

Juvenile Recidivism in Washington State: A 2013 Court Cohort and 2014 Juvenile Rehabilitation Release Cohort

Introduction

In 2016 the National Center for Juvenile Justice (NCJJ) in conjunction with the Pew Charitable Trusts (Pew) launched a program to develop comparable juvenile justice recidivism data across several states.¹ The authors used data prepared by the Washington State Center for Court Research (WSCCR) and Juvenile Rehabilitation (JR) to examine a cohort of youth disposed and another cohort of youth admitted to a JR facility during the calendar year 2012. Their efforts united the courts and JR in a commitment to initiate recidivism reporting annually. This publication represents the first efforts to conduct annual recidivism reporting for court-involved youth in Washington State.

To build upon this foundation, we have completed a new juvenile recidivism study using a cohort of juveniles who received court dispositions (diversion, community sanctions/probation, or commitment to JR) in 2013 and a cohort of juveniles released from JR in 2014. To adapt the Pew-NCJJ analysis to the needs of stakeholders in Washington State and to align our analysis with the approach established by the Washington State Institute for Public Policy (Barnoski, 1997) we made adjustments to some of Pew-NCJJ's methodological and definitional choices. Notably, our study accounts for time incarcerated during the follow-up period, in order to ensure that all subjects had at least 180 days of "street time".² It also uses a JR release cohort rather than a JR admission cohort to measure recidivism for youth released from JR. In addition, we added new variables related to the youths' criminal history and previous incarcerations to help explore potential associations between types of experiences among youth with dispositions and recidivism.

¹ NCJJ. Court Analysis Report. Unpublished Manuscript.

² "Street time" refers to time not spent in incarceration. Loftstrom, M., Raphael, S., & Grattet, R. (2014). Is Public Safety Realignment Reducing Recidivism in California? Public Policy Institute of California.

Recently there has been discussion of proper metrics for measuring and reporting criminal justice outcomes (Duwe, 2017). Recidivism does provide some information and is easy for many justice entities to measure. They know when a person is convicted and they know when that person is arrested or convicted again. However, critics have noted that using recidivism or using only recidivism may provide an incomplete picture (Maltz, 2001). Education, employment, and health outcomes are some examples of post-conviction measures that are not often utilized, but could provide a more complete picture.

How to Interpret

This is the first juvenile recidivism report produced for all Washington State court involved youth in more than a decade. Given the lack of comparable precedents, it should act as a starting point and more information should be able to be gleaned from future results. Our hope is that courts and stakeholders examine trends, rather than particular years, as individual years can be anomalous due to variances in the population or study cohort or by structural changes to laws or court related practices.

County-level Analysis

- Counties with smaller numbers of youth disposed in their courts are more likely to see larger variances in recidivism rates from year to year.
- Our best guidance is not to look at individual years or even the change from one year to another, but rather the longer trends across several years.
- WSCCR can look at implementing trend lines into charts for future versions of the juvenile recidivism report, to aid in identifying trends.

Inter-state Comparisons

- Inter-state comparisons are complicated by different ways states define and measure recidivism.³
- Most states look only at juveniles released from custody, as opposed to all court involved youth.
- We felt this approach misses the majority of court-involved juveniles and we have sufficient data and inter-agency cooperation to accomplish this more ambitious examination.

³ Yu, E. (2014). Juvenile Recidivism Measurement Inconsistent Across States. Juvenile Justice Information Exchange.
<http://jije.org/2014/06/13/juvenile-recidivism-measurement-inconsistent-across-states/>

Data & Methods

The qualifying event for inclusion in the study's court cohort was the first criminal justice cycle⁴ for which an individual received a disposition during 2013; for the JR cohort, it was an individual's first release from JR during 2014.⁵ Only the most serious disposed charge in that criminal justice cycle was counted. For youth with more than one court disposition during 2013 or more than one JR release during 2014, the first disposition or release was the qualifying event for inclusion in the study and all follow-up periods are based upon that date. The follow-up period included offenses that may have occurred after the youth had reached the age of majority and was tried as an adult.

We used WSCCR's collection of court records to identify qualifying dispositions and to track criminal history and recidivism events. JR provided admission and release records to identify qualifying events for the JR release cohort and to track previous JR admissions for study subjects. We also examined WSCCR's juvenile detention records to calculate whether individuals met the minimum duration of street time for the follow up period.

With access to the offender's complete Washington court history, we examined the relationship between early and later offending and the relationship between the age of first adjudication and recidivism. Although WSCCR's detention data is under development⁶, it portrays detention history for the majority of juveniles detained in Washington State. We included measures of detention prior to the qualifying offense, pretrial detention related to the qualifying offense, and prior incarcerations at a JR

⁴ A criminal justice cycle pertains to the period around an offense with a disposition. As such, we filter out multiple charges with the same case number, offense date, and adjudication date, to not over-count the number of offenses committed by an individual.

⁵ The first disposition of the calendar was taken for each disposition cohort. There were a number of individuals who had both an adjudication and diversion in the same year, so those categories are not exclusive.

⁶ Currently, WSCCR receives records from all juvenile detention facilities across Washington State, except for Martin Hall, a private facility that serves Asotin, Douglas, Ferry, Pend Oreille, Stevens, Whitman, and parts of Adams, Lincoln, and Spokane counties. In addition, our King County detention records incorporated in this study are limited to 2013-2016. Mason County detention data may be incomplete prior to 2015, and Pacific/Wahkiakum detention data may be incomplete prior to 2014.

facility. We recognize that many of these measures are proxies for the seriousness of past and current offending, but there are a number of instances where the relationship may not be so direct. Differences in judicial sentencing practices can result in court involved youth with similar demographics and criminal history receiving disparate punishments. In some cases, these judicial differences can send one offender to incarceration while a similar offender receives a non-custodial sentence. For this reason, we examined the relationship between previous incarcerations to future offending.

The preceding study from Pew-NCJJ did not account for time incarcerated during the recidivism follow-up period, in effect curtailing the period during which recidivism could possibly happen, thus artificially reducing reported recidivism below its actual level. To address this, we deducted time spent in JR and local detention from the interval between the youth's adjudication date and the date of the most recent data available to us. Only those individuals with the minimum amount of follow-up period (18 months)⁷ of "street time" were included in the study. The second large methodological change from the NCJJ and Pew study was use of a JR release cohort rather than an admission cohort. Using a release cohort permits a more recent cohort to be analyzed and fewer subjects are excluded for reason of insufficient street time.

We divided our analyses into categories, depending on the qualifying case outcome - all dispositions (convictions, deferrals, and diversions), adjudications only (convictions and deferrals), and diversions only.⁸ As indicated below, only some analyses include the JR release cohort because multiple

⁷ For the court cohorts, the recidivism clock began on their disposition date and for the JR release cohort it began on the date of their residential release. Recidivism was defined as an offense that occurred within eighteen months of their disposition (local) or residential release (JR), and that resulted in an adjudication or conviction within twelve months of the offense date.

⁸ Please note that some individuals received multiple dispositions in the same year. The first offense for each of the three categories (disposition, adjudication, and diversion) was captured. Therefore, the same individual may appear in multiple categories, if they had multiple offenses that resulted in different dispositions during the year.

factors, including a lack of a consistent case-related identifier between JR and court data, prevented connecting the JR release cohort to the original disposition.⁹

Study Population

In the tables below, differences in gender, race, age, and qualifying offense are evident between the disposition, adjudication, diversion, and JR release cohorts.

Gender, Race/Ethnicity, and Age

The gender gap varies greatly across the various cohorts from 66.3% male among dispositions, 74.7% among adjudications, 60.5% among diversions, and 89.8% among the JR release cohort. The mean age only moves 0.2 years among the court cohorts, it jumps almost a full year with the JR release cohort. This is not surprising as the JR release cohort has served a sentence since their court adjudication.¹⁰ Notable differences in racial/ethnic percentages across cohorts appeared with White youth, who were 61.0% of the diversion cohort but 51.8% of the JR release cohort. In contrast, Black youth were 9.4% of the diversion cohort but 18.7% of the JR release cohort.

⁹ From past analysis we know that the majority come from adjudications for felony charges, along with revocations for disposition alternatives or juveniles with extensive criminal histories.

¹⁰ The average JR sentence is 10.4 months in length.

Population Demographics: Gender, Race/Ethnicity, and Age

| | All Dispositions (N=12,470) | | Diversions (N=7,559) | | Adjudications (N=5,378) | | JR Release Cohort (N=599) | |
|--------------------------|--------------------------------|------|-------------------------|------|----------------------------|------|---------------------------------|------|
| | N | % | N | % | N | % | N | % |
| Gender | | | | | | | | |
| Males | 8,261 | 66.3 | 4,564 | 60.5 | 4,019 | 74.7 | 537 | 89.8 |
| Females | 4,199 | 33.7 | 2,986 | 39.6 | 1,358 | 25.3 | 61 | 10.2 |
| Race¹¹ | | | | | | | | |
| White | 7,311 | 58.6 | 4,612 | 61.0 | 2,962 | 55.1 | 310 | 51.8 |
| Black | 1,416 | 11.4 | 707 | 9.4 | 760 | 14.1 | 112 | 18.7 |
| Hispanic | 2,752 | 22.1 | 1,600 | 21.2 | 1,277 | 23.7 | 132 | 22.1 |
| Asian/Pacific Islander | 400 | 3.2 | 269 | 3.6 | 140 | 2.6 | 26 | 4.4 |
| Am. Indian/Nat. Alaskan | 411 | 3.3 | 211 | 2.8 | 218 | 4.1 | 17 | 2.8 |
| Unknown | 180 | 1.4 | 160 | 2.1 | 21 | 0.4 | 2 | 0.3 |
| Age | | | | | | | | |
| Age 10 | 39 | 0.3 | 31 | 0.4 | 8 | 0.2 | 0 | 0.0 |
| Age 11 | 123 | 1.0 | 107 | 1.4 | 22 | 0.4 | 0 | 0.0 |
| Age 12 | 559 | 4.5 | 383 | 5.1 | 203 | 3.8 | 8 | 1.3 |
| Age 13 | 1,247 | 10.0 | 858 | 11.4 | 445 | 8.3 | 24 | 4.0 |
| Age 14 | 2,081 | 16.7 | 1,319 | 17.5 | 862 | 16.0 | 68 | 11.4 |
| Age 15 | 2,728 | 21.9 | 1,586 | 21.0 | 1,252 | 23.3 | 109 | 18.2 |
| Age 16 | 3,127 | 25.1 | 1,807 | 23.9 | 1,443 | 26.8 | 150 | 25.0 |
| Age 17 | 2,566 | 20.6 | 1,468 | 19.4 | 1,143 | 21.3 | 185 | 30.9 |
| Mean Age | | 15.1 | | 15.0 | | 15.2 | | 15.9 |

¹¹ Race is derived using AOC data where the offender's race is recorded by the police or court and bi-racial and multi-racial are not options.

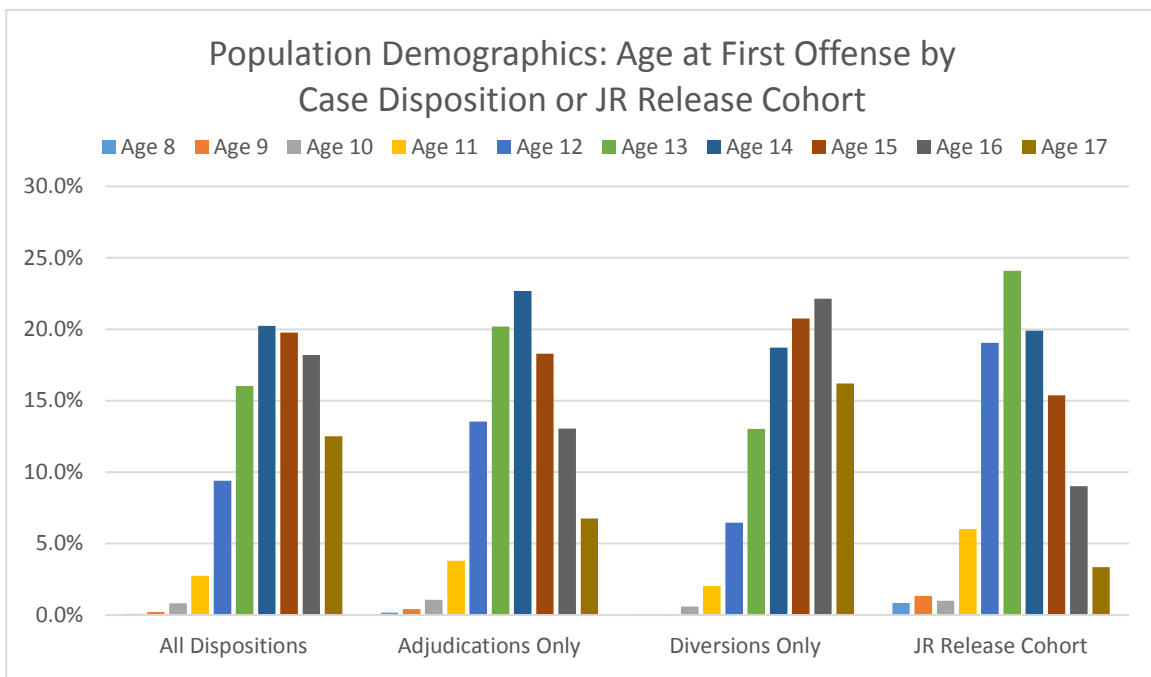
Qualifying Offense:

Qualifying offense also varied across the cohorts. For example, 1.7% of diversions came from felony cases in contrast to 33.3% of adjudications. Adjudications are considered more severe dispositions than diversions, so it is expected that there would be more adjudications associated with felony cases.

| Population Demographics: Most Serious Qualifying Offense | | | | | | |
|---|-----------------------------|-------------|----------------------|-------------|-------------------------|-------------|
| | All Dispositions (N=12,470) | | Diversions (N=7,559) | | Adjudications (N=5,378) | |
| | N | % | N | % | N | % |
| Total Misdemeanors | 10,575 | 84.8 | 7,428 | 98.3 | 3,587 | 66.7 |
| Other Misdemeanor | 1,692 | 13.6 | 1,041 | 13.8 | 713 | 13.3 |
| Drug Misdemeanor | 1,515 | 12.2 | 1,293 | 17.1 | 287 | 5.3 |
| Property Misdemeanor | 4,623 | 37.1 | 3,359 | 44.4 | 1,449 | 26.9 |
| Weapon Misdemeanor | 129 | 1.0 | 66 | 0.9 | 67 | 1.3 |
| Sex Misdemeanor | 40 | 0.3 | 24 | 0.3 | 21 | 0.4 |
| Assault Misdemeanor | 2,576 | 20.7 | 1,645 | 21.8 | 1,050 | 19.5 |
| Total Felonies | 1,895 | 15.2 | 131 | 1.7 | 1,791 | 33.3 |
| Other Felony | 44 | 0.4 | 6 | 0.1 | 38 | 0.7 |
| Drug Felony | 186 | 1.5 | 23 | 0.3 | 169 | 3.1 |
| Property Felony | 932 | 7.5 | 79 | 1.1 | 869 | 16.2 |
| Weapon Felony | 78 | 0.6 | 2 | 0.0 | 77 | 1.4 |
| Assault Felony | 357 | 2.9 | 13 | 0.2 | 347 | 6.5 |
| Violent-Property Felony | 17 | 0.1 | 1 | 0.0 | 16 | 0.3 |
| Robbery-Kidnap Felony | 99 | 0.8 | 5 | 0.1 | 95 | 1.8 |
| Sex Felony | 179 | 1.4 | 2 | 0.0 | 177 | 3.3 |
| Homicide Felony | 3 | 0.0 | 0 | 0.0 | 3 | 0.1 |

Age at First Offense:

Finally, age at first disposition also varied across the cohorts. The most frequent age of first disposition for the JR release cohort was 13, but 14 for adjudications and all dispositions, and 16 for the diversion cohort. This observation is consistent with expected findings. Several criminological studies have identified a relationship between early age of onset for criminal behavior and longer and more severe criminal acts and careers (Blumstein, et. al., 1986; Elliot, 1994; Farrington, et. al., 1990; Tracy and Kempf-Leonard, 1996; Wolfgang, 1972).



County:

One noticeable result regarding the study population comes from the differences in case dispositions among the Washington State counties. Diversions make up the majority of case dispositions, with approximately 1.4 times as many diversions as adjudications in this study. Among those counties with at least 100 total dispositions, ten counties had a ratio of at least 1.5 adjudications for every diversion or vice versa. Benton/Franklin, Douglas, Grant, Grays Harbor, Pierce, Skagit, Snohomish, Spokane, and Whatcom all had a ratio of at least 1.5 diversions for every adjudication. Conversely, only Cowlitz County had more than 100 dispositions and at least 1.5 adjudications for every diversion.

| Population Demographics: County ¹² | | | | | | | | |
|---|--------------------------------|------|-------------------------|------|----------------------------|------|------------------------------|------|
| | All Dispositions (N=12,470) | | Diversions (N=7,559) | | Adjudications (N=5,378) | | JR Release Cohort (N=599) | |
| | N | % | N | % | N | % | N | % |
| Adams | 81 | 0.7 | 63 | 0.8 | 19 | 0.4 | -- | -- |
| Asotin/Garfield | 82 | 0.7 | 31 | 0.4 | 53 | 1.0 | -- | -- |
| Benton/Franklin | 965 | 7.7 | 639 | 8.5 | 373 | 6.9 | 34 | 5.7 |
| Chelan | 195 | 1.6 | 100 | 1.3 | 104 | 1.9 | 10 | 1.7 |
| Clallam | 164 | 1.3 | 83 | 1.1 | 85 | 1.6 | -- | -- |
| Clark | 971 | 7.8 | 548 | 7.3 | 474 | 8.8 | 41 | 6.9 |
| Cowlitz | 278 | 2.2 | 114 | 1.5 | 181 | 3.4 | 23 | 3.9 |
| Douglas | 122 | 1.0 | 88 | 1.2 | 41 | 0.8 | -- | -- |
| Ferry | -- | -- | -- | -- | -- | -- | -- | -- |
| Grant | 326 | 2.6 | 221 | 2.9 | 127 | 2.4 | 10 | 1.7 |
| Grays Harbor | 170 | 1.4 | 120 | 1.6 | 55 | 1.0 | 11 | 1.8 |
| Island | 100 | 0.8 | 61 | 0.8 | 41 | 0.8 | -- | -- |
| Jefferson | 51 | 0.4 | 25 | 0.3 | 26 | 0.5 | -- | -- |
| King | 1,563 | 12.5 | 915 | 12.1 | 671 | 12.5 | 107 | 17.9 |
| Kitsap | 553 | 4.4 | 286 | 3.8 | 286 | 5.3 | 16 | 2.7 |
| Kittitas | 69 | 0.6 | 32 | 0.4 | 38 | 0.7 | -- | -- |
| Klickitat | 53 | 0.4 | 34 | 0.5 | 20 | 0.4 | -- | -- |
| Lewis | 206 | 1.7 | 115 | 1.5 | 103 | 1.9 | 12 | 2.0 |
| Lincoln | 29 | 0.2 | 23 | 0.3 | -- | -- | -- | -- |
| Mason | 136 | 1.1 | 73 | 1.0 | 69 | 1.3 | -- | -- |
| Okanogan | 160 | 1.3 | 73 | 1.0 | 96 | 1.8 | -- | -- |
| Pacific/Wahkiakum | 56 | 0.5 | 31 | 0.4 | 25 | 0.5 | -- | -- |
| Pend Oreille | 42 | 0.3 | 36 | 0.5 | -- | -- | -- | -- |
| Pierce | 1,494 | 12.0 | 993 | 13.1 | 546 | 10.2 | 75 | 12.5 |
| San Juan | 24 | 0.2 | 11 | 0.2 | 14 | 0.3 | -- | -- |
| Skagit | 346 | 2.8 | 232 | 3.1 | 130 | 2.4 | -- | -- |
| Skamania | 33 | 0.3 | 21 | 0.3 | 15 | 0.3 | -- | -- |
| Snohomish | 1,270 | 10.2 | 846 | 11.2 | 465 | 8.7 | 47 | 7.9 |
| Spokane | 681 | 5.5 | 449 | 5.9 | 244 | 4.5 | 40 | 6.7 |
| Stevens | 68 | 0.6 | 38 | 0.5 | 36 | 0.7 | -- | -- |
| Thurston | 707 | 5.7 | 358 | 4.7 | 385 | 7.2 | 31 | 5.2 |
| Walla Walla/Columbia | 263 | 2.1 | 146 | 1.9 | 129 | 2.4 | 14 | 2.3 |
| Whatcom | 443 | 3.6 | 289 | 3.8 | 180 | 3.4 | 17 | 2.8 |
| Whitman | 36 | 0.3 | 26 | 0.3 | 12 | 0.2 | -- | -- |
| Yakima | 727 | 5.8 | 438 | 5.8 | 315 | 5.9 | 33 | 5.5 |

¹² Fields with fewer than 10 subjects are omitted to protect confidentiality.

Recidivism Results

The analyses examine a variety of demographic, offense, and court factors related to the study population and the outcomes analysis. Some clear trends appear below. As noted above, due to difficulties linking JR admissions to qualifying offenses, those analyses based upon a qualifying disposition, criminal history, or previous incarcerations do not include the JR release cohort.

Recidivism

The most consistent trend was that recidivism rates increased along with the severity of the disposition - diversions to adjudications to all dispositions to the JR release cohort. This was true regardless of the demographic, criminal history, or qualifying offense variable used to filter the results or the type of recidivism measured (overall, misdemeanor, felony, or violent felony).¹³ All tables after the recidivism outcomes table include only statistics for felony and all recidivism. Tables with all four recidivism categories are found as appendices to this report.

The most inclusive category, all dispositions, had an overall recidivism rate of 28.1% and a felony recidivism rate of 9.7%. The adjudication cohort saw higher rates (43.5% and 18.3%), while the diversion cohort saw lower rates of recidivism (20.0% and 4.6%, respectively). The recidivism rate for adjudications was at least 2.0 times higher than the diversions recidivism rate, regardless of the type of recidivism measured.

| Recidivism Outcomes | | | | |
|----------------------------|----------------------|----------------|-------------------|-----------------------|
| | All Dispositions (%) | Diversions (%) | Adjudications (%) | JR Release Cohort (%) |
| All Recidivism | 28.1 | 20.0 | 43.5 | 54.3 |
| Misdemeanor Recidivism | 23.3 | 17.4 | 34.8 | 33.9 |
| Felony Recidivism | 9.7 | 4.6 | 18.3 | 33.7 |
| Violent Felony Recidivism | 3.5 | 1.6 | 6.7 | 13.9 |

¹³ Felony recidivism includes any felony offense that occurs after the qualifying adjudication and meets the other elements of recidivism as defined on p. 3 of this report. Violent felony recidivism includes any assault felony, violent-property felony, robbery-kidnap felony, sex felony, or homicide felony that occurs after the qualifying adjudication and meets the other elements of recidivism as defined on p. 3 of this report.

Gender

For both felony and all recidivism categories, males recidivated more than females across all the court cohorts. Gender had one of the strongest and most consistent patterns of recidivism among the various factors analyzed. Felony recidivism percentages among males ranged from a 1.7 to 2.7 times higher than those of females across the different court cohorts. The court cohort trend was not present in the JR release cohort, where females had higher rates of all recidivism (59.0% to 53.8%). A finding that was driven by misdemeanor recidivism, as males had slightly higher felony recidivism rates (34.1% to 31.2%).

| Recidivism Outcomes by Gender | | | | | | | | |
|--------------------------------------|----------------------|----------------|-------------------|--------|----------------------|----------------|-------------------|--------|
| | All Recidivism | | | | Felony Recidivism | | | |
| | All Dispositions (%) | Diversions (%) | Adjudications (%) | JR (%) | All Dispositions (%) | Diversions (%) | Adjudications (%) | JR (%) |
| Males | 31.9 | 23.1 | 45.3 | 53.8 | 12.2 | 6.2 | 20.5 | 34.1 |
| Females | 20.7 | 15.2 | 37.9 | 59.0 | 4.9 | 2.3 | 11.9 | 31.2 |

Race

The relationship between race and recidivism rates is fairly consistent across types of recidivism and different dispositions. Black juveniles had elevated recidivism rates for any disposition involving a felony, for all adjudications, and for the JR release cohort. Asians and Pacific Islanders had the lowest all recidivism rates across all dispositions. Across racial and ethnic groups, White youth were comparatively less likely to experience a new felony disposition in the 18 months following their disposition.

| Recidivism Outcomes by Race¹⁴ | | | | | | | | |
|---|----------------------|----------------|-------------------|--------|----------------------|----------------|-------------------|--------|
| | All Recidivism | | | | Felony Recidivism | | | |
| | All Dispositions (%) | Diversions (%) | Adjudications (%) | JR (%) | All Dispositions (%) | Diversions (%) | Adjudications (%) | JR (%) |
| White | 25.9 | 18.8 | 41.2 | 50.7 | 8.1 | 3.9 | 16.2 | 29.7 |
| Black | 35.0 | 23.1 | 49.2 | 59.8 | 15.3 | 7.8 | 23.4 | 47.3 |
| Hispanic | 31.8 | 23.2 | 46.1 | 55.3 | 11.2 | 5.7 | 19.7 | 30.3 |
| Asian/Pacific Islander | 23.0 | 16.7 | 37.9 | -- | 9.0 | 3.0 | 22.9 | -- |
| American Indian/Native Alaskan | 34.3 | 26.1 | 45.9 | -- | 13.1 | 7.1 | 20.6 | -- |
| Unknown | 6.1 | 5.6 | -- | -- | 2.8 | 2.5 | -- | -- |

Age at Qualifying Offense

The court cohorts show a consistent trend across all recidivism.¹⁵ For adjudications and all dispositions, recidivism rates increase until age 14 and then decrease until age 17. This pattern is altered in the felony recidivism category. The felony recidivism rates for the adjudication and all disposition cohorts increase steadily until age 16 and then decrease. The diversion cohort's recidivism rates, across both felony and all recidivism, appear to peak around age 12 and then fall consistently.

¹⁴ Fields with fewer than 30 subjects are omitted as to not provide potentially skewed or misleading statistics.

¹⁵ The JR cohort was not included in this analysis because of issues identifying the offense that resulted in the JR commitment. As such, the age at qualifying offense could not be calculated.

| Recidivism Outcomes by Age at Qualifying Conviction¹⁶ | | | | | | |
|---|----------------------|----------------|-------------------|----------------------|----------------|-------------------|
| | All Recidivism | | | Felony Recidivism | | |
| | All Dispositions (%) | Diversions (%) | Adjudications (%) | All Dispositions (%) | Diversions (%) | Adjudications (%) |
| Age 10 | 12.8 | 3.2 | -- | 0.0 | 0.0 | -- |
| Age 11 | 22.8 | 17.8 | -- | 4.9 | 3.7 | -- |
| Age 12 | 28.1 | 25.9 | 39.4 | 8.2 | 7.3 | 13.8 |
| Age 13 | 29.4 | 25.4 | 42.9 | 9.5 | 6.8 | 17.8 |
| Age 14 | 32.0 | 25.3 | 48.1 | 9.8 | 5.2 | 18.5 |
| Age 15 | 30.5 | 20.9 | 45.9 | 10.2 | 4.6 | 18.8 |
| Age 16 | 28.2 | 18.8 | 43.7 | 10.7 | 4.5 | 19.8 |
| Age 17 | 22.3 | 11.4 | 37.5 | 8.8 | 2.6 | 17.2 |

Age at First Disposition

All disposition groups have their highest recidivism rates for either the first or second age group listed, then show a consistent decrease in recidivism as the age at first disposition increases. In some instances, the decrease was dramatic, with all recidivism adjudication decreasing from 65.5% for those with a first disposition at age 10 to 22.9% for those with their first disposition at age 17. The JR release cohort did not demonstrate the same patterns as the court cohort, with the all recidivism category showing a slight decrease from age 12 (58.8%) to age 16 (51.9%) and the felony recidivism category showing a similar rate of increase from age 13 (31.6%) to age 16 (38.9%).

¹⁶Fields with fewer than 30 subjects are omitted as to not provide potentially skewed or misleading statistics.

| Recidivism Outcomes by Age at First Disposition¹⁷ | | | | | | | | |
|---|----------------------|----------------|-------------------|--------|----------------------|----------------|-------------------|--------|
| | All Recidivism | | | | Felony Recidivism | | | |
| | All Dispositions (%) | Diversions (%) | Adjudications (%) | JR (%) | All Dispositions (%) | Diversions (%) | Adjudications (%) | JR (%) |
| Age 10 | 40.8 | -- | 65.5 | -- | 11.7 | -- | 20.7 | -- |
| Age 11 | 40.9 | 23.5 | 57.6 | 61.1 | 17.0 | 6.5 | 26.3 | 50.0 |
| Age 12 | 38.3 | 27.8 | 48.2 | 58.8 | 14.6 | 7.0 | 20.7 | 31.6 |
| Age 13 | 35.7 | 25.3 | 47.6 | 54.2 | 13.5 | 6.8 | 20.4 | 29.9 |
| Age 14 | 32.3 | 24.4 | 45.4 | 49.6 | 11.0 | 5.5 | 18.8 | 30.3 |
| Age 15 | 26.1 | 19.9 | 39.7 | 55.4 | 8.8 | 4.2 | 17.4 | 34.8 |
| Age 16 | 21.5 | 17.9 | 37.3 | 51.9 | 6.6 | 4.1 | 15.4 | 38.9 |
| Age 17 | 12.3 | 10.0 | 22.9 | -- | 2.9 | 2.0 | 7.4 | -- |

Criminal History

Consistently, the likelihood of recidivism increases with the quantity and severity of the criminal history. The pattern appears in all disposition cohorts for both felony and all recidivism groups.¹⁸ Felony recidivism rates among those with felony criminal history ranged from 2.1 to 4.9 times higher than felony recidivism rates for those with no prior criminal history. Percentage-wise the greatest increase within disposition and recidivism category was a 540% increase in felony recidivism rates from all dispositions with no criminal history (5.9%) to all dispositions with both felony and misdemeanor criminal history (32.0%). In absolute numbers, the greatest increase within disposition and recidivism category was a 39.7 point increase in all recidivism rates from all dispositions with no criminal history (21.4%) to all dispositions with misdemeanor and felony criminal history (61.1%).

¹⁷ Fields with fewer than 30 subjects are omitted as to not provide potentially skewed or misleading statistics.

¹⁸ The JR cohort was not included in this analysis because of issues identifying the offense that resulted in the JR commitment and distinguishing criminal history from the instant offense.

| Recidivism Outcomes by Criminal History¹⁹ | | | | | | |
|---|----------------------|----------------|-------------------|----------------------|----------------|-------------------|
| | All Recidivism | | | Felony Recidivism | | |
| | All Dispositions (%) | Diversions (%) | Adjudications (%) | All Dispositions (%) | Diversions (%) | Adjudications (%) |
| No Criminal History | 21.4 | 18.9 | 36.0 | 5.9 | 4.3 | 14.1 |
| Misdemeanor Criminal History | 43.8 | 28.3 | 49.2 | 18.4 | 7.0 | 21.6 |
| Felony Criminal History | 56.8 | 29.3 | 58.7 | 28.8 | 13.8 | 29.8 |
| Violent Felony Criminal History | 57.1 | -- | 57.7 | 30.1 | -- | 30.6 |
| Misdemeanor and Felony Criminal History | 61.1 | -- | 61.6 | 32.0 | -- | 32.3 |

Previous Incarcerations

There appears to be a clear relationship between the type of previous incarceration and the recidivism rate. Those with any kind of prior incarceration (qualifying offense pretrial detention, previous offense post-adjudication detentions, or previous JR admissions) had higher recidivism rates than those without any incarcerations and those with JR admissions had higher recidivism rates than those that only had been in detention across all types of recidivism.²⁰ Felony recidivism rates among those with a prior detention stay ranged from 2.2 to 4.5 times higher than felony recidivism rates for those with no prior incarcerations.

¹⁹ Fields with fewer than 30 subjects are omitted as to not provide potentially skewed or misleading statistics.

²⁰ The JR cohort was not included in this analysis because of issues identifying the offense that resulted in the JR commitment and classifying detention episodes accurately.

| Recidivism Outcomes by Incarceration History²¹ | | | | | | |
|--|------------------|------------|---------------|-------------------|------------|---------------|
| | All Recidivism | | | Felony Recidivism | | |
| | All Dispositions | Diversions | Adjudications | All Dispositions | Diversions | Adjudications |
| No Prior Incarcerations | 18.2 | 17.0 | 30.5 | 4.6 | 3.8 | 11.1 |
| Qualifying Offense Pretrial Detention | 42.9 | 31.6 | 49.5 | 17.6 | 8.0 | 22.0 |
| Prior Offense Detention Stays | 47.8 | 32.4 | 54.7 | 20.5 | 8.5 | 24.8 |
| Any Prior JR Stays | 66.1 | -- | 66.7 | 38.0 | -- | 38.4 |

Further examinations of the data reveal consistencies in the relationship between previous incarcerations and recidivism. The table below presents recidivism rates based upon previous incarceration history for those individuals whose qualifying offense was a property misdemeanor.²² The majority of instances find recidivism rates for property misdemeanants to be within a few percentage points of the overall cohort and the pattern of changes in recidivism rates remains consistent.

| Recidivism Outcomes for Property Misdemeanants by Incarceration History²³ | | | | | | |
|---|------------------|------------|---------------|-------------------|------------|---------------|
| | All Recidivism | | | Felony Recidivism | | |
| | All Dispositions | Diversions | Adjudications | All Dispositions | Diversions | Adjudications |
| No Prior Incarcerations | 17.6 | 16.1 | 41.5 | 4.6 | 4.1 | 15.5 |
| Instant Offense Pretrial Detention | 44.9 | 29.9 | 54.2 | 18.5 | 9.7 | 24.1 |
| Prior Offense Detention Stays | 47.3 | 29.6 | 56.8 | 18.7 | 8.0 | 24.1 |
| Any Prior JR Stays | 67.7 | -- | 68.9 | 25.8 | -- | 26.2 |

²¹ Fields with fewer than 30 subjects are omitted as to not provide potentially skewed or misleading statistics. Also, the one offender may be included in more than one of the prior incarceration categories.

²² Property misdemeanors were the modal offense for all court cohorts, representing between 26.9% and 44.4% of the total cohort.

²³ Fields with fewer than 30 subjects are omitted as to not provide potentially skewed or misleading statistics.

County Level

County level analysis of recidivism poses challenges because several counties have a low number of juveniles represented in the study. As a result, it is often difficult to draw county level conclusions. For example, 13 of the 35 juvenile jurisdictions in Washington State had fewer than 100 juveniles with dispositions in 2013. The number of counties with more than 100 subjects per category of analysis decreases further as the dispositions are disaggregated. For example, less than one-half of jurisdictions (16) had more than 100 subjects in the adjudicated cohort, and only 1 jurisdiction had more than 100 subjects in the JR release cohort.

Recidivism Outcomes by County²⁴

| | All Recidivism | | | | Felony Recidivism | | | |
|--------------------------|----------------------|----------------|-------------------|-------------|----------------------|----------------|-------------------|-------------|
| | All Dispositions (%) | Diversions (%) | Adjudications (%) | JR (%) | All Dispositions (%) | Diversions (%) | Adjudications (%) | JR (%) |
| State Average | 28.1 | 20.0 | 43.5 | 54.3 | 9.7 | 4.6 | 18.3 | 33.8 |
| Adams | 42.0 | 31.8 | -- | -- | 12.4 | 3.2 | -- | -- |
| Asotin/ Garfield | 30.5 | 25.8 | 32.1 | -- | 12.2 | 6.5 | 15.1 | -- |
| Benton/ Franklin | 31.8 | 25.0 | 48.0 | 44.1 | 10.7 | 6.1 | 20.4 | 26.5 |
| Chelan | 27.2 | 20.0 | 36.5 | -- | 7.7 | 4.0 | 11.5 | -- |
| Clallam | 28.7 | 14.5 | 44.7 | -- | 2.4 | 0.0 | 4.7 | -- |
| Clark | 33.3 | 25.4 | 47.7 | 58.5 | 13.1 | 6.0 | 23.0 | 46.3 |
| Cowlitz | 41.0 | 29.0 | 51.4 | -- | 14.4 | 6.1 | 21.0 | -- |
| Douglas | 24.6 | 14.8 | 56.1 | -- | 9.8 | 4.6 | 26.8 | -- |
| Ferry | -- | -- | -- | -- | -- | -- | -- | -- |
| Grant | 30.1 | 24.9 | 43.3 | -- | 11.7 | 6.8 | 21.3 | -- |
| Grays Harbor | 28.8 | 21.7 | 50.9 | -- | 7.7 | 5.0 | 16.4 | -- |
| Island | 21.0 | 14.8 | 31.7 | -- | 3.0 | 1.6 | 4.9 | -- |
| Jefferson | 29.4 | -- | -- | -- | 7.8 | -- | -- | -- |
| King | 20.9 | 10.3 | 36.4 | 51.4 | 10.0 | 4.3 | 18.5 | 34.6 |
| Kitsap | 25.7 | 14.7 | 39.9 | -- | 9.2 | 4.6 | 15.0 | -- |
| Kittitas | 14.5 | 18.8 | 13.2 | -- | 2.9 | 6.3 | 2.6 | -- |
| Klickitat | 34.0 | 26.5 | -- | -- | 9.4 | 8.8 | -- | -- |
| Lewis | 28.6 | 28.7 | 34.0 | -- | 11.2 | 8.7 | 15.5 | -- |
| Lincoln | -- | -- | -- | -- | -- | -- | -- | -- |
| Mason | 24.3 | 17.8 | 34.8 | -- | 6.6 | 2.7 | 11.6 | -- |
| Okanogan | 41.9 | 23.3 | 60.4 | -- | 20.6 | 9.6 | 31.3 | -- |
| Pacific/ Wahkiakum | 30.4 | -- | -- | -- | 8.9 | 3.2 | -- | -- |
| Pend Oreille | 9.5 | 11.1 | -- | -- | 0.0 | 0.0 | -- | -- |
| Pierce | 28.0 | 20.5 | 46.7 | 48.0 | 10.7 | 5.6 | 22.9 | 36.0 |
| San Juan | -- | -- | -- | -- | -- | -- | -- | -- |
| Skagit | 25.7 | 22.4 | 37.7 | -- | 6.4 | 2.6 | 15.4 | -- |
| Skamania | 33.3 | -- | -- | -- | 12.1 | -- | -- | -- |
| Snohomish | 28.1 | 21.0 | 44.5 | 51.1 | 9.1 | 4.6 | 18.3 | 29.8 |
| Spokane | 23.2 | 12.5 | 45.5 | 62.5 | 9.7 | 2.7 | 23.8 | 50.0 |
| Stevens | 32.4 | 31.6 | 44.4 | -- | 7.4 | 0.0 | 13.9 | -- |
| Thurston | 30.6 | 19.8 | 44.2 | 61.3 | 6.5 | 2.5 | 12.0 | 19.4 |
| Walla Walla/ Columbia | 35.4 | 28.1 | 49.6 | -- | 9.1 | 3.4 | 15.5 | -- |
| Whatcom | 30.9 | 24.2 | 49.4 | -- | 7.9 | 3.5 | 17.2 | -- |
| Whitman | 16.7 | -- | -- | -- | 5.6 | -- | -- | -- |
| Yakima | 27.2 | 20.8 | 38.1 | 48.5 | 9.1 | 4.6 | 16.5 | 27.3 |

As discussed in the population demographics section, a number of counties had a disproportionate number of diversions to adjudication (Benton/Franklin, Douglas, Grant, Grays Harbor, Pierce, Skagit, Snohomish, Spokane, and Whatcom). Despite the high percentage of diversion cases, they had a combined all recidivism rate for all dispositions of 28.2%, which is almost identical to the state average of 28.1% and well below the only county with a disproportionate number of adjudications to diversions (Cowlitz County, 41.0%). Further analysis would be required to identify why an increased proportion of diversions did not result in recidivism rates lower than the state average. However, it signifies that case disposition is not the only explanatory factor for recidivism rates.

Conclusion

As discussed, the highest rates of recidivism are found with the JR release cohort, followed by the adjudicated cohort, all dispositions and then, the diversion cohort. These results were anticipated, because dispositions do not occur in a vacuum, nor are they meted out randomly. From this study, the more severe dispositions are associated with longer and more severe criminal histories and more severe qualifying offenses. The relationship between past offending and criminal sanctioning on current offenses has been identified in previous research (Durham III, 1987). This finding is consistent with the stated aims and objectives of criminal justice institutions at both the federal and state level (USSC, 2016; Washington CFC, 2016), as well as previous court rulings (Kent v. U.S., 1966). So, those who have committed serious offenses or have a record of prior crimes are more likely to receive more severe case dispositions and then are more likely to commit future offenses.

As described above, criminal history explains a portion of the disposition and our analysis showed that those with more and more severe criminal histories had higher rates of recidivism. These results are in line with previous research. An individual's criminal history is often cited as a predictive factor for recidivism and is prominently featured in risk assessments and recidivism studies (Andrews and

²⁴ Fields with fewer than 30 subjects are omitted as to not provide potentially skewed or misleading statistics.

Bonta, 1995; Barnoski and Drake, 2007; Latessa, et. al., 2009; Van Nostrand and Lowenkamp, 2011).

Further analysis can be done in this area to identify specific offense types, number of offenses, or other factors to further elucidate the relationship between criminal history and future offending.

Males also demonstrated higher rates of recidivism, relative to females. Males are overrepresented in the criminal justice system at all stages and offender ages (Durose, Snyder, & Cooper, 2015; FBI, 2015; Hunt and Dumville, 2016). The only surprise in this finding was that JR cohort females had higher rates of all recidivism. As noted earlier, JR cohort males had higher felony recidivism rates than JR cohort females.

The individual's age at first disposition also showed a relationship to recidivism. Generally, the earlier a person had their first disposition, the more likely they were to recidivate after the qualifying offense. This factor has also been identified by a number of previous researchers and scholars as predictive of future offending (Blumstein, Farrington, and Moitra, 1985; Farrington and Hawkins, 1991; Moffitt, 1993). The inverse relationship between age of first disposition and recidivism rates found in the court cohorts was not as consistent with JR cohort. However, as with other disparities between the court and JR cohorts, this may be explained by demographic, qualifying offense, criminal history, or other differences not captured in our study.

While we believe this study provides an accurate and important picture of the state of recidivism among juvenile offenders in Washington State, there is room for improvement. In the next report we hope to incorporate data from the Washington State Department of Corrections to ensure subjects had the minimum follow up period as street time, as well as track case outcomes. We also aim to include King County detention facility records prior to 2013, to provide a more comprehensive record of each subjects' previous detentions. In addition, we will attempt to incorporate additional explanatory variables into the analysis to provide deeper insight into the court and JR populations, their recidivism, and possible explanations for these outcomes.

The most daunting obstacle to improving recidivism reporting is a lack of accurate data. We cannot account for all the time that juveniles have spent off the streets during a potential follow-up period

without jail and DOC data. In addition, as discussed above, recidivism often becomes the sole outcome measure for court-involved youth. Including other outcomes such as education, employment, and health would give a more complete picture of the status of the youth population and the successes or failures of the juvenile justice system. If there are no efforts to connect incarceration, education, health, and employment data to court data, then our reporting will always be incomplete and significant opportunities for system improvement, intervention program development, and rehabilitation will be lost.

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