Who Gets Arrested in America

Trends Across Four Decades, 1980–2024

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The United States has experienced sweeping shifts in arrest patterns over the past four decades. Following substantial increases in the 1980s and 1990s, national arrest rates declined steadily and dropped sharply in 2020 amid the widespread disruptions associated with the COVID-19 pandemic, including changes in public activity and law enforcement operations. Since 2020, arrests for both adults and juveniles have remained far below their historical peaks and below 2019 levels. While some age, sex, and racial groups experienced modest increases from their 2020 lows, none have returned to pre-pandemic arrest levels.

These arrest patterns mirror long-standing reductions in crime nationwide, but they also reflect shifts in enforcement practices and broader social changes. They also occur as rates of reported violent and property crime return to pre-pandemic levels and as homicide rates in many cities fall back to low levels not seen since the early 1960s.

Arrest data are vital for understanding public safety, enforcement priorities, and how communities experience the justice system. But the nation has lacked a reliable picture of arrest trends in recent years. The federal government stopped publishing demographic arrest rates after 2020, leaving policymakers, researchers, and the public without a consistent way to track changes across age, sex, race, and offense type.

This brief restores that visibility. By combining historical federal estimates with recent FBI data, it rebuilds national arrest rates from 1980 through 2024 to provide a clear, comparable picture of how arrests have changed across demographic groups and offense categories. For the first time since federal reporting ended in 2020, decision makers can again monitor national arrest trends using a consistent, historically anchored dataset.

Periodic updates of this resource will be published in CCJ's online data library, The Footprint: Tracking the Size of the American Criminal Justice System, as new FBI figures are released. For details, see the Supplemental Methodology Report.

Key Takeaways

- **The total number of arrests in the U.S. fell sharply in 2020 during pandemic-driven shifts in public activity and enforcement—and it has changed little since then.** The 2024 arrest total was 25% lower than in 2019, the year before the pandemic, and half the number in the peak year of 1997.

- **The combination of falling arrests and rising resident population has driven down the national arrest rate**, which in 2024 was 30% lower than in 2019 and 71% below its peak in 1994.

- **Drug arrests, in particular, have cratered.** In 2024, the drug offense rate for both adults and juveniles was roughly half the 2019 level.

- **Juvenile arrests now make up a much smaller share of national arrests.** In 1980, 19% of arrests were of juveniles. Since 2018, this share has been at or below 7%. This drop marks a generational shift in youth exposure to the justice system.

- **Over the past four years, however, adult and juvenile arrest rates diverged**: The juvenile rate rose 14% since 2020 while the adult rate was 7% lower.

- **Juvenile arrest patterns are shifting**. In 2024, the juvenile drug crime arrest rate fell below the juvenile violent crime arrest rate for the first time since 1993, reflecting a change in the composition of youth arrests.

- **Arrest rates have fallen sharply across age and sex groups, though recent trends—particularly among juveniles—differ from long-term patterns.** In 2024, the adult male arrest rate was 8% lower than in 2020 and 66% below its 1989 peak; the adult female rate was 3% lower than in 2020 and 42% below its 2009 peak. Juvenile arrest rates for both sexes peaked in 1996 and remained far below those levels in 2024—85% lower for boys and 77% lower for girls—even as rates increased 10% for boys and 23% for girls between 2020 and 2024.

- **With male arrests falling more steeply over time, females now account for a larger share of arrests than four decades ago.** Adult women's share rose from 14% in 1980 to about 27% since 2020, and girls' share of juvenile arrests increased from 18% to about 31%.

- **Arrest trends by offense type follow long-term declines, but recent juvenile patterns diverge.** Violent, property, and drug crime arrests for adults and juveniles all peaked in the late 1980s to mid-2000s and remain below 2019 levels. Drug offense rates fell the most sharply, falling by about half for both adults and juveniles from 2019 to 2024. Adult rates for all offense categories continued to fall or remained flat after 2020, but juvenile trends shifted: Between 2020 and 2024, boys' violent and property arrest rates rose 13% and 9% (while drug arrests fell 13%), and girls' violent, property, and drug arrest rates rose 29%, 13%, and 7%, respectively.

- **Racial patterns in arrest rates show notable divergence since 2020.** Between 2020 and 2024, the juvenile arrest rate increased sharply for Black (+48%) and Asian (+45%) youth, compared with a more modest rise among White juveniles (+11%); rates for American Indian/Alaska Native (AI/AN) juveniles fell 4%. Adult arrest rates show a similar split: Black (+12%) and Asian (+18%) adults experienced increases, while rates for White (-10%) and AI/AN (-17%) adults declined. Independent trends for people who identify as Hispanic cannot be reported because the data do not allow race and Hispanic origin to be analyzed separately.

Data and Charts

A Note on the Data. Arrest data for 2016 are excluded because the necessary tables were not available in that year's FBI Crime in the United States release. Data for 2021 are also excluded due to a national reporting transition to the National Incident-Based Reporting System (NIBRS), which resulted in unusually low participation and incomplete national coverage. See the Supplemental Methodology Report for details.

Tip for Exploring the Charts. Many figures in this brief display multiple groups at once (for example, adults and juveniles, or several offense categories). To focus on a single group, you can click on any label in the chart's legend—such as "Adults" or "Property Crime"—to hide or show that series. This lets you simplify the view, compare specific groups, or follow one trend line more easily.

National Arrest Trends, 1980-2024

Counts

Arrests in the U.S. climbed sharply through the 1980s and early 1990s before entering a decades-long decline (Figure 1). Total arrests peaked in 1997 at about 15 million and have fallen substantially since. In 2024, the arrest total was 25% lower than in 2019, the year before the pandemic, and there were about half as many arrests (7.5 million) nationwide as the 1997 peak.

Adults

Adult arrests rose 47% from roughly 8.3 million in 1980 to a peak of 12.5 million in 1997. After that high point, adult arrests declined overall, aside from a modest uptick in the mid-2000s. There were about 9.4 million adult arrests in 2019, down 25% from the peak. The pandemic accelerated these long-term declines as public activity slowed and policing practices shifted: Adult arrests fell sharply in 2020 and have remained below those levels since. In 2024, there were about 7 million adult arrests, 44% below the 1997 peak and 25% lower than in 2019.

Juveniles

Juvenile arrests followed a similar early growth pattern, but they peaked earlier and have declined more steeply. Arrests of juveniles grew from about 2 million in 1980 to 2.6 million in 1996, an increase of 34%. By 2019, juvenile arrests had fallen to about 700,000—a 73% decline from the peak. Juvenile arrests also dropped sharply in 2020 but, unlike the trend for adults, rose modestly above that low in subsequent years. In 2024, there were roughly 500,000 juvenile arrests, 81% below the peak and 28% lower than in 2019.

Figure 1. Number of Estimated National Arrests by Age, 1980-2024

Share

Juveniles now account for a much smaller share of national arrests than in prior decades. In 1980, youth aged 10 to 17 made up 19% of all arrests. Their share declined through the

1980s, rose between 1990 and 1996, and then began a long downward trend. This decline was steepest from the late 2000s through 2020, when the juvenile share reached a low of about 6%. By 2024, the share had risen modestly to roughly 7%, but juveniles still represented a historically small proportion of arrests—65% lower than at the 1980 peak. These changes reflect long-term shifts in youth offending, prevention efforts, and enforcement practices.

Figure 2. Share of Juvenile Arrests, 1980–2024

Rates

In 2024, the total national arrest rate was 30% lower than in 2019 and 71% below the peak in 1996. Arrest rates show the same long-term rise and fall as arrest counts but follow distinct timelines for adults and juveniles (Figure 3). Over the past four years, adult and juvenile rates have diverged.

Adults

The adult arrest rate peaked in 1989 at 13,600 per 100,000—30% higher than in 1980. Rates declined steadily over the next three decades, falling 45% by 2019. After a sharp drop in 2020, adult arrest rates have plateaued with minor year-to-year fluctuation. In 2024, the adult arrest rate was 5,301—61% below the 1989 peak, 29% lower than in 2019, and 7% lower than in 2020.

Juveniles

Juvenile arrest rates peaked later than adult rates and declined more sharply. The juvenile rate reached its high in 1996 at 16,700 per 100,000—32% above the 1980 level. Rates fell steadily through 2001, leveled off from 2002 to 2006, and then declined steeply through 2020. After rising in 2022 and 2023, the rate decreased again in 2024. The 2024 juvenile arrest rate of 2,891 was 75% below the 1996 peak and 31% lower than in 2019, but 14% higher than in 2020.

Figure 3. Arrest Rates by Age, 1980-2024

Arrests by Offense: Long-Term Declines Across Crime Types

While arrest trends vary by offense, this analysis shows a consistent pattern: Across violent, property, and drug crimes, arrests in 2024 remained far below historical peaks, with little evidence of a jump back up to pre-pandemic levels. Most offense categories showed long-term declines beginning in the mid-1990s or 2000s, interrupted by modest year-to-year fluctuations in recent years.

Adults

Counts

Adult arrests rose through the 1980s and early 1990s before entering a long decline across all major offense categories. While trends differ in timing and duration, sustained reductions occurred for each offense type through 2019, followed by modest shifts during the pandemic period and its aftermath. For this report, violent offenses include the FBI's violent crime index (homicide, rape, robbery, and aggravated assault); property offenses include the property crime index (burglary, larceny-theft, motor vehicle theft, and arson); drug offenses refer to drug abuse violations; and "other offenses" encompass all remaining arrest categories.

- **Violent crime:** Adult violent crime arrests peaked in 1995 at about 650,000, roughly 69% higher than in 1980. Arrests declined gradually thereafter, with a brief increase from 2013 to 2018. By 2019, violent arrests were 31% below the peak. Adult arrests for violent crime did not drop sharply in 2020, although they declined in 2022, the next year for which data was available. After rising slightly in 2023, violent crime arrests declined again in 2024. That year, there were about 377,000 adult arrests for violent crime, a number 42% lower than the peak and 16% lower than in 2019.

- **Property crime:** Adult property crime arrests peaked in 1989 at approximately 1.6 million, about 45% above 1980 levels. Arrests declined through 2000, rose modestly through 2012, then fell again through 2022. Property arrests increased slightly in 2023 and 2024. In 2024, there were about 825,000 adult arrests for property crime, 49%

fewer than in the peak year of 1989 and 14% lower than in 2019.

- **Drug offenses:** Adult arrests for drug crimes peaked in 2006 at about 1.7 million, more than 2.5 times the number recorded in 1980. Arrests fell gradually through the late 2000s and were relatively stable with slight increases through the late 2010s, before falling sharply beginning in 2020. In 2024, there were about 782,000 adult drug arrests, 54% fewer than the total in the peak year of 2006 and 47% fewer than in 2019.

Figure 4. Estimated Adult Arrests by Offense Type, 1980-2024

Rates

Across offense categories, adult arrest rates in 2024 remained well below both pre-pandemic levels and historical peaks (Figure 5).

- **Violent crime:** The violent crime arrest rate peaked in 1995 at 676 per 100,000, up 38% from 1980. Rates fell steadily through 2013 and then rose slightly and plateaued until 2018, when they began dropping again. The rate increased slightly from 2022 to 2023 (by about 5 per 100,000) before dropping in 2024. The 2024 rate was 285 per 100,000—58% below the peak and 20% lower than in 2019.

- **Property crime:** Adult property crime arrest rates reached their highest point in 1989, at 1,793 per 100,000. Rates then fell through the 1990s and remained relatively stable until around 2012, when they resumed a gradual decline. Rates rose from 2022 to 2024, but the 2024 rate (621 per 100,000) was 65% below the peak rate and 18% lower than in 2019.

- **Drug offenses:** Adult drug offense arrest rates rose for a longer period and more steeply than rates for property and violent crimes, increasing 157% from 1980 to the 2006 peak of 1,537 per 100,000. While there was greater year-to-year fluctuation than there was for violent or property crime, drug offense arrest rates have declined sharply since 2019. In 2024, the drug offense arrest rate was 591 per 100,000 adults, 62% below the peak and half the 2019 level.

Figure 5. Adult Arrest Rates by Offense Type, 1980-2024

A Note on Arrests for "Other" Offenses

The “other” category includes all arrests not classified in the FBI’s violent crime or property crime indexes or as drug abuse violations. It encompasses a wide range of non-traffic offenses, such as simple assault, vandalism, fraud, gambling, prostitution, weapons offenses, and other public-order violations. Because this broad group reflects much of day-to-day enforcement activity outside of serious violent, property, and drug crimes, it is the largest arrest category. Due to its size and broad mix of offenses, arrests for “other” offenses are visualized separately and are not discussed in the text.

Juveniles

Counts

Juvenile arrests rose through the late 1980s and early 1990s before entering a long period of decline across crime types (Figure 6). Peaks differed slightly by offense, but all categories saw reductions through 2019, followed by modest variation in recent years.

- **Violent crime:** Juvenile violent crime arrests peaked in 1994 at about 148,000, 64% above 1980 levels. Arrests then declined steadily, except for a brief bump in the mid-2000s. By 2019, arrests for violent crimes were 67% below the peak. After rising from 2020 to 2023, they declined again in 2024. The 2024 total—about 43,000 arrests—was 71% below the peak and 12% lower than in 2019.

- **Property crime:** Juvenile arrests for property crime also peaked in 1994, at about 736,000, only slightly higher than the 1980 level (less than 2%). Arrests fell sharply and consistently thereafter. By 2019, they were 84% below the peak. After a modest increase in 2023, arrests declined again in 2024. The 2024 total of about 86,000 arrests was 88% below the peak and 28% lower than in 2019.

- **Drug offenses:** Juvenile drug offense arrests peaked in 1997 at about 215,000, nearly double the 1980 volume. Arrests then declined gradually and largely plateaued through the mid-2000s, before beginning a more pronounced descent in 2008. By 2019, arrests were 62% below the peak. Volumes remained relatively stable from 2020 to 2024. The 2024 total—about 41,000 arrests—was 81% below the peak and roughly half the 2019

level.

Figure 6. Estimated Juvenile Arrests by Offense Type, 1980-2024

Share

The juvenile share of arrests varies substantially by offense type.

- **Violent crime:** In the mid-1990s, youth accounted for roughly 19% of all violent crime arrests nationwide. That share declined steadily over the next two decades, with a brief uptick in the mid-2000s, and has remained at or below 10% since 2015.
- **Property crime:** Historically, youth have represented a much larger share of property crime arrests—about 35% in the mid-1990s. This share has fallen sharply over time, reaching 11% in 2019 and a low of 5% in 2023. Although the juvenile share of property crime arrests increased modestly in 2024, it remained below pre-pandemic levels at about 9%.
- **Drug offenses:** The juvenile share of drug arrests edged upward in recent years. In 2024, juveniles accounted for about 6% of all drug arrests nationwide.

Figure 7. Share of Juvenile Arrests by Offense Type, 1980-2024

Rates

Juvenile arrest rates remain far below their historical peaks and below pre-pandemic levels, even with modest year-to-year fluctuations in recent years (Figure 7). A notable milestone occurred in 2024: The juvenile drug crime arrest rate fell below the violent crime arrest rate for the first time in more than 30 years, signaling a significant shift in the nature of youth offending and/or enforcement patterns.

- **Violent crime:** The juvenile violent crime arrest rate peaked in 1994 at 976 per 100,000—68% higher than in 1980. The rate fell steadily through 2004, rose slightly and plateaued from 2005 to 2008, and then resumed its decline. After remaining

relatively stable from 2013 to 2019, the violent crime arrest rate dropped by more than 25% in 2020. It increased from 2022 to 2023 before falling again in 2024. The 2024 rate of 242 per 100,000 was 75% lower than the 1994 peak and 16% lower than in 2019.

- **Property crime:** Juvenile property crime arrest rates peaked in 1988 at 5,012 per 100,000, about 8% above 1980 levels. Rates plateaued briefly through 1991, fluctuated in the early 1990s, and began a sustained decline starting in 1994. A short uptick occurred from 2006 to 2008, followed by continued declines through 2020. Rates rose modestly in 2022 and 2023 before falling again in 2024. The 2024 rate of 490 per 100,000 was 90% below the peak and 31% lower than in 2019.

- **Drug offenses:** The juvenile arrest rate for drug crimes climbed sharply in the 1990s, peaking in 1997 at 1,343 per 100,000, about 90% higher than in 1980. Rates fell through 1999, plateaued until 2007, and then began a more sustained downward trend. The drop from 2019 to 2020—from about 483 per 100,000 to 252 per 100,000, a decline of 48%—was the largest single-year drop among offense categories for both juveniles and adults. Rates rose modestly in 2022 and 2023 before falling again in 2024. The 2024 rate of 232 per 100,000 was 82% below the 1997 peak and less than half the 2019 rate, the steepest post-pandemic decline of any major offense category for youth.

Figure 8. Juvenile Arrest Rates by Offense Type, 1980-2024

Diverging Long-Term Patterns in Male and Female Arrests

Adults

Counts

Long-term declines in arrests have occurred for both adult males and females, though along different trajectories (Figure 9). Men have consistently accounted for the majority of arrests—several times the volume of women—but the gap has narrowed considerably over time. In 1980, men were arrested about six times as often as women, who made up just 14% of adult arrests. By 2024, women accounted for 27% of adult arrests, and men were arrested roughly 2.7 times as often. These shifts reflect the fact that male arrest rates and counts

peaked decades earlier, in 1989, and have since fallen more steeply, while female arrests continued rising until 2009 and then declined more gradually. As a result, women today represent a larger share of arrests than in prior decades, underscoring how patterns of law enforcement contact have changed over time.

Males

Adult male arrests peaked in 1989 at just over 10 million, 42% higher than in 1980. Arrests declined gradually through the 1990s and early-to-mid-2000s, with year-to-year variation, before entering a more sustained downturn around 2006. By 2019, male arrests were 32% below their peak. After a sharp drop of 1.5 million arrests from 2019 to 2020 (about 21%), arrests continued to drop through 2022, followed by a slight uptick in 2023 and a decline in 2024. In 2024, there were roughly 5.1 million adult male arrests, nearly half the 1989 peak and 25% below the 2019 levels.

Females

Adult female arrests followed a different path. Arrests rose for nearly three decades, peaking in 2009 at 2.9 million—142% above 1980. After that historical high, female arrests declined gradually year over year, falling 11% by 2019. From 2019 to 2020, arrests dropped substantially, by 660,000 (about 25%). From 2020 to 2024, they remained relatively stable, with a slight decrease in 2022 followed by increases the next two years. In 2024, there were about 1.9 million adult female arrests, 34% below peak levels and 25% below 2019.

Figure 9. Number of Estimated Adult Arrests by Sex, 1980-2024

Share

The share of adult female arrests nearly doubled over four decades, rising from 14% in 1980 to 27% in 2019 (Figure 10). The share dipped briefly during the pandemic (to 26% in 2020) before returning to 27% in 2024.

Figure 10. Share of Adult Female Arrests, 1980-2024

Rates

Adult arrest rates for men and women have fallen substantially from their historical highs, though the timing and pace of decline differ by sex (Figure 11). Male rates peaked in the late 1980s and have dropped sharply since, while female rates peaked two decades later and declined more gradually. Both rates remain well below pre-pandemic levels in 2024.

Males

The adult male arrest rate peaked in 1989 at 11,426 per 100,000, about 26% higher than in 1980. After brief plateaus and small increases in the mid-1990s and mid-2000s, the rate began a sustained decline around 2006. By 2019, the male arrest rate was less than half its peak. Rates continued to fall after 2019, with a modest uptick from 2022 to 2023 before easing again in 2024. In 2024, the adult male arrest rate was 3,896 per 100,000—66% below the peak, 28% lower than in 2019, and 8% lower than in 2020.

Females

The adult female arrest rate peaked much later, in 2009, at 2,404 per 100,000—74% above the 1980 level. Rates increased steadily through the 1980s and 1990s, dipped briefly around 2000, and then rose again until reaching the 2009 peak. From 2009 to 2022, the female arrest rate fell and was followed by a small increase in 2023 before stabilizing in 2024. In 2024, the adult female arrest rate was 1,398 per 100,000—42% below the peak, 27% below 2019, and 3% lower than in 2020.

Figure 11. Adult Arrest Rates by Sex, 1980-2024

Juveniles

Counts

Juvenile arrests have declined dramatically from their highs in the mid-1990s, though recent

years show modest fluctuations (Figure 12). As with adults, boys account for the majority of arrests, but the gap between boys and girls has narrowed over time. In 1980, boys were arrested nearly five times as often as girls; by 2024, that ratio had fallen to about two to one. Arrest rates for both groups peaked in the mid-1990s and declined sharply thereafter, with steeper long-term reductions among boys. As a result, girls now make up a larger share of youth arrests—rising from 18% in 1980 to about 31% in recent years.

Males

Juvenile male arrests have declined sharply from their mid-1990s peak, with especially steep reductions beginning in 2006. Arrests of juvenile males peaked in 1996 at just over 2 million, about 25% above their 1980 level. By 2019, arrests had declined 76%. Arrests then fell by about 185,000 (38%) from 2019 to 2020. Between 2020 and 2023, arrests rose modestly—about 60,000 more arrests were made in 2023 than in 2020—before easing again in 2024. In 2024, there were roughly 348,000 juvenile male arrests, 83% below the 1996 peak and 28% lower than in 2019.

Females

Arrests of juvenile females peaked a year later, in 1997, at about 616,000—79% higher than in 1980. Arrests remained relatively stable through the early 2000s before beginning a steady decline in 2007. By 2019, arrests of juvenile females had fallen 65% from their historical high. From 2019 to 2020, arrests decreased by 90,000—a 42% drop. Arrests increased in 2022 and 2023 before dipping slightly in 2024. That year, there were about 159,000 juvenile female arrests, 74% below the 1997 peak and 26% lower than in 2019.

Figure 12. Number of Estimated Juvenile Arrests by Sex, 1980-2024

Share

Girls have come to account for a growing share of juvenile arrests over time (Figure 13). In 1980, juvenile females represented 18% of all juvenile arrests. By 2024, that share had risen to over 31%.

Figure 13. Share of Juvenile Female Arrests, 1980-2024

Rates

Juvenile arrest rates for boys and girls have fallen substantially from their mid-1990s peaks, though the timing and pace of the decline vary by sex (Figure 14). In 2024, rates for both sexes remained well below pre-pandemic levels and well below their historical highs, though they have increased since 2020.

Males

The juvenile male arrest rate peaked in 1996 at 12,687 per 100,000, up 23% from 1980. Rates then fell sharply, with a brief uptick in 2006 before the long-term decline resumed. By 2019, the arrest rate was 77% below the peak. Rates dropped sharply in 2020, and rose in 2022 and 2023 before easing in 2024. In 2024, the rate was 1,949 per 100,000—85% lower than the 1996 peak and 32% lower than in 2019, but 10% higher than in 2020.

Females

The juvenile female arrest rate also peaked in 1996, at 4,029 per 100,000, up 75% from 1980. The female peak rate was roughly one-third the male peak, reflecting long-standing differences in youth system involvement by sex. Rates held steady from 1996 to 1997, then declined slightly and plateaued from 1999 to 2008 before beginning a sustained downturn. By 2019, the rate was 67% below the peak. After a sharp drop in 2020, rates increased in 2022 and 2023 before dipping slightly in 2024. The 2024 rate of 942 per 100,000 was 77% lower than the 1996 peak and 28% lower than in 2019, but 23% higher than in 2020.

Figure 14. Juvenile Arrest Rates by Sex, 1980-2024

Arrest Trends by Sex and Offense

Arrest patterns vary substantially by sex and offense type for adults and juveniles. For adult

males and juvenile males and females, arrests for violent and property crimes peaked in the late 1980s or mid-1990s, with drug offenses peaking later in the mid-2000s. For adult females, however, arrests generally peaked later and declined more gradually, reshaping the gender composition of system contact over time. Despite these different trajectories, arrests for all groups and most offense categories in 2024 remained far below historical peaks and pre-pandemic levels. However, arrests for some categories, mostly among juveniles, have increased since the pandemic-related declines of 2020.

Adults

Arrest trends for adult males and females follow markedly different long-term patterns (Figure 15).

Counts

Males

Adult male arrests followed the same broad, long-term pattern as overall adult arrests, rising through the 1980s and early 1990s before entering a sustained decline. Peaks varied by offense type, and year-to-year fluctuations have occurred since 2020. But adult male arrests for all offense categories in 2024 were well below historical highs and pre-pandemic levels.

- **Violent crime:** Adult male violent crime arrests peaked in 1995 at about 550,000, up 59% from 1980. They declined steadily through the 2000s, rose from 2013 to 2018, and flattened in 2019 and 2020. In 2019, violent arrests were 36% below the peak. After a drop in 2022 and a small increase in 2023, arrests fell again in 2024. In 2024, there were about 296,000 violent arrests, 46% lower than the peak and 16% lower than in 2019 and 2020.

- **Property crime:** Adult male property crime arrests peaked in 1989 at about 1.2 million, 39% above 1980 levels. They declined through the 1990s, held relatively steady from 1999 to 2015, and then fell again through 2022. In 2019, property arrests totaled about half of the peak volume. Adult male property crime arrests rose modestly in 2023 and 2024 but remained below pre-pandemic levels. In 2024, there were about

536,000—55% below the peak and 9% below 2019, but about 3% higher than in 2020.

- **Drug offenses:** Adult male drug arrests peaked in 2006 at about 1.4 million, 231% higher than in 1980. Arrests declined gradually through 2011, remained broadly stable through the late 2010s, and then fell sharply beginning in 2019. In 2019, volumes were 20% below the peak. By 2024, adult male drug arrests had fallen to about 580,000—58% lower than the peak and 47% lower than in 2019.

Females

Trends for women differ from those for men. Female arrest volumes have remained substantially lower overall, but peaks occurred later and declines were more gradual. Adult female arrests for all offense categories in 2024 were well below historical peaks and pre-pandemic levels, and violent and drug crime arrests in 2024 remained below the drops seen in 2020.

- **Violent crime:** Adult female violent crime arrests peaked in 2018 at about 99,000, roughly 161% above 1980 levels. Arrests rose through the mid-1990s, then remained relatively flat for nearly two decades before declining after 2018. Arrests rose modestly in 2023 before declining again in 2024. In 2024, there were about 80,000 violent arrests, 19% below the peak and 16% lower than in 2019.

- **Property crime:** Adult female property crime arrests peaked in 2014 at about 514,000, roughly 106% above 1980 levels. After rising through the early 1990s, arrests declined through 2000, increased again into the mid-2010s, and then steadily declined through 2022. In 2019, volumes were 29% below the peak. Arrests rose from 2022 to 2024 but remained below pre-pandemic levels. In 2024, there were about 288,000 property crime arrests, 44% below the peak and 21% lower than in 2019, but about 4% higher than in 2020.

- **Drug offenses:** Adult female drug arrests peaked in 2018 at about 386,000, roughly five-and-a-half times higher than the count in 1980. Arrests rose gradually over several decades before declining sharply after 2018. By 2024, drug arrests among adult females had fallen to about 203,000—47% below the peak and 46% lower than in 2019.

Figure 15. Estimated Adult Arrests by Sex and Offense Type, 1980-2024

Share

Over time, women have come to account for a greater share of total adult arrests, a trend that holds true across all crime categories. This pattern likely reflects shifts in enforcement as well as a steeper long-term decline in male arrests and other factors. In the 1980s, women accounted for roughly 10% of all adult violent crime arrests, but by 2024, that share had more than doubled to 21%. Women have historically represented a larger portion of adult property crime arrests, a share that was about 23% in 1980 and 39% at its peak in 2015. From 2020 through 2024, that proportion remained stable at about 35%. The female share of adult drug arrests has also risen consistently through the years, doubling from 13% in 1980 to 26% in 2024.

Figure 16. Share of Adult Female Arrests by Offense Type, 1980-2024

Rates

Adult arrest rates for males and females have fallen substantially from their historical peaks, though the timing and pace of decline differ across crime types (Figure 17).

Males

Adult male arrest rates remain below their pre-pandemic and 2020 levels across offense categories, despite modest recent fluctuations.

- **Violent crime:** The adult male violent crime arrest rate peaked in 1990 at 591 per 100,000—33% above the 1980 level. After remaining elevated through the mid-1990s, the rate entered a long decline, leveling off briefly from 2013 to 2018. In 2019, the rate was less than half the peak rate. Thereafter, the rate held steady from 2019 to 2020, dropped in 2022, rose slightly in 2023, and fell again in 2024. The 2024 rate of 226 per 100,000 was 62% below the peak and 20% lower than in 2019.

- **Property crime:** The property crime arrest rate peaked in 1989 at 1,365 per 100,000—23% above the rate in 1980. After declining through 2000, it held relatively steady until 2012 before resuming a downward trend. In 2019, the rate was 65% lower than the peak. The rate increased modestly from 2022 to 2024, but the 2024 rate (410 per 100,000) was 70% below the peak and 14% lower than in 2019.

- **Drug offenses:** The drug offense arrest rate rose sharply through the 1980s and 1990s, with spikes in 1989 and 1997, and peaked in 2006 at 1,254 per 100,000—about 137% above the rate in 1980. The drug crime rate fell through 2011 and then flattened until 2019 before falling more steeply. In 2019, the rate was 29% below the peak. In 2024, the drug arrest rate was 442 per 100,000—65% lower than the peak and about half the 2019 rate.

Females

Adult female arrest rates have consistently been lower than male arrest rates, but their long-term pattern differs, with later peaks and more gradual declines. In 2024, the violent crime and drug offense arrest rates for females remained below the pandemic-related declines recorded in 2020, and the property crime arrest rate was lower than in 2019.

- **Violent crime:** The female violent crime arrest rate peaked in 1995 at 94 per 100,000—113% above the 1980 rate. It declined through 2013, plateaued until 2018, and then fell again. In 2019, the violent crime arrest rate was 23% below the peak. After a small uptick in 2023, the rate declined in 2024 to 59 per 100,000—37% lower than the peak, 19% below 2019, and about one-quarter the male rate.

- **Property crime:** The female property crime arrest rate peaked in 1989 at 428 per 100,000—47% above the rate in 1980. It dropped through 2000, rose again and neared peak levels from 2009 to 2014, and then fell steeply through 2022. In 2019, the rate was 35% below the peak. The property crime arrest rate rose in 2023 and 2024 but remained below pre-pandemic levels. The 2024 rate of 212 per 100,000 was less than half the peak rate, 24% below 2019, roughly equal to the 2020 rate (+0.8%), and about half the male rate.

- **Drug offenses:** The female drug offense arrest rate showed multiple spikes (in 1989, 1997, and 2006) before ultimately peaking in 2018 at 297 per 100,000, more than triple

the 1980 rate. After decades of gradual increases, the rate fell sharply after 2018. The 2019 rate was 31% below the peak. In 2024, the rate was 149 per 100,000, about half the peak, half the 2019 level, and roughly one-third the male rate.

Figure 17. Adult Arrest Rates by Sex and Offense Type, 1980-2024

Juveniles

Juvenile arrests rose through the 1980s and early 1990s before entering a long period of decline across crime categories (Figure 18). Peaks varied by offense type and sex, but all categories saw steep reductions through 2020, followed by modest, short-term fluctuations in the years since. In 2024, juvenile arrests across offense types remained below their historical highs and their pre-pandemic 2019 levels. But only juvenile male drug offense arrests dipped back below the pandemic-related lows of 2020.

Counts

Males

Juvenile male arrest patterns vary by offense type, but trends for each crime category show steep long-term declines from the peak levels of the mid-1990s. In 2024, arrests were lower overall than in 2019, but only arrests for drug offenses were below the levels recorded in 2020.

- **Violent crime:** Juvenile male violent crime arrests peaked in 1994 at about 127,000—57% higher than the number recorded in 1980. Arrests mostly declined after that point, increasing briefly from 2005 to 2008 before resuming their downward trend. By 2019, arrests were 69% below the peak level. They rose from 2020 to 2023 before falling again in 2024, when there were roughly 34,000 violent crime arrests—74% below the peak year and 13% lower than the 2019 number.

- **Property crime:** Property crime arrests for boys numbered 590,000 in 1980, the peak year. Counts remained relatively flat through the late 1990s before beginning a sustained decline after 1997. From 1980 to 2019, arrests dropped 87%. Arrests dropped

sharply in 2020, increased slightly in 2023 and edged down in 2024. In 2024, there were about 61,000 property crime arrests, 90% below the peak and 23% lower than the 2019 number.

- **Drug offenses:** Drug offense arrests for juvenile males peaked in 1997 at about 186,000, more than doubling from 1980. Arrests remained relatively stable into the late 2000s before falling sharply. In 2019, there were 68% fewer arrests of juvenile males for drug offenses than at the peak. After a large decline from 2019 to 2020, such arrests have stayed relatively flat. In 2024, there were about 58,000 drug offense arrests, 85% below the peak and 52% below 2019 levels.

Females

Arrest patterns for girls followed a long-term decline similar to that seen for their male counterparts, though with later peaks and somewhat different trajectories across crime types. In 2024, arrests across major offense categories were lower than in 2019 but higher than in 2020.

- **Violent crime:** Arrests of female juveniles for violent crimes peaked in 1995 at about 22,000—136% above 1980 levels. Such arrests declined thereafter, with small increases in 2005 and 2006, and small increases again between 2015 and 2018 before stabilizing in 2019. In 2019, arrests were 57% below the peak. They fell sharply in 2020, rose in 2022 and 2023, and decreased slightly in 2024. There were about 8,900 violent crime arrests in 2024—60% below peak and 5% lower than in 2019.

- **Property crime:** Property crime arrests for girls peaked in 1996 at about 190,000, 42% above 1980. Arrests declined through the early 2000s, rose briefly from 2007 to 2009, and then continued to decline. By 2019, arrests were 79% below the peak level. Property crime arrests dropped sharply in 2020, rose modestly in 2023, and leveled off in 2024 at around 25,000—87% below the peak and 37% lower than the 2019 level.

- **Drug offenses:** Arrests of juvenile females for drug crimes peaked in 2004 at about 33,000—83% above 1980. They decreased until 2013, remained relatively stable through 2019, and then dropped sharply in 2020. In 2019, arrests were 36% below the peak. Arrests increased in 2022 and 2023 before declining modestly in 2024. In 2024, there were about 12,000 drug offense arrests, 65% below the peak and 44% below the

2019 number.

Figure 18. Estimated Juvenile Arrests by Sex and Offense Type, 1980-2024

Share

The female share of juvenile arrests has grown over time, though the trajectory varies across offense categories (Figure 19). For violent crime, girls made up about 10% of juvenile arrests in 1980, and that share has steadily increased over the past four decades. By 2023 and 2024, girls accounted for 21% of all juvenile violent crime arrests, more than double their share in 1980.

The pattern is different for property crime. In 1980, about 19% of juvenile property crime arrests involved girls. That share rose steadily to a peak of 38% in 2009 and 2010, then dipped as low as 31% through the mid-2010s before increasing briefly in 2018 and 2019 to roughly 33%. Since 2020, the female share of property arrests has leveled off at about 29%.

Drug offense patterns show the most fluctuation. Girls accounted for 17% of juvenile arrests for drug crimes in 1980, a share that fell to 11% by 1991 before climbing again to 17% in 2004. After holding steady through 2012, the female share began rising once more, reaching a high of 31% in 2023 before easing to 29% in 2024.

Figure 19. Share of Female Juvenile Arrests by Offense Type, 1980-2024

Rates

Arrest rates for juvenile males and females have fallen substantially from their historical highs, with long-term declines occurring across violent, property, and drug offenses (Figure 20). While there have been modest year-to-year shifts since 2020, juvenile arrest rates in 2024 remained below pre-pandemic levels. Notably, only the juvenile male drug offense arrest rate remained below the 2020 rate in 2024.

Males

Arrest rates for juvenile males show steep, long-term declines across violent, property, and drug offenses, with modest short-term fluctuations in the years following the 2020 pandemic-related drops. Violent crime and property offense rates in 2024 were lower than in 2019; only the drug offense rate was below the 2020 rate.

- **Violent crime:** The violent crime arrest rate for boys peaked in 1994 at 832 per 100,000, about 60% higher than in 1980. Rates then fell steadily, aside from a brief uptick between 2005 and 2008. In 2019, the rate was 72% lower than the peak. After dropping sharply in 2020, the rate rose in 2022 and 2023, before easing in 2024. The 2024 rate of 189 per 100,000 was 77% below the peak level and 18% lower than in 2019, but 13% higher than in 2020.

- **Property crime:** The property crime arrest rate for boys peaked in 1988 at 3,953 per 100,000, about 5% above the 1980 mark. Rates declined sharply beginning in the mid-1990s, with a brief plateau from 2005 to 2008, and continued falling through 2022. In 2019, the rate was 88% lower than peak levels. The rate dropped in 2020, but not sharply. After a rise in 2023 and a decrease in 2024, the 2024 rate of 341 per 100,000 was 91% lower than the peak year and 27% lower than in 2019, but 9% higher than in 2020.

- **Drug offenses:** The juvenile male drug offense arrest rate nearly doubled from 1980 to its 1996 peak of 1,157 per 100,000. It then declined, with a short plateau from 2005 to 2007. In 2019, the rate was 70% lower than in the peak year. The drug offense rate dropped sharply in 2020, and remained essentially flat through 2023 before easing in 2024. The 2024 rate of 162 per 100,000 was 86% below the peak, 54% lower than in 2019, and 13% lower than in 2020. Notably, the male drug offense rate rose above the violent crime rate in 1994 and remained higher for many years before falling below it again in 2023.

Females

Arrest rates for girls follow similar long-term downward trajectories, though with later peaks and somewhat different post-2020 movement than those observed for males. Arrest rates in all major offense categories were lower in 2024 for female juveniles than in 2019, but above

the 2020 rates.

- **Violent crime:** The violent crime arrest rate for girls peaked in 1995 at 149 per 100,000, up 139% from 1980. It declined with a brief rise in 2005 and 2006, then fell again through 2013 and remained relatively flat through 2019. In 2019, the rate was 61% lower than the peak. After a sharp decline in 2020 and increases in 2022 and 2023, the rate dipped in 2024. The 2024 rate of 53 per 100,000 was 64% lower than the peak level and 8% lower than in 2019, but 29% higher than in 2020.

- **Property crime:** The juvenile female property crime arrest rate peaked in 1994 at 1,274 per 100,000—43% higher than in 1980. The rate fell through the early 2000s but spiked from 2006 to 2009, increasing about 25% over that period, before resuming a steady decline. In 2019, the rate was 81% lower than the peak level. After dropping sharply in 2020, rising in 2023, and easing slightly in 2024, the 2024 rate of 149 per 100,000 was 88% below the peak and 39% lower than in 2019, but 13% higher than in 2020.

- **Drug offenses:** The juvenile female drug offense arrest rate peaked in 2004 at 201 per 100,000—66% above the rate recorded in 1980. This peak was preceded by a dramatic increase from a low of 63 per 100,000 in 1991 to 190.2 in 1997—a rise of more than 200%. After fluctuating but remaining elevated through the 2000s, rates declined overall, with a brief increase from 2009 to 2010. In 2019, the rate was 35% lower than the peak level. Following a sharp drop in 2020, rates rose in 2022 and 2023 before falling again in 2024. The 2024 rate of 70 per 100,000 was 65% below the peak and 46% lower than in 2019, but 7% higher than in 2020.

Figure 20. Juvenile Arrest Rates by Sex and Offense Type, 1980-2024

Racial Patterns in Arrest Trends

Arrest trends have changed differently across racial groups and between adults and juveniles. Federal data do not allow for race-by-sex estimates, so the analysis that follows shows arrest patterns by race within adult and juvenile populations. While all groups experienced large long-term declines in arrests through 2019, post-pandemic trends diverged, with arrests among some groups showing rebounds and numbers for others continuing downward.

Adults

Arrest trends for adults show long-term declines across all racial groups, though the timing and magnitude of those declines vary. By 2024, arrest counts and rates for all racial groups remained below their 2019 levels. Only White and American Indian/Alaska Native (AI/AN) adults had arrest levels lower than those recorded during the 2020 pandemic year. Arrests of Black and Asian adults rebounded after the pandemic, with rates increasing 12% for Black adults and 18% for Asian adults from 2020 to 2024.

Counts

Adult arrests by race show distinct long-term trajectories, with different peak years and differing movement before and after the pandemic (Figure 21). In 2024, arrest counts were below their 2019 levels for all four groups, though only White and AI/AN arrests remained below their 2020 lows.

- **White adults:** Arrests of White adults peaked in 2006 at about 8.6 million, a number 41% higher than the total in 1980. Arrests then declined gradually through 2019, followed by a sharp drop in 2020 and continued decreases through 2024. In 2019, White adult arrests were 24% below the peak. In 2024, there were 4.6 million arrests of White adults, a total 46% lower than the peak and 29% lower than in 2019.

- **Black adults:** Arrests of Black adults peaked in 1997 at about 3.8 million, a number 86% above the 1980 count. After declining through the early 2000s, arrests rose briefly from 2003 to 2006 before resuming a downward trend through 2019. In 2019, Black adult arrests were 36% below the peak. Arrests fell sharply in 2020 and then increased thereafter. In 2024, there were 2.1 million arrests of Black adults, a number 45% below the peak and 14% lower than the total in 2019, but 13% higher than in 2020.

- **American Indian/Alaska Native adults:** Arrests of AI/AN adults increased from 1980 through the mid-1990s and then generally plateaued until a sharp spike in 2015. Arrests peaked in 2017 at about 238,000—127% above 1980. They declined from 2019 through 2024, falling below the long plateaus in the 2000s and 2010s and below 2020 levels. In 2024, there were about 146,000 arrests, a total 39% below the peak and 36% lower than in 2019.

- **Asian adults:** Arrests of Asian adults increased overall from 1980 to 2012, with year-to-year fluctuations. Arrests peaked in 2012 at about 160,000, up 256% from 1980. After fluctuating through 2019, arrests fell in 2020 and then rose in subsequent years. In 2024, there were about 142,000 arrests of Asian adults, a count 11% below the peak and 5% lower than in 2019, but 29% higher than in 2020.

Figure 21. Estimated Adult Arrests by Race, 1980-2024

Rates

Adult arrest rates vary substantially across racial groups, reflecting different historical peaks, long-term declines, and post-pandemic patterns (Figure 22). In 2024, arrest rates for all groups were below their peak and 2019 levels, but only the White and AI/AN adult rates remained below their 2020 lows.

- **White adults:** The White adult arrest rate peaked in 1989 at 5,289 per 100,000, a rate 24% higher than in 1980. It remained relatively flat through the mid-2000s before beginning to decline in 2006. In 2019, the rate was 38% below the peak. After a sharp drop in 2020, the rate continued to fall through 2024. The 2024 rate was 2,278 per 100,000—57% below the peak, 30% lower than in 2019, and 10% lower than in 2020.

- **Black adults:** The Black adult arrest rate also peaked in 1989, reaching 17,982 per 100,000—51% higher than the rate in 1980 and more than three times the White rate at its peak. Rates for Black adults remained elevated but edged downward through 1997, then declined steadily through 2020. In 2019, the rate was 60% below the peak. In 2024, the Black adult arrest rate was 5,960 per 100,000—67% below the peak and 16% lower than in 2019, but 12% higher than in 2020.

- **American Indian/Alaska Native adults:** AI/AN adults recorded their highest arrest rate in 1980 at 11,993 per 100,000. The rate remained generally flat with fluctuations through the mid-1990s, including a spike in 1996, before declining steadily through 2014. It rose from 2015 to 2019 and then fell each year from 2020 through 2024. In 2019, the rate was 44% below the 1980 peak. The 2024 rate was 4,295 per 100,000—64% below the peak year, 36% lower than in 2019, and 17% lower than in 2020.

- **Asian adults:** Asian adults also had their highest arrest rate in 1980 at 1,688 per 100,000. The rate was largely flat through 1996, then declined steadily with a spike in 2012 and a plateau from 2013 to 2019. In 2019, the rate was 48% below the peak. After a drop in 2020, the rate increased from 2022 to 2024. The 2024 rate of 747 per 100,000 was 56% lower than the peak year and 14% lower than in 2019, but 18% higher than in 2020.

Figure 22. Adult Arrest Rates by Race, 1980-2024

Juveniles

Juvenile arrest patterns vary widely across racial groups, but all groups have experienced steep declines since their 1990s peaks. Year-to-year increases occurred in 2022 and 2023, but they did not reverse the long-term downward trends. In 2024, arrests for all racial groups remained below their 2019 levels, but only AI/AN juveniles recorded arrest volumes and rates below their 2020 pandemic low. Arrests of Black and Asian juveniles rebounded after the pandemic, with rates for Black juveniles increasing 48% and rates for Asian juveniles increasing 45% between 2020 and 2024.

Counts

Juvenile arrest counts declined sharply across all racial groups after the 1990s (Figure 23). In 2024, arrests for all groups were below their 2019 levels, but only AI/AN juveniles remained below their 2020 lows.

- **White juveniles:** Arrests of white juveniles peaked in 1996 at about 1.9 million—22% higher than in 1980. Arrests declined gradually, with a small uptick in 2006, and then fell steadily through 2020. In 2019, arrests were 77% below the peak. After falling in 2020, arrests rose in 2022 and 2023 before decreasing again in 2024. In 2024, there were about 296,000 arrests of White juveniles, a total 84% below the peak year and 33% lower than in 2019, but 8% higher than in 2020.

- **Black juveniles:** Black juvenile arrests peaked in 1995 at roughly 724,000, a total 63% higher than that recorded in 1980. Arrests fell through 2000, rose slightly through

2006, and then declined steadily through 2020. In 2019, arrests were 67% below the peak. After falling in 2020, arrests rose in 2022 and 2023 and decreased in 2024. In 2024, there were about 195,000 arrests of Black juveniles, a number 73% below the peak level and 18% lower than that recorded in 2019, but 41% higher than in 2020.

- **American Indian/Alaska Native juveniles:** AI/AN juvenile arrests peaked in 1997 at about 35,000; that number was nearly double the 1980 volume, but such arrests represent a small share of all juvenile arrests. AI/AN arrests declined with fluctuations through the mid-2010s, increased from 2015 to 2019, and then fell. In 2019, arrests were 55% below the peak. Arrests remained relatively flat from 2020 to 2024. In 2024, there were about 10,700 arrests of AI/AN juveniles, a count 70% below the peak, 33% lower than the number in 2019, and 9% lower than in 2020.

- **Asian juveniles:** Asian juvenile arrests—also a small share of national totals—peaked in 1996 at about 43,000—204% above the 1980 level. Arrests declined until about 2000, plateaued through 2008, then fell sharply in 2013 and remained relatively stable through 2019. In 2019, arrests were 77% below the peak. After falling in 2020, arrests rose in 2022 and 2023 and declined again in 2024. There were about 7,800 arrests of Asian juveniles in 2024, a total 82% below the peak and 21% lower than the level in 2019, but 45% higher than in 2020.

Figure 23. Estimated Juvenile Arrests by Race, 1980-2024

Rates

Juvenile arrest rates declined sharply across all racial groups from their 1990s highs (Figure 24). While arrest rates for Black and Asian juveniles rose sharply after the 2020 low, rates for all racial groups remained below 2019 levels in 2024.

- **White juveniles:** The White juvenile arrest rate peaked in 1996 at 7,649 per 100,000—26% higher than in 1980. Rates declined gradually with a brief rise in 2006 and fell steadily through 2020. In 2019, the rate was 77% below the peak. After increases in 2022 and 2023 and a decrease in 2024, the 2024 rate was 1,214 per 100,000—84% below the peak year and 31% lower than in 2019, but 11% higher than in 2020.

- **Black juveniles:** The Black juvenile arrest rate peaked in 1995 at 15,355 per 100,000—55% higher than in 1980. It declined through 2000, plateaued with small increases through 2008, and then fell consistently through 2020. In 2019, the rate was 72% below the peak. It rose sharply in 2022 and 2023 before declining slightly in 2024. The 2024 rate of 3,697 per 100,000 was 76% below the peak and 15% lower than the 2019 rate. The Black juvenile arrest rate had the steepest post-pandemic rebound among all racial groups, with the 2024 rate 48% higher than in 2020.

- **American Indian/Alaska Native juveniles:** AI/AN juvenile arrest rates peaked in 1996 at 8,424 per 100,000—24% higher than in 1980. Rates declined through 2014, increased slightly through 2019, and then fell again. In 2019, the rate was 70% below the peak level. After a drop in 2020 and small increases in 2022 and 2023, the rate declined again in 2024. The 2024 rate of 1,793 per 100,000 was 79% below the peak, 30% lower than in 2019, and 4% lower than in 2020.

- **Asian juveniles:** The Asian juvenile arrest rate peaked in 1996 at 3,515 per 100,000, about 25% higher than in 1980. Rates trended downward with fluctuations through 2020. In 2019, the rate was 87% below the peak. Rates rose in 2022 and 2023 before falling in 2024. The 2024 rate of 362 per 100,000 was 90% below the peak level and 22% lower than in 2019. Although on a different scale than Black juvenile rates, the Asian juvenile arrest rate also has increased sharply since 2020, with the 2024 rate 45% higher than the 2020 low.

Figure 24. Juvenile Arrest Rates by Race, 1980-2024

Conclusion

The federal government stopped publishing population-adjusted, demographically detailed arrest statistics after 2020. The Council on Criminal Justice has rebuilt national arrest data to restore visibility into those arrest trends. By combining weighted historical estimates—reflecting national totals, including jurisdictions that do not fully report to the FBI—with recent FBI arrest counts, CCJ provides a continuous and comparable picture of arrest patterns from 1980 through 2024 across age, sex, race, and offense categories.

The clearest finding from this analysis is that arrests were already declining in the 2000s and

2010s before they dropped sharply in 2020. Overall, arrests have remained well below pre-pandemic levels since that time—even as many pandemic-era conditions and enforcement constraints receded. Yet these overall trends hide important differences across groups. Adult arrest rates continued to fall after 2020, while youth trends moved in more varied directions: Violent and property arrest rates for boys and girls rose, drug arrests declined for boys but increased for girls, and post-2020 increases were especially pronounced among Black and Asian youth.

These patterns reflect long-standing reductions in crime, shifts in enforcement activity, and demographic changes, including the shrinking share of U.S. residents in late-teen and early-adult age ranges and declining crime among youth and young adults.[1] Today, juveniles account for less than 7% of all arrests—a generational low—and the composition of youth arrests has changed considerably over time.

Taken together, these results show that while the national picture remains one of sustained decline, the post-2020 period has introduced emerging divergences across age, sex, race, and offense type that warrant close attention.

By rebuilding this series and committing to periodic updates, CCJ is restoring essential analytical infrastructure—supporting earlier detection of emerging trends, more accurate tracking of disparities, and more informed, evidence-based public safety policymaking.

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Endnotes

[1] Kids Count Data Center. (n.d.). *Population by birth cohort generation and race and ethnicity in the US*. The Annie E. Casey Foundation. https://datacenter.aecf.org/data/tables/11504-population-by-birth-cohort-generation-and-race-and-ethnicity; Lofstrom, M., Martin, B., Premkumar, D., & Skelton, A. (2023, September). *Are younger generations committing less crime?* Public Policy Institute of California. https://www.ppic.org/publication/are-younger-generations-committing-less-crime/