

FACT SHEET



Arrests for Drug Offenses in Alaska: 2000–2011

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This fact sheet presents data on arrests for drug offenses made by Alaska police agencies for the period 2000 through 2011. The data presented were extracted from the Alaska Department of Public Safety's annual publication, *Crime in Alaska*.

The frequency of arrests for drug offenses. Figure 1 presents information on the total *number* of arrests (light green shading), and the *percentage* of all arrests (dark green shading) for drug offenses for the period 2000 through 2011. Arrest data pertaining to adult arrests are depicted in the left panel; data for juvenile arrests are shown in the right panel. Since 2000, the

total number of adult arrests increased nearly 18%, from 31,227 to 36,770 statewide. The *proportion* of adult arrests attributable to drug offenses also increased, from 4.8% of all adult arrests in 2000 to 5.4% of all adult arrests in 2011 (a percentage increase of 12.5%).

In contrast, the total number of juvenile arrests in Alaska declined sharply during the 2000–2011 time period. In 2000, Alaska police agencies reported 6,024 arrests of persons under the age 18; by 2011, that number had fallen to 3,631 (a percentage decrease of nearly 40%). While the total number of juvenile arrests declined between 2000 and 2011, the percentage of juvenile arrests attributable to drug offenses increased at a rate nearly three times that for adults, from 7.2% in 2000 to 9.7%

FIGURE 1

Total Number of Arrests and Percentage of All Arrests for Drug Offenses: Adults and Juveniles in Alaska, 2000–2011



* Note that the "Total number of arrests" scale differs between adults and juveniles.

Source of data: Alaska Department of Public Safety, Criminal Records & Identification Bureau (2001–2012). *Crime in Alaska*. Juneau, AK.

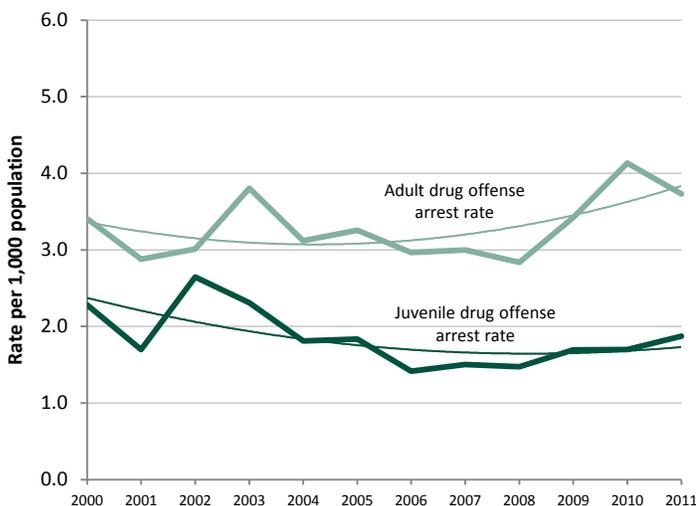
in 2011 (a percentage increase of 34.7%). Since 2006, when the percentage of juvenile arrests attributable to drug offenses stood at 6.1%, the proportional increase in juvenile arrests for drug offenses has risen 59%.

Importantly, the arrest data reported by Alaska police agencies reflect official agency actions once police are made aware of criminal offenses. Readers are cautioned against inferring that decreases or increases in the percentages of arrests attributable to drug offenses are due to decreases or increases in underlying criminal activity (i.e., possession, sale/manufacture, or use of illicit drugs).

Figure 2 presents the *drug offense arrest rate* for both Alaskan adults and juveniles for the period 2000 through 2011. The rates presented in Figure 2 represent the number of arrests per 1,000 members of the adult and juvenile populations for each year, from 2000 to 2011. The adult drug offense rate is depicted using a light green line; a dark green line represents the juvenile drug offense arrest rate. The thinner lines overlaid on each of these lines represent what is called a “best fit” trend line — that is, a line that depicts the overall shape of the data trend.

The drug offense arrest rate for adults was consistently higher than that for juveniles for the entire 2000–2011

FIGURE 2
Drug Offense Arrest Rate per 1,000 Population: Adults and Juveniles in Alaska, 2000–2011



Source of data: Alaska Department of Public Safety, Criminal Records & Identification Bureau (2001–2012). *Crime in Alaska*. Juneau, AK.

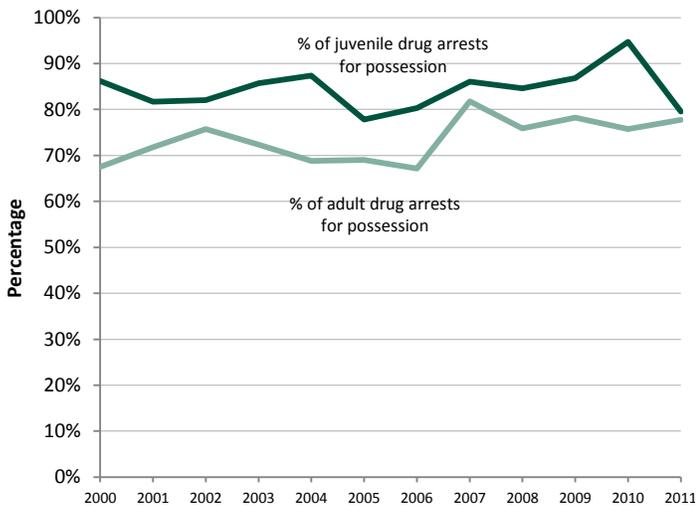
period. On average, between 2000 and 2011 the adult drug offense arrest rate was 1.4 times higher than the juvenile drug offense arrest rate. Notably, however, the difference in drug offense rates between adults and juveniles has diverged since 2000. That year, adult Alaskans were arrested for drug offenses at a rate of 3.4 arrests per 1,000 population, while juveniles were arrested for drug offenses at a rate of 2.3 arrests per 1,000 population. Based on these rates, adults were approximately 1.5 times more likely to be arrested for a drug offense than juveniles. By 2011, the drug offense arrest rates for adults and juveniles were 3.7 per 1,000 and 1.9 per 1,000, respectively, making adults 1.9 times more likely to be arrested for drug offenses than juveniles. The drug offense arrest rates for both adults and juveniles have increased over the past several years. Since 2006, the drug offense arrest rate for adults increased 23%; for juveniles, the rate increased 35%. However, when the entire 12-year trend is examined, distinctive patterns emerge for adults and juveniles. For adults, since 2000, the drug offense arrest rate *increased* by 8.8%. For juveniles, since 2000, the drug offense arrest rate *decreased* by 17.4%.

Drug offense arrests, by offense type. Figure 3 and Figure 4 present data on adult and juvenile drug offense arrests according to the type of offense committed: *possession* of a controlled substance, and *sale/manufacture* of a controlled substance. Figure 3 shows data for both adults and juveniles for possession offenses; Figure 4 shows data for both adults and juveniles for sale/manufacture offenses.

For both adults and juveniles, a large majority of all drug offense arrests during the 2000–2011 time period were for the *possession* of a controlled substance. On average, 73.5% of all adult drug offense arrests were for illegal possession of a controlled substance between 2000 and 2011. For juveniles, this figure was 84.4%. The peak for adults was in 2007, when 81.7% of all drug offense arrests were for possession. For juveniles, the highest percentage was in 2010, when 94.7% of all drug offense arrests were for possession. Overall, the proportion of drug offense arrests made for possession increased for

FIGURE 3

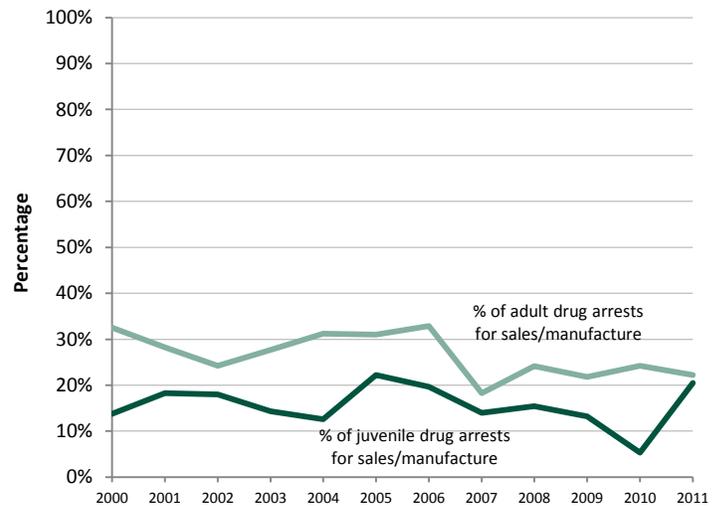
Percentage of Drug Arrests for Possession: Adults and Juveniles in Alaska, 2000–2011



Source of data: Alaska Department of Public Safety, Criminal Records & Identification Bureau (2001–2012). *Crime in Alaska*. Juneau, AK.

FIGURE 4

Percentage of Drug Arrests for Sales/Manufacture: Adults and Juveniles in Alaska, 2000–2011



Source of data: Alaska Department of Public Safety, Criminal Records & Identification Bureau (2001–2012). *Crime in Alaska*. Juneau, AK.

adults during the 2000–2011 period, from 67.5% in 2000 to 77.8% in 2011 (a percentage increase of more than 15%). In contrast, the percentage of drug arrests for juveniles that were classified as possession offenses declined during the same time period, from 86.2% in 2000 to 79.5% in 2011 (a percentage decline of more than 7%).

Figure 4 presents the percentage of all drug offense arrests that were classified by police as sale/manufacture offenses, for both adult and juvenile offenders. Overall, the percentage of drug sale/manufacture offense arrests declined substantially among adults (from 32.5% of all drug offense arrests in 2000 to 22.2% of all drug offense arrests in 2011). In contrast, the percentage of drug sale/manufacture offenses among juveniles increased during the same period, from 13.8% of all drug offense arrests in 2000 to 20.5% of all drug offense arrests in 2011. For both adults and juveniles, illegal drug sale/manufacture arrests comprised only a minority of all drug offense arrests between 2000 and 2011. On average, 26.5% of all adult and 15.6% of all juvenile drug arrests were classified by police as sale/manufacture offenses.

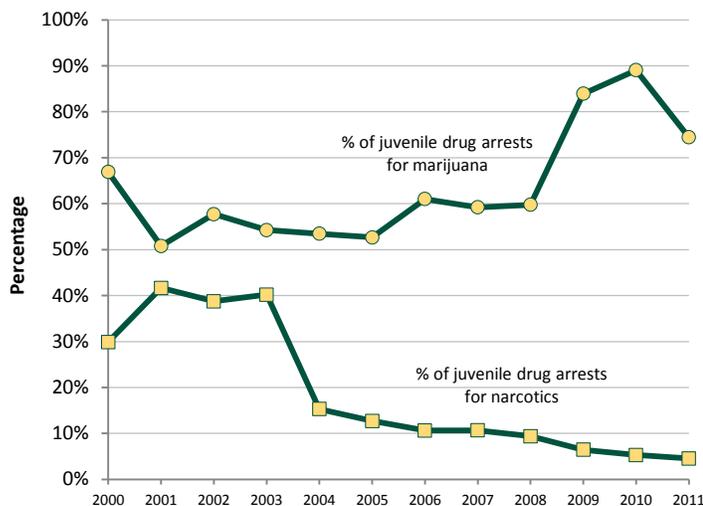
Drug offense arrests, by type of drug. Figure 5 and Figure 6 present data on the percentage of drug

offense arrests according to the type of drug. Figure 5 presents the information for juveniles; Figure 6 presents the information for adults. In both figures, data are presented for the percentage of drug arrests for two drug types: *marijuana* (depicted using line with circles), and *narcotics* (depicted using line with squares). On average, marijuana and narcotics comprised over 80% of all juvenile drug offense arrests, and over 85% of adult drug offense arrests. Additional drug types reported by Department of Public Safety in their *Crime in Alaska* publication, but which are not reported in this fact sheet, include *synthetic narcotics* and *other (not specified)*.

The data in Figure 5 show that most juvenile drug offense arrests involve marijuana. On average, nearly two-thirds (63.6%) of all juvenile drug offense arrests during the 2000–2011 time period were for either the possession or sale/manufacture of marijuana. In contrast, over the same period approximately 19% of drug offense arrests involved narcotics. Since 2000, the percentage of juvenile *marijuana* drug offense arrests has increased, while the percentage of juvenile *narcotics* drug offense arrests have decreased. Juvenile marijuana drug offense arrests increased from a low of 50.8% in 2001, to a high of 89.1% in 2010. (Marijuana arrests comprised 74.4% of all juvenile drug offense arrests in 2011.) Overall,

FIGURE 5

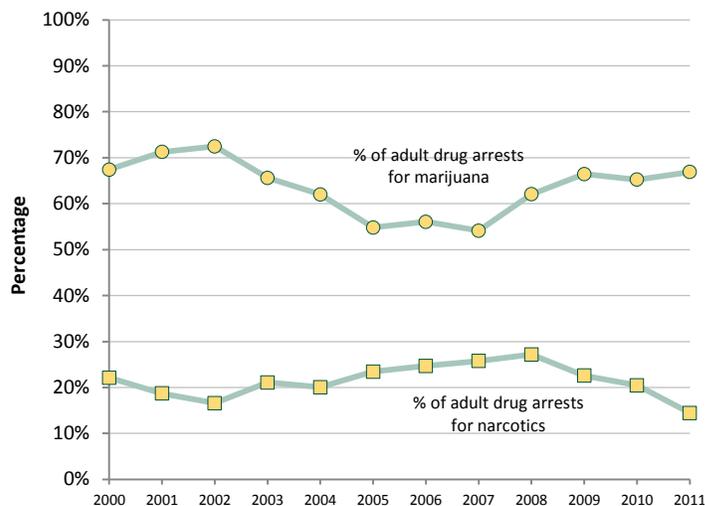
Percentage of Juvenile Drug Arrests for Marijuana and Narcotics in Alaska, 2000–2011



Source of data: Alaska Department of Public Safety, Criminal Records & Identification Bureau (2001–2012). *Crime in Alaska. Juneau, AK.*

FIGURE 6

Percentage of Adult Drug Arrests for Marijuana and Narcotics in Alaska, 2000–2011



Source of data: Alaska Department of Public Safety, Criminal Records & Identification Bureau (2001–2012). *Crime in Alaska. Juneau, AK.*

juvenile arrests for marijuana offenses increased 11.2% between 2000 and 2011; juvenile arrests for narcotics offenses declined by nearly 85%.

Figure 6 presents the percentage of adult drug offense arrests for marijuana and narcotics. As with juvenile drug offense arrests, a majority (63.7%) of all adult drug offense arrests between 2000 and 2011 were for marijuana offenses. Overall, the frequency with which adults were arrested for marijuana offenses remained relatively stable (67.4% in 2000, 66.9% in 2011), although a marked increase in marijuana arrests was observed for the 2007–2011 period (54.1% in 2007, 66.9% in 2011). Adult arrests for narcotics offenses, on the other hand, declined between 2000 and 2011, from 22.1% of all drug offense arrests in 2000 to 14.4% of all drug offense arrests in 2011 (a percentage decrease of 35%). The overall percentage of narcotics arrests was higher for adults (21.4%) than for juveniles (19%).

Summary. This fact sheet presented drug offense arrest data compiled from the Alaska Department of Public Safety’s annual *Crime in Alaska* publication. Drug offense arrest information was presented for both adults and juveniles for the period 2000 through 2011.

Over the 2000–2011 period the total number of adult

arrests (for all offenses) increased significantly, from 31,227 in 2000 to 36,770 in 2011. In contrast, the total number of juvenile arrests (for all offenses) declined from 6,024 in 2000 to 3,631 in 2011.

Drug offenses comprise a small portion of all arrests for both adults and juveniles in the state of Alaska. On average, only 4.8% of all adult arrests were for drug offenses between 2000 and 2011; for juveniles, an estimated 7.5% of all arrests were drug offenses during the same period. Between 2000 and 2011 the *percentage* of adult arrests attributable to drug offenses increased from 4.8% to 5.4%. The *percentage* of juvenile arrests attributable to drug offenses also increased, but much more rapidly than for adults — from 7.2% of all arrests in 2000 to 9.7% of all arrests in 2011.

The adult drug offense *arrest rate* (the number of arrests per 1,000 Alaska adults) was consistently higher than the drug offense *arrest rate* for juveniles (the number of arrests per 1,000 Alaska juveniles). While the adult drug offense *arrest rate* increased over the 2000–2011 period (+8.8%), the juvenile drug offense *arrest rate* declined markedly (-17.4%).

A large majority of all drug offense arrests during the 2000–2011 period were for the possession of a

controlled substance. On average, 73.5% of all adult drug offense arrests were for illegal possession; for juveniles, this figure was 84.4% of all drug arrests. For adults, the proportion of drug offense arrests made for possession increased during the 2000–2011 period; for juveniles, the percentage of drug arrests classified as possession offenses declined.

Adult arrests for drug sale/manufacture offenses dropped substantially between 2000 and 2011, from 32.5% of all drug arrests in 2000 to 22.2% of all drug offense arrests in 2011. In contrast, the *percentage* of drug sale/manufacture offenses among juvenile increased, from 13.8% in 2000 to 20.5% in 2011.

Most adult and juvenile drug offense arrests involve marijuana. On average, 63.6% of all juvenile and 63.7% of all adult drug offense arrests during the 2000–2011 period were for either the possession or sale/manufacture of marijuana. Since 2000, the *percentage* of juvenile marijuana drug offense arrests has increased, while the *percentage* of narcotics drug offense arrests have decreased. For adults, the *percentage* of arrests for marijuana drug offense arrests remained relatively stable between 2000 and 2011, while the *percentage* of adult arrests for narcotics drug offenses declined by an estimated 35%.

NOTES

UNIFORM CRIME REPORTS

First initiated by the Federal Bureau of Investigation in 1930 to measure the volume of crime in the United States, the Uniform Crime Reporting (UCR) Program collects monthly information from nearly 18,000 law enforcement agencies on eight serious crimes (called Part I offenses) and more than twenty less serious offenses (called Part II offenses). Part I offenses include four violent crimes (murder and non-negligent manslaughter, forcible rape, robbery, and aggravated assault) and four property crimes (burglary, larceny-theft, motor vehicle theft, and arson). These eight offenses are the most frequently cited crimes statistics in the United States.

The primary objective of the UCR program is to produce reliable data on crime for use in law enforcement administration, operation, and management. UCR data are not intended to be used to rank agencies or the jurisdictions in which they are located, and thus UCR data should not be used to designate American cities, counties, or other jurisdictions as “safe” or “dangerous” in the absence of careful consideration of the limitations of these data.

UCR IN ALASKA

Since 1982 the Alaska Department of Public Safety (DPS), Division of Administrative Services, has administered the UCR program for the state of Alaska. The Division of Administrative Services collects, tabulates, reports, and publishes UCR data voluntarily submitted by Alaska law enforcement agencies.

The Alaska Department of Public Safety’s annual report, *Crime in Alaska*, represents the State of Alaska’s contribution to the Federal Bureau of Investigation’s national Uniform Crime Reporting (UCR) Program.

As is the case nationally, submitting agencies in Alaska retain responsibility for the accuracy of the data. Because the UCR is a voluntary program, the number of agencies reporting data to DPS varies from year to year. As of 2011, 34 Alaska law enforcement agencies provided crime data to DPS. An estimated 99.4 percent of the state’s total population fell within the jurisdiction of the submitting agencies.

THE ALASKA JUSTICE STATISTICAL ANALYSIS CENTER



ABOUT

The Alaska Justice Statistical Analysis Center (AJSAC) was established by Administrative Order No. 89, signed by Governor William Sheffield on July 2, 1986. Since that time the AJSAC has been housed within the University of Alaska Anchorage Justice Center. The AJSAC assists Alaska criminal justice agencies, as well as state and local governments and officials, with the development, implementation, and evaluation of criminal justice programs and policies through the collection, analysis, and reporting of crime and justice statistics.

Since 1972, the Bureau of Justice Statistics (BJS) and its predecessor agency, the National Criminal Justice Information and Statistics Service, has provided support to state and territorial governments to establish and operate Statistical Analysis Centers (SACs) to collect, analyze, and report statistics on crime and justice to federal, state, and local levels of government, and to share state-level information nationally. There are currently 53 SACs located in the United States and its Territories. The AJSAC is a member of the Justice Research and Statistics Association (JRSA), a national nonprofit organization comprised of SAC directors, researchers, and practitioners dedicated to policy-oriented research and analysis.

CONTACT INFORMATION

Location

The Alaska Justice Statistical Analysis Center (AJSAC) is housed in the University of Alaska Anchorage Justice Center, which is located on the second floor of the UAA/APU Consortium Library, Suite 213.

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To learn more about the AJSAC research, please visit our website at: <http://www.uaa.alaska.edu/ajsac/>.



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