

# Juvenile Felony Arrests in California

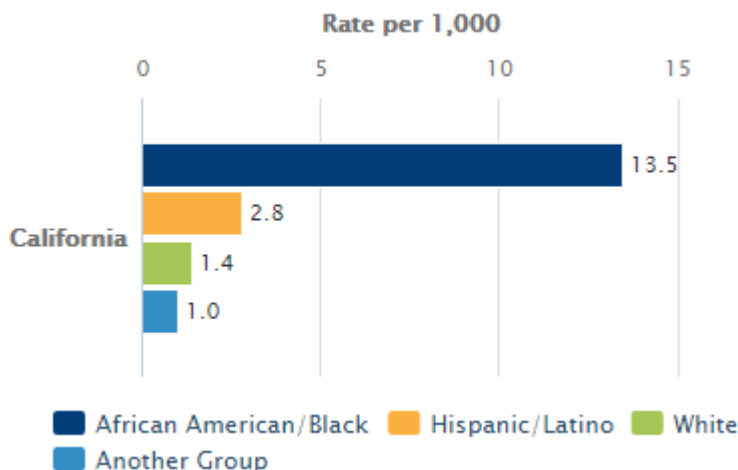
**Rate of Felony Arrest Among Juveniles Ages 10-17: 2020**

Locations	Rate per 1,000
California	2.7
Alameda County	3.5
Contra Costa County	2.6
Fresno County	3.7
Kern County	3.3
Los Angeles County	2.6
Orange County	1.9
Riverside County	1.1
Sacramento County	3.4
San Bernardino County	3.3
San Diego County	2.1
Santa Clara County	3.0

**Definition:** Number of felony arrests per 1,000 youth ages 10-17 (e.g., in 2020, the felony arrest rate among California juveniles was 2.7 arrests per 1,000 youth ages 10-17).

**Data Source:** California Dept. of Justice, [Crime Statistics: Arrests](#); California Dept. of Finance, [Population Estimates and Projections](#) (Dec. 2021).

**Rate of Felony Arrest Among Juveniles Ages 10-17, by Race/Ethnicity: 2020**



**Definition:** Number of felony arrests per 1,000 youth ages 10-17, by race/ethnicity (e.g., in 2020, the felony arrest rate among Hispanic/Latino juveniles in California was 2.8 arrests per 1,000 youth ages 10-17).

**Data Source:** California Dept. of Justice, [Crime Statistics: Arrests](#); California Dept. of Finance, [Population Estimates and Projections](#) (Dec. 2021).

**Percentage of Felony Arrests Among Youth Ages 17 and Under, by Type of Offense: 2020**

## What It Is

This topic describes felony arrests among children under age 18. Felonies include violent offenses (assault, homicide, kidnapping, rape, and robbery), property offenses (such as arson, burglary, forgery, and theft), drug and alcohol offenses, sex offenses, and others (such as driving under the influence, hit-and-run, and weapons offenses). Indicators on kidsdata.org include:

- The rate of felony arrest per 1,000 juveniles ages 10-17 overall, by gender, and by race/ethnicity
- The number of felony arrests among youth ages 17 and younger overall, and the number and percentage of felony arrests by gender, by race/ethnicity, and by type of offense

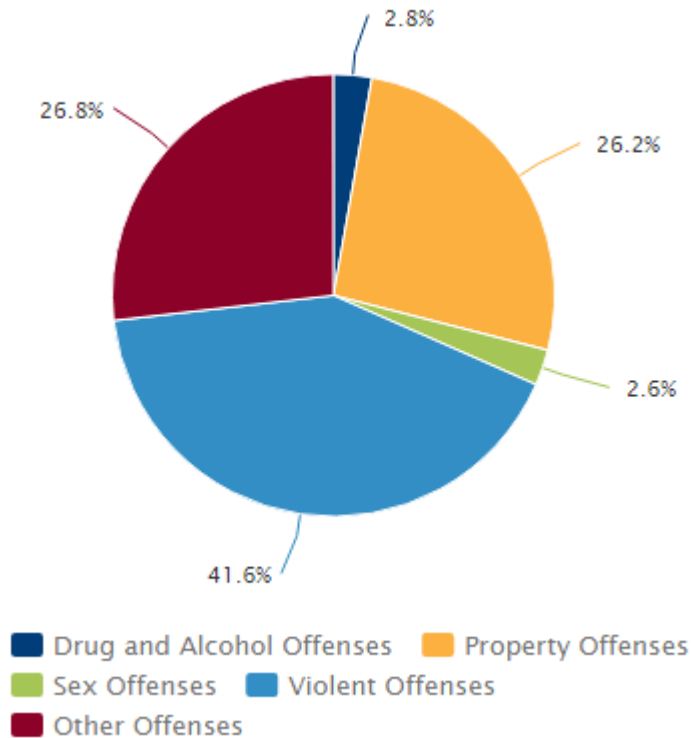
## Why This Topic Is Important

Most young people who are arrested are not ultimately convicted of a crime, but those who are detained or incarcerated are at increased risk for a number of negative outcomes that can have long-term consequences, such as mental health problems, dropping out of school, difficulty with employment, and re-arrest. Research suggests that any length of youth incarceration is independently associated with a higher likelihood of poor physical and mental health in adulthood.

Many youth enter the juvenile justice system with existing psychological or physical health problems: For example, nearly half (46%) of newly detained youth have urgent health care needs and 70% of incarcerated youth have at least one mental health disorder. Further, the vast majority of these young people have experienced some form of trauma during childhood, and system involvement can re-traumatize them, creating further challenges for healing and healthy development.

Juvenile justice system involvement is not experienced equally across groups. Youth of color are consistently over-represented at every stage, from arrest to incarceration, and disparate treatment of children of color compared with their white counterparts has been documented widely. LGBTQ youth also are disproportionately represented in the justice system. These inequities not only affect individuals but also the families and communities around them. Communities with high levels of youth incarceration typically also have higher rates of poverty and inadequate housing, health care, and other resources. Closing these gaps will require continued

## California



**Definition:** Percentage of felony arrests among youth ages 17 and under, by type of offense (e.g., in 2020, 26.2% of juvenile felony arrests in California were for property offenses).

**Data Source:** California Dept. of Justice, [Crime Statistics: Arrests](#) (Dec. 2021).

multisector efforts to achieve equitable treatment and opportunities for all young people, as well as a new focus on providing hope and support to meet their needs.

### How Children Are Faring

Between 1980 and 2020, the felony arrest rate among California juveniles ages 10-17 declined by more than 90%, from 31.9 arrests per 1,000 youth to 2.7 per 1,000. Over the same period, a drop of more than two-thirds was recorded in every county with data. Still, juvenile felony arrest rates vary widely at the county level, from 1.1 arrests per 1,000 juveniles to 5.3 per 1,000 in 2020. African American/black youth are arrested for felonies at higher rates than their peers in other groups: Statewide, the rate of felony arrest among African American/black juveniles ages 10-17 in 2020 (13.5 per 1,000) was almost five times the rate for Hispanic/Latino juveniles (2.8 per 1,000) and nearly ten times the rate for white juveniles (1.4 per 1,000). In 2020, African American/black and Hispanic/Latino youth accounted for 80% of all felony arrests involving juveniles under age 18 in California.

Violent offenses (assault, homicide, kidnapping, rape, and robbery) were the most common type of felony for which California youth were arrested in 2020, at 42%, followed by property offenses (e.g., arson, burglary, forgery, theft) at 26%, and drug/alcohol and sex offenses at 3% each; all other offenses (including driving under the influence, hit-and-run, and weapons violations) made up the remaining 27%.

Statewide, boys account for the vast majority of felony arrests among youth under age 18—83% in 2020.

*View references for this text and additional research on this topic:*

<https://kidsdata.org/topic/30/juvenile-arrests/summary>



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