

King County Juvenile Legal System Statistics

2018 Compared to 2019¹

Headlines

- In 2019, admissions to secure detention and the average number of youth detained each day dropped to their *lowest in recorded King County history*, even after factoring in the additional youth held on adult matters.
- Girls experienced a 37% drop in their average daily presence in detention
- Bookings into detention for probation violations dropped 30% between 2018 (n = 176) and 2019 (n = 123), the lowest recorded.
- Referrals and filings continue to fall in 2019 to their lowest point since first being tracked in 1998, down another 4% and 15%, respectively.
- Referrals to *pre-filing diversions* were up 3% in 2019, while *post-filing diversions* increased 236% (n = 137 diversion referrals) due to an increase in deferred dispositions and the addition of the CEDAR program.

Referrals, Filings and Diversions² (pages 1-4)

- Referrals and filings continue to fall in 2019 to their lowest point since first being recorded in 1998, down another 4% and 15%, respectively.
- Referrals of unique youth (each youth counted once) fell across all races and genders, however the total referrals for youth who are Asian/Pacific Islander and girls overall increased 10% (n = 21 referrals) and 7% (n = 46 referrals), respectively. This indicates that the increase is due to individual youth experiencing re-referrals in the same year.
- Referrals of youth who are black, Hispanic/Latinx and Native youth all had large drops in referrals and filings (see Table 1).
- Filings followed the same trend as referrals, with decreases in filings of unique youth dropping in 2019, but slight increases in total referrals for girls (n = 14 filings) and youth who are Asian/Pacific Islander (n = 6 filings).
- Referrals of felony offenses dropped 10%, while referrals of misdemeanors was fairly flat at a 1.5% change (n = 25 referrals).

¹ Due to declining numbers of youth in the juvenile legal system, it is important to make note of the number as well as the percentage. Small numbers can look like large percentages so the *n* has been included, where necessary.

² "Other/Unknown" numbers in the race category are due primary to law enforcement reporting. This data is usually updated in the data warehouse if a youth is seen by the probation department where they are asked to self-report race and ethnicity. Due to the large number of "unknown" in the referral numbers it is impossible to determine which race category they would have self-identified as. Those youth filed on had met with a probation intake counselor and therefore the "unknown" category is quite small.

Table 1. Decreases in Referrals and Filings

Race	Decrease in Referrals	Referrals % Decrease	Decrease in Filings	Filings % Decrease
Asian/Pacific Islander	21	10%	6	8%
Black	-106	-9%	-116	-19%
Hispanic/Latinx	-31	-6%	-28	-12%
Native American	-30	-41%	-15	-39%
White	1	0%	-31	-12%

- Referrals and filings fell across all offense types, except for Sex offenses. The increase in referrals of Sex offenses were driven by an increase of referrals of Rape 3, Assault 4 – SM, and Disclosing of Intimate Images. Filings increased for Rape offenses. Conversations with the juvenile Prosecuting Attorney’s Office indicates an uptick in the reporting of peer sexual assaults that could be due in part to the #MeToo movement and increased education on consent.
- Referrals to *pre-filing diversions*³ were up 3% in 2019, while *post-filing diversions*⁴ increased 236% (n = 137 diversion referrals, see page 4) due to an increase in deferred dispositions and the implementation of the CEDAR program.

Truancy Petitions (page 5)

- For the first time, truancy petitions filed in Juvenile Court are included in this report.^{5,6}
- The number of petitions filed are down 11% in calendar year 2019 over 2018.
- Eight school districts make up 84% of petitions filed in 2019.
- Of all youth enrolled⁷ in King County public school districts (n = 278,803), 11% (n = 30,053) were reported as truant⁸, and 6% of those youth identified as truant had a truancy petition filed in Superior Court (n = 1,707). However, these numbers differ by school district.

Alternatives to Secure Detention (page 6)

- The average number of youth in alternatives to secure detention *increased 21%* between 2018 and 2019, meaning there were 6 more youth on ASD, on average, each day. This increase was

³ Pre-filing referrals by the PAO to formal and informal programs aimed at diverting youth from deeper system involvement.

⁴ Post-filing referrals by the PAO aimed at providing the youth with a dismissed case if the youth successfully completes the terms offered and agreed to.

⁵ Source: King County Department of Judicial Administration

⁶ Data on race is generally not reported by DJA due to its inability to be validated. It should be interpreted accordingly with caution here.

⁷ Youth of all ages that are enrolled in King County Public Schools; Source: OSPI; Comprehensive Educational Data and Research System (CEDARS) extracted on October 22, 2019

⁸ Youth aged 6 to 17 years old; Source: OSPI; Comprehensive Educational Data and Research System (CEDARS) extracted on October 22, 2019

driven primarily by the increase in “long term youth”⁹ placed on ASD. These youth experienced longer lengths of stay, as did those on ASD charged with adult matters, which in turn contributed to an increased average daily population.

- Most of the increased average number of youth on ASD were boys (n = 5 boys per day)
- By race, Asian/Pacific Islander, black, and Latinx each had more youth on ASD, on average, each day than in 2018.

Secure Detention (pages 7-9)

- Admissions to secure detention and the average number of youth detained dropped to their *lowest in recorded King County history*, even after factoring in the additional youth held on adult matters. Admissions fell to below 1,000 in 2019 with an average daily population of 41.7. When looking into youth held on *juvenile matters*, that average number fell to 34 youth held in secure detention each day. The average number of days a youth is held in detention likewise fell for youth held in detention on juvenile matters (including “long term youth”). The increased length of stay for youth held on adult matters prevented the average length of stay from falling further.
- Girls experienced a 37% drop in their average daily presence in detention (3.9 in 2019 vs. 6.2 youth in 2018, a difference of 2 girls) and in their proportion of all youth in detention (from 11.8% down to 9.4%). The average daily population of boys in secure detention dropped 19% (46.5 youth down to 37.8 in 2019, though they made up a slightly higher proportion of the total (from 88.2% to 90.6%).
- Although the proportion of youth of color and Native youth in secure detention is holding at 86%, ADP fell across all races, with the average daily population of black and Latinx youth decreasing 18% and 27%, respectively.
- While the total number of admissions to detention fell in 2019, they didn’t fall equally across admission reasons. For example, there were increases in admissions for Felony Person, Misdemeanor Person, Misdemeanor Property and admissions for Offender Warrants.
- The average length of stay¹⁰ decreased overall by 10% (or almost 2 days), but increased for Felony Drug/Alcohol offenses, for JRA and Muni Court holds, for Warrants, youth sentenced to detention, and youth held on adult matters.
- In 2019, youth booked on Felony Person offenses accounted for 35% (ADP = 14.5) of the population in detention, followed by Offender Warrants (20%, ADP = 8.2) and youth held on adult matters (18%, ADP = 7.6).

Prepared by: Elizabeth Haumann, Criminal Justice Research and Evaluation Analyst
King County Office of Performance, Strategy and Budget
elizabeth.haumann@kingcounty.gov

⁹ Youth under juvenile jurisdiction whereas in prior years (prior to July 1, 2018) would have been eligible for auto adult jurisdiction: <https://app.leg.wa.gov/rcw/default.aspx?cite=13.04.030>

¹⁰ Average length of stay is calculated from the time of admission to the time of release or the end of the reporting period. The length of stay provided is for the ENTIRE time a youth was in secure detention, not just on the offense that they were booked on.