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## Juvenile Offense Patterns in Alaska—1985

—David L. Parry

Contrary to a widespread belief, juvenile delinquency does not appear to be an especially serious problem in Alaska. Rather, Division of Family and Youth Services (DFYS) records of juvenile delinquency referrals in 1985 show that most children who were arrested in that year were charged with minor property offenses or alcohol violations, not more serious offenses.

Although the rate at which children in Alaska were arrested in 1985 appears from these records to have been higher than the comparable national rate, the rate for serious, felony-level offenses was lower than 1 in 5, and only 1 in 40 was for a violent felony. The DFYS records also show that only about 1 child in 5 arrested in 1985 was arrested a second time that year.

Intake logs which record juvenile delinquency referrals handled by DFYS reveal that 4,800 children, or about 3 percent of all children in the state, were arrested and referred to DFYS at least once in 1985 for an act which would be a crime if committed by an adult. (Note that this figure includes arrests for possession or consumption of both alcohol and marijuana. Both of these offenses are considered to be misdemeanors if committed by young adults who have not yet reached legislatively mandated minimum ages. But possession of alcohol and marijuana by persons above the minimum ages are not regarded as crimes in Alaska except under certain circumstances.) Of these, 1,002 (21 percent of all children arrested, or less than 1 percent of all children in the state) were arrested more than once, bringing the total number of juvenile arrests in 1985 to 6,464. The arrest rate for juveniles in Alaska, based on these figures, was 3,818 arrests per 100,000 children in 1985. In comparison, the national arrest rate for juveniles, estimated from data compiled by the Federal Bureau of Investigation and the U.S. Census Bureau, was about 2,800 per 100,000 children in 1984, the last year

for which complete statistics are available.

A close look at the offenses for which children in Alaska were arrested in 1985 reveals that the overwhelming majority of arrests were for minor offenses which would be considered misdemeanors if committed by an adult. Nearly two-thirds of all delinquency referrals were for minor property offenses or liquor violations. Liquor violations alone accounted for just under 20 percent of all referrals, while misdemeanor thefts (predominantly shoplifting and concealment of merchandise) accounted for nearly 30 percent. Other misdemeanor property offenses (mainly criminal mischief and criminal trespass) contributed 17 percent to the total.

Other minor offenses for which children were arrested in 1985 included possession of marijuana (6 percent of all referrals), minor offenses against the person (mostly minor assaults, which accounted for 5 percent of all referrals, and misdemeanor sexual abuse of a minor, which was committed by 1.5 percent) and misdemeanor offenses against public order such as harassment, disorderly conduct, and carrying a concealed weapon (4 percent of all referrals).

Serious offenses which would be considered felonies if committed by an adult accounted for only about 18 percent of all referrals to DFYS in 1985. Most of the 1,172 felony referrals were for burglary (10 percent of all referrals) or other property offenses (5 percent of all referrals). Violent felonies (including murder, robbery, sexual assault, serious physical assaults, and serious sexual abuse of a minor) together accounted for only 159 referrals, or about 2.5 percent of all referrals to DFYS in 1985. This translates into a rate of 94 arrests for violent felonies per 100,000 juveniles, substantially below the estimated national rate of about 135 such arrests per 100,000 children. Only 20 felony drug offenses were reported to DFYS in 1985, and only 24

children were charged with felony-level offenses against public order. (The rate of arrest for all felonies combined in 1985 was 692 per 100,000 children in Alaska. However, since national arrest totals are not routinely broken down into misdemeanors and felonies, no comparison with national rates of arrest for all felony-level offenses was possible.)

With both misdemeanors and felonies grouped together according to the type of offense, as shown in Figure 1, it is clear that property offenses were by far the most common type of offense committed by juveniles in 1985, accounting for 61 percent of all referrals to DFYS. Consumption of alcohol was second, at 19 percent. Nine percent of all referrals were for offenses against the person, while 6 percent were for drug offenses, and 4 percent were for offenses against public order.

There were some interesting differences in the frequency of arrest and the types of offenses committed by children in different parts of the state in 1985. A breakdown of referrals to intake officers in the thirteen Youth Services districts which handled delinquency referrals in 1985 is shown in Figure 2.

The largest proportion of juvenile arrests occurred in Anchorage, where 2,306 children, representing about 36 percent of all children arrested statewide, were re-

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### HIGHLIGHTS INSIDE THIS ISSUE

- Studies of runaway children are hampered by data problems (p. 6).
- The Bureau of Justice Statistics estimates 5 of 6 people will be victims of violent crimes at least once during their lives (p. 4).

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ferred to Youth Services intake officers. The Youth Services intake unit in Fairbanks, which handles all referrals in the Fairbanks-North Star Borough as well as a large section of interior Alaska, received 893 referrals, 14 percent of the statewide total. Six hundred thirteen children, representing 9.5 percent of all children arrested in the state, were arrested on the Kenai Peninsula and referred to the intake office in Kenai. The Youth Services offices in Juneau (511 referrals) and Ketchikan (498 referrals) each accounted for just under 8 percent of all juvenile arrests. Four hundred eighty-seven children (7.5 percent of all arrests) were arrested in the Matanuska-Susitna Borough and referred to the Youth Services office in Palmer. The district office in Kodiak, which served the Dillingham area as well as Kodiak and surrounding islands in 1985, received 273 delinquency referrals. Children in the Bethel area, which includes the city of Bethel as well as the many villages along the lower Kuskokwim and lower Yukon rivers, accounted for 237 delinquency referrals. One hundred ninety children were referred to the field office in Petersburg, which at that time served Petersburg, Wrangell, and Craig. The Youth Services office in Barrow recorded 165 arrests of children in the North Slope Borough. One hundred thirty-nine children were referred to the district office in Nome, which serves all of the Seward Peninsula. One hundred eight children were arrested in and around Sitka. And only 44 cases were logged by the intake officer in Kotzebue.

As Figure 2 indicates, property offenses (including both misdemeanors and felonies), which accounted for 61 percent of all delinquency referrals statewide in 1985, also represent the majority of referrals handled by each Youth Services office except the one in Ketchikan, where only 37 percent of referrals were for offenses against property.

Violent acts committed by juveniles appear to have been a more serious problem in the Nome and Bethel areas than elsewhere. In both areas, offenses against the person accounted for 17 percent of all referrals, substantially higher than the statewide average of 9 percent. In no other area did such offenses account for more than 11 percent of referrals.

Variations in alcohol abuse by children around the state are somewhat more difficult to evaluate than are other offenses because of regional differences in reporting practices. In Anchorage, for example, liquor violations are typically handled as a police problem and are rarely referred to DFYS. Only 104 incidents of juveniles

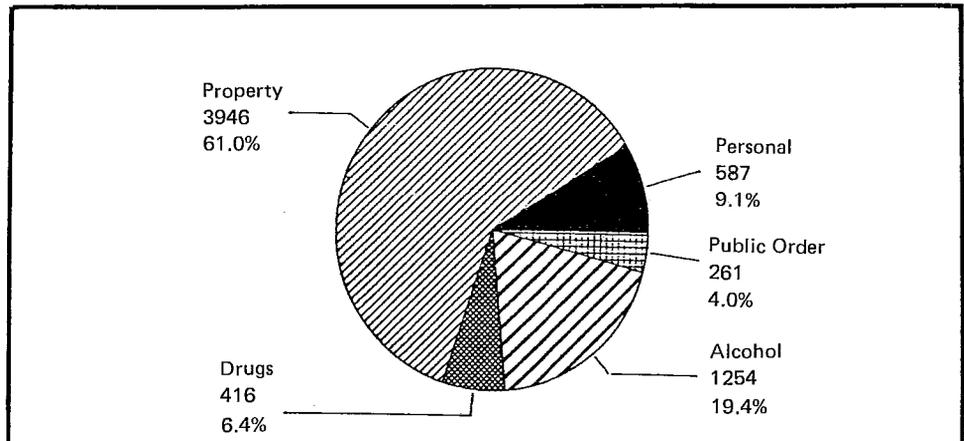


FIGURE 1. Youth Services Referrals, by Type of Offense, 1985

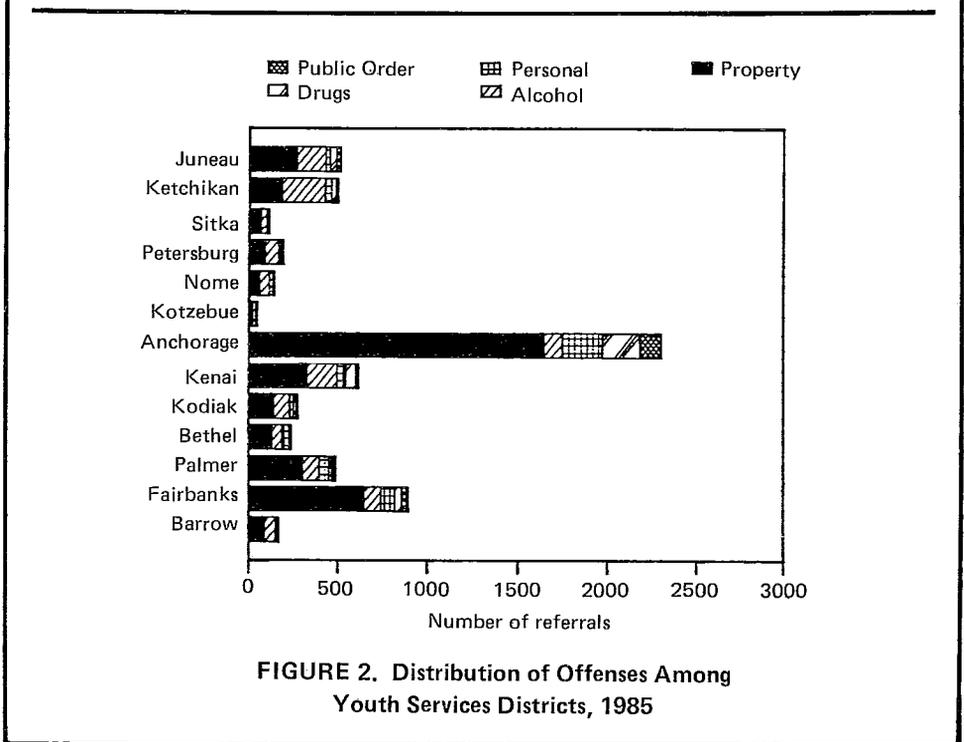


FIGURE 2. Distribution of Offenses Among Youth Services Districts, 1985

consuming alcohol were referred to the Anchorage intake unit throughout 1985. But, in all parts of the state except Anchorage, the Matanuska-Susitna Borough and the large area served by the Youth Services office in Fairbanks, liquor violations accounted for no less than 25 percent of referrals in 1985.

Drug offenses were much less common in most parts of the state, with the Youth Services intake unit in Anchorage handling fully half of all such offenses statewide. Five of the 13 Youth Services offices, in fact, recorded fewer than 5 referrals each for misconduct involving controlled substances.

Offenses against public order, such as disorderly conduct, harassment and wea-

pons violations, appear to have been uncommon in all parts of the state. Only 4 percent of juvenile arrests statewide, and no more than 7 percent of referrals to any Youth Services office, were for such offenses.

An examination of the seriousness of offenses committed by children in different parts of the state reveals wide regional variations. Serious offenses constituted the greatest proportion of all referrals in the Bethel area, where 36 percent of all arrests were for offenses which would be felonies if committed by an adult. In Ketchikan, at the other extreme, only 10 percent of arrests were for felony-level offenses. In most areas, though, the

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proportion of serious offenses was within a few percentage points of the statewide proportion of 18 percent.

Some interesting differences are also apparent in 1985 arrest patterns among children of different ages, sexes, and races. These are shown in Figure 3. The ages of children who were arrested ranged from eight children who were under five years of age to 82 young adults who had already turned eighteen but, due either to error or current juvenile probation status, were referred to DFYS rather than being charged as adults. Eight percent of all referrals involved children who were under twelve years of age. Another 15 percent were 12 to 13 years old. Children who were 14 to 15 years old accounted for 35 percent of the referrals. Forty-one percent of the children arrested were 16 to 17 years old. Finally, those over 18 years old constituted just over 1 percent of all referrals. The median age was about 15.5 years. Boys outnumbered girls by a three-to-one margin, accounting for about 75 percent of all referrals. Of the children whose race could be determined, 73 percent were Caucasian. Twenty percent were Alaska Natives. Only 4.5 percent were black. Children of other races constituted less than 3 percent of the total.

Reviewing the types of offenses committed by children of different ages reveals that the proportion of referrals for liquor violations increases with age and that the proportion of property offenses decreases in the older age groups. In addition, while the majority of liquor violations were committed by children in the 16-to-17-year age group, drug offenses seem to have been slightly more common among children in their mid-teens (14 to 15 years of age).

Girls, representing only about 25 percent of all children arrested in 1985, were proportionately far more likely to be arrested for liquor violations than were boys, and they were less likely than their male counterparts to be arrested for property offenses. Differences in other offense categories were negligible.

Some interesting racial variations in offense patterns are also apparent. Property offenses represented the majority of referrals for all racial groups. But while it was a slim majority for Natives, it was much larger for Caucasians and extremely large for blacks and those in other racial groups. Conversely, liquor violations represented 30 percent of all referrals of Native youth, but less than 5 percent of referrals of blacks and other racial minorities. Drug offenses and public order offenses, uncommon in all racial groups,

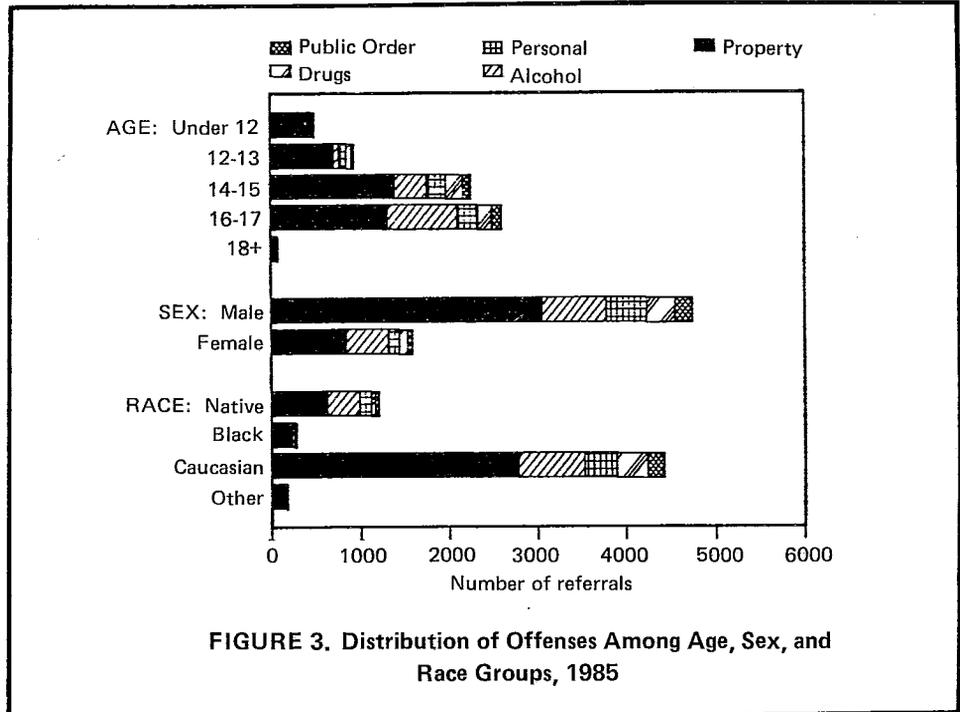


FIGURE 3. Distribution of Offenses Among Age, Sex, and Race Groups, 1985

were nevertheless noticeably more common among Caucasians than among any of the other groups.

Taken together, these findings indicate that, on the whole, the delinquency problem in Alaska is predominantly one of property offenses—especially minor property offenses—and alcohol abuse. Although there was considerable variation in offense patterns among children in different parts of the state and among children of different ages, sexes, and races in 1985, the proportion of serious offenses among all offenses committed by children was relatively low in almost all Youth Services districts. (In only two districts did serious offenses account for more than 22 percent of juvenile arrests in 1985, and only 159 cases of serious violent offenses were reported to DFYS officials statewide in the entire year.) Seventy-five percent or more of the offenses committed by children in every part of the state and in every category of age, sex, and race were either property offenses (including both misdemeanors and felonies, which were examined separately in the analysis of statewide offense patterns, but not in the regional and demographic comparisons) or alcohol violations.

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(Copies of the study, An Analysis of Offense Patterns, Recidivism and Emer-

gency Detention of Children Accused of Delinquent Acts in Alaska in 1985 [Anchorage AK: Justice Center, 1987], from which this article is adapted, may be obtained from the Alaska Statistical Analysis Unit, Justice Center.)



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## A BJS Report

# Lifetime Likelihood of Victimization

An estimated 5 out of 6 people will be victims of violent crimes (rape, robbery, and assault), either completed or attempted, at least once during their lives (Table 1), according to data assembled by the Bureau of Justice Statistics from the National Crime Survey (NCS). (For the precise definitions of the crimes discussed in this report, see the "Crime Definitions" with this article.) About half the population will be victimized by violent crime more than once. Males are somewhat more likely to become victims than females.

The greatest contrast is in multiple victimizations. It is estimated that more than 2 in 5 black males will be victimized by a violent crime three or more times. This is almost double the likelihood for black females and more than triple the likelihood for white females.

When attempted crimes are excluded, the differences in lifetime victimization rates between blacks and whites are greater. About 5 in 10 blacks, compared with 4 in 10 whites, will suffer a completed violent crime.

Based on 1973-82 rates as determined by the NCS, nearly 1 out of 12 females will be the victim of a completed or attempted rape. The estimated rate for black females is 1 out of 9.

It is estimated that 3 in 10 persons will be victims of a completed or attempted robbery during their lifetimes. The victim's sex and race appear to have a greater effect upon the lifetime likelihood of victimization for robbery than for other crimes. Blacks are almost twice as likely to be robbed as whites; males are about 70 percent more likely to be robbed than females.

About 3 out of 4 people will become victims of a completed or attempted assault; 2 in 5 will be victims of this crime at least twice. Males are more likely to be assaulted than females, but the likelihood is nearly the same for blacks and whites.

According to 1975-84 victimization rates derived from NCS data, an estimated 2 in 5 persons will be injured as the result of a robbery or assault; about 1 in 10 will be injured more

than once. (Injuries reported by the NCS range from minor to life threatening.)

According to these estimates, nearly everyone will be the victim of a personal theft at least once, with about 7 in 8 persons being victimized 3 or more times. In general, findings for theft do not vary by the sex or race of the victim.

The likelihood of becoming the victim of a violent crime in the remainder of one's lifetime declines more rapidly than life expectancy, reflecting declining victimization rates with increasing age (Table 2). For example, the average remaining life expectancy at age sixty is nearly half as long as at age thirty, but a person age sixty is only about one-quarter as likely as a thirty-year-old to become a victim of violent crime during the remainder of his or her lifetime. Similarly, those who are thirty are five times likelier than those who are sixty to be injured during a robbery or assault over the remaining course of their lives.

Estimates of the likelihood of a per-  
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## CRIME DEFINITIONS FROM THE NATIONAL CRIME SURVEY

**Assault**—An unlawful physical attack, whether aggravated or simple, upon a person, including attempted or threatened attacks with or without a weapon. Excludes rape and attempted rape, as well as attacks involving theft or attempted theft, which are classified as robbery. Severity of crimes in this category range from threats to attacks that result in life-threatening injuries.

**Burglary (completed)**—Unlawful or forcible entry of a residence, usually, but not necessarily, attended by theft. The entry may be by force, such as breaking a window or slashing a screen, or it may be through an unlocked door or an open window. As long as the person entering had no legal right to be present in the structure, a burglary has occurred. Furthermore, the structure need not be the house itself for a household burglary to take place. Illegal entry of a garage, shed, or any other structure on the premises also constitutes household burglary. In fact, burglary does not necessarily have to occur on the premises. If the breaking

and entering occurred in a hotel or in a vacation residence, it still would be classified as a burglary for the household whose member or members were staying there at the time.

**Household larceny (completed)**—Theft of property or cash from a residence or its immediate vicinity. For a household larceny to occur within the home itself, the thief must be someone with a right to be there, such as a maid, a delivery person, or a guest. Forcible entry, attempted forcible entry, or unlawful entry are not involved.

**Motor vehicle theft (completed)**—Stealing or unauthorized taking of a motor vehicle.

**Personal theft**—Includes both personal larceny with contact and personal larceny without contact. *Personal larceny with contact* is theft of purse, wallet, or cash by stealth directly from the person of the victim, but without force or the threat of force, including attempted purse snatching. *Personal larceny without contact* is theft or attempted theft, without direct

contact between victim and offender, of property or cash from any place other than the victim's home or its immediate vicinity. The property need not be strictly personal in nature; the act is distinguished from household larceny solely by place of occurrence. Examples of personal larceny without contact include the theft of a briefcase or umbrella from a restaurant, a portable radio from the beach, clothing from an automobile parked in a shopping center, a bicycle from a school yard, food from a shopping cart in front of a supermarket, etc. In rare cases, the victim sees the offender during the commission of the act.

**Rape**—Carnal knowledge through the use of force or the threat of force, including attempts. Statutory rape (without force) is excluded.

**Robbery**—Completed or attempted theft, directly from a person, of property or cash by force or threat of force, with or without a weapon.

Source: Based on *Criminal Victimization in the United States, 1984*, NCJ-100435, pp. 123-126.

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sonal theft drop off much less rapidly with age than do the estimates for violent crime victimization. Personal theft victimization probabilities are approximately proportional to remaining life expectancies.

At 1975-84 victimization rates derived from the NCS, over a period of twenty years almost 3 out of 4 households will suffer a burglary; 3 out of 8 will suffer more than one. Nearly 9 out of 10 households will be victimized by larceny; more than 1 in 3 will be victimized by this crime three or more times. About 1 in 5 of all households will be victims of motor vehicle theft.

For all of these crimes, urban households are more likely to be victimized than those in the suburbs, and victimization is even less likely in rural areas. The difference is greatest for motor vehicle theft; urban households are about two-and-one-half times as likely as rural households to be victims of this crime.

(This article was based on the Bureau of Justice Statistics report NCJ-104274, "Lifetime Likelihood of Victimization" [Washington, D.C.: Bureau of Justice Statistics, 1987]. Copies of the report can be obtained through the Alaska Statistical Analysis Unit, Justice Center.)

**Recent BJS Reports**

In addition to the report summarized in the preceding article, the following recent studies and reports from the Bureau of Justice Statistics are available from the Alaska Statistical Analysis Unit:

"Automated Fingerprint Identification Systems: Technology and Policy Issues," NCJ-104342

"Prisoners in 1986," NCJ-104864

"Robbery Victims," NCJ-104638

**TABLE 1**

**Lifetime Likelihood of Victimization**

	Percent of Persons Who Will be Victimized by Crime Starting at 12 Years of Age			
	Total One or more victimizations	Number of Victimations		
		One	Two	Three or more
<b>Violent crimes, total*</b>				
Total population	83%	30%	27%	25%
Male	89	24	27	38
Female	73	35	23	14
White	82	31	26	24
Male	88	25	27	37
Female	71	36	22	13
Black	87	26	27	34
Male	92	21	26	45
Female	81	31	26	24
<b>Violent crimes, completed*</b>				
Total population	42%	32%	9%	2%
Male	48	34	11	3
Female	36	28	6	1
White	41	31	8	2
Black	53	35	13	4
<b>Rape</b>				
Total female	8%	8%	—	—
White	8	7	—	—
Black	11	10	1	—
<b>Robbery</b>				
Total population	30%	25%	5%	1%
Male	37	29	7	1
Female	22	19	2	—
White	27	23	4	—
Black	51	35	12	4
<b>Assault</b>				
Total population	74%	35%	24%	15%
Male	82	31	26	25
Female	62	37	18	7
White	74	35	24	16
Black	73	35	25	12
<b>Robbery or assault resulting in injury</b>				
Total population	40%	30%	7%	2%
<b>Personal theft</b>				
Total population	99%	4%	8%	87%
Male	99	3	8	88
Female	99	4	10	84
White	99	4	9	87
Male	99	3	8	88
Female	99	4	10	86
Black	99	5	12	81
Male	99	5	10	84
Female	98	7	15	76

Note: Data are based on average victimization rates measured by the National Crime Survey for 1975-84, except for rape data, which are based on victimization rates for 1973-82. All crimes include attempts except where noted. See box on page 4 for crime definitions.

— Less than 0.5%.

\* Includes rape, robbery, and assault.

Source: Bureau of Justice Statistics.

TABLE 2

## Lifetime Likelihood of Victimization, by Age

Percent of Persons Who Will be Victimized by Crime Starting at Various Ages

	Total One or more victimizations	Number of Victimizations		
		One	Two	Three or more
<b>Violent crimes*</b>				
Current age				
12 years old	83%	30%	27%	25%
20	72	36	23	14
30	53	35	13	4
40	36	29	6	1
50	22	19	2	—
60	14	13	1	—
70	8	7	—	—
<b>Robbery or assault resulting in injury</b>				
Current age				
12 years old	40%	30%	7%	2%
20	30	25	4	1
30	19	17	2	—
40	11	11	1	—
50	7	6	—	—
60	4	4	—	—
70	2	2	—	—
<b>Personal theft</b>				
Current age				
12 years old	99%	4%	8%	87%
20	98	9	16	73
30	93	19	25	48
40	82	31	19	33
50	64	37	19	8
60	43	32	9	2
70	24	21	3	—

Note: Data are based on average victimization rates measured by the National Crime Survey for 1975-84. All crimes include attempts. See box on page 4 for crime definitions.

— Less than 0.5%. \* Includes rape, robbery, and assault.

Source: Bureau of Justice Statistics.

## Court System Report

The Alaska court system has recently released its *1986 Annual Report*. This document presents a profile of the entire system and its activities for the year. It includes statistics on filings, dispositions, and pending caseloads for the various courts.

The *1986 Annual Report* also presents a summary discussion of major administrative issues dealt with during FY86, with particular attention focused on the cost-saving measures necessitated by the state economic crisis.

(The report can be obtained from the Office of the Administrative Director, Alaska Court System, 303 K Street, Anchorage, Alaska 99501. Phone 907-274-8610.)

## BJS Grant Awards

The Bureau of Justice Statistics, U.S. Department of Justice, recently awarded the Alaska Statistical Analysis Unit (SAU) at the University of Alaska, Anchorage, two grants through its national program, "Investigation of Issues in Criminal Justice and Development of Analytic Methods and Techniques."

The grant awards, which total approximately \$60,000, will be used to fund two SAU projects: an evaluative study of the operation of the state's pretrial diversion project and an investigation of felony charge disparity. Work on the studies will begin this summer.

## Runaways: Delineating the Problem

—Nella Lee

Although the national and local media have focused attention recently on the problem of runaway children, reliable data on this issue, especially with regard to Alaska, are somewhat elusive. Without credible data, it is difficult to design effective courses of action for meeting the problem. Two Alaska studies completed during the last year illustrate the problems involved in delineating the runaway issue in Alaska. The reports were commissioned by different bodies and have slightly different orientations.

The first of the reports, a two-volume study entitled "Running Toward Prison" and "Running Toward Success," was prepared by Consultation Unlimited, a private Anchorage firm, for the Alaska Sen-

ate Finance Committee as an assessment of runaway and street juveniles in relation to the corrections system. The study is quasi-etiological in its thrust; that is, Part One, "Running Toward Prison," attempts to identify variables leading to runaway behavior and then to establish a causal relationship between running away, juvenile delinquency, and future criminality. Part Two, "Running Toward Success," contains recommendations which seem to be based primarily on neo-classical criminological theory with its emphasis on punishment rather than social rehabilitation.

In its attempt to identify factors which precipitate running away, Part One utilizes information derived from several earlier studies, from uncited sources and from interviews with a number of uniden-

tified juveniles. The data presentation is problematic because of a lack of precision in citation, identification, and discussion.

According to both this report and the second—to be discussed later—the Anchorage Police Department estimates that the total number of runaways in Anchorage, reported and unreported, can be as high as 1500 during any month. However, according to APD, the actual recorded figure for all 1984 is 742 runaways. The Anchorage population between 12 and 18 years old is given as approximately 20,000. If indeed as many as 1500 children in any given month are running away, it is a truly staggering problem. However, no basis for APD's unofficial estimate or explanation of how it is calculated is

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**Alaska Department of Corrections Profile of Population**

As of April 1987, Department of Corrections had jurisdiction over 5,311 persons. This number includes:

- 2,002 persons in Alaska institutions.
- 184 persons in the Federal Bureau of Prisons.
- 97 persons in Minnesota state institutions.
- 205 persons in community residential centers (furloughees).
- 27 persons in community residential centers (prob-parolees).
- 354 persons on parole.
- 2,442 persons on probation.

Since April 1983, the following increases have occurred:

Persons in Alaska's institutions	up	53%	(1,312-2,002)
Persons in federal and Minnesota prisons	up	41%	(200-281)
Persons in community residential centers	up	183%	(82-232)
Persons on parole	up	148%	(143-354)
Persons on probation	up	78%	(1,371-2,442)

The makeup of the persons incarcerated in Alaska's institutions, the Federal Bureau of Prisons, and Minnesota state prisons has changed during these four years.

	4/83	4/86	4/87	83-87 Change	86-87 Change
Felons—sentenced	967	1,451	1,569	+62%	+8%
Misdemeanants—sentenced	178	126	133	-25%	+6%
Felons—unsentenced	310	481	453	+46%	-6%
Misdemeanants—unsentenced	57	106	128	+125%	+21%
<b>Totals</b>	<b>1,512</b>	<b>2,164</b>	<b>2,283</b>	<b>+51%</b>	<b>+5%</b>

**Average Daily Number of Prisoners  
April 1987**

**Capacity**

221 persons in Fairbanks Correctional Center	200
91 persons in Anvil Mountain Correctional Center	102
94 persons in Yukon-Kuskokwim Correctional Center	88
382 persons in Cook Inlet Pretrial Facility	397
91 persons in Anchorage—Sixth Avenue	116
222 persons in Hiland Mountain C.C.	229
57 persons in Meadow Creek C.C.	56
132 persons in Palmer Minimum Correctional Center	130
122 persons in Palmer Medium Correctional Center	125
63 persons in Mat-Su Pretrial Facility	74
296 persons in Wildwood C.C. & Pretrial	310
178 persons in Lemon Creek Correctional Center	174
53 persons in Ketchikan Correctional Center	63
205 persons in community residential centers (furlough)	
27 persons in community residential centers (prob-parole)	
184 persons in Federal Bureau of Prisons	200
97 persons in Minnesota state prisons	100

**Department of Public  
Safety Report**

The Alaska Department of Public Safety has released the 1985 "Crime in Alaska." This annual report presents a statistical analysis of crime patterns within the state. It utilizes data compiled by twenty-five Alaska law enforcement agencies as part of the Uniform Crime Reporting Program (UCR) of the Federal Bureau of Investigation.

Under the UCR program, local law enforcement agencies throughout Alaska voluntarily submit monthly crime report data for the purpose of evaluating the level of reported crime and police activity within the state.

"Crime in Alaska" reports on the seven UCR index offenses: murder, rape, robbery, aggravated assault, larceny, burglary, and motor vehicle theft. The report presents pertinent figures and analysis for each offense category on a statewide basis. In addition, tallies of reports from individual agencies for 1985 are included.

All index offenses for 1985 show an increase of 2.5 percent over 1984 figures. Nationally, there was an increase of 5 percent. Total violent crime, including murder, rape, robbery, and aggravated assault, increased by 0.3 percent in Alaska and 4 percent nationally. Robbery rates alone actually decreased 11 percent and rape 9.4 percent. Aggravated assault increased 5.8 percent. In Alaska total property crime offenses, including burglary, larceny, and motor vehicle theft increased only 2.7 percent, while nationally the property crime total increased 5 percent.

*(Copies of the report can be obtained from the Alaska Department of Public Safety, P.O. Box N, Juneau, AK 99811.)*

**Alaska Judicial Council  
1985-1986 Report**

The Alaska Judicial Council has released its biennial summary report to the state supreme court and the legislature. The report details Council activities for 1985-1986, including its major research studies, and provides a listing of judges, judicial applicants, nominees and appointees and a summary of Council procedures for judicial selection and retention.

*(Copies of the Judicial Council "Thirteenth Report: 1985-1986 to the Legislature and Supreme Court" can be obtained from the Alaska Judicial Council, 1031 W. Fourth Avenue, Anchorage, Alaska 99501 (Phone 907-279-2526.)*

## RUNAWAYS . . .

(Continued from page 6)

given. Lack of explanation for the figures cited is consistently a problem throughout "Running Toward Prison."

The report discusses those factors which influence a child's decision to run away. Social problems, including breakdowns in the family structure and educational system, are cited, but the discussion is very general, drawing more upon currently acceptable clichés rather than upon systematic investigation: "Strains put on traditional family roles have been combined with many structural changes and malfunctions in governmental and social systems and have resulted in a throwaway/runaway problem that have (sic) reached epidemic proportions" ("Running Toward Prison," p. 7).

The discussion of problems encountered on the street by children who have run away is similarly unspecific, and, while it seems based on a variety of sources, again citations for figures are lacking. Statements such as the following are presented without discussion or support:

They are more sexually active than their peers with homes. One study found that nearly 75 percent had engaged in intercourse, and one-third of the girls had been pregnant at least once. And girls who have a baby often perpetuate the cycle of homelessness and deprivation into the next generation ("Running Toward Prison," p. 10).

Part II, "Running Toward Success," continues an attempt to correlate sexual abuse, alcohol and drug abuse, family problems, and running away with future criminality as a prelude to making recommendations concerning the runaway problem, but as with Part I, the data presented are too sketchy to establish such connections. Moreover, the recommenda-

tions for treating the runaway problem, which, in their entirety, have a punitive cast, are not logically or statistically warranted by the preceding discussion.

The second of the two studies, while much narrower in scope and for a different purpose, is ultimately more reliable, although it, too, reveals that accurate data on runaways are elusive. This study, "Runaway Support Network Project," was conducted by a consortium of four bodies—Family Connection; Alaska Youth Advocates; Alaska Children's Services, Inc.; and the Anchorage Department of Health and Human Services—working with Wasserman Consulting Services, a private firm. The objectives of the project were to assess the existing system of support services for runaways, to develop a plan for a coordinated network of services, to publicize the network, and to evaluate network services. The results of this project were made available to a city task force on runaways and homeless youth established by Mayor Tony Knowles.

The study analyzed contact and intake data on all runaways seeking assistance in Anchorage from Alaska Youth Advocates; Family Connection; and Alaska Children's Services, Inc. The sample data covered a period of one year with final analysis of the data resulting in an overall system plan which would provide social services to runaway and homeless youth.

The project's data collection effort, which was limited to information available on actual contacts made by runaways to the three agencies, was methodologically sound. The study was systematic in its collection, tabulation, and analysis of the data, and the final report presents the statistical results with restrained interpretation and discussion of limitations.

The report provides detailed statistics on runaway contacts for each agency, in-

cluding percentages and frequencies according to age, sex, race, referral problem, and agency action. Category parameters are defined, data problems noted, and figures interpreted narrowly.

In its discussion of the scope of the overall runaway problem in Anchorage, the report cautiously cites several sources for estimates, including the APD figure mentioned earlier, and evaluates the reliability of these estimates. The report concludes that approximately 1200 cases of runaways are handled yearly by the three agencies whose client information was studied and that interpretation of all data would justify an estimate "that there are three to five times as many (as is the national estimate) actual runaways and castaways as there are known runaways who come into contact with the system" ("Runaway Support Network Project: Final Assessment Report," p. 35).

The concluding recommendations made by this study, and later by the Knowles' task force, focused on prevention, increased services, and support in both treatment and after-care.

While the "Runaway Network Support Project" was more limited in scope than the study commissioned by the Senate Finance Committee, it is ultimately more reliable because of its imposed limitations: it presents a fairly precise and detailed picture of the runaway issue as encountered by three social services agencies dealing with the problem and its recommendations are based directly on the data assembled. Such an approach can result ultimately in more effective measures on the part of involved agencies.

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