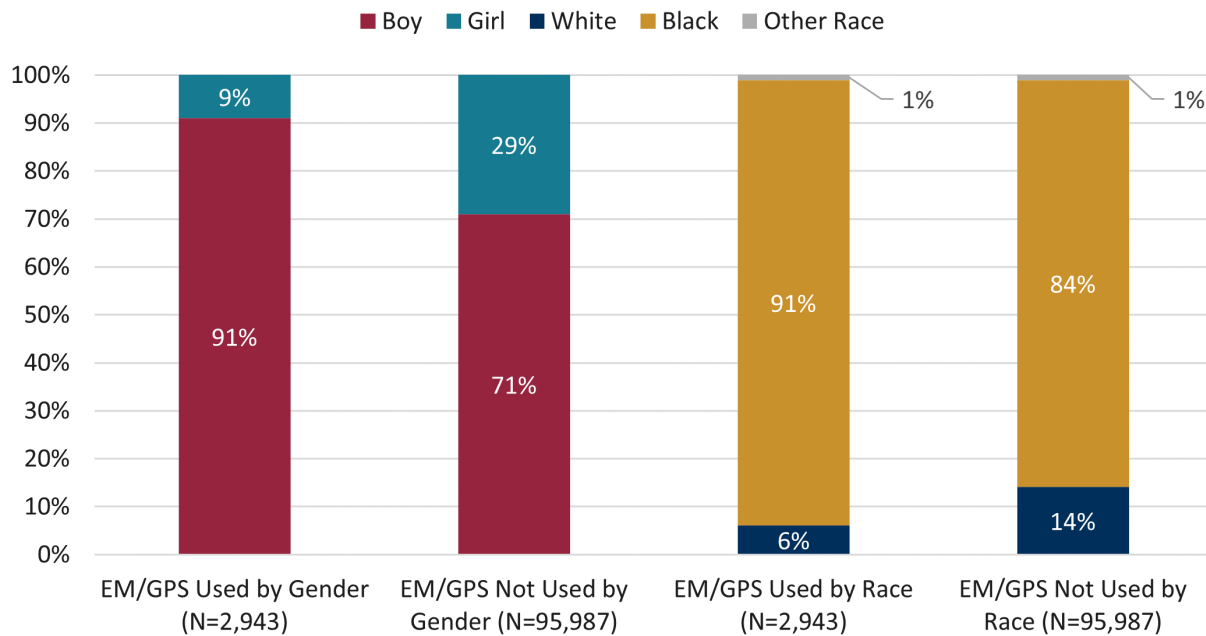
1. The axis on the left (ranging from 0 to 14,000) corresponds with the graph bars, indicating the number of complaints involving a delinquent allegation that did or did not use EM/GPS.
2. The axis on the right (ranging from 0% to 100%) corresponds with the graph line, indicating the percentage of complaints involving a delinquent allegation resulting in the use of EM/GPS out of the total complaints involving a delinquent allegation per year.
3. “EM/GPS” denotes “Electronic Monitoring or Global Positioning System Monitoring”.
4. Quantitative figures for 2023 may be under-counted due to limiting the sample to closed complaints.
5. These figures may be an undercount of total youth on EM/GPS because the data do not capture youth remanded to the state Department of Children’s Services (DCS) which oversees both youth in custody and on community supervision. The most recent data from DCS shows that on average an additional 340 young people were on EM/GPS each month in the first six months of 2023.<sup>30</sup>

As displayed in **Figure 16**, findings also show that most complaints involving a delinquent allegation where EM/GPS was used occurred among boys and Black youth. Additionally, findings suggest that complaints involving a delinquent allegation among boys and Black youth are slightly more likely to use EM/GPS than not use such monitoring (91 vs. 71 percent and 91 vs. 84 percent, respectively); whereas complaints involving a delinquent allegation among girls and white youth are slightly less likely to use EM/GPS than not use such monitoring (9 vs. 29 percent and 6 vs. 14 percent, respectively). These findings indicate that both gender and race imbalances among EM/GPS usage may exist among complaints involving delinquent allegations.

*Most complaints involving a delinquent allegation where EM/GPS was used occurred:*

**91%**  
among Boys and Black Youth

**Figure 16: Percentage of Electronic or GPS Monitoring Usage Among Complaints Involving a Delinquent Allegation by Gender and Race, 2009-2023**



**Notes:**

1. Some complaints did not have race information documented; therefore, total percentages for race may not equal 100 percent.
2. "EM/GPS" denotes "Electronic Monitoring or Global Positioning System Monitoring".

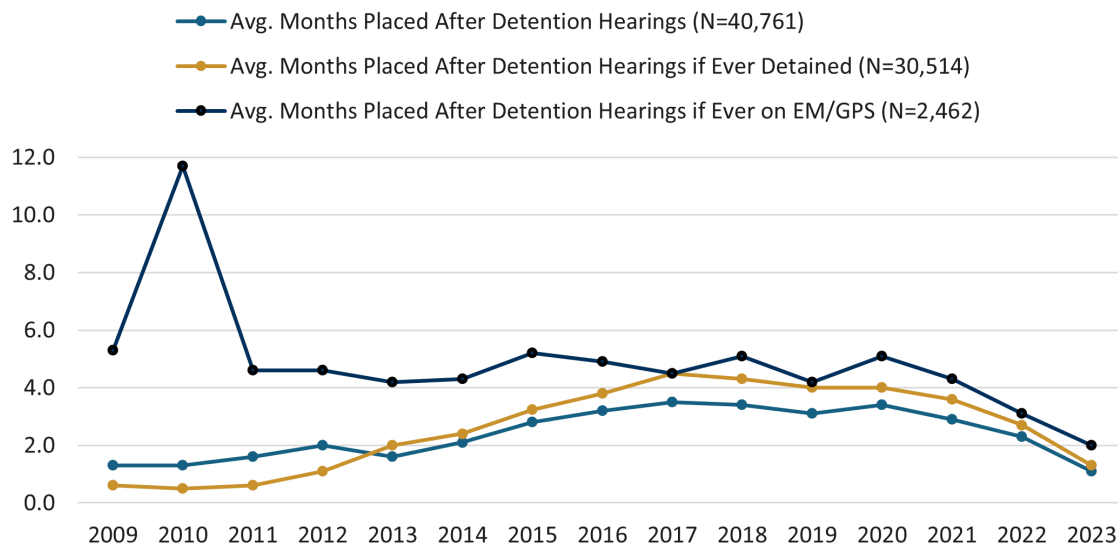
### Length of Placement After Detention Hearings<sup>ii</sup>

JCMSC tracks the amount of time youth spend in certain placements after detention hearings; this provides opportunities to evaluate outcomes associated with complaints involving delinquent allegations such as placement length trends. **Figure 17** displays the average total months placed (i.e., average time spent in all placements) after detention hearings from 2009 through 2023 for a subsample of complaints, as well as complaints involving a delinquent allegation ever resulting in detention (N=30,514) and complaints involving a delinquent allegation ever using EM/GPS (N=2,462), which met certain admission and release date criteria. The Court Services data included multiple items related to detention. For analysis purposes, youth with at least one complaint involving a delinquent allegation were identified as ever detained if meeting any of the following criteria: 1) placement after detention hearing included detained or jailed, 2) unit placement after detention hearing included detention unit, 3) facility placement after detention hearing included detention center, or 4) a disposition included “detained”.

Findings show that complaints involving a delinquent allegation that used EM/GPS had the longest average placements after detention hearings, followed by complaints ever resulting in detention (since 2013). However, the average time spent in all placements after detention hearings has decreased for all groups since 2020. Average placement lengths for all groups may be found in **Appendix J**.

<sup>ii</sup> As provided, the Court Services data included dates of admission and release associated with placements resulting from detention hearings. Placements included the following: reception and release, waiting or holding room, foster care or Youth Villages, EM/GPS, protective placement, home or kinship placement, DCS corrective or secure placement, case management, intensive case management, detention alternative, Youth Services Bureau, detention center or unit, and other. A youth associated with a complaint could have multiple different placements corresponding with multiple detention hearings. However, data were only available for a subsample of 40,761 youth with a complaint involving a delinquent allegation. To be included in this subsample, a complaint must have had both an admission and release date, where the release date was either the same as or later than the admission date.

**Figure 17: Average Total Months Placed After Detention Hearings Among Complaints Involving a Delinquent Allegation, Complaints Ever Resulting in Detention, and Complaints Using EM/GPS**



**Notes:**

1. In this figure, “complaints” denotes those involving a delinquent allegation.
2. N denotes the sample size for each subsample of youth.
3. “EM/GPS” denotes “Electronic Monitoring or Global Positioning System Monitoring”.
4. These figures do not show the average time specifically spent in detention or on EM/GPS, as the data structure did not allow for this determination. These figures represent the average time spent in all placements after detention hearing(s) based on whether youth were ever detained or ever on EM/GPS from 2009 through 2023.
5. Quantitative figures for 2023 may be under-counted due to limiting the sample to closed complaints.



The Court Services data also allowed for a comparison of placement lengths after detention hearings by demographic subgroups including gender and race. This provided an opportunity to examine whether significant gender or race differences exist in the amount of time spent in placement after a detention hearing, utilizing independent samples t-tests.<sup>iii</sup> These results demonstrate significant gender and race differences in the average total months placed after detention hearings – both among complaints involving a delinquent allegation in general and among complaints involving a delinquent allegation ever resulting in detention.

Findings show that among complaints involving a delinquent allegation, boys spent an average of between 0.69 and 1.63 months longer in placement after detention hearings than girls, depending on offense type (i.e., referral reason). Black youth spent an average of between 0.58 and two months longer in placement after detention hearings than white youth from 2009 through 2023. Among complaints involving a delinquent allegation ever resulting in detention (with the exception of complaints involving drug or DUI offenses), boys and Black youth also spent significantly longer on average in placements compared to girls and white youth, respectively.

However, there were no significant gender or race differences in the average total months placed after detention hearings if EM/GPS was ever used during a complaint involving a delinquent allegation. For all t-test results, see [Appendix K](#).

### ***Disposition Decisions***

The Court Services data included an item labeled “dispositions;” however, this item captured a broad array of court actions at various stages of a complaint – such as attorney advisements, continuances, and motions – in addition to sanctions like probation or detention. Because of this, many complaints had multiple dispositions documented in the data. Due to the data structure, however, the analysis could only examine whether a complaint ever resulted in a certain disposition – not the total number of dispositions or court actions that occurred throughout the duration of a complaint (for more information, see the Data Limitations section on page 23).

**Figure 18** displays the distribution of relevant dispositions occurring at least once among complaints involving a delinquent allegation between 2009 and 2023. Findings show that the number of complaints that resulted in at least one release pre-adjudication or pre-disposition has decreased 92 percent since 2009, while the number of complaints with at least one continuance increased 180 percent between 2009 and 2018 but has since decreased 67 percent through 2023. Additionally, the number of complaints with at least one disposition of probation or the Youth Services Bureau have decreased 83 percent since 2009; and since 2017, approximately the same number of complaints that had at least one disposition of probation or the Youth Services Bureau had at least one disposition of detention.

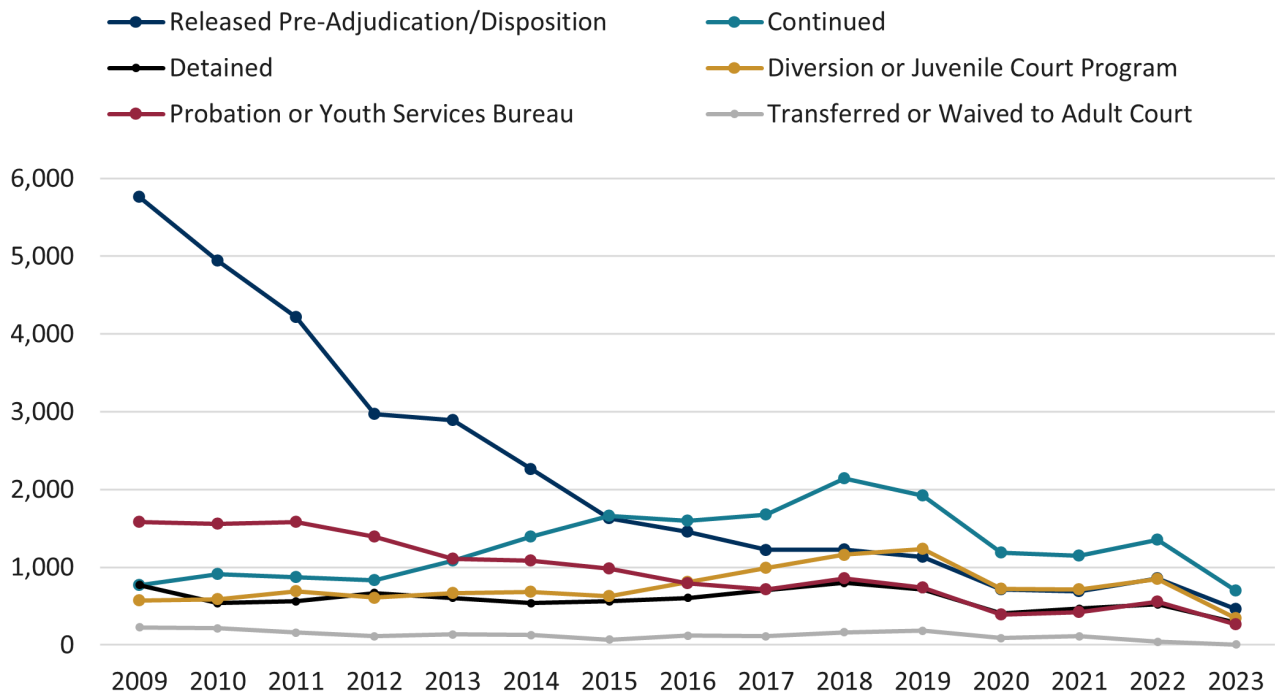
Furthermore, the number of complaints with at least one disposition of diversion or placement in a Juvenile Court program increased 114 percent between 2009 and 2019 but has since decreased 72 percent through 2023. Despite this recent decrease, the number of complaints with at least one disposition of diversion or Juvenile Court programs appears to have outpaced the number of complaints with at least one disposition of detention since 2013.

Finally, the data show that the number of complaints transferred or waived to adult court at least once has decreased 97 percent since 2009. The number of complaints involving delinquent allegations by type of disposition ever ordered (per year) may be found in [Appendix L](#).

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<sup>iii</sup> Independent samples t-tests compare means (or averages) of two of two separate groups for a specific variable to determine whether those means are significantly different. For example, independent samples t-tests may be used to examine whether the average length of time in detention is significantly different for boys vs. girls or white vs. Black youth.

**Figure 18: Relevant Dispositions Occurring At Least Once Among Complaints Involving a Delinquent Allegation (N=98,930)**



**Notes:**

1. Released pre-adjudication/disposition includes release on bond, recognizance, or to parents.
2. In addition to diversion programs, “Juvenile Court Program” includes the following: Youth Court, JIFF, Pursuit Center/Evening Reporting Center, Youth Villages, Ceasefire, Memphis Allies, and Youthful Offender Initiative.
3. Probation or Youth Services Bureau includes dispositions of “School-Based Probation Liaison”.
4. Besides the Juvenile Court programs previously listed, the Court Services data do not specify dispositions to the Children’s Services Bureau or Youth Services Bureau.
5. Quantitative figures for 2023 may be under-counted due to limiting the sample to closed complaints.
6. This figure does not include all disposition types documented in the Court Services data, only the types relevant to the analysis of outcomes among complaints involving a delinquent allegation.

**Data Limitations**

While the Court Services data included many items that were necessary and relevant for the quantitative analysis, some limitations should be noted. Most limiting to the analysis was the structure of the Court Services data. It is understandable (and standard) that in the data, a single youth may have been associated with multiple complaints, and thus would present more than once in the data files. However, per JCMSC, the Court Services data system creates additional lines for any data change associated with a youth’s complaint. For example, if a youth had a change in attorney, the Court Services data

system would add a new line duplicating all the youth’s information associated with their original complaint while updating the entry for their attorney to reflect their new counsel. While it is good practice that the Court Services data system is tracking updates associated with a youth’s complaint, the duplication of other information (that has not changed) muddles the overall picture of a youth’s complaint; this may inaccurately reflect certain information such as the number of offenses related to the complaint, how many times a youth was detained throughout the course of the complaint, or types of dispositions resulting from the complaint.

Due to the aforementioned limitation, the analysis could only determine if a youth “ever” or “never” experienced most outcomes – such as diversion, placement on EM/GPS, or other dispositions, for example – rather than being able to measure how many distinct times a youth might have experienced such outcomes. The data structure therefore did not allow for an examination of whether some youth experienced certain outcomes more than once.

Missing information among data items as well as data items that were missing from the data altogether also limited the analysis. For instance, the data did not include adjudication or disposition dates, which would have been beneficial to include to determine the length of time that elapsed between complaint filing date and adjudication, as well as between adjudication and disposition. Data items comprising disposition length were also missing a significant amount of information – specifically the item for disposition period (e.g., hours, days, months); this hindered the ability to analyze disposition lengths.

Finally, detention items in the data appeared to be missing a significant amount of information and it was unclear how some of the detention items related to one another. For example, a detention item labeled as “placement after detention hearing” documented just under 7,100 youth as detained or jailed (versus released, bond authorized, foster home, or not applicable); however, another item labeled as “facility placement after detention hearing” documented slightly over 30,500 youth as placed in a detention center.

CJI corresponded with JCMSC throughout the quantitative analysis process to obtain clarification about certain data points and data entry codes in effort to fully understand the data and mitigate limitations where possible. However, as described in the following sections, data entry and tracking improvements are needed to allow for a more accurate and comprehensive tracking of youths’ involvement with Court Services.

## Summary of Quantitative Analysis Findings

The quantitative analysis revealed some common themes related to youths’ involvement with JCMSC’s Court Services Division, outlined below:

- ▶ The Court Services Division is increasingly processing complaints through formal means, evidenced by increases in complaint filings involving unruly allegations and status offenses, increases in the number of complaints involving a delinquent allegation resulting in petition filings, and increases in the use of continuances, coupled with a decrease in the use of diversion or other Juvenile Court programs.
- ▶ While the proportion of youth with more than one complaint filed in the same year has decreased, most youth cycled through JCMSC more than once over multiple years.
- ▶ Youth are increasingly being pushed from the child welfare system to the youth justice system, evidenced by an uptick in crossover youth and an increase in the proportion of JCMSC referrals made by DCS or other social service agencies.
- ▶ Boys, Black youth, and youth experiencing poverty are disproportionately represented among the JCMSC population compared to the Shelby County population overall. Complaints involving a delinquent allegation are more likely to be filed among boys and Black youth; furthermore, complaints involving delinquent allegations among boys and Black youth are more likely to be formally processed by JCMSC via petition filing, involve placement on EM/GPS, and result in longer average placements after detention hearings than similar complaints among girls and white youth.
- ▶ Incidents related to complaints involving delinquent allegations are not evenly distributed across Shelby County, indicating a need to target resources and preventative efforts in the geographic areas most impacted.
- ▶ Data entry issues limit the ability of JCMSC to accurately track youths’ involvement with Court Services, examine trends in case outcomes, and evaluate the performance of Court Services’ processes.

# System Assessment Recommendations

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To maximize effectiveness within the newly developed Divisions, JCMSC should adopt and implement evidence-based policies and practices grounded in research on adolescent development, which has been shown to reduce recidivism and enhance data management practices to determine how new policies and practices impact outcomes. Additionally, JCMSC should incorporate individualized approaches that consider strengths, needs, and responsivity factors that impact how individuals learn and receive treatment, involve family and other natural supports, and emphasize community-based interventions. The following recommendations, informed by the system assessment findings, include suggested activities to balance accountability with rehabilitation and ways to measure success to improve long-term outcomes for youth, their families, and the community.

## Recommendation 1:

**Utilize evidence-based approaches proven to reduce recidivism and contribute to positive behavioral change to effectively and meaningfully interact with youth, families, and partners.**

JCMSC can enhance decision-making and more efficiently allocate the Court's resources by implementing the Principles of Effective Intervention where key intervention concepts for reducing the likelihood of youth committing new crimes include the Risk, Need, Responsivity, and Fidelity Principles.<sup>31</sup> Using these principles, interventions are tailored to a youth's individual circumstances and the results of a validated risk and needs assessment, reserving the most intensive services and supervision for youth with a higher risk of re-offending. These principles tell us who and what to target for change and how to deliver interventions effectively with fidelity to the model.<sup>32</sup> When these principles are adopted, youth-serving systems have better outcomes such as reduced recidivism and increased likelihood for positive behavior change, leading to success. To set the foundation for a shared interagency approach, all youth justice system stakeholders within JCMSC and other system partners who work with and make decisions about youth in Memphis and Shelby County should be trained in and gain an understanding of these principles and how using this framework improves outcomes, thus functioning JCMSC and the newly established Divisions most effectively.

## Recommendation 2:

**Examine how risk-and-needs assessments and other assessment instruments are utilized to inform decision-making and case planning efforts.**

Risk-and-needs assessments are tools designed to guide decision-making for youth justice populations and help create plans for appropriate services and supervision.<sup>33</sup> To ensure such assessments are being used according to their intended purpose, especially upon organizational restructuring, JCMSC should take a deeper look at how assessments are utilized in guiding decisions and matching youth to appropriate services and programs. Specifically, risk assessments should utilize objective and balanced criteria related to aggravating and mitigating factors and ensure that assessment domains (e.g., current offense, adjudication history) are weighted properly (i.e., scores are properly assigned to certain aspects of the assessment domains).<sup>34</sup> To be most effective, the divisions should establish a schedule to review and update policies, manuals, and guides that are related to Risk-and-Needs Assessments and other assessment instruments used by the Court; the Divisions should also plan to conduct regular validations of risk assessment instruments to assess whether such instruments are accurately predicting risk and make appropriate modifications as necessary.<sup>35</sup> Additionally, staff using the assessment instruments must be provided with refresher training opportunities on an ongoing basis, yearly at minimum, to ensure the tools are used according to their intended purpose. Further, to ensure these assessments accurately identify a youth's risk and needs, the Divisions should conduct quality assurance through interrater reliability activities with the CANS and YSB Screening Tool.<sup>36</sup> This ensures scoring consistency among different staff administering the assessment instruments and ensures fidelity to the intended purpose of the tools.

### Recommendation 3:

#### **Utilize system mapping to increase opportunities for pre- and post-adjudication diversionary responses to youth behavior.**

JCMSC should consider expanding opportunities for diversion for youth who are assessed as low-to-moderate-risk and those who commit status and less serious delinquency offenses<sup>37,38</sup> and ensure diversion approaches are applied in a racially equitable manner.<sup>39</sup> System mapping is a strategy JCMSC can utilize to enhance diversion decision-making that increases the use of diversion as a response to youth behavior and increases stakeholder and community partner engagement. Research shows that using diversion to steer youth from formal involvement in the justice system promotes public safety and yields better life outcomes.<sup>40,41</sup> Diversion is underutilized nationally, even though research suggests this approach is more effective in reducing recidivism than traditional court procedures, costs less,<sup>42</sup> and reduces continued involvement in the system.<sup>43</sup> Since the data show disproportionate representation among boys, Black youth, and youth experiencing poverty in formal processing, JCMSC should explore ways to target resources and interventions to prevent and reduce involvement and formal processing with these groups. Further, since there are increased referrals to the Court from child welfare, JCMSC should determine whether these reasons warrant formal involvement with the youth justice system, considering the negative consequences of involving youth and their families in multiple systems.<sup>44,45</sup>

### Recommendation 4:

#### **Evaluate court hearing continuances occurring during a youth's case, specifically focusing on reasons for the continuance, how often continuances are permitted, and how that impacts the length of each case.**

Delays in the youth justice system can have negative consequences for youth, their families, and their communities. Particularly, given the developmental immaturity of youth, swift system responses and connection to interventions are likely to be more effective with young people. Delays in juvenile court processing may interfere with the ability to connect youth with necessary resources to address assessed risks and needs related to the offending behavior, and research suggests that youth are less likely to recidivate when the court processes their cases in a timely manner.<sup>46</sup> Thus, JCMSC should consider limiting the use of continuances throughout the duration of youths' cases, as delays in JCMSC processing can keep youth in the system, contribute to a disconnection from school or employment and other essential supports, and limit the effectiveness of certain interventions. JCMSC should evaluate current guidelines and time standards and consider strategies to cut down on processing times and then use data collection and reporting to monitor impact.<sup>47</sup>

### Recommendation 5:

#### **Assess JCMSC's use of Electronic Monitoring and Global Positioning System Monitoring as an alternative to detention for pre-adjudicated youth and as a dispositional response to determine if they are aligned with best practices.**

JCMSC's current EM/GPS practices can be enhanced to better align with best practices by using this surveillance option as a last resort, not the default.<sup>48</sup> Although EM/GPS is an alternative to incarceration and offers cost savings, it can also place unnecessary hardships on the youth and families and may result in negative emotional effects due to the stigma associated with wearing a device.<sup>49</sup> Constant supervision through EM/GPS may also increase the youth's likelihood of incurring a technical violation, which in JCMSC's case has resulted in severe consequences such as detention or deeper system involvement. To assess the use of this type of response, JCMSC should review policies surrounding this practice and make revisions where necessary to ensure alignment with best practices, in addition to training staff and other system stakeholders on appropriate EM/GPS use.

## Recommendation 6:

**Adopt an effective case management strategy to include case planning documents that are individualized, informed by the results of a validated risk-and-needs assessment, and engage youth and families within the strategy.**

JCMSC should consider implementing an effective case management strategy that includes setting goals, targeting criminogenic needs, and identifying strengths, opportunities, triggers, and barriers through an individualized case plan. A case plan is a written document, creating a structured way to help youth make long-lasting prosocial changes and prevent further system involvement. This includes authentic partnering with youth to create individualized, short and long-term goals while also addressing barriers, building on strengths, and connecting youth with interventions matched to their criminogenic needs.<sup>50</sup> Additionally, to reduce the overrepresentation of certain groups in the system, JCMSC should administer these resources and implement interventions with the understanding that pathways to and protective factors against delinquency vary by gender, race, and socioeconomic status.<sup>51-55</sup> Incorporating case planning into JCMSC's practices will equip staff with the necessary tools to drive behavior change and match youth to interventions that address the root cause of anti-social behaviors. Further, this approach will transform the Court's supervision approach from a surveillance and compliance-focused approach to a more supportive style that nurtures a young person's positive development and maturation.

## Recommendation 7:

**Revise JCMSC's graduated response system to incorporate positive reinforcement and incentives to address youth compliance and pro-social behaviors.**

Graduated responses are proportionate, timely, and consistent responses to an individual's positive and negative behaviors using a balance of incentives and sanctions.<sup>56</sup> This includes appropriately matching each response to the severity and type of behavior exhibited by the youth and increasing positive reinforcement at a ratio of four incentives to every one sanction.<sup>57</sup> JCMSC should build on its current graduated response grid by emphasizing incentives for positive behavior, ensuring responses are developmentally and culturally appropriate and informed by a validated assessment tool.

## Recommendation 8:

**Establish a training environment that provides staff with the skills and tools to help their clients achieve successful outcomes.**

The JCMSC should consider enhancing professional development opportunities for staff that include offering trainings on evidence-based practices surrounding adolescent behavior and the youth justice system, establishing a team to oversee and facilitate trainings, and assessing and reinforcing skills learned.<sup>58</sup> Developing and implementing a training curriculum and schedule will help staff gain an understanding of how evidence-based practices can positively impact young people and families who encounter the justice system. Implementing evidence-based practices is a long-term process that requires an accountability system to assess how organizations deliver services, ensuring positive impacts on youth outcomes.<sup>59,60</sup> Once JCMSC has set clear policies and procedures for improved programming through staff training, a quality assurance process is necessary to ensure new practices align with model fidelity. Creating a continuous quality assurance process includes monitoring and coaching staff through activities, such as training audits, observation, and case file reviews.<sup>61</sup> See [Appendix M](#) for evidence-based effective case management tools.

## Recommendation 9:

### **Build a continuum of care framework to meet the needs of youth and families in Shelby County.**

Bringing child welfare, youth justice, and community stakeholders together and building a continuum of care framework can play an important role in meeting the needs of youth and families in Shelby County, instilling a holistic approach.<sup>62</sup> To build this framework, the newly developed Divisions will need to create avenues to increase communication and collaboration within the Court, with the community, and across systems to effectively address youth needs and behaviors. Since youth and families in the justice system often interact with several different agencies, JCMSC should strengthen collaboration, which will reduce duplication of services, eliminate silos, and remove barriers for youth and families.<sup>63</sup> Also considered should be authentically engaging and partnering with youth and their families, especially in areas of Shelby County's most impacted by incidents associated with complaints involving delinquent allegations filed in JCMSC. This can be done by soliciting the input of Lived Experience Experts and community members regarding delinquency prevention and reduction efforts and involving these individuals in conversations to ensure such efforts are tailored to communities' unique needs.<sup>64,65</sup> Additionally important, considering that youth involved in the child welfare system – particularly those with a history of child maltreatment – are at a greater risk of delinquency,<sup>66,67,68</sup> JCMSC should examine how to expand support for child welfare-involved youth and their families to prevent crossover into the youth justice system. Given the Division restructuring, instilling a collaborative approach should be prioritized to improve the Court's efficiency and minimize barriers for families who encounter the youth justice system. This continuum of care approach also allows all youth justice system stakeholders to understand available resource assets and identify gaps, further giving collaborators the ability to think through barriers and how to best respond to them.

## Recommendation 10:

### **Provide oversight of community-based programs to ensure effective communication and collaboration and meet performance metrics and outcome indicators as set by JCMSC.**

JCMSC should develop a formal application process to select external community-based programs that are suitable for the Court's needs. Ideally, these community partners would provide evidence-based or promising programs, programs that provide positive and prosocial activities, and/or programs that fulfill any resource gaps. Once the Court has selected the programs that best serve Shelby County's youth justice population, JCMSC should standardize a referral, information-sharing, and engagement process that outlines the agreed-upon duties and responsibilities of the Court staff and the program provider. JCMSC should also establish performance and outcome measures and require the program to collect and report data, which will identify any issues with which to develop solutions. This oversight will allow JCMSC to increase communications between the Court and programs, ensure accountability of each program, and assess the program's ability to serve and provide positive outcomes for the referred youth. JCMSC has already begun considering strategies to put this recommendation into motion.

## Recommendation 11:

### **Develop a plan to improve data practices within Court Services to determine whether the new system improvements result in desired outcomes.<sup>69</sup>**

JCMSC should enhance data entry, management, and tracking practices to promote an accurate accounting of a youth's involvement with JCMSC and support the examination of trends in case outcomes. To achieve this, JCMSC should expand data collection around detention processes and identify other metrics to evaluate the performance of JCMSC processes to determine which processes are working (or not working) effectively. Additionally, with the Court's restructuring, new and improved data practices overall within each new division should be considered. Effective data collection is necessary to evaluate outcomes, determine whether the new practices are delivering the intended results, and make decisions to make further adjustments when needed.

## Conclusion

Youth justice systems that rely heavily on surveillance and confinement or mimic the adult legal system can critically deprive young people of healthy adolescent development. Systems like JCMSC can thrive and produce better outcomes for youth and their families when developmental approaches are incorporated into policy and practice. Such approaches can include accountability without criminalization through restorative practices, increasing alternatives to formal system involvement, establishing individualized responses based on the assessed risks and identified needs, utilizing interventions rooted in knowledge about adolescent development, limiting confinement only when necessary for public safety, and actively and consistently engaging the family.<sup>70</sup>

Recognizing the need for system improvements, having a genuine commitment to fairness, and sensitivity to disparate treatment, JCMSC is dedicated to using data and research to drive system change and establish divisions that are aligned with their mission in policy and practice. Through the work of the transition and implementation teams, the Court is taking the necessary steps to be responsive to the needs of staff, the youth and families they serve, and the community; ultimately improving Shelby County's youth justice system. This is evident by the openness of staff, the restructuring of the Court Services Division, revamping the probation supervision role, hiring more staff including a training coordinator, establishing avenues to receive staff feedback, reimagining how the Court engages with community partners, making revisions to standard operating procedures, and importantly conducting a comprehensive assessment of their system to drive change. The findings and recommendations outlined in this report are intended to provide JCMSC with the information necessary to understand current practices, the impact of those practices, and to guide system improvements that are driven by data and research.



## Appendix A: Data Point Definitions

- **Youth:** An individual person aged 17 or under with a complaint filed in JCMSC.
- **Complaint:** A referral to JCMSC involving a youth. A single youth could be associated with more than one complaint in the data.
- **Allegation:** The type of case associated with a complaint, including delinquent, unruly, and/or dependent and neglected. A single youth could have more than one allegation associated with the same complaint, such as unruly and delinquent.
- **Referral Reason:** The type of offense (or incident) associated with an allegation, which is then associated with a complaint. Referral reasons are categorized as 1) person offenses, 2) nonperson (property) offenses, 3) drug or DUI-related offenses, 4) status offenses, probation violations, or dependent and neglected-related incidents, and 5) other offenses.<sup>i</sup> A single youth could have more than one referral reason associated with the same complaint.
- **Referral Source:** The agency or person(s) referring a youth to JCMSC, such as law enforcement, DCS or other social service agency, informal sources (e.g., parents, relatives, neighbors), or others including schools, probation officers, private attorneys, the district attorney's office, other courts, and sources listed as "other" in the data. A single youth could have been referred to the JCMSC by more than one source within the same complaint.
- **Gender:** A youth's gender as boy or girl.<sup>ii</sup>
- **Race:** A youth's race as white, Black, Asian or Pacific Islander, Indigenous (American Indian or Alaska Native), or more than one race.
- **Age:** A youth's age at time of complaint filing.
- **School Performance Level:** Describes a youth's proficiency in school at time of complaint filing as below expected level, at expected level, or accelerated.
- **Individualized Education Plan (IEP):** Denotes whether a youth had an IEP filed in school at time of complaint filing.
- **Special Education Programming:** Denotes whether a youth was involved in special education programming in school at time of complaint filing.
- **Living Arrangement:** Describes where a youth lived at time of complaint filing.
- **Family Income:** Describes a youth's family income at time of complaint filing.
- **Petition Filed:** Indicates whether a complaint resulted in a formal petition filing.
- **Electronic or GPS Monitor:** Indicates whether a youth was ever placed on electronic or GPS monitoring at any time over the course of a complaint.
- **Length of Placement after Detention Hearing:** The number of months in any placement occurring after a detention hearing.
- **Disposition:** Court actions associated with a complaint, such as orders of probation or detention.<sup>iii</sup>

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<sup>i</sup> Person offenses include those of murder or homicide, robbery, assault, weapons, kidnapping or false imprisonment, disorderly conduct, child abuse or neglect, reckless endangerment, terrorism or mass violence, stalking, conspiracy or acting in concert, obstruction or evading law enforcement, and sex offenses. Ordinarily, sex offenses would be included as a distinct category; however, sex offenses were included with person offenses for this analysis due to a low number of observations. Nonperson (property) offenses include vandalism, theft, burglary, trespassing or criminal mischief, traffic offenses, and fraud. "Other" includes any offense not included in categories 1-4, such as civil rights intimidations, contempt of court, involuntary commitment, offenses involving animals, contributing to the delinquency of a minor, arson, vice or other public order offenses, and those listed in the data as "other" or where descriptions were unclear.

<sup>ii</sup> The Court Services data document this information using sex categories of "male" and "female." For the purposes of this report, CJI uses gender categories of "boy" and "girl," as the use of certain terms may contribute to adultification of youth (for more information, see <https://genderjusticeandopportunity.georgetown.edu/focus-areas/adultification-bias/>). However, it should be noted that sex categories do not always translate perfectly to gender identify categories (for more information, see <https://medicine.yale.edu/news-article/what-do-we-mean-by-sex-and-gender/>).

<sup>iii</sup> The Court Services data included an item labeled "dispositions;" however, this item captured a broad array of court actions at various stages of a complaint – such as attorney advisements, continuances, and motions – in addition to sanctions like probation or detention. Because of this, many complaints had multiple dispositions documented in the data. Due to the data structure, however, the analysis could only examine whether a complaint ever resulted in a certain disposition – not the total number of dispositions or court actions that occurred throughout the duration of a complaint. For more information, see the Data Limitations section.

## Appendix B: Number of Complaints and Youth Per Year, 2009-2023

Year	Number of Complaints	Number of Youth
2009	17,675	13,156
2010	18,143	13,024
2011	16,688	12,274
2012	14,691	11,109
2013	14,496	10,744
2014	11,626	8,874
2015	10,552	8,308
2016	8,780	6,917
2017	7,238	5,774
2018	7,010	5,194
2019	6,568	4,944
2020	4,203	3,139
2021	3,887	3,146
2022	4,151	3,210
2023	2,327	1,842

Notes:

- <sup>1</sup> To calculate percentage changes between two time periods, subtract the value from the earlier time period (time 1) from the later time period (time 2), divide by time 1 and multiply by 100. Negative values resulting from this calculation represent percentage decreases, while positive values represent percentage increases. For example, the 77 percent decrease in complaints from 2010 to 2022 was calculated in the following manner:  $[(4,151-18,143)/18,143]*100$
- <sup>2</sup> The total number of youth will exceed the unique youth sample of 72,603 as some youth had multiple complaints filed in different years
- <sup>3</sup> Quantitative figures for 2023 may be under-counted due to limiting the sample to closed complaints

## Appendix C: Number of Allegations by Type, 2009-2023

Year	Delinquent	Unruly	Dependent & Neglected
2009	12,299	2,052	3,794
2010	12,721	2,346	3,565
2011	11,659	2,249	3,282
2012	9,882	1,868	3,347
2013	9,932	2,068	2,893
2014	8,038	1,419	2,521
2015	6,879	1,449	2,502
2016	5,634	959	2,344
2017	4,125	799	2,396
2018	4,586	565	2,007
2019	4,134	373	2,154
2020	2,618	208	1,469
2021	2,265	127	1,546
2022	2,674	288	1,285
2023	1,484	314	619

Notes:

- <sup>1</sup> The total number of allegations will exceed the unique number of complaints, as the same complaint may be associated with more than one allegation type
- <sup>2</sup> Quantitative figures for 2023 may be under-counted due to limiting the sample to closed complaints

## Appendix D: Number of Referrals Among Complaints by Reason for the Referral, 2009-2023

Year	Person Offense	Nonperson Offense	Drug or DUI Offense	Status Offense	Probation or YSB Violation	Dependent & Neglected	Other
2009	5,865	5,591	1,002	2,308	122	3,794	618
2010	6,450	5,412	1,019	2,627	123	3,565	596
2011	5,905	5,008	800	2,607	89	3,282	437
2012	4,937	4,274	776	2,107	125	3,347	325
2013	4,850	4,527	856	2,201	56	2,893	271
2014	3,871	3,858	653	1,492	53	2,521	183
2015	3,369	3,392	468	1,515	63	2,502	149
2016	2,704	2,827	452	1,006	65	2,342	97
2017	1,866	2,278	245	825	161	2,396	58
2018	2,065	2,514	327	566	220	2,007	91
2019	1,843	2,295	237	372	211	2,152	64
2020	1,196	1,497	177	206	102	1,469	58
2021	1,243	1,115	177	120	141	1,546	43
2022	1,451	1,362	241	293	206	1,285	32
2023	842	720	130	303	115	619	34

Notes:

1. "YSB" denotes "Youth Services Bureau"
2. The total number of referral reasons will exceed the unique number of complaints, as the same complaint may be associated with more than one referral reason
3. Quantitative figures for 2023 may be under-counted due to limiting the sample to closed complaints

## Appendix E: Number of Referrals Among Complaints by Referral Source, 2009-2023

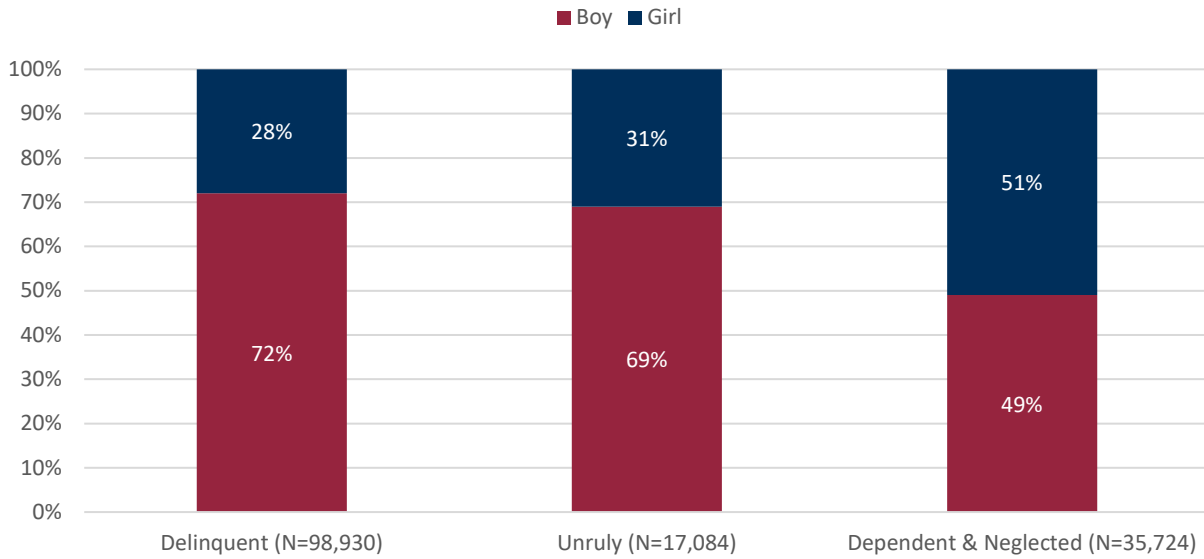
Year	Law Enforcement	Informal Referral	DCS or Social Service Agency	Other
2009	13,377	2,360	1,351	587
2010	14,015	2,466	1,023	639
2011	12,742	2,330	897	719
2012	10,771	2,415	872	633
2013	11,060	2,034	799	603
2014	8,646	1,914	566	500
2015	7,347	1,857	589	759
2016	5,803	1,715	549	713
2017	3,933	1,719	596	990
2018	4,418	1,370	529	693
2019	4,007	1,254	729	578
2020	2,565	390	805	443
2021	2,173	418	859	437
2022	2,522	512	640	477
2023	1,463	360	195	309

Notes:

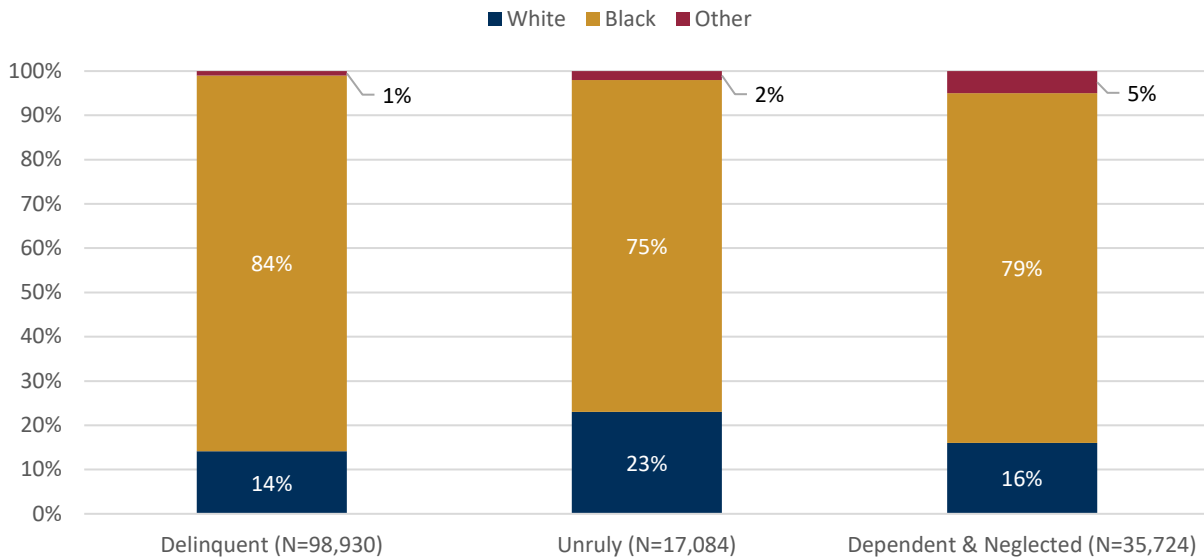
1. "Other" includes referral sources of school, probation officer, private attorney, District Attorney's office, other court, and other source
2. Quantitative figures for 2023 may be under-counted due to limiting the sample to closed complaints

## Appendix F: Demographic Distributions of Allegations, Referral Reasons, and Referral Sources, 2009-2023

**Figure 1: Percentage of Allegations Associated with Complaints Per Year by Allegation Type and Gender, 2009-2023**



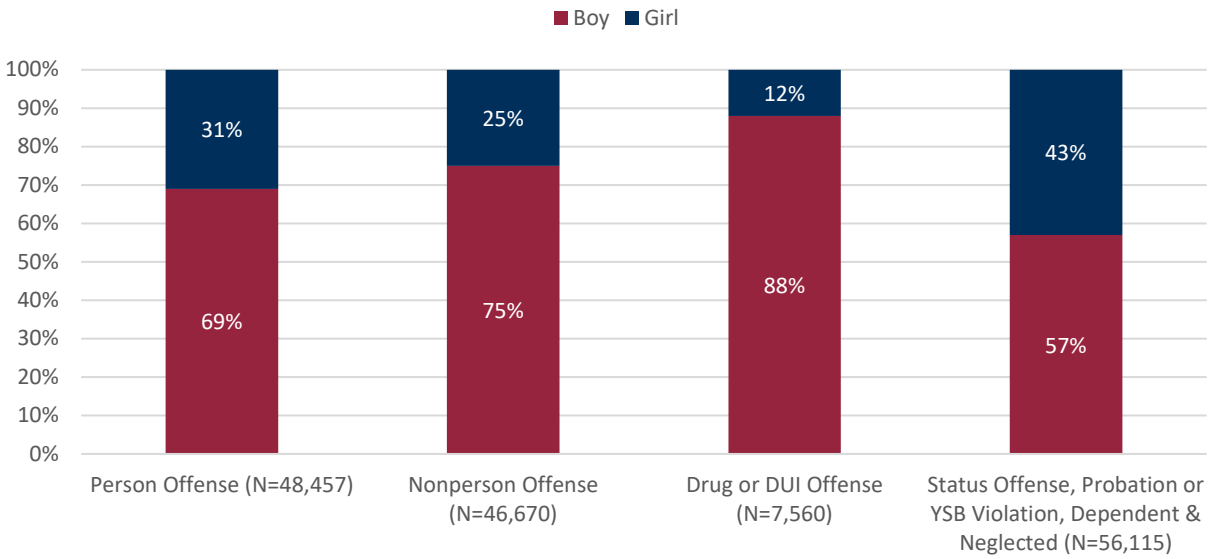
**Figure 2: Percentage of Allegations Associated with Complaints Per Year by Allegation Type and Race, 2009-2023**



**Notes:**

<sup>1</sup>. Due to the small numbers of Asian or Pacific Islander youth, Indigenous youth, and youth of more than one race in the sample, they are combined into an “Other” category to ensure anonymity for reporting purposes. For race figures, total percentages may not equal 100 as some youth were missing race information in the data.

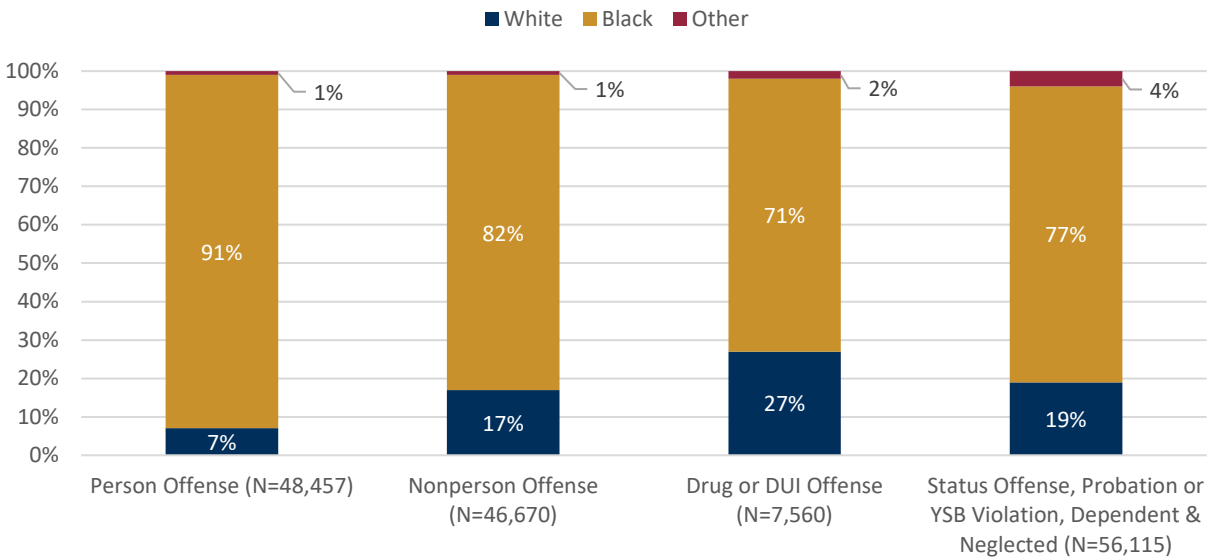
**Figure 3: Percentage of Referrals for Sampled Complaints by Reason for the Referral and Gender, 2009-2023**



**Notes:**

1. "YSB" denotes "Youth Services Bureau"

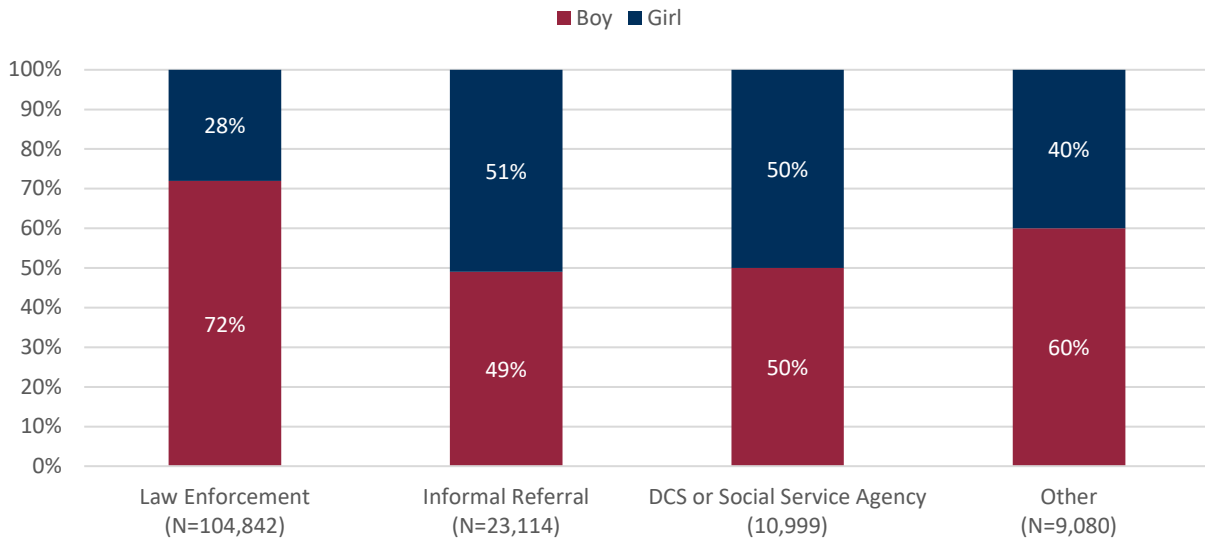
**Figure 4: Percentage of Referrals for Sampled Complaints by Reason for the Referral and Race, 2009-2023**



**Notes:**

1. "YSB" denotes "Youth Services Bureau"

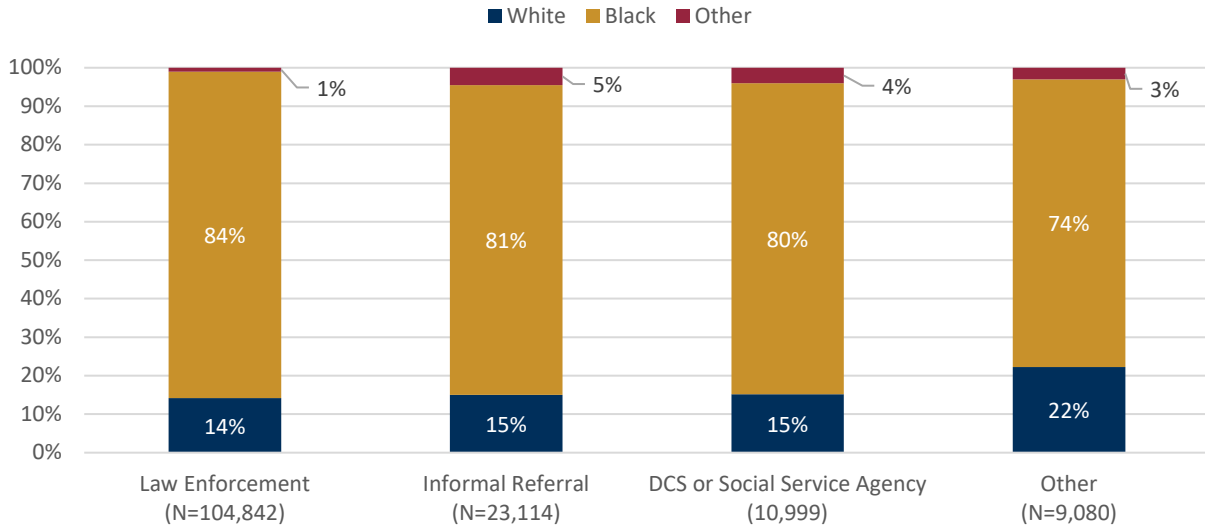
**Figure 5: Percentage of Referrals for Complaints in the Sample by Referral Source and Gender, 2009-2023**



Notes:

1. "Informal Referral" denotes referrals from parents, relatives, neighbors, and etc.
2. "Other" includes referral sources of school, probation officer, private attorney, District Attorney's office, other court, and other source

**Figure 6: Percentage of Referrals for Complaints in the Sample by Referral Source and Race, 2009-2023**



Notes:

1. Totals may exceed 100% due to rounding



## Appendix G: Number of Complaints Involving a Delinquent Allegation by Gender, Race, and Age at Time of Complaint, 2009-2023

### Gender and Race

Year	Boy	Girl	White	Black	Other Race
2009	8,640	3,659	1,858	10,268	126
2010	8,886	3,835	1,911	10,675	113
2011	8,250	3,409	1,601	9,918	137
2012	6,794	3,088	1,383	8,423	74
2013	7,037	2,895	1,328	8,499	103
2014	5,750	2,288	1,077	6,849	112
2015	4,847	2,032	1,004	5,805	70
2016	4,113	1,521	848	4,730	55
2017	3,125	1,000	637	3,436	49
2018	3,540	1,046	620	3,914	48
2019	3,113	1,021	576	3,503	51
2020	2,067	551	447	2,128	36
2021	1,761	504	299	1,890	43
2022	2,167	507	220	2,212	42
2023	1,167	317	104	1,280	37

Notes:

1. "Other Race" includes Asian or Pacific Islander youth, Indigenous youth, and youth of more than one race
2. Quantitative figures for 2023 may be under-counted due to limiting the sample to closed complaints

### Age

Year	14 or Younger	15 Years Old	16 Years Old	17 Years Old
2009	3,158	2,226	3,111	3,804
2010	3,437	2,289	3,186	3,809
2011	3,409	2,087	2,780	3,383
2012	2,695	1,874	2,366	2,947
2013	2,903	1,891	2,265	2,873
2014	2,268	1,441	1,916	2,413
2015	1,953	1,181	1,653	2,092
2016	1,578	949	1,342	1,765
2017	858	750	1,098	1,419
2018	905	846	1,213	1,622
2019	716	808	1,101	1,509
2020	466	439	694	1,019
2021	342	436	616	871
2022	576	454	716	928
2023	345	295	371	473

Notes:

1. Quantitative figures for 2023 may be under-counted due to limiting the sample to closed complaints

**Appendix H: Number of Complaints Involving Delinquent Allegations and Whether a Petition Filing Occurred, 2009-2023**

<b>Year</b>	<b>Petition Filed</b>	<b>Petition Not Filed</b>
2009	2,511	9,788
2010	2,526	10,195
2011	2,676	8,983
2012	2,410	7,472
2013	2,219	7,713
2014	2,104	5,934
2015	2,120	4,759
2016	1,725	3,909
2017	1,781	2,344
2018	2,223	2,363
2019	1,959	2,175
2020	1,111	1,507
2021	1,091	1,174
2022	1,347	1,327
2023	624	860

Notes:

<sup>1</sup>: Quantitative figures for 2023 may be under-counted due to limiting the sample to closed complaints

## Appendix I: Number of Complaints Involving Delinquent Allegations and EM/GPS Usage, 2009-2023

Year	Used EM/GPS	Did Not Use EM/GPS
2009	12	12,287
2010	<10	12,712
2011	37	11,622
2012	96	9,786
2013	79	9,853
2014	62	7,976
2015	107	6,772
2016	301	5,333
2017	348	3,777
2018	356	4,230
2019	345	3,789
2020	238	2,380
2021	228	2,037
2022	433	2,241
2023	292	1,192

**Notes:**

1. As provided, the Court Services data did not include a specific “electronic or GPS monitoring” item. For analysis purposes, complaints involving a delinquent allegation were identified as ever using electronic or GPS monitoring if meeting any of the following criteria: 1) unit placement after detention hearing was electronic monitoring, GPS, or “EM,” 2) facility placement after detention hearing was electronic monitoring, or 3) a disposition included electronic monitoring
2. “EM/GPS” denotes “Electronic Monitoring or Global Positioning System Monitoring”
3. Quantitative figures for 2023 may be under-counted due to limiting the sample to closed complaints

## Appendix J: Average Placement Length After Detention Hearing (in Months), 2009-2023

Year	All Placements in General (N=40,761)	If Detained (N=30,514)	If EM/GPS Used (N=2,462)
2009	1.3	0.6	5.3
2010	1.3	0.5	11.7
2011	1.6	0.6	4.6
2012	2.0	1.1	4.6
2013	1.6	2.0	4.2
2014	2.1	2.4	4.3
2015	2.8	3.2	5.2
2016	3.2	3.8	4.9
2017	3.5	4.5	4.5
2018	3.4	4.3	5.1
2019	3.1	4.0	4.2
2020	3.4	4.0	5.1
2021	2.9	3.6	4.3
2022	2.3	2.7	3.1
2023	1.1	1.3	2.0

Notes:

1. "EM/GPS" denotes "Electronic Monitoring or Global Positioning System Monitoring"
2. Quantitative figures for 2023 may be under-counted due to limiting the sample to closed complaints

**Appendix K: Independent Samples T-Tests Results, Average Total Months Placed After Detention Hearings by Gender and Race Among Complaints Involving a Delinquent Allegation, 2009-2023**

Group	Avg. Total Months: All Placements in General	Avg. Total Months: Detained	Avg. Total Months: EM/GPS Used
<b>Person Offenses</b>			
Boy	2.43	2.04	4.50
Girl	0.80	0.45	4.03
CI	0.00	0.00	0.27
White	1.46	1.26	4.78
Black	2.04	1.67	4.44
CI	0.00	0.00	0.53
<b>Nonperson Offenses</b>			
Boy	2.43	1.63	3.79
Girl	1.07	0.56	4.61
CI	0.00	0.00	0.19
White	1.55	0.81	2.57
Black	2.29	1.52	3.94
CI	0.00	0.00	0.06
<b>Drug or DUI Offenses</b>			
Boy	1.86	1.00	3.30
Girl	1.17	0.65	3.78
CI	0.00	0.12	0.66
White	1.31	0.72	3.29
Black	1.92	1.01	3.42
CI	0.00	0.08	0.86
<b>Status Offense or Probation/YSB Violation</b>			
Boy	3.17	2.08	3.11
Girl	1.98	1.28	4.13
CI	0.00	0.01	0.40
White	1.34	1.05	1.52
Black	3.34	2.12	3.45
CI	0.00	0.00	0.22

Notes:

1. "CI" denotes "confidence interval." Any CI less than 0.05 represents a significant relationship, where values closer to zero indicate increased significance
2. "EM/GPS" denotes "Electronic Monitoring or Global Positioning System Monitoring"
3. These figures **do not** show the average time specifically spent in detention or EM/GPS, as the data structure did not allow for this determination. These figures represent the average time spent in all placements after detention hearing(s) based on whether a complaint involving a delinquent allegation ever resulted in detention or ever used EM/GPS from 2009 through 2023
4. The number of observations (Ns) for each gender and race group are listed in order of offense category as 1) person, 2) nonperson, 3) drug or DUI, and 4) status or probation/YSB violation. **Boys:** 1) all placements (N=19,832), detained (N=15,661), EM/GPS (N=1,571); 2) all placements (N=13,443), detained (N=9,672), EM/GPS (N=1,142); 3) all placements (N=2,895), detained (N=2,224), EM/GPS (N=200); 4) all placements (1,592), detained (N=1,208), EM/GPS (N=117). **Girls:** 1) all placements (N=7,240), detained (N=5,107), EM/GPS (N=178); 2) all placements (N=2,378), detained (N=1,691), EM/GPS (N=82); 3) all placements (N=274), detained (N=208), EM/GPS (N=10); 4) all placements (N=428), detained (N=357), EM/GPS (N=17). **White youth:** 1) all placements (N=1,921), detained (N=1,392), EM/GPS (N=125); 2) all placements (N=1,218), detained (N=889), EM/GPS (N=64); 3) all placements (N=524), detained (N=386), EM/GPS (N=25); 4) all placements (N=391), detained (N=297), EM/GPS (N=10). **Black youth:** 1) all placements (N=24,761), detained (N=19,096), EM/GPS (N=1,575); 2) all placements (N=14,416), detained (N=10,341), EM/GPS (N=1,124); 3) all placements (N=2,579), detained (N=1,997), EM/GPS (N=174); 4) all placements (N=1,600), detained (N=1,248), EM/GPS (N=121)

## Appendix L: Number of Complaints Involving Delinquent Allegations by Type of Disposition Ever Ordered, 2009-2023

Year	Released Pre-Adjudication or Disposition	Continued	Detained	Diversion or Juvenile Court Program	Probation or Youth Services Bureau	Transferred or Waived to Adult Court
2009	5,763	766	769	574	1,584	227
2010	4,938	908	537	590	1,555	216
2011	4,214	870	562	693	1,578	161
2012	2,970	829	668	607	1,393	114
2013	2,890	1,082	605	668	1,104	134
2014	2,263	1,393	536	685	1,086	129
2015	1,631	1,663	562	630	981	70
2016	1,458	1,596	605	810	792	118
2017	1,222	1,675	707	986	710	111
2018	1,223	2,143	799	1,159	859	163
2019	1,131	1,923	715	1,231	738	184
2020	710	1,187	406	721	393	88
2021	687	1,146	469	716	420	113
2022	859	1,354	522	844	555	39
2023	463	697	288	345	264	<10

Notes:

- <sup>1</sup> Released pre-adjudication/disposition includes release on bond, recognizance, or to parents
- <sup>2</sup> In addition to diversion programs, "Juvenile Court Program" includes the following: Youth Court, JIFF, Pursuit Center/Evening Reporting Center, Youth Villages, Ceasefire, Memphis Allies, and Youthful Offender Initiative
- <sup>3</sup> Probation or Youth Services Bureau includes dispositions of "School-Based Probation Liaison"
- <sup>4</sup> Besides the Juvenile Court programs previously listed, the Court Services data do not specify dispositions to the Children's Services Bureau or Youth Services Bureau
- <sup>5</sup> These dispositions do not encompass all disposition types documented in the Court Services data, only the types relevant to the analysis of outcomes among complaints involving a delinquent allegation
- <sup>6</sup> Quantitative figures for 2023 may be under-counted due to limiting the sample to closed complaints

# Community Supervision Tools

## Achieving Effective Case Management for Youth

### PEI Principles of Effective Intervention

- Risk Principle **WHO** to target
- Need Principle **WHAT** to target
- Responsivity Principle **HOW** to target
- Fidelity Principle How to do it **RIGHT**

### CIS Cognitive Interaction Skills

- ✓ Target criminogenic needs
- ✓ Reinforce prosocial behaviors
- ✓ Reduce antisocial behaviors and attitudes
- ✓ Teach new prosocial skills

### Effective Case Management

Setting goals, targeting criminogenic needs, and identifying strengths, opportunities, triggers, and barriers

### MI Motivational Interviewing

- Ease doubts about change and develop intrinsic motivation

- O** Ask open-ended questions
- A** Affirm
- R** Listen reflectively
- S** Summarize

### GR Graduated Responses

Use incentives

**4 to 5** more times 

than sanctions



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# Achieving Effective Case Management for Youth

## Preparing Supervision Staff to Advance Behavior Change

Effective Case Management in conjunction with other community supervision tools will improve case management, more effectively create behavior change, and yield better results than using any of these tools alone. Below highlights community supervision tools that can strengthen supervision staff's approach to advancing behavior change.

### Principles of Effective Intervention

The Principles of Effective Intervention act as a guide to effective case management that informs behavior change.

**Risk Principle:** Assessing overall risk for future delinquency.

**Need Principle:** Identifying which criminogenic needs to target.

**Responsivity Principle:** Addressing barriers to intervention (e.g., mental health trauma, transportation, language).

**Fidelity Principle:** Ensuring interventions are used as intended through coaching and monitoring.

### Cognitive Interaction Skills

Cognitive Interaction Skills are cognitive-behavioral approaches designed to give staff the skills to guide youth through behavior change

- Effective Use of Authority
- Effective Use of Reinforcement
- Role Clarification
- Active Listening
- Giving Feedback
- Effective Use of Disapproval
- Cognitive Restructuring
- Relationship Skills



### Community Supervision Tools

### Motivational Interviewing

Motivational Interviewing is a collaborative conversation style that helps increase a person's motivation and commitment to change by:

- Engaging
- Focusing
- Evoking their "why" of change
- Planning the "how"

### Graduated Responses

Graduated Responses can be used to promote behavior change in a graduated manner through the use of incentives in response to prosocial behavior, as well as sanctions in response to antisocial behavior.

- Responses should be:**
- Proportionate
  - Consistent
  - Timely



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