



Juvenile Disposition Summary

Fiscal Year 2023

The Caseload Forecast Council (CFC) received 2,215 juvenile dispositions rendered by Washington State juvenile courts in Fiscal Year 2023.¹ This report describes those dispositions.

Washington State Juvenile Sentencing Guidelines

The Washington State juvenile code mandates a system of presumptive sentencing guidelines for juvenile offenders.

The presumptive standard range for an offense² is a function of the seriousness of the current offense (current offense category) and criminal history (prior adjudication score).

Although the level of presumptive sanction increases with offense seriousness and prior adjudication score, the increase is not linear (see Figure 1).

Generally, current offense seriousness outweighs prior adjudication score.

Courts also have the option of using several sentencing alternatives to the standard range.

Current Offense Category

While the juvenile system uses adult crime statutes, individual offenses are assigned a more differentiated juvenile “current offense category” (with + and – added to differentiate within a class) for sentencing purposes. While juvenile offense categories generally parallel adult felony classes (i.e., Class B felonies are typically B+, B, or B- category offenses), that is not universally the case.

Prior Adjudication Score

The seriousness of criminal history is summarized by the “prior adjudication score.” Prior felony adjudications count as one point each, and misdemeanors and gross misdemeanors count as one-quarter point. The prior adjudication score is the sum of the points for all prior adjudicated offenses, with fractions rounded down.

¹ Juvenile courts are required by statute (RCW 13.50.010(9)) to report all dispositions to the Caseload Forecast Council.

² Washington’s juvenile code, while paralleling the adult criminal justice system in most respects, retains traditional juvenile court terminology where juvenile offenders are “adjudicated” rather than “convicted” of “offenses” rather than “crimes.” This report uses the juvenile and adult terms interchangeably, recognizing that in some cases, absolute accuracy is subordinated to readability.

Prior adjudications do not affect the standard range for any current offense that is not a felony. Any current offense that is a misdemeanor or gross misdemeanor will always involve local sanctions regardless of the youth’s prior adjudication score.

Standard Range: Confinement to Juvenile Rehabilitation vs. Local Sanction

The juvenile sentencing guidelines specify two types of presumptive penalties: a standard range of confinement under the supervision of the Department of Children, Youth, and Families’ Juvenile Rehabilitation (JR) for more than thirty days or a local sanction administered at the county level.

Standard ranges which exceed 30 days, include a minimum and a maximum term, and are served in a Juvenile Rehabilitation facility. Juvenile Rehabilitation has the limited discretion to set a release date between the minimum and maximum terms. Youths do not earn a sentence reduction for good behavior.

Local sanctions are supervised by county probation departments. Courts sentencing youths to local sanctions have the discretion to select from a menu of options including confinement, home monitoring, private residence, community supervision, fines, community service and work crew.

The presumptive sanction for category “B+” or higher offenses (Class A felonies and some violent Class B felonies) is a standard range of confinement in a Juvenile Rehabilitation facility.

Less serious offenses, the equivalent of B and C felonies, carry a presumption of a standard range of confinement or a local sanction, depending on the offense categories and prior adjudication scores.

Misdemeanors or gross misdemeanors carry a presumptive local sanction.

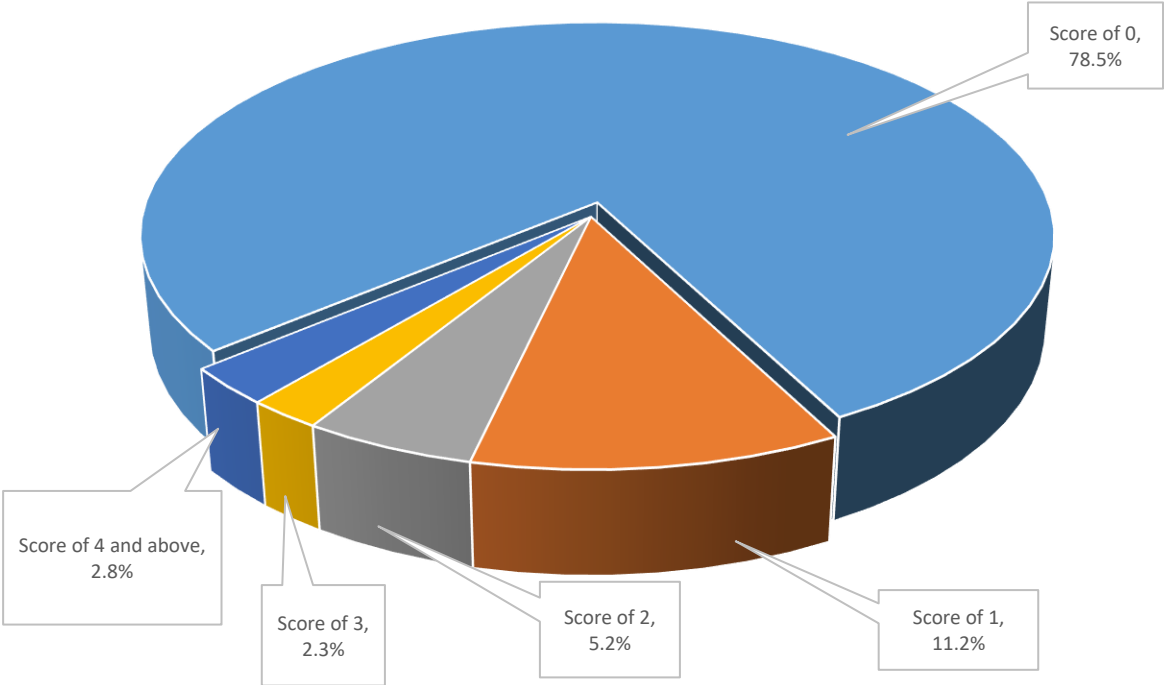
Figure 1. Option A - Juvenile Offender Sentencing Grid Standard Range (RCW 13.40.0357)

Current Offense Category	Standard Range Sanction				
A++	129 to 260 weeks for all category A++ offenses				
A+	180 weeks to age 21 for all category A+ offenses				
A	103-129 weeks for all category A offenses				
A-	30-40 weeks	52-65 weeks	80-100 weeks	103-129 weeks	103-129 weeks
B++	15-36 weeks	52-65 weeks	80-100 weeks	103-129 weeks	103-129 weeks
B+	15-36 weeks	15-36 weeks	52-65 weeks	80-100 weeks	103-129 weeks
B	LS	LS	15-36 weeks	15-36 weeks	52-65 weeks
C+	LS	LS	LS	15-36 weeks	15-36 weeks
C	LS	LS	LS	LS	15-36 weeks
D+	LS	LS	LS	LS	LS
D	LS	LS	LS	LS	LS
E	LS	LS	LS	LS	LS
Prior Adjudication by Score	0	1	2	3	4 or more

Fiscal Year (FY) 2023 Juvenile Court Dispositions

Most youths sentenced in FY 2023 had little or no criminal histories. About three quarters (78.5%)³ of those sentenced were youths with no prior adjudications or less than three non-felony charges. Another 11.2% had prior adjudication scores of one. The remaining 10.3% had prior adjudication scores of two or more (Figure 2).

Figure 2. FY 2023 Juvenile Dispositions by Prior Adjudication Score⁴



³ This is comprised of 1,432 dispositions with scores of zero and 307 dispositions with score of 0.25, 0.5 or 0.75.

⁴ Fractions are rounded down meaning a score 1.75 is reported as a score of 1.

Demographics

Table 1 shows the dispositions distributed by gender, race/ethnicity, and age range. Most youths sentenced in FY 2023 were male (77.7%), and nearly half were Caucasian (45.2%). The least common racial group was Asian/Pacific Islander (2.8%).

Youths ranged in age from 11 to 17, but most were clustered at the upper end of the age range. The most common ages at disposition were from 15 to 17, comprising 69.4% of the total.

Table 1. Demographics

Gender⁵	Number	Percentage
Male	1,721	77.7%
Female	489	22.1%
	2,215	100.0%
Race/Ethnicity⁶		
African American	359	16.2%
Asian/Pacific Islander	63	2.8%
Caucasian	1,001	45.2%
Hispanic ⁷	578	26.1%
Native American	103	4.7%
Total	2,215	100.0%
Age Range (at Disposition)		
10 years old or younger	0	0.0%
11 years old	1	0.0%
12 years old	42	1.9%
13 years old	185	8.4%
14 years old	291	13.1%
15 to 17 years old	1,538	69.4%
18 years old and older	158	7.1%
Total	2,215	100.0%

⁵ Gender was missing on 5 disposition (0.2%)

⁶ Race/Ethnicity was missing on 111 dispositions (5%).

⁷ The ethnicity data in juvenile dispositions submitted by counties to the CFC are often missing or reported inconsistently. While Hispanic is generally considered an ethnic group, it is reported as a race in this publication if it is available.

Race/Ethnicity: Dispositions vs. State Population

Minorities are typically disproportionately over-represented in juvenile offender populations. One common method of measuring disproportionality is to construct a ratio of the percentage of a given race/ethnicity in a target population to the percentage in the general population. If the percentages are the same, the disproportionality ratio is 1.0. If the percentage is greater in the target population (e.g., juvenile offenders) than in the state population, the ratio will be greater than 1.0 which indicates an “over-representation.” Likewise, a ratio less than 1.0 indicates an “under-representation.” The magnitude of the ratio indicates the degree of disproportionality.

Table 2 presents the race/ethnicity breakdown of the FY 2023 juvenile dispositions compared to the 2020 Census state population distribution.⁸

The last column presents the disproportionality ratio. For example, the disproportionality ratio for Native American youths is 3.3. In other words, the proportion of Native Americans sentenced (4.7%) was 3.3 times the proportion in the general population (1.4%). In contrast, the disproportionality ratio for Caucasian is 0.9, which means the proportion of juvenile dispositions involving Caucasians is 0.9 times less than the proportion of Caucasians in the state population. Asian/Pacific Islanders are the most “under-represented” racial group in the offender population with a disproportionality ratio of 0.3.

Table 2. Racial/Ethnic Disproportionality⁹

Race/Ethnicity	% FY 2023 Juvenile Dispositions	% FY 2020 Washington State Juvenile Population ¹⁰	Disproportionality Ratio
African American	16.2%	4.2%	3.8
Asian/Pacific Islander	2.8%	9.2%	0.3
Caucasian	45.2%	51.5%	0.9
Hispanic	26.1%	22.0%	1.2
Native American	4.7%	1.4%	3.3
Missing/Unknown ¹¹	5.0%	11.6%	0.4
Total	100.0%	100.0%	
(n)	2,215	1,243,361	

⁸ The state population data used for this analysis is the 5-to-17 year old cohort.

⁹ In calculating the disproportionality ratio, data provided by Census Bureau is used to compare juvenile dispositions to the general statewide population. Census population data categorizes Hispanic as an ethnic group and not a race. The ethnicity data in juvenile dispositions submitted by counties to the CFC are often missing or reported inconsistently. Hispanic is often reported as a race when it is available.

¹⁰ Census State Population for ages 5 to 17.

¹¹ Race/Ethnicity was missing on 111 dispositions.

County

As would be expected, most juvenile dispositions occur in the more populated counties in the state.

Table 3 shows the number of juvenile dispositions by county. Spokane County (265 or 12%) had the highest number of dispositions, followed by King County (223 or 10.1%), and Yakima County (163 or 7.4%).

Together, these three counties (Spokane, King, and Yakima) accounted for more than a quarter of all dispositions in the state. In contrast, 21 of 39 counties had less than 100 dispositions each and 10 of the smallest counties had less than 10 dispositions per county.

Table 3. Juvenile Dispositions by County

County	Number	County	Number
Adams	30	Lewis	72
Asotin	19	Lincoln	12
Benton	142	Mason	27
Chelan	40	Okanogan	35
Clallam	53	Pacific	N/A
Clark	142	Pend Oreille	N/A
Columbia	N/A ¹²	Pierce	144
Cowlitz	95	San Juan	N/A
Douglas	44	Skagit	51
Ferry	N/A	Skamania	N/A
Franklin	95	Snohomish	78
Garfield	N/A	Spokane	265
Grant	78	Stevens	36
Grays Harbor	35	Thurston	104
Island	36	Wahkiakum	N/A
Jefferson	N/A	Walla Walla	12
King	223	Whatcom	85
Kitsap	34	Whitman	11
Kittitas	20	Yakima	163
Klickitat	N/A		
Total all counties: 2,215			

¹² (N/A): Less than 10 juvenile dispositions.

Type of Court Disposition

The vast majority of dispositions (2,169 or 97.9%) were the result of guilty pleas; only 27 (or 1.2%) of dispositions involved youths adjudicated guilty following a juvenile court hearing. The remaining dispositions (19 or 0.9%) were revoked deferred and “Alford” pleas.¹³

Locus of Sanction

Most youths (86.5%) are sanctioned at the local (county) level with the remainder of FY 2023 dispositions resulting in confinement in a state operated JR facility (Figure 3). The range of confinement for JR commitments was an average minimum of 61.7 weeks and an average maximum of 86.7 weeks (Table 4).

Figure 3. Locus of Sanction

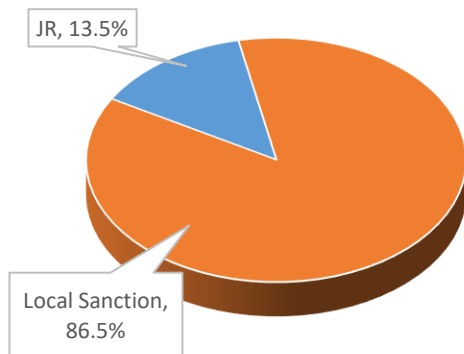


Table 4. Confinement Ordered by Placement Type

Placement Type	Average Sanction
JR	53.1 to 78.1 Weeks
County Detention	16.9 Days
Work Crew	4.9 Days
Electronic Monitoring	21.2 Days

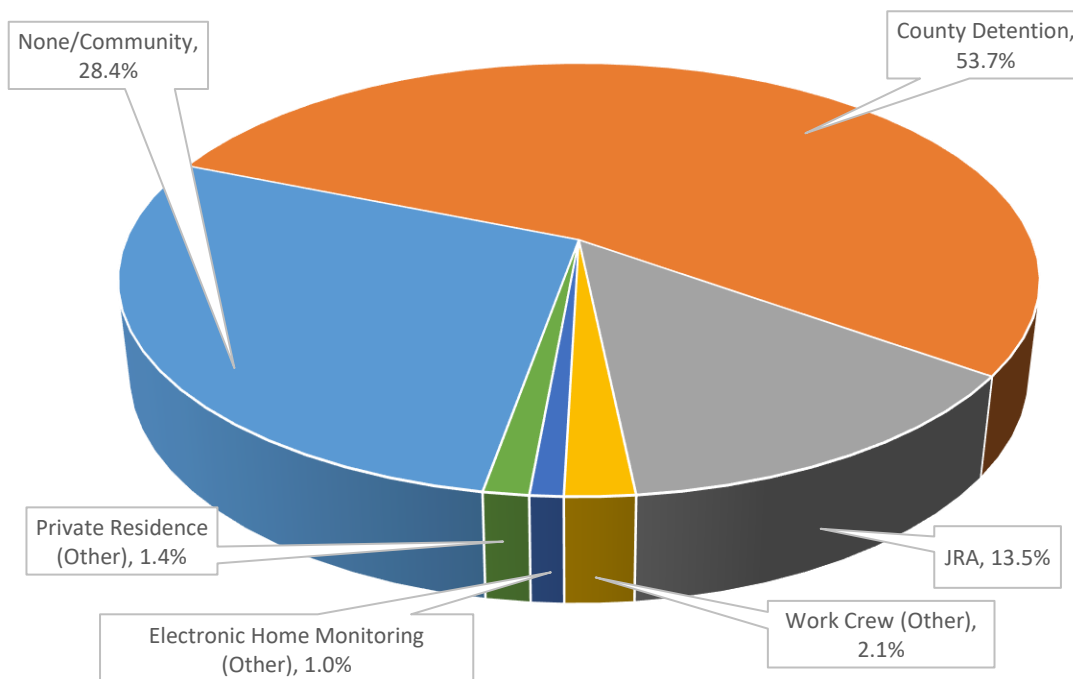
Local Sanctions

“Local sanction” is the presumptive sentencing range for youths at the lower end of the offense seriousness/prior adjudication score continuum. Most (86.5%) of the FY 2023 dispositions resulted in sentences to local sanctions at the county level.

More than half (53.7%) of youths sentenced to local sanctions were assigned some confinement in county detention, with an average sentence of 16.9 days. Another 28.4% received community supervision without detention. The remaining 4.5% received some other sanction (work crew, electronic home monitoring, private residence, etc.). The average order of electronic home monitoring was 21.2 days. The average work crew order was 4.9 days.

¹³ An Alford Plea is when a defendant enters a plea of guilty without making an admission of guilt.

Figure 4. Local Sanction by Type



Felony and Non-felony Offenses

Of the 2,215 juvenile dispositions imposed in FY 2023, majority of the offenses committed were for non-felony (gross misdemeanor and misdemeanor) offenses. Felonies accounted for 39.1% of all offenses committed (Table 5).

Table 5. Felony and Non-felony Offenses

Offense	Number	Percent
Felony	1,275	39.1%
Gross Misdemeanor	1,660	50.9%
Misdemeanor	327	10.0%
Total	3,262	100.0%

Felony Offenses

There were 1,275 felony offenses imposed in the 2,215 juvenile dispositions. Offenses within the Homicide offense category were the most serious felony offenses committed by juveniles, with an average minimum term of 88.8-week and an average maximum term of 94.9-week confinement. The second most serious felony offense category was Obstructing Governmental Operation, with an average minimum sentence of 19 weeks and an average maximum sentence of 30.1 weeks (Figure 5 and Table 6). On average, felony offenses included 6.4 months of community supervision in addition to any confinement.

Figure 5. Felony Offense Categories - Average Confinement by Weeks

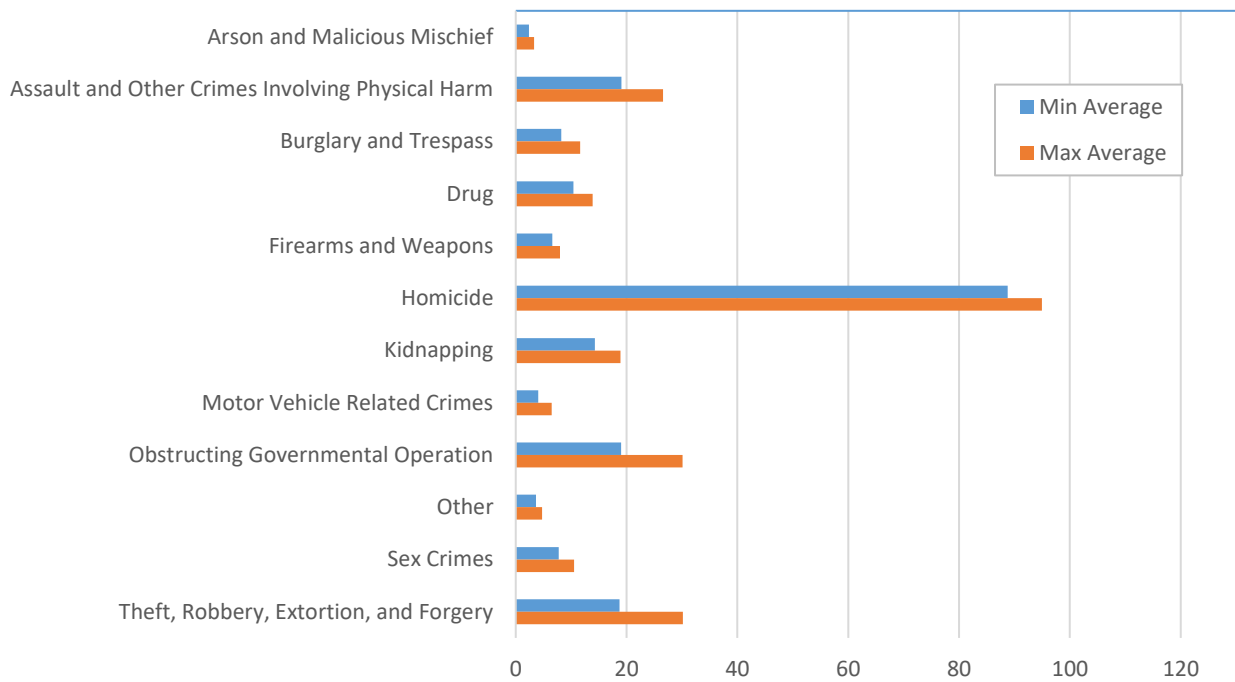


Table 6. Average Confinement Ordered by Felony Offense Categories

Felony Offenses by Category	Number	Average Term (Weeks)	
		Minimum	Maximum
Arson and Malicious Mischief	62	2.4	3.3
Assault and Other Crimes Involving Physical Harm	274	19.1	26.6
Burglary and Trespass	101	8.2	11.6
Drug	18	10.4	13.9
Firearms and Weapons	168	6.6	8.0
Homicide	18	88.8	94.9
Kidnapping	5	14.3	18.9
Motor Vehicle Related Crimes	43	4.1	6.5
Obstructing Governmental Operation	8	19.0	30.1
Other	113	3.7	4.8
Sex Crimes	129	7.7	10.5
Theft, Robbery, Extortion, and Forgery	336	18.7	30.2
Total	1,275		

Non-Felony Offenses

Within the 2,215 juvenile dispositions, 1,987 gross misdemeanor and misdemeanor offenses were imposed. The offenses within the categories of Assault and Other Involving Physical Harm were the most common non-felony offenses, with an average sentence of 9.8-day confinement. The average community supervision imposed for gross misdemeanors and misdemeanors was 6.6 months.

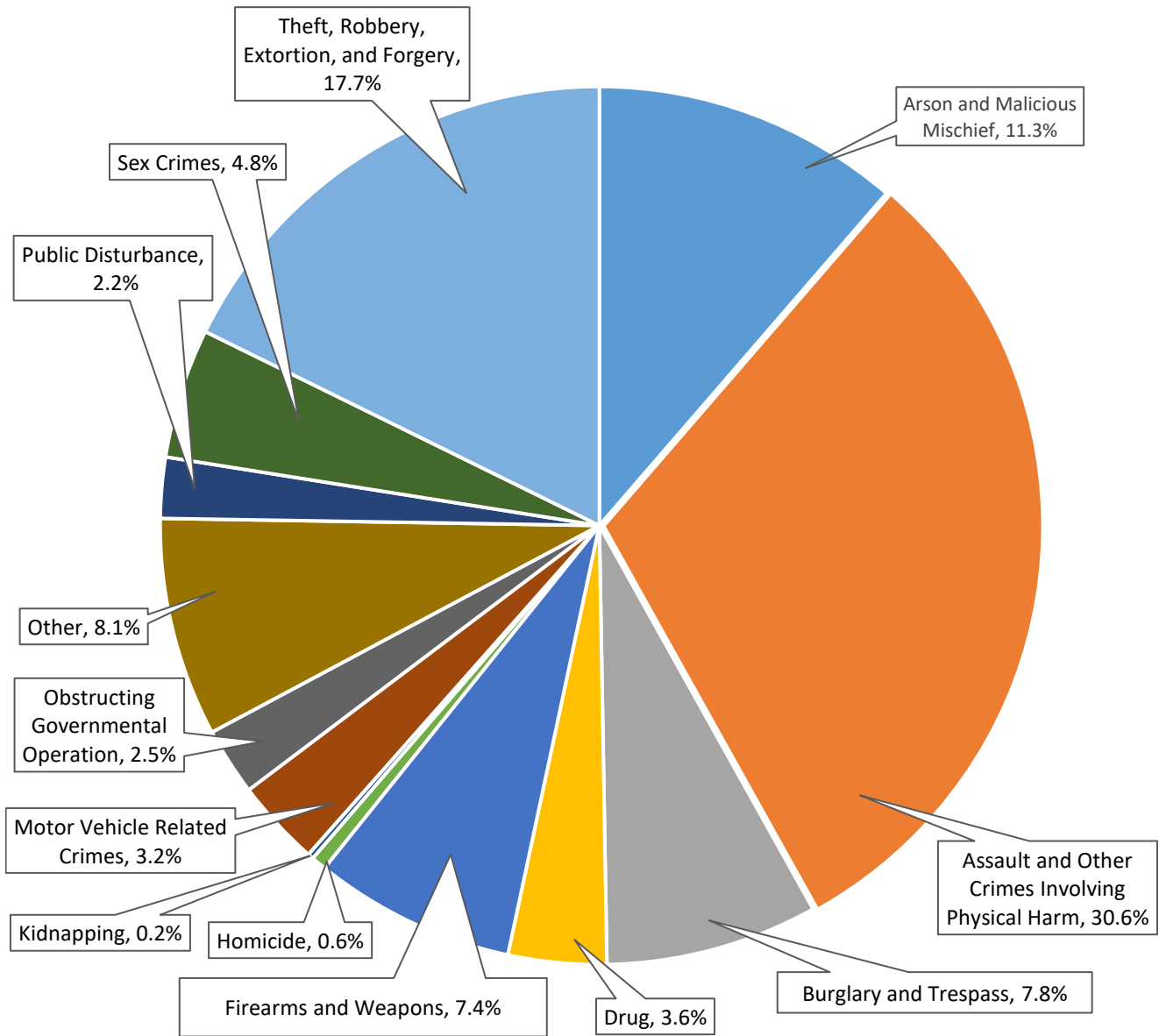
Table 7. Average Confinement Ordered by Non-Felony Offense Categories

Non-Felony Offenses by Category	Number	Average (Days)
Arson and Malicious Mischief	308	6.5
Assault and Other Crimes Involving Physical Harm	723	9.8
Burglary and Trespass	154	5.4
Drug	100	6.3
Firearms and Weapons	74	26.2
Kidnapping	2	-
Motor Vehicle Related Crimes	61	7.3
Obstructing Governmental Operation	73	8.1
Other	150	6.0
Public Disturbance	73	5.8
Sex Crimes	27	6.3
Theft, Robbery, Extortion, and Forgery	242	7.9
Total	1,987	

Table 8. Distribution of Offense by Categories

Offense by Category	Number	Percentage
Arson and Malicious Mischief	370	11.3%
Assault and Other Crimes Involving Physical Harm	997	30.6%
Burglary and Trespass	255	7.8%
Drug	118	3.6%
Firearms and Weapons	242	7.4%
Homicide	18	0.6%
Kidnapping	7	0.2%
Motor Vehicle Related Crimes	104	3.2%
Obstructing Governmental Operation	81	2.5%
Other	263	8.1%
Public Disturbance	73	2.2%
Sex Crimes	156	4.8%
Theft, Robbery, Extortion, and Forgery	578	17.7%
Total	3,262	100.0%

Figure 6. Distribution of Offense Category



Violent and Non-violent Offenses

The great majority (89.5%) of FY 2023 juvenile adjudications were for offenses classified as non-violent (Table 9). Non-violent offenses carried an average minimum sentence of 16.8-day confinement and an average maximum sentence of 21.2-day confinement.

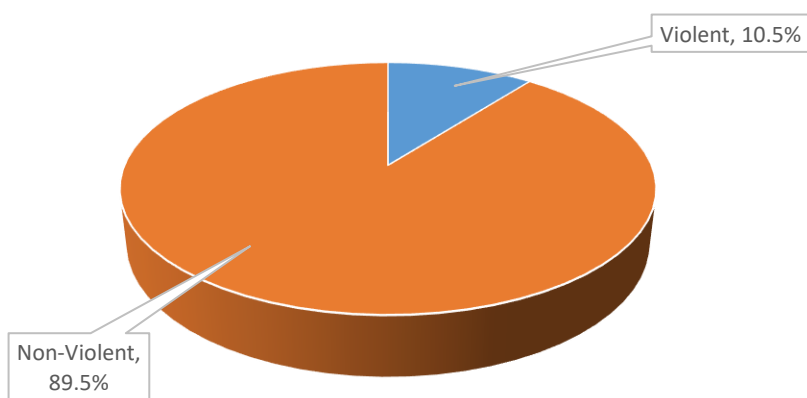
Table 9. Violent and Non-Violent Offenses

Offense	Number	Average Term
Serious Violent	31	113 to 124 Weeks
Violent	313	29 to 46 Weeks
Non-Violent	2,918	16.8 to 21.2 Days
Total	3,262	

Adjudications for juvenile “serious violent offenses”¹⁴ were extremely rare in FY 2023, accounting for only 31 (or 1%) of 3,262 offenses committed. Total confinement for serious violent offenses carried an average range of 113 to 124 week confinement in JR.¹⁵

There were an additional 313 juvenile adjudications for offenses categorized as violent, with an average confinement range of 29 to 46 weeks.

Figure 7. Violent and Non-Violent Offenses



¹⁴ “Serious violent offense” is a subcategory of violent offense and means:

(i) Murder in the first degree; (ii) Homicide by abuse; (iii) Murder in the second degree; (iv) Manslaughter in the first degree; (v) Assault in the first degree; (vi) Kidnapping in the first degree; (vii) Rape in the first degree; (viii) Assault of a child in the first degree; or (ix) An attempt, criminal solicitation, or criminal conspiracy to commit one of these felonies. (RCW 9.94A.030(45))

¹⁵ Most individuals under the age of 18 committing “serious violent offenses” are sentenced as adults and therefore are not technically juvenile offenders. These sentences are reported in a separate CFC publication: “Statistical Summary of Adult Felony Sentencing: Fiscal Year 2023” available on the CFC website.

Suspended Disposition Alternatives

The state juvenile law permits a number of alternatives to the standard presumptive sentencing ranges (Option A), depending on the current offense, criminal history, and treatment needs of the youth. There are three “alternative” dispositions which allow a court to impose a sentence, and then suspend that sentence in favor of a community based local sanctions disposition. These three alternatives are based on compliance with appropriate treatment goals.

1. Suspended Dispositions (Option B) (RCW 13.40.0357)

Option B provides authority to the court to suspend a portion of the standard range confinement time in order for the youth to participate in a treatment or education program. The court imposed approximately 56 Option B suspended dispositions with an average minimum confinement of 4.3 days, a suspended range of confinement with an average minimum of 149.3 days and an average maximum of 267.5 days, and an average of 11 months of community supervision.

2. Chemical Dependency/Mental Health Disposition Alternative (CDMHDA) (Option C) (RCW 13.40.165)

During FY 2023, 6 dispositions were imposed under the Mental Health Disposition Alternative (MHDA) and 52 dispositions were imposed under the Co-Occurring CDMHDA option. CDMHDA provides chemically dependent/Mental Health youth with an alternative disposition that includes mental health, drug or alcohol treatment. MHDA and Co-Occurring CDMHDA respectively involved an average confinement of 0 days and 0.8 days, a suspended range of confinement with an average minimum of 78.5 days and 49.8 days; an average maximum of 78.5 days and 63.5 days; and an average of 9.2 months and 9 months of community supervision.

3. Special Sex Offender Disposition Alternative (SSODA) (RCW 13.40.162)

During FY 2023, 138 dispositions were imposed under the Special Sex Offender Disposition Alternative option. SSODA authorizes the court to suspend the standard range disposition and impose inpatient or outpatient treatment for certain sex offenses. The court may impose a number of special conditions as a prerequisite of the suspended disposition. SSODA dispositions carried an average minimum confinement of 1.2 days, a suspended range of confinement with an average minimum of 138 days and an average maximum of 150.9 days, and an average of 24.4 months of community supervision.

Table 10. Juvenile Disposition Alternatives

Alternative	Average Range of Confinement (Days)				Supervision (months)	
	Number	Confinement		Suspended		
		Min	Max	Min		Max
CDDA	-	-	-	-	-	
Co-Occurring CDMHDA	52	0.8	0.8	49.8	63.5	9.0
MHDA	6	-	-	78.5	78.5	9.2
Option B – Suspended Disposition	56	4.3	4.3	149.3	267.5	11.0
SSODA	138	1.2	1.2	138.0	150.9	24.4

Manifest Injustice Offenses (Option D)

In addition to the alternatives described above, the court may depart from the standard range by imposing a Manifest Injustice order either above or below the standard range.¹⁶ Of the dispositions imposed in FY 2023 for the 3,262 offenses, 150 received a manifest injustice order (4.6%) in FY 2023, as detailed in Table 11.

¹⁶ The court may declare a “Manifest Injustice” and sentence outside the standard range when the facts and circumstances of a case or characteristics of the juvenile lead to the conclusion that dispositions ordered within the standard range would be manifestly unjust. The court’s findings of a Manifest Injustice must be supported by clear and convincing evidence and its justification entered into the record.

Table 11. Ratio of Manifest Injustice (MI) by Offenses

Category By Offenses	Total Offenses	Offenses Ordered in Standard Range	Offenses with MI	Ratio of MI
Arson and Malicious Mischief	370	367	3	0.8%
Assault and Other Crimes Involving Physical Harm	997	934	63	6.3%
Burglary and Trespass	255	247	8	3.1%
Drug	118	116	2	1.7%
Firearms and Weapons	242	231	11	4.5%
Homicide	18	8	10	55.6%
Kidnapping	7	6	1	14.3%
Motor Vehicle Related Crimes	104	101	3	2.9%
Obstructing Governmental Operation	81	79	2	2.5%
Other	263	260	3	1.1%
Public Disturbance	73	73	-	0.0%
Sex Crimes	156	136	20	12.8%
Theft, Robbery, Extortion, and Forgery	578	554	24	4.2%
Total	3,262	3,112	150	4.6%

The most common reasons for mitigated Manifest Injustice sentences were “other mitigating factor” and “all parties agree to mitigated sentence.” The most cited reasons for aggravated Manifest Injustice sentences were “all parties agree to aggravated sentence,” “other aggravating factor,” and “recent criminal history or failed to comply with diversion agreement” as shown in Table 12.

Table 12. Total Manifest Injustice Reasons

Mitigating Reasons	Number
All parties agree to mitigated sentence	8
One year or more between current offense and prior offense	6
Other Mitigating Factor	21
Suffered mental or physical condition that reduced capability for the offense	5
The conduct neither caused nor threatened serious bodily injury or did not contemplate the conduct would cause or threaten serious bodily injury	4
Aggravating Reasons	
All parties agree to aggravated sentence (up)	40
Finding of sexual motivation	2
Heinous, cruel or depraved	3
Highly likely to reoffend	4
Impose a serious and clear danger to society	3
Need the structure, intensive treatment, training and supervision	2
Other aggravating factor	24
Other complaints resulting in diversions or guilty plea not listed in history	8
Recent criminal history or failed to comply with diversion agreement	20
Standard range too lenient considering priors	17
Victim was particularly vulnerable	10
While committing or fleeing from offense inflicted or attempted to inflict injury	16

Summary

This report details characteristics of the 2,215 FY 2023 Washington State juvenile offender dispositions reported to the Caseload Forecast Council.

As the data shows, more than three quarters (77.7%) of the dispositions involved young males. Most youths sentenced in juvenile court have little or no criminal history. In fact, approximately 64.7% of dispositions were imposed to youths with no prior offenses.

Similarly, most youths sentenced in court were there for relatively minor crimes. Almost two thirds (60.9%) of the youths sentenced in FY 2023 were sentenced for offenses that were gross misdemeanors or misdemeanors.

Washington is among the small number of states with presumptive sentencing guidelines for juvenile offenders. Although courts have access to a variety of sentencing alternatives for youths with specific treatment needs (sex offenders, chemical dependency/mental health issues, and Option B), the majority of youths (95.4%) are sentenced under the presumptive sentencing guidelines.

One of the intents of the Washington juvenile code and its system of presumptive sentencing guidelines is to promote accountability and proportionality in the sentencing of youths. The data in this report support the conclusion that these intents are being realized, at least to the extent that the severity of sanctions ordered by the courts tend to increase with the seriousness of the offense and the extent of prior criminal history.

There was racial/ethnic disproportionality in the sentenced population. Compared to the state as a whole, those adjudicated in FY 2023 were more likely to be Native Americans or African Americans.

While it is beyond the scope of this report to determine the causes of gender and racial/ethnic disproportionality in the sentenced population, the data is clear that it persists.

This report is updated annually. It, along with prior annual reports, is available on the Caseload Forecast Council's (CFC) website: www.cfc.wa.gov.

The juvenile disposition data contained in this report come from Washington Disposition forms sent to the CFC by the courts. Data include all juvenile dispositions known to the CFC that were imposed between July 1, 2022, and June 30, 2023 (FY 2023). Data elements entered into the CFC database and used in the report include race, gender, type of sentence, current offense, offense history, offender score, and the imposed terms of confinement and community supervision.

Comments or questions may be directed to:

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