

2023

NORTH DAKOTA JUVENILE COURT ANNUAL REPORT





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WHAT IS **Juvenile Court?**

ESTABLISHED IN 1911 ON THE FOUNDING PRINCIPAL OF REHABILITATION, NORTH DAKOTA'S JUVENILE COURTS ARE A DIVISION OF THE DISTRICT COURTS AND SERVE MANY VITAL PURPOSES. The Court has jurisdiction over youth ages 10 to 18 referred to the Court on a report of delinquent behavior. The juvenile court also has jurisdiction over cases involving a Child in Need of Protection (formerly a deprived child) and cases regarding guardianship of a minor child.



JUVENILE COURT Mission Statement

THE JUVENILE COURT PROTECTS THE BEST INTERESTS OF CHILDREN AND ADDRESSES THE UNIQUE CHARACTERISTICS AND NEEDS OF CHILDREN THAT COME BEFORE THE COURT AS A CHILD IN NEED OF PROTECTION, AND IN JUVENILE DELINQUENCY MATTERS. Following the principles of Balanced and Restorative Justice, the mission of the North Dakota Juvenile Court is to promote public safety, hold juvenile offenders accountable, and increase the capacity of juveniles to contribute productively to their community. The courts empower victims, encourage community participation, and support parental responsibility.

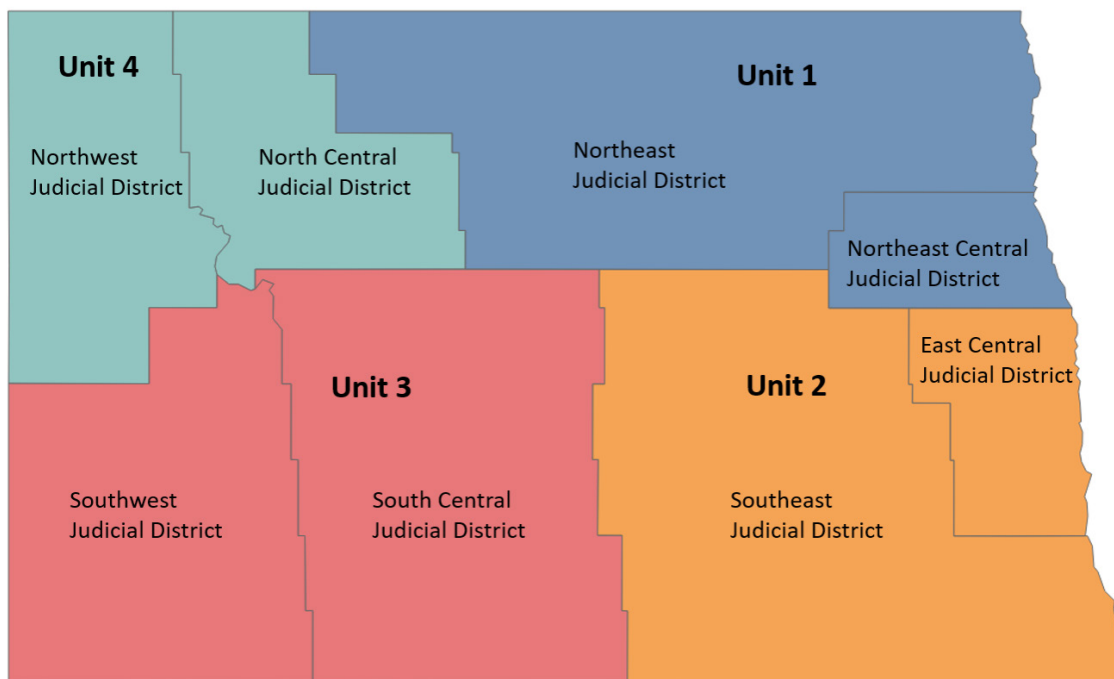
REPAIRING HARM, REDUCING RISK AND CREATING OPPORTUNITIES





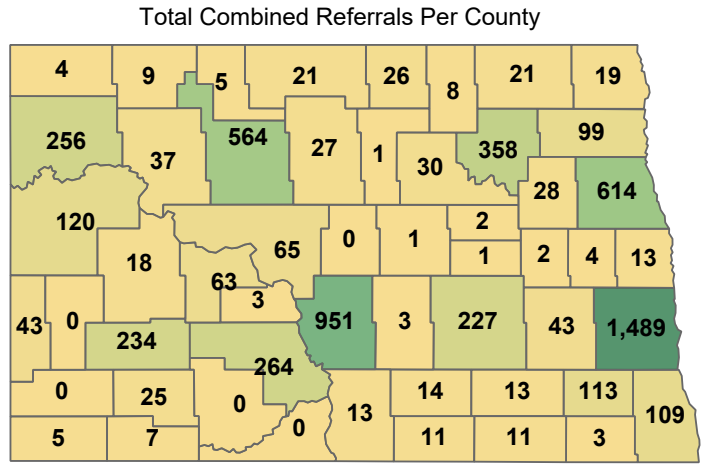
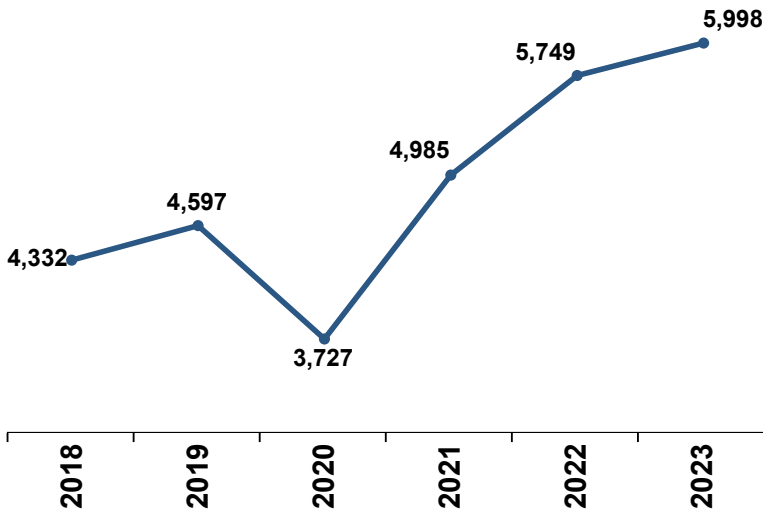
JUVENILE COURT Structure

The juvenile court is structured by four administrative units and eight judicial districts.

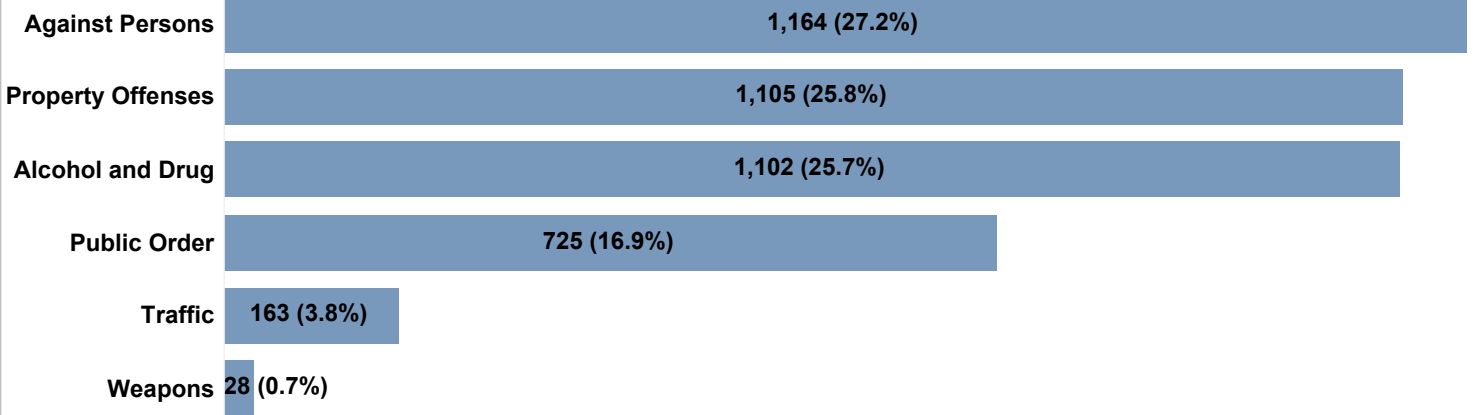


North Dakota Juvenile Court 2023 Delinquent Referrals Received

Total Delinquent Referrals- 5,998



Primary Delinquent Referrals - 4,287

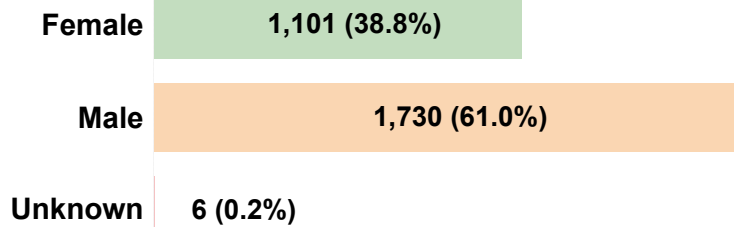


Number of Youth Referred to Juvenile Court: 2,837

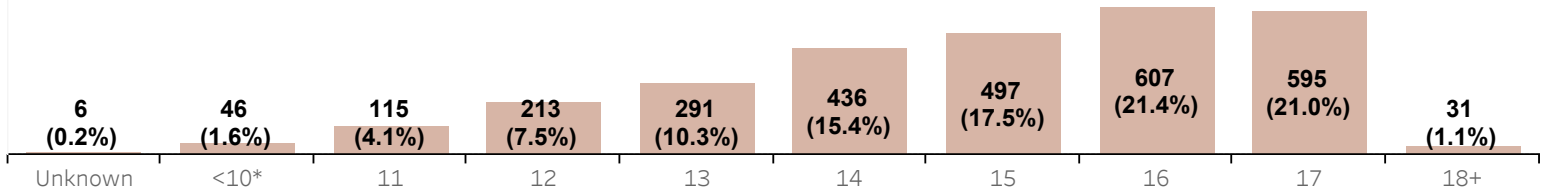
Race



Gender



Age



* 10 and 18 year old group include those referrals of youth under 10 and over 18 that were referred to juvenile court

2023 DELINQUENT REFERRALS TO Juvenile Court



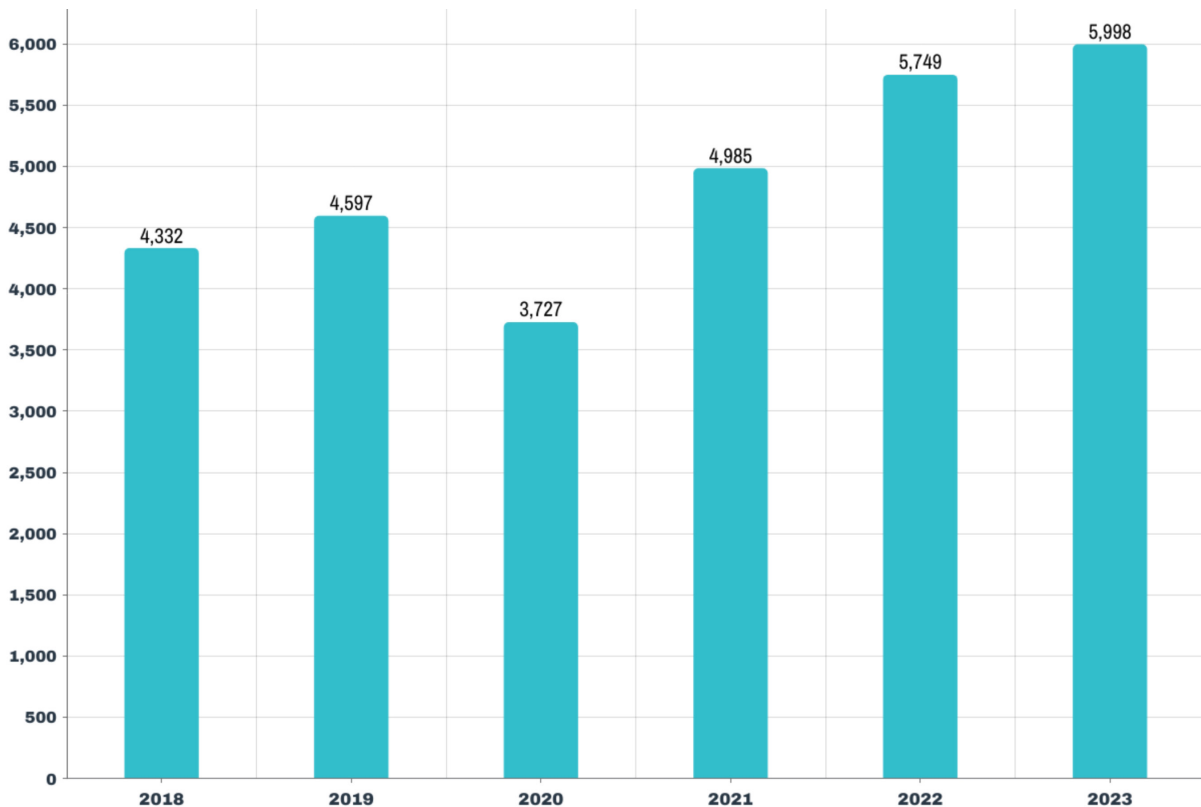
REFERRALS TO THE JUVENILE COURT FOR DELINQUENT OFFENSES ARE RECEIVED FROM LAW ENFORCEMENT AGENCIES. A delinquent act is behavior that would be considered a crime if committed by an adult.

In 2023, total delinquency referrals to the North Dakota Juvenile Courts increased by 249 (4%).

These were the top five juvenile court referrals in 2023.

Against Persons	1,187
Property Offenses	1,105
Alcohol and Drug	1,103
Public Order	698
Traffic	167

Delinquent Referrals





REFERRAL Types

Against Person Offenses

All assaults, menacing, harassment, terrorizing, gross sexual imposition, robbery

Property Offenses

Shoplifting, burglary, criminal mischief/vandalism, criminal trespass, all thefts,

Public Order

Disorderly conduct, disturbance of a public school, failure to appear, resisting arrest

Weapons

Unlawful possession of a firearm, carrying a loaded firearm in a vehicle, failure to produce a license or inform police, carrying a concealed weapon

Traffic

Driving under suspension, reckless driving, leaving the scene of an accident

Drug and alcohol

Any drug or alcohol related offense

Referral by Location of Offense

In 2023, 61% of all delinquent referrals were the result of law violations or behaviors by youth that occurred in the community such as stores, streets, or parks; 15% occurred in the home; 19% were from acts reported to have occurred at a school building or grounds during the school day; and 5% were law enforcement calls to residential placement facilities.



Analysis of Juvenile Offenders

Age

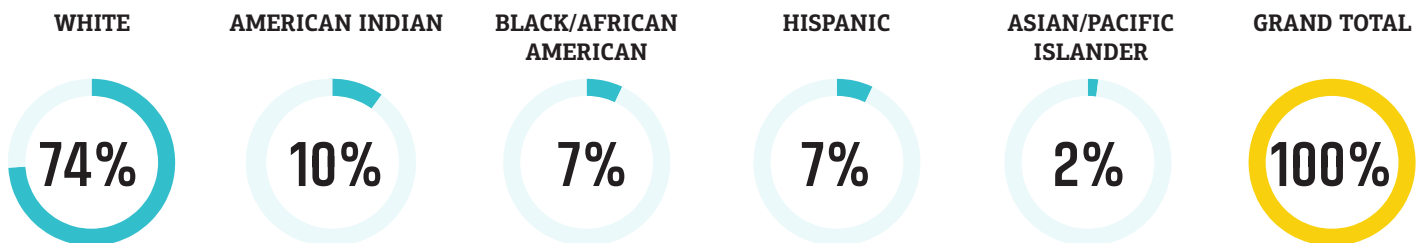
The most common age of youth referred to the juvenile courts for delinquent behavior in 2023 was 16 years of age. Juveniles age 13 and younger accounted for 31% of all referrals to the courts.

Gender

In 2023, males committed 61% of delinquent acts referred to the juvenile courts, while females accounted for 39% of referrals.

Race

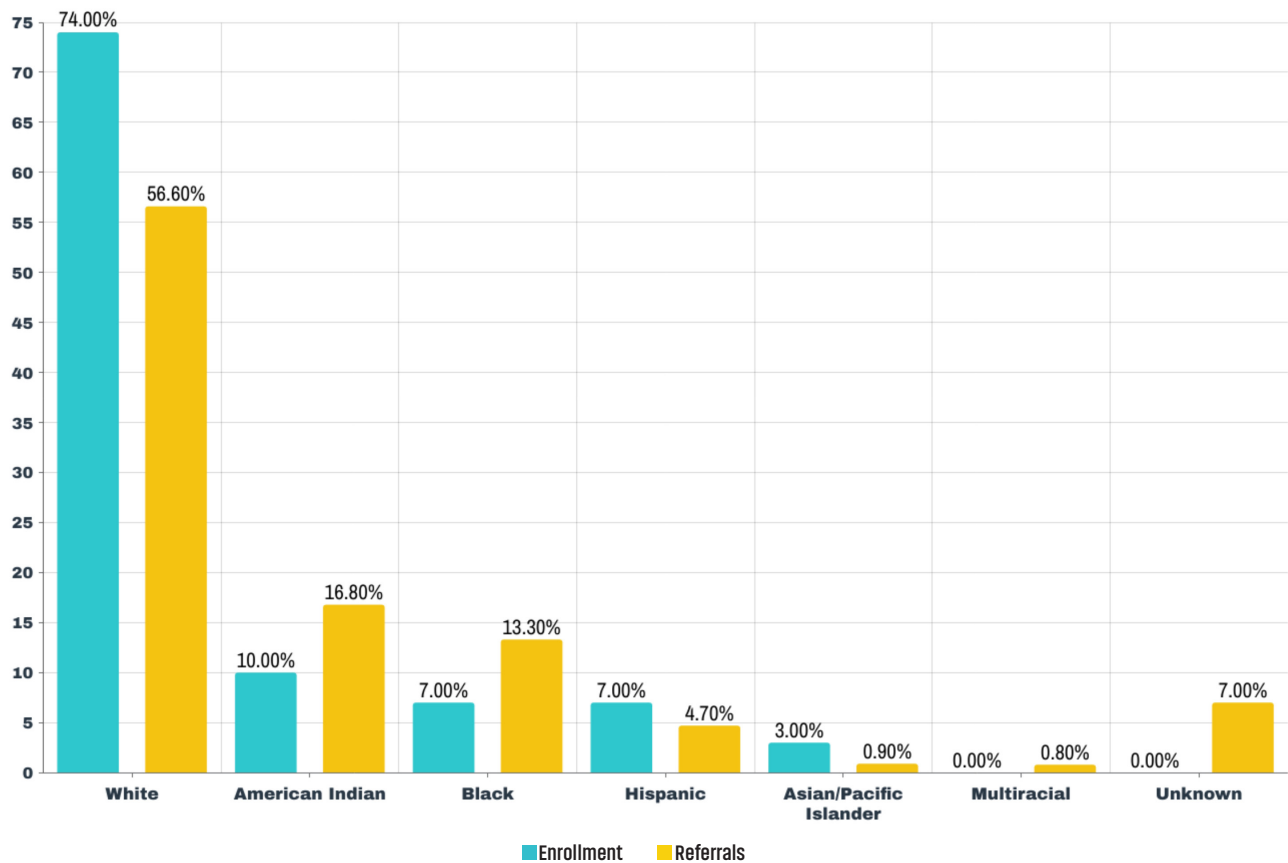
North Dakota school enrollment for grades 5 through 12 shows the white population remained the largest race or ethnicity group in North Dakota at 74% of the population. The Chart below depicts the breakout for all reported race or ethnic groups in 2023:





THE AMERICAN INDIAN AND BLACK/AFRICAN AMERICAN POPULATION ARE OVERREPRESENTED IN THE NUMBER OF REFERRALS SENT TO THE JUVENILE COURT. Total delinquent referrals for the American Indian populations were 17% of the overall total while they are only 10% of the general population. Black/African Americans were 13% of the overall referral totals while only 7% of the total population.

Juvenile Enrollment Population vs Percentage of Population that Received Referrals





Delinquency by Primary Offense Type

The most common primary offense types were offenses against persons (28%), followed by property offenses (26%), drug and alcohol offenses (25%), public order (17%), traffic offenses (4%) and weapons offenses (<1%).

DELINQUENCY BY PRIMARY OFFENSE TYPE - RACE

	Against Persons	Drug and Alcohol	Property	Public Order	Traffic	Weapons
White	26.0%	29.3%	24.0%	16.2%	3.8%	0.8%
American Indian	24.2%	25.5%	32.1%	14.4%	3.0%	0.8%
Black/African American	31.0%	14.8%	28.4%	21.8%	2.7%	1.4%
Hispanic	21.5%	24.4%	21.5%	22.3%	9.1%	1.2%
Asian/Pacific Isl.	31.1%	8.2%	24.6%	29.5%	6.6%	
Mixed	24.4%	20.0%	37.8%	13.3%	2.2%	2.2%
Unknown	25.3%	25.3%	27.1%	18.1%	3.9%	0.3%



Outcome of Juvenile Delinquent Offenses

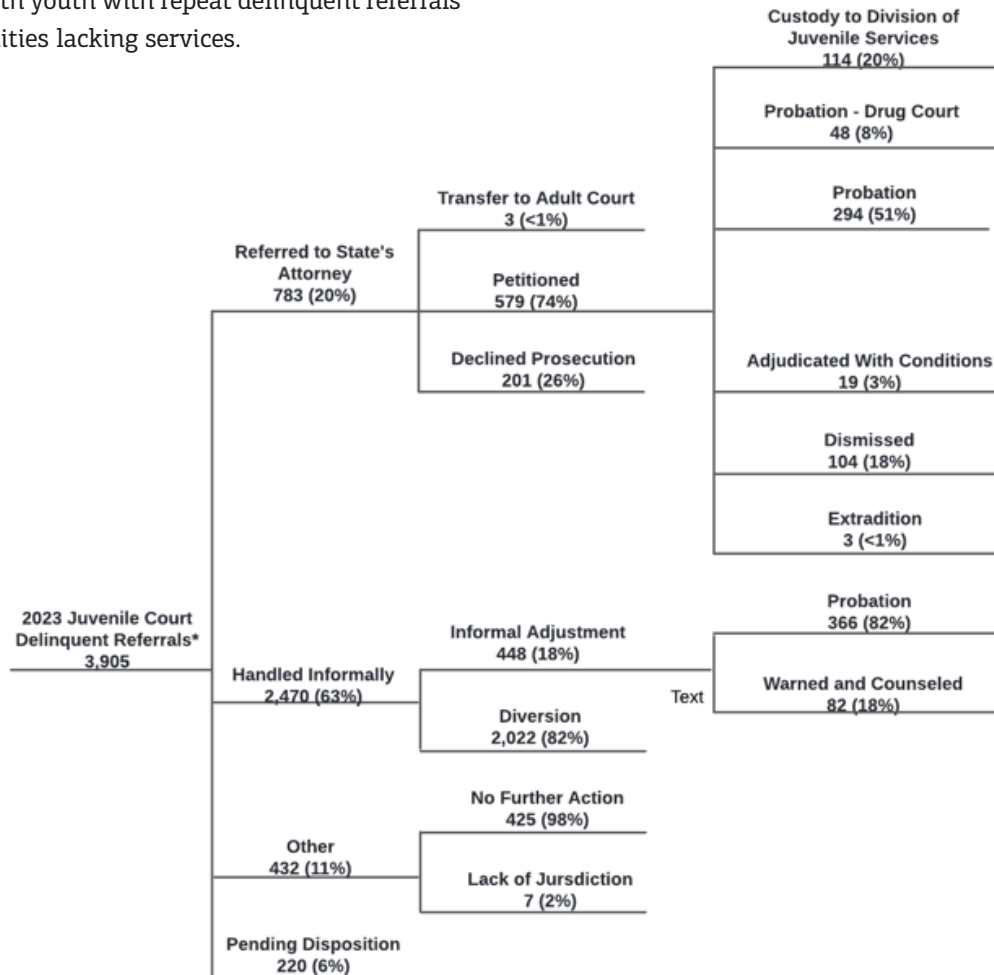
Processing of Delinquency Cases

North Dakota law requires that dispositions **1)** be individualized based on the outcome of the youth's risk and needs assessment and include steps to repair harm caused to the victim, **2)** treat and rehabilitate the youth, and **3)** ensure the safety of the community.

An important task for juvenile court intake officers is to connect delinquent youth and families to appropriate programs in their community. For low risk youth, diversion can take place via letter, phone call, or meeting with juvenile court staff or may involve a referral to restorative justice or an education program. Directive skill-based teaching can also be delivered in short visits with youth with repeat delinquent referrals or in communities lacking services.

The law requires that each youth in a formal delinquency petition receive a pre-dispositional assessment, which must include a risk and needs assessment. This is to ensure that each disposition is targeting specifically the delinquency or crime producing behaviors.

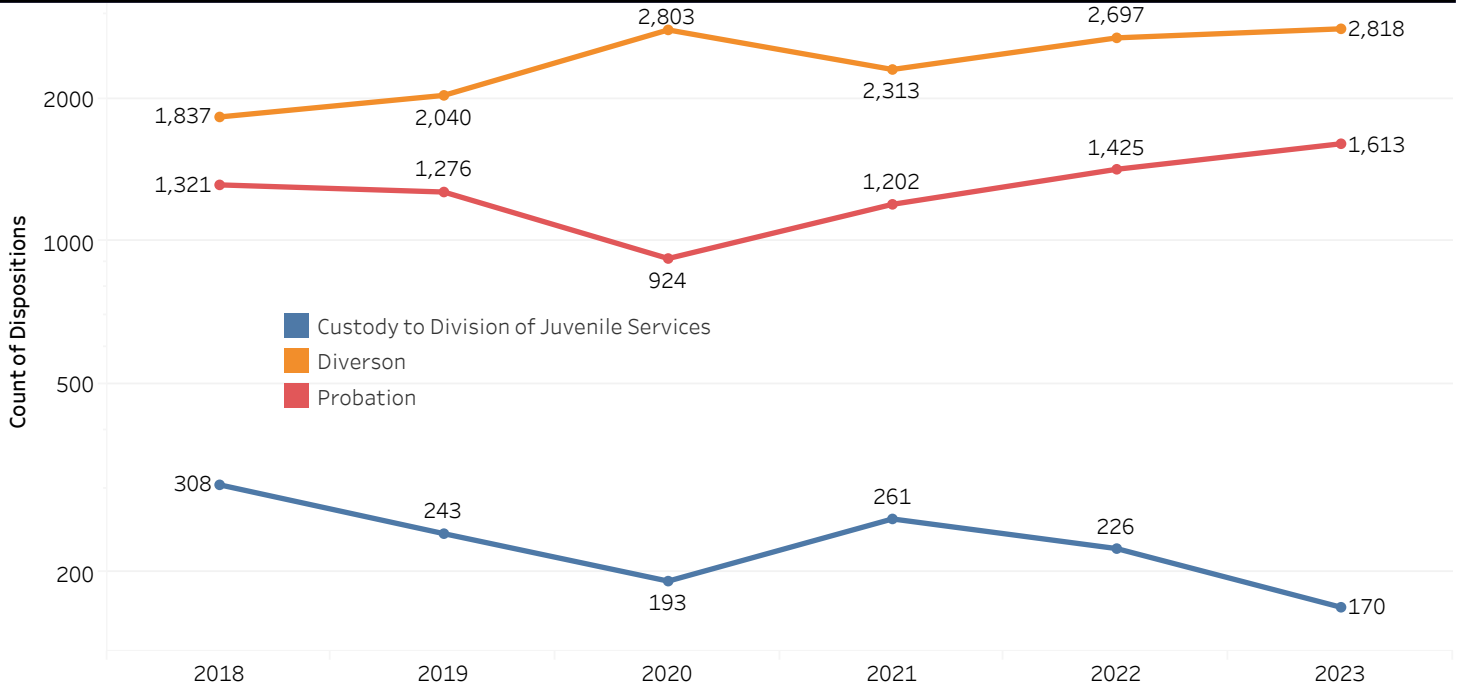
Commitment of a youth to the Division of Juvenile Services is only considered as a last resort, when all other community treatment options have been exhausted, or when public safety requires such an outcome. Transfer to adult court is rare, and can be done only through a voluntary request by the youth or by following the process under NDCC 27-20.4.



*Primary referrals received in 2023

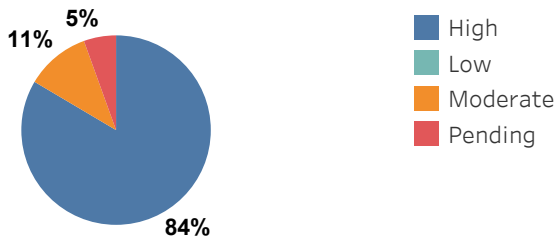
North Dakota Juvenile Court: Total Dispositions and Supervision Caseload of Delinquent Referrals

Select Disposition Trends**

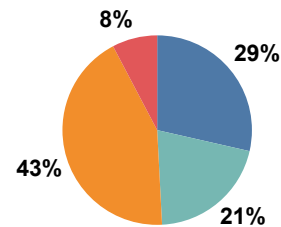


YASI* Risk Level By Supervision Type

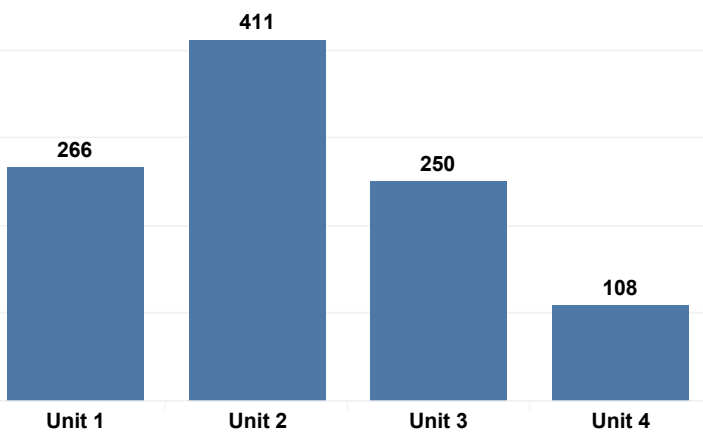
Custody to Division of Juvenile Services



Probation



Total Probation Caseload per Unit - 2023



Restorative Justice

- 586.75 hours of community service completed in 2023
- 318 youth and 275 victims served through Restorative Conferencing
- 279 youth attended a Victim Empathy Seminar
- \$136,676.71 collected in restitution

** Total dispositions given in 2023, regardless of referral year

*North Dakota Juvenile Court uses the Youth Assessment and Screening Instrument (YASI) for risk and needs of youth

*As of 7/1/2021, a youth can no longer be placed with HSZ for a delinquent referral

Screening and Programming

2023 Trauma Screening (TSSCA) Summary

The goal of trauma screening is to identify youth who may have emotional, behavioral, learning, or relationship difficulties due to traumatic stress reactions and who may need further trauma assessment. Screenings

occur as early as possible, often at the first meeting or at minimum within the first 30 days of supervision. By law, a screen is also administered upon admission to secure detention and the results filed with the court.

Score of 0 to 5	396	Indicates some level of trauma-related symptomatology
Score of 6 or higher	62	Indicates moderate to severe traumatic stress symptomatology
Total Screens Performed	458	

Youth Assessment and Screening Inventory (YASI)

North Dakota juvenile court officers use the validated Youth Assessment and Screening Inventory (YASI) to gauge a range of risk, needs, and strengths associated with delinquent behavior in adolescents to predict recidivism and effectively case manage youth assigned to juvenile court supervision.

Reassessments

YASI reassessments are conducted every three months while a youth is on supervised probation or whenever services are adjusted. A final assessment is completed at case closure.

YASI Pre-Screens

The YASI Pre-Screen is primarily used for risk classification, estimating an individual's likelihood to be referred again to the juvenile court for a delinquent referral. The pre-screen is administered by juvenile court officers at diversion meetings, informal adjustment conferences, or as part of a predisposition assessment during the formal court process.

Prescreen	728
Full Assessment	688
Reassessment	874
Total	2,290

YASI Full Screens

The YASI Full Screen is completed on youth who score moderate or high risk on the pre-screen. It gives greater depth to provide a more detailed needs assessment for prioritizing treatment goals and is used to guide pretrial recommendations and create comprehensive probation plans.

Educational Programming

To support behavior change, juvenile court officers utilize the evidenced-based Carey Guides, Tools on Devices, and The Change Companies journals with youth on probation. The assignments completed and discussed reinforce the skills and attitudes modeled and supported by the assigned court officer. Workbooks and assignments are selected based on the individual needs of each youth.

Juvenile Court Officers also utilize motivational interviewing and Effective Practices in Community Supervision (EPICS). This means that time spent with youth on probation have specific goals based on that youth's individualized case plan. Structured learning takes place at each visit to a home, school, or juvenile court office. Positive behaviors are modeled and reinforced while negative behaviors are addressed through disapproval and concrete lessons on how to avoid risky, anti-social behaviors. Incentives and graduated sanctions are used to respond to youth behaviors.

Substance Abusing Behaviors Cognitive Class

The juvenile court teaches a cognitive based class for adolescents referred for drug or alcohol offenses. This program is a collaboration of the juvenile court staff across the state and is available to youth in person at unit juvenile court offices or via Zoom. In 2023, 77 youth were referred to the program and 61 youth successfully completed the program, two youth withdrew from the class to seek a chemical dependency evaluation due to additional charges,

and 16 youth did not complete the program. This program is free of charge and utilizes an evidenced-based curriculum.

Delinquency Probation Case Management

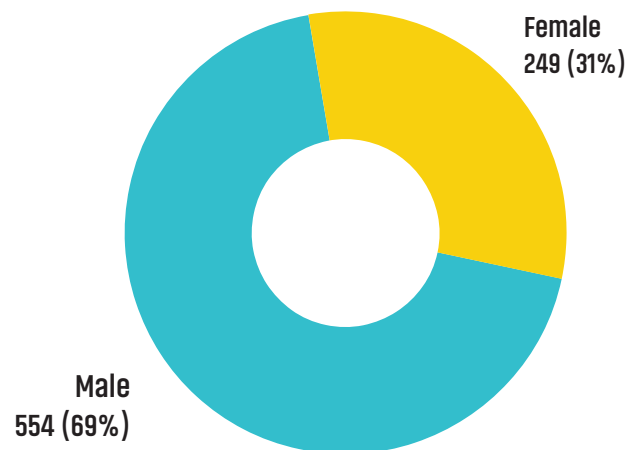
Youth are encouraged to explore vocational goals and interests while on probation. This is achieved through the Growth Focused Case Management process utilized by juvenile court officers to guide youth toward a successful vocation. Court officers assist the youth in exploring future academic or vocational career paths as a part of their time spent on probation. Further training on this promising case management practice is being planned for 2024.

Juvenile probation case management combines traditional monitoring and oversight for compliance with court orders or consent-based court agreements, with the essential function being to improve youth behavior and targeted responses to priority areas of youth risk and needs. Juvenile court officers play an important role in reducing the risk of reoffending, thereby improving public safety while increasing the chances that youth will develop improved cognitive behavior skills and attitudes that will interrupt any trajectory into adult criminality.

In 2023, the 923 distinct probations on the statewide caseload were made of 803 unique youth. This number includes informal adjustment and formal adjudication cases.

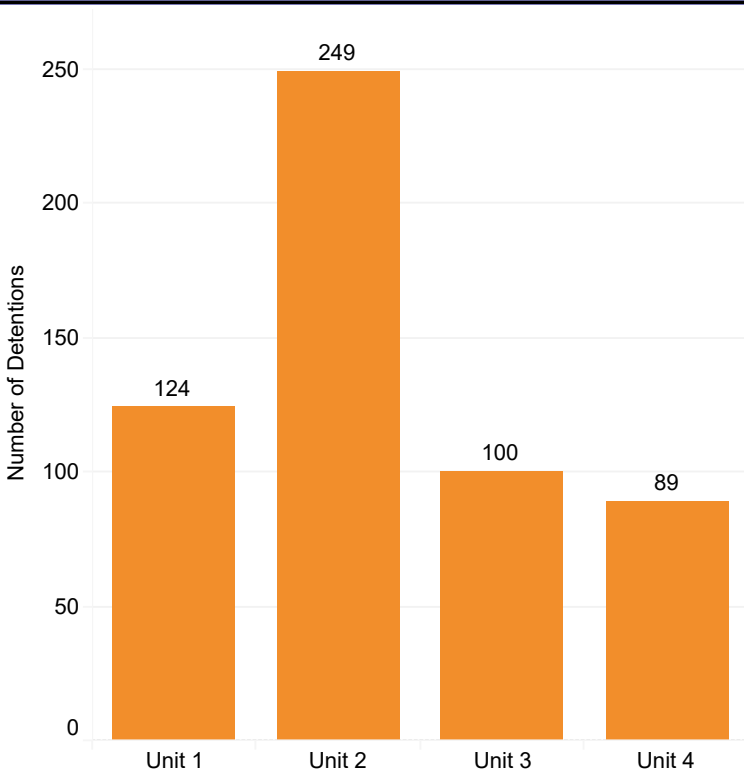
Below are basic demographic information for those individuals:

RACE	% OF TOTAL PROBATIONS
WHITE	57%
AMERICAN INDIAN	18%
BLACK/AFRICAN AMERICAN	15%
UNKNOWN	4%
HISPANIC	4%
ASIAN/PACIFIC ISL.	1%
MIXED	<1%

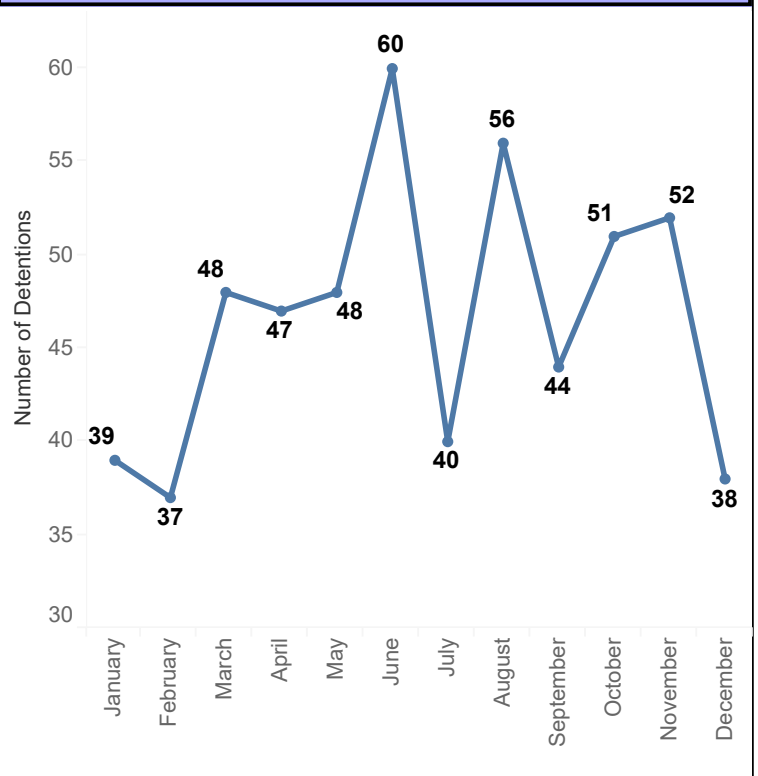


North Dakota Juvenile Court 2023 Juvenile Detention

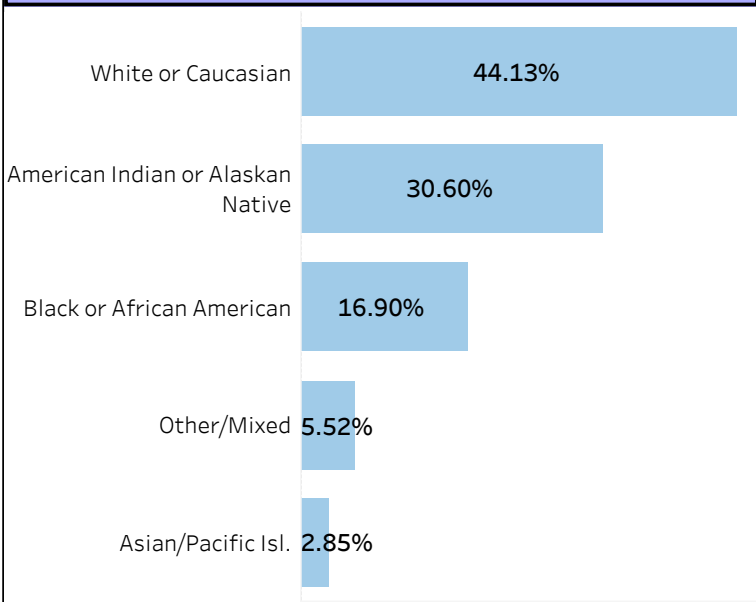
Total Detained Youth per County



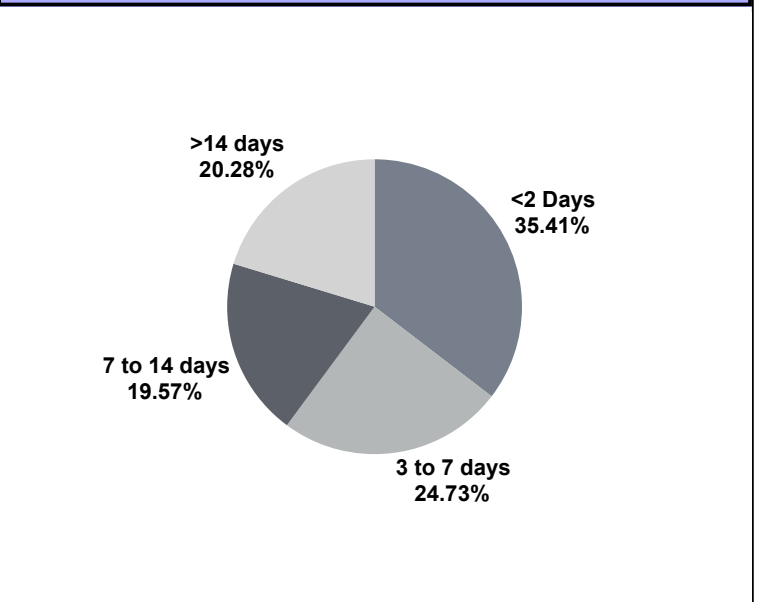
Detained Youth per Month



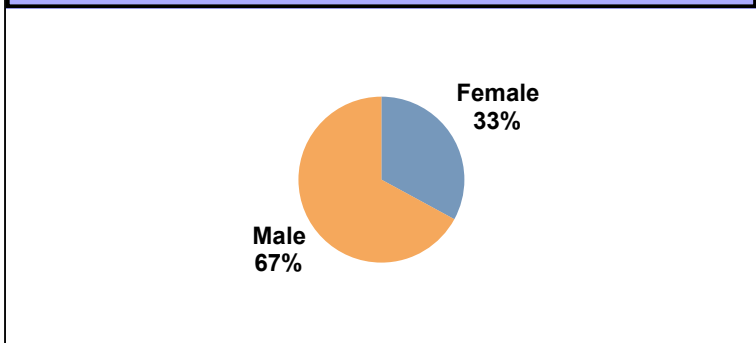
Race of Youth in Detention



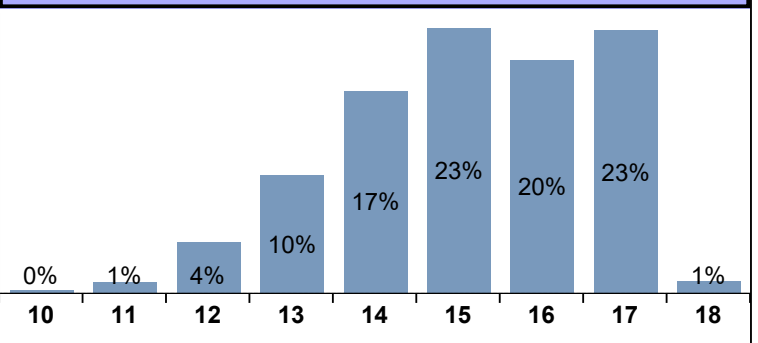
Days in Detention



Gender of Youth in Detention



Age of Youth in Detention





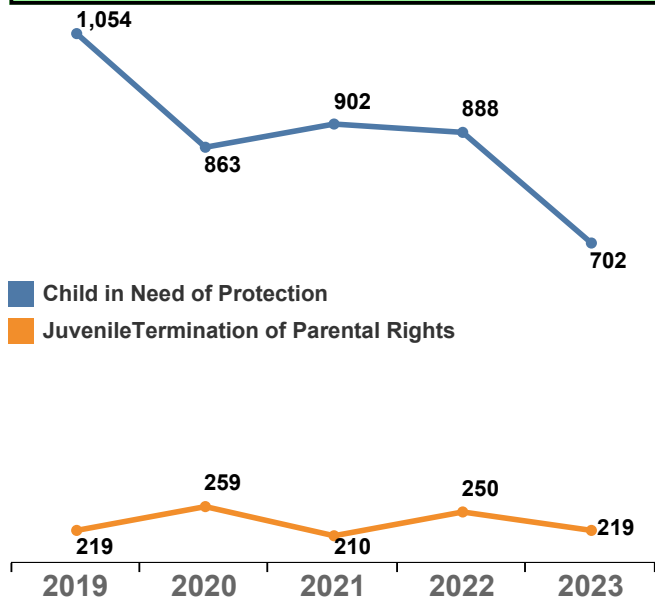
Tribal Juvenile Services Cooperative Agreements

N.D.C.C. 27-20.4-17 allows state and tribal entities to enter into agreements to deliver services to youth under Tribal Court jurisdiction. Memorandums of understanding are currently in place with Spirit Lake Tribal Court and the Turtle Mountain Tribal Court. The North Dakota Indian Affairs Commission, The Division of Juvenile Service (Dept. of Corrections and Rehabilitation), and the North Dakota Court System (Juvenile Court) are the State entities involved in the agreements. The MOU's allow for the sharing of information, resources, and data collection to address the needs of delinquent youth who are under the jurisdictions of the Tribal Courts.

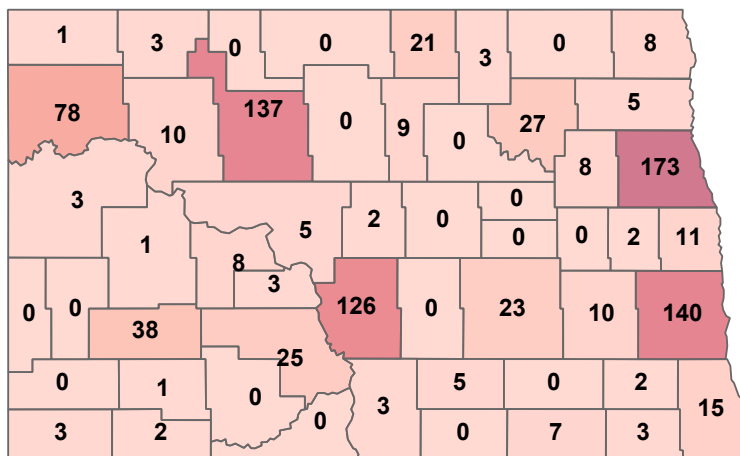
An additional MOU is in place between the Spirit Lake Tribal Court and the Northeast Judicial District Juvenile Wellness/Drug Court Program. This allows youth under Tribal Court jurisdiction to participate in the Drug Court Program and Tribal Court staff to participate on the treatment team. Wellness/Drug Court is held at the Spirit Lake Tribal Court the 1st Thursday each month while the other weekly sessions are held at the Ramsey County Courthouse in Devils Lake.

**North Dakota Juvenile Court
2023 Child in Need of Protection (CHIPS) and Termination of Parental Rights (TPR)**

Total CHIPS and TPR Case Filings - 921

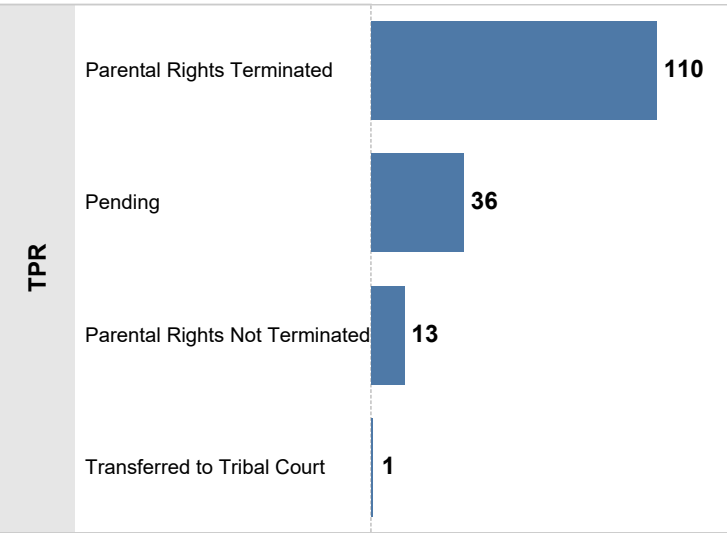
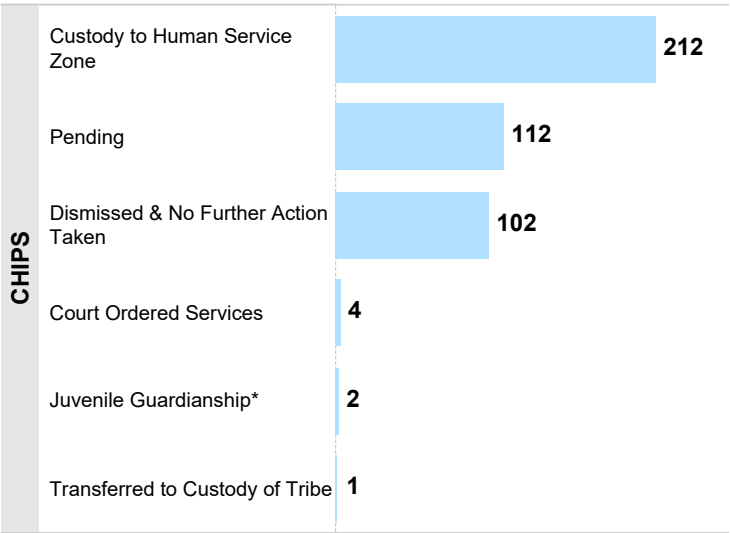


Total Combined Filings Per County

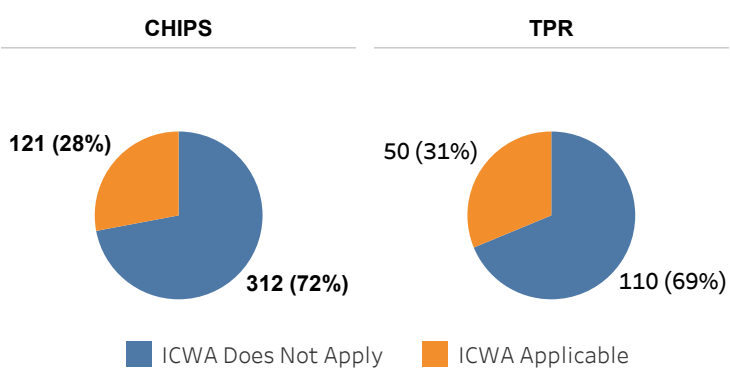


Individual Case Filings Were Comprised of 593 Families (433 CHIPS, 160 TPR)

Disposition of CHIPS and TPR Cases Filed in 2023



Indian Child Welfare Act (ICWA)



Time From TPR Petition to Final Order (days)

Unit 1	127	Unit 3	124
Unit 2	116	Unit 4	154

Respondents Represented by Attorney

Child in Need of Protection: **62%**
Termination of Parental Rights: **62%**

*CHIPS cases filed in 2023 that directly resulted in Juvenile Guardianship filings

Child in Need of Protection/Termination of Parental Rights

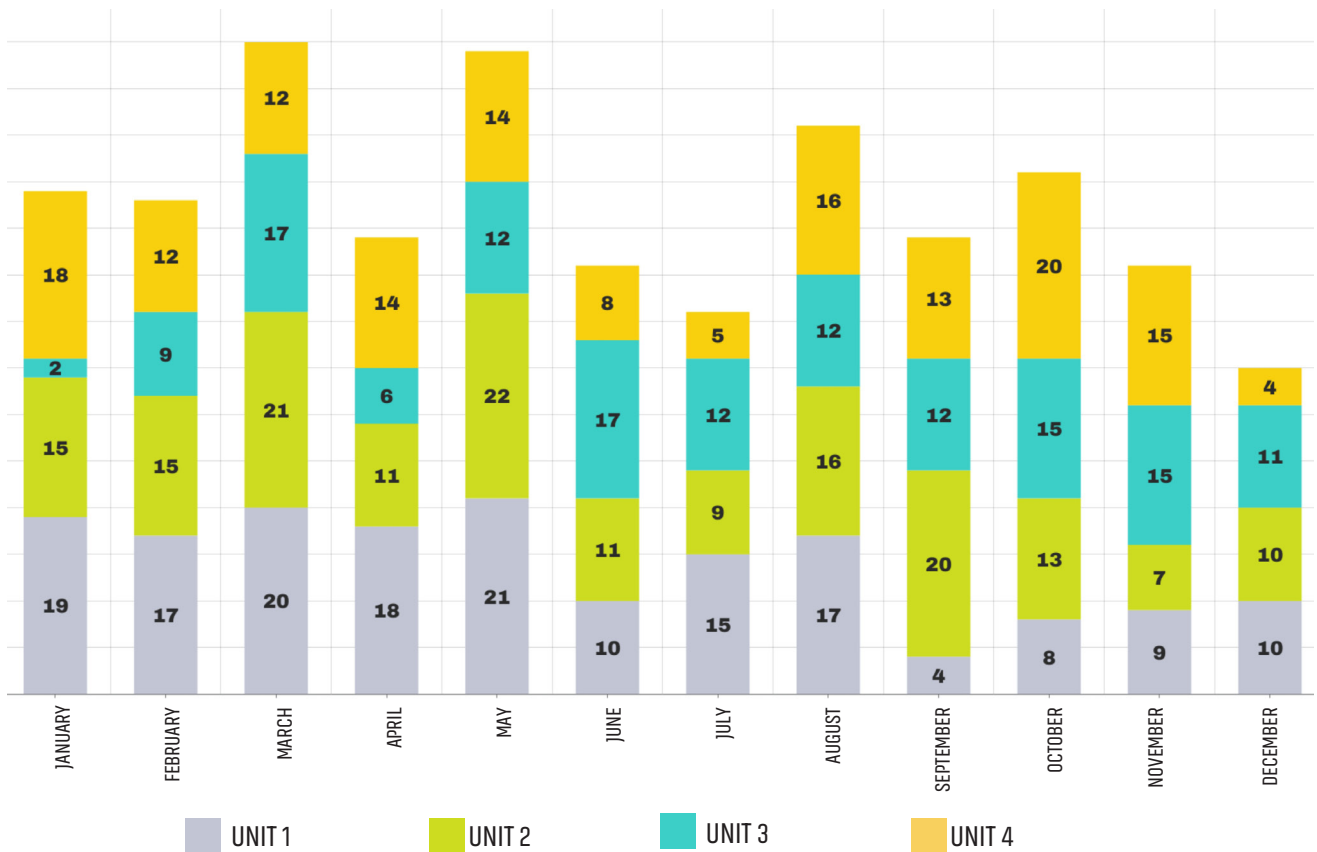
Child Abuse and Neglect Reports Received by Court

In 2023, the human service zones reported 752 confirmed cases of child abuse and neglect to the juvenile court as required by NDCC 50-25.1-05.2. In these cases, no action is requested from the court.

Emergency Protective Custody Orders

In order to provide for child safety and provide court oversight of the emergency removal of children from their homes, the juvenile court directors or their designees receive requests to authorize emergency protective custody of children. This occurs when a child is reported to be in immediate danger from the child’s surroundings and removal is necessary to protect the child from harm. In 2023, there were 624 emergency removals authorized by either a law enforcement officer or juvenile court. The chart below provides information on removals each month by judicial units:

Emergency Protective Custody Trends





Termination of Parental Rights

Ninety-six percent of the petitions for the termination of parental rights were brought by the state (involuntary). The State may only bring involuntary termination of parental rights cases forward. Four percent of termination cases were at the request of the parent(s) (voluntary). Voluntary termination of parental rights cases involves parents who choose to have their parental rights terminated due to issues such as incarceration, abandonment, and the emotional well being of the child.

Continued Foster Care

Youth ages 18 to 21 who currently or have previously been in foster care may choose to stay in foster care. The goal is to support them in continuing with education and making a successful transition into adulthood.

Year	2020	2021	2022	2023
Continued Foster Care Youth	18	24	27	33

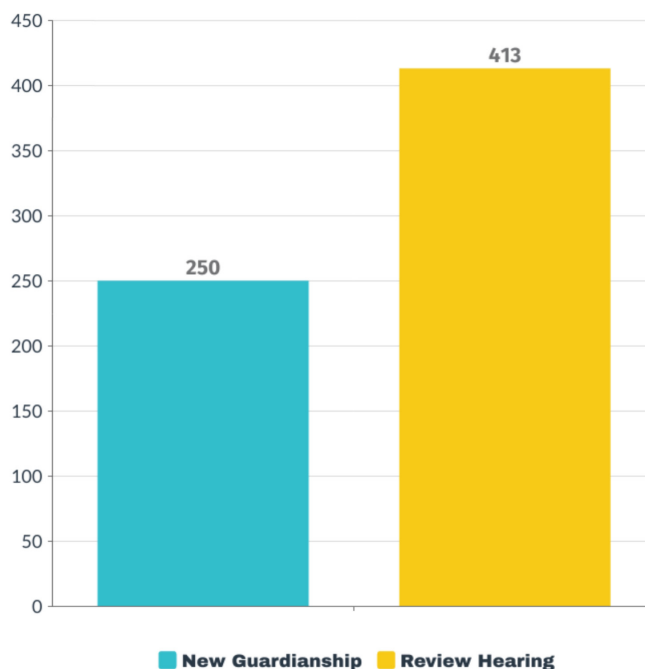
Juvenile Guardianship Cases

A guardianship of a minor child is a juvenile court process where a judge or referee appoints a guardian to act in the place of a parent of the child when certain circumstances may require someone to care for and make decisions on behalf of the child. The Juvenile Guardianship case type may arise as a permanent or temporary solution from a child in need of protection case where a relative or other appropriate person is willing to care for the child. Other cases begin as a result of a parent's death, abandonment, or as a prior arrangement made between the parent and the other party. A statutory duty of the director of juvenile court is to review and examine petitions to establish, modify, or terminate a guardianship of a minor established under Chapter 27-20.1 of the North Dakota Century Code.

A large percentage of private parties requesting a guardianship of a child file with the courts without the benefit of legal counsel. Self-represented litigants are able to utilize informational guides and forms available on the North Dakota Courts website at the Self-Help Center. Juvenile court staff are often a point of local information for these self-represented litigants in order to provide timely and understandable access to the juvenile courts for purposes of child guardianships.

Guardianships differ from other court cases in that courts are responsible for monitoring guardianships throughout the life of the case. This monitoring includes an annual review of the child's well-being and finances. It also includes an assessment of the ongoing need for the guardianship.

Juvenile Guardianship 2023





Qualified Residential Treatment Placement

When a Human Service Zone or the Division of Juvenile Services determines placement of a youth in a Qualified Residential Treatment Facility may be necessary, they must first have an assessment done by Maximus Ascend to ensure the placement is appropriate. Maximus Ascend is a contractor with the Department of Human Services. If the placement is found to be appropriate, the juvenile court director must then review the placement to ensure that all the procedural requirements were met.

In 2023, the juvenile court received 179 assessments from Maximus Ascend. The juvenile court director or designee reviewed 136 approvals and made any follow-up necessary to proceed with placement. Forty-three of the assessments received were denials of residential placement by Maximus Ascend, which by Juvenile Procedure Rule 18.1, are not reviewed by the juvenile court.

Court Improvement Program

The Court Improvement Program (CIP) provides support and resources to North Dakota's state courts, allowing them to evaluate and enhance court processes in response to the needs of children in the child welfare system. The CIP is funded by a federal grant provided by the Administration of Children and Families Children's Bureau.

The CIP grant enables state courts to assess the role, responsibilities and effectiveness of courts in carrying out laws relating to child welfare proceedings. It also allows courts to improve the safety, well-being, and permanency planning for children in foster care. The grant supports court data collection and analysis in partnership with child welfare agencies and North

Dakota Tribes. Finally, it provides cross-training opportunities among agencies, tribes, courts, and other key stakeholders.

Updated CIP program requirements for 2023 included focusing on quality hearings in child welfare cases, quality legal representation for parents and children, joint project and collaboration with the state's child welfare agency, as well as supporting participation of legal and judicial partners in all stages of North Dakota's Children and Family Review. The CIP must also use at least 30% of grant funds to collect data jointly with the child welfare system. The data is used to improve case tracking and achievement of permanency goals for children and families.



Pre-Petition Legal Representation Pilot Program

Over the past year, the North Dakota Court Improvement Program, Legal Services of North Dakota, Children and Family Services, and the North Dakota ICWA Partnership grant continued to work on providing pre-petition legal representation to families in two Human Service Zones. The pre-petition legal representation model aims to keep families together while providing early advocacy in child welfare cases before court involvement.

The pre-petition legal representation model continues

to operate within the Burleigh County and Three Rivers Human Service Zones for children at risk of being placed in shelter care. The goal of the model is to maintain children in their homes, mitigate safety issues and decrease the disproportionality rate of American Indian children entering foster care. Since implementing the model on September 1, 2021, 73 families have been referred to the program. Of the families successfully served by the pre-petition team, 88% of the children of those families remained in the home.

Indian Child Welfare Act and Race Equity

The CIP continues to collaborate with child welfare and court professionals such as state's attorneys, parent attorneys, guardian ad items, and judicial officers to improve compliance and implementation of ICWA in the North Dakota court process.

Dual Status Youth Initiative 2023 Update

The Court Improvement Program funds and oversees the work of the North Dakota Dual Status Youth Initiative.

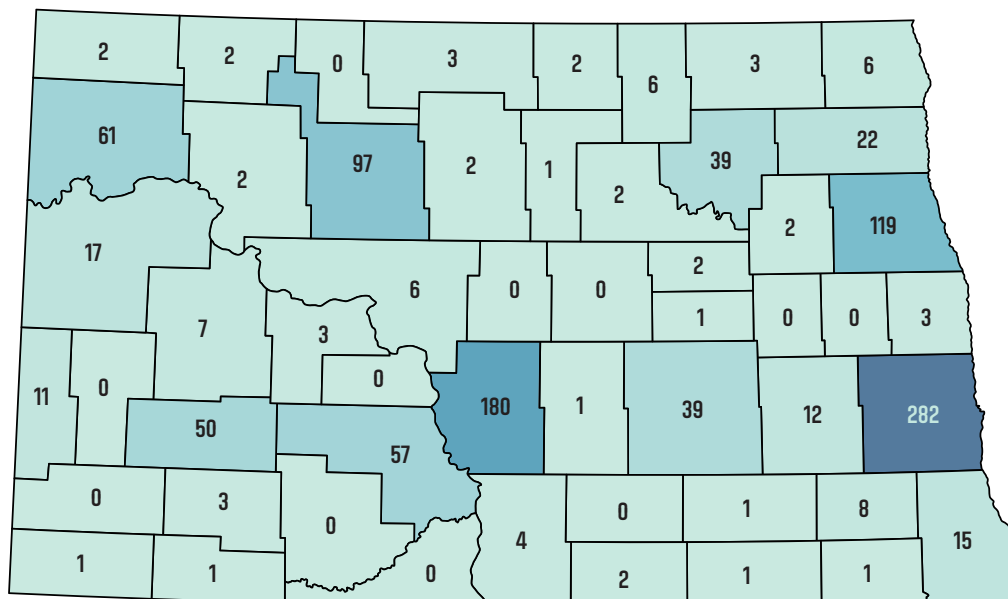
Dual Status Youth (DSY) are those North Dakota youth simultaneously involved or previously involved in the state's child welfare and juvenile justice systems. The North Dakota Dual Status Youth Initiative works to improve collaboration, communication, and exchange of information between agencies. Once children are identified as dual status, the agencies work together to improve outcomes for the youth. This is accomplished by increasing interagency information sharing between juvenile court and child welfare and establishing child and family-centered multidisciplinary policies and practices.

To achieve the best possible oversight and coordination of dual status youth cases, the Human Service Zone Child in Need of Services (CHINS) specialists and the juvenile court have designated a "DSY Liaison" in each of their respective areas. Roles and responsibilities of the DSY Liaisons include serving as a point of contact for all dual status youth notifications, clarifying policies and practices to agency staff, participating in monthly DSY workgroup meetings to discuss practice and protocol best practices, and ensuring that child welfare

agency staff and juvenile court officers have a complete understanding of their roles and responsibilities when working with dual status youth.

One resource used to improve outcomes for dual status youth is the Family Centered Engagement meeting (FCE). The Village Family Service Center provides the FCE. The meeting consists of a facilitated team process that includes participation from parents, extended family, children, service providers, child welfare staff, and juvenile court staff to make critical decisions regarding the safety and well-being of the child to achieve the safest and least restrictive outcomes that are in the best interest of the dual status youth. In 2023, 224 FCE meetings, along with additional follow-up meetings, were provided to dual status families. Of the surveys received from families who participated in an FCE meeting, 98% reported they felt they had an opportunity to listen and share information, and 85% reported they felt the FCE meeting process was a positive experience.

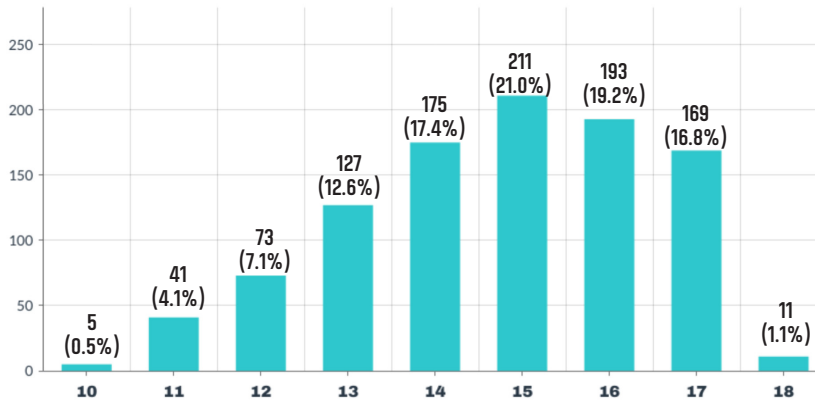
In 2023, there were 1,079 dual status youth identified by the Initiative. Five hundred fifty of those youth were new to the Initiative. The map below shows the home county where the dual status youth were identified:



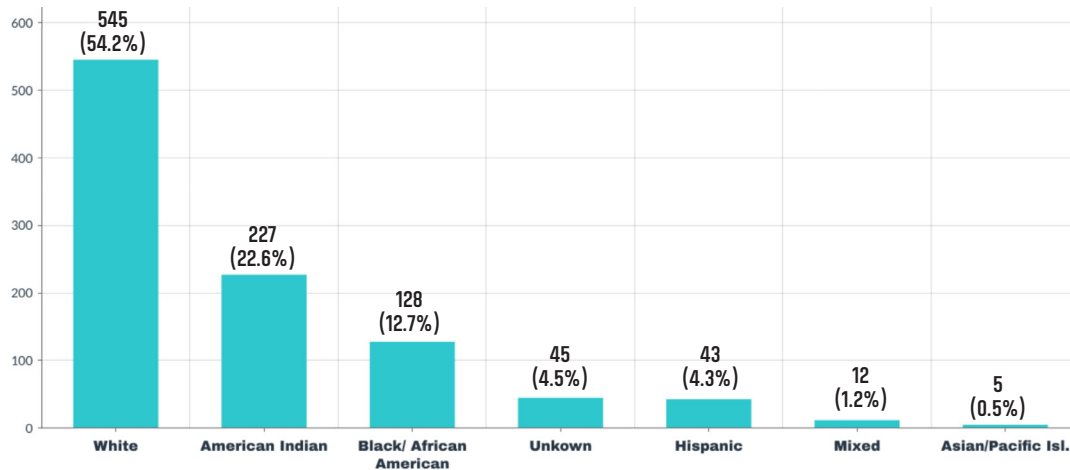
Below is the breakout of gender, age and race for dual status youth in 2023:



DSY - Age



DSY - Race





Juvenile Court Accomplishments and Goals

KEY ACCOMPLISHMENTS: THE JUVENILE COURT CONTINUES TO FOCUS ON JUVENILE JUSTICE REFORM.

The work focuses on alternatives to detention, the use of incentives and sanctions for probation youth, the search for a validated tool to use with 18+ youth and upcoming implementation of a new caseworks system for our validated assessments. A summary of the accomplishments are below:

1. The Juvenile Court Replacement Team continued the enormous project of replacing and implementing the new juvenile court case management system. The Team consisted of Scott Hopwood, Karen Kringlie, Shawn Peterson, Carrie Hjellming, Scott Johnson, Chase Breitbach, Nicole Leitner, Cassie McCamy, Chris Lipsh, Robin Olson, Jennifer Perdaems, Andy Chintis, Heather Traynor and Cathy Ferderer. The IT staff included John Tassava, Cammie Schock and Channing Backes. The team and Tyler Technologies completed system configuration, data conversion and testing, building business process documents, and worked on report development. Training on the new system was conducted in April 2023 over a two-week period in Bismarck and Fargo. The system went live on May 1, 2023. Since that time, the Team has continued to monitor the implementation of the system and identify any issues that need resolution. Overall, the new system has been a huge improvement over the previous system.
2. The Detention Screening Tool was updated and approved by the Juvenile Policy Board. The new tool was implemented on September 1, 2023, with the support of the Grand Forks Regional Assessment Center and the Ward County Juvenile Detention Center. Law Enforcement can contact the facilities 24/7 for assistance in accurately scoring the tool and making it more efficient to complete in the field. Each facility was provided with read only access to the juvenile court database to assist in providing the previous offense history of the juvenile which is key to accurately scoring the tool.
3. Youth Coordinators have been hired in multiple jurisdictions as of September 2023. They are being utilized to facilitate pro-social skills and mentoring youth. In addition they are tasked with a variety of interventions with our higher risk youth.
4. The legislatively formed Commission on Juvenile Justice has been working on a bill draft to address the collateral consequences of a juvenile who admits to or is found to be delinquent. Karen Kringlie has been an active member of the workgroup and testified at an Interim Juvenile Justice Committee on the work of the Commission.



2024 Goals:

1. To increase youth access to evidenced-based services regardless of geographic location through participation in the Systems of Care Grant Workgroup through the Department of Behavioral Health.
2. To continue to enhance our work through follow-up training in the area of Growth Focused Case management.
3. To work to further develop reports and an auditing process for our new juvenile court case management system to increase our ability to track data and outcomes of the youth we serve.
4. To participate in a study on the feasibility of establishing a separate delinquency code to replace the existing criminal code that is used for both adult and juvenile offenders.