

Overview

Authorized under [Executive Order 2023-20](#), in partnership with the Governor's Office of Youth, Faith and Family, the Arizona Juvenile Justice Commission (AJJC) facilitates the Racial and Ethnic Disparities (R/ED) Workgroup, which has been identified as the coordinating body to assist in developing this plan. AJJC serves as the supervisory entity responsible for the state's compliance with the Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention Act (JJDP). Additionally, AJJC serves as the State's Interstate Compact for Juvenile Supervision Council as required by [ARS § 8-361](#).

Statewide Data

The Arizona R/ED data report contains five data collection points. Arizona's definitions of the decision points differ slightly from the definitions used within the 2024 Title II solicitation guidelines. Each definition used within this report is provided below to clarify any differences.

Arrest/Referral: Referral statistics are used in Arizona's R/ED planning report. Juveniles can enter the court system via other avenues besides law enforcement. Schools and caregivers can also submit a referral to juvenile court to allege a delinquent or incorrigible act. Therefore, restricting referrals to only those initiated by an arrest does not accurately capture the entire scope of the target population.

Diversion: In Arizona, diversion allows a juvenile to avoid the formal court process and instead receive a referral alleging an adjusted offense if the juvenile complies with one or more condition(s). Adjusting means disposing of a case without the juvenile being required to appear in court. If a referral is adjusted, a petition is not filed.

Detention: Juvenile detention centers temporarily confine juveniles. A juvenile may be detained pending a court hearing or as a dispositional option as ordered by the court. The main difference between the state and federal definitions is that in Arizona, detention can be issued to a juvenile as a court-ordered consequence for committing a delinquent act or violating the terms of probation in addition to pre-trial circumstances.

Secure Confinement: In Arizona, data related to secure confinement pertains to long-term confinement, or commitment to juvenile corrections. Youth are typically committed to juvenile corrections due to their high-risk status, which requires more restrictive supervision and programming than can be offered in the county system through juvenile probation.

Transfer to Adult Court: Juveniles who meet specific criteria may be transferred to the adult system. The state may transfer felony offenders under 18 to be tried by the criminal court and detained in an adult jail or prison. Many factors are used to determine transfer, including but not

limited to the severity of the offense, the juvenile’s criminal history, and the juvenile court’s ability to provide adequate services to rehabilitate the offender.

The following data sets compare statewide juvenile data with Maricopa County, Arizona’s most populous county, and all other Arizona counties. Arizona has provided the percent distribution of race or ethnic groups compared to the general population from the most recent U.S. Census data obtained from [Easy Access to Juvenile Populations](#) (EZAPOP). The 2020 baseline data is the most recent year available through EZAPOP. This baseline population data has been compared to the [2020 Arizona Juvenile Data](#) obtained through the Arizona Office of the Courts per the [2024 Title II Solicitation](#).

State of Arizona - R/ED Data						
Race		White	Black	American Indian	Asian	Hispanic
Population		386,060	58,991	48,674	34,673	417,853
Referral	Number	5,914	1,745	717	86	4,316
	Percentage	1.53%	2.96%	1.47%	0.25%	1.03%
Diversion	Number	2,699	519	219	43	1,539
	Percentage	0.70%	0.88%	0.45%	0.12%	0.37%
Detention	Number	710	423	143	18	759
	Percentage	0.18%	0.72%	0.29%	0.05%	0.18%
Secure Confinement	Number	38	26	6	0	75
	Percentage	0.01%	0.04%	0.01%	0.00%	0.02%
Adult Transfer	Number	60	72	6	2	119
	Percentage	0.02%	0.12%	0.01%	0.01%	0.03%

Maricopa County - R/ED Data						
Race		White	Black	American Indian	Asian	Hispanic
Population		255,965	46,406	12,532	28,065	264,790
Referral	Number	2,708	1,182	196	52	1,426
	Percentage	1.06%	2.55%	1.56%	0.19%	0.54%
Diversion	Number	1,376	341	73	29	553

	Percentage	0.54%	0.73%	0.58%	0.10%	0.21%
Detention	Number	311	305	51	13	380
	Percentage	0.12%	0.66%	0.41%	0.05%	0.14%
Secure Confinement	Number	17	22	3	0	39
	Percentage	0.01%	0.05%	0.02%	0.00%	0.01%
Adult Transfer	Number	34	54	3	1	57
	Percentage	0.01%	0.12%	0.02%	0.00%	0.02%

All Other Counties - R/ED Data						
Race		White	Black	American Indian	Asian	Hispanic
Population		130,095	12,585	36,142	6,608	153,063
Referral	Number	3,206	563	521	34	2,890
	Percentage	2.46%	4.47%	1.44%	0.51%	1.89%
Diversion	Number	1,323	178	146	14	986
	Percentage	1.02%	1.41%	0.40%	0.21%	0.64%
Detention	Number	399	118	92	5	379
	Percentage	0.31%	0.94%	0.25%	0.08%	0.25%
Secure Confinement	Number	21	4	3	0	36
	Percentage	0.02%	0.03%	0.01%	0.00%	0.02%
Adult Transfer	Number	26	18	3	1	62
	Percentage	0.02%	0.14%	0.01%	0.02%	0.04%

Action Plan

1. What do your R/ED numbers tell you about your jurisdiction?

The state's action plan designates two target jurisdictions. The first is Maricopa County, which encompasses 61.8% of Arizona's population despite only covering 8.1% of Arizona's square miles. The Maricopa County data was compared to all other counties, primarily rural, with a few urban population centers scattered throughout the remaining 91.9% of Arizona's square miles.

Both data sets show notable disparities within all data points between Black youth compared with other races. This disparity is seen in urban (Maricopa) and rural (Other Counties) areas; therefore, it cannot be concluded that the disparities stem from location. Instead, the R/ED numbers imply Arizona has considerable juvenile justice system improvements to be accomplished at each of the data points to reduce disparities and prevent juvenile system involvement.

2. What would success in R/ED reduction look like for your state?

The overarching goal for each jurisdiction is to reduce disparities involving the overrepresentation of Black youth among all 5 data points. Arizona would measure the state's success by observing a decline in Black youth data rates and achieving comparable rates of detained White youth with other minority youth.

Arizona also recognizes the need to empower youth from diverse backgrounds to participate in decision-making processes related to juvenile justice reform. Creating opportunities for youth voices to be heard and valued when shaping policies and practices that affect their lives would be another success for Arizona.

3. How do you want to reduce R/ED next year?

Arizona hopes to see a yearly reduction in Black youth referrals. This reduction will prevent youth from getting further into the juvenile justice system. Since referrals are the entry point for many youth, reducing the referral rate will, in turn, reduce the other data points.

Arizona understands the racial and ethnic disproportionality within the state juvenile justice system is a complex problem with many possible contributing factors, such as bias, resource inequities, cultural and language differences, and other variables, which may even include factors that have not yet been discovered. Though the identification, assessment, intervention, and evaluation process can take substantial time before witnessing tangible outcomes, reducing referrals will be the starting point.

4. Why do you believe this is a reasonable reduction?

The target outcome of reducing referrals for Black youth is reasonable based on the understanding that racial and ethnic inequality within the system is a highly complicated issue

that takes time to unravel or distinguish which contributing factors need to be addressed through policy reform.

5. What do you need, if anything, from OJJDP to be successful with your R/ED action plan?

To succeed in Arizona's R/ED action plan, the Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention (OJJDP) is asked to provide support that will assist Arizona in determining reasonable objectives within the plan. Assistance in the form of published research or policy examples that demonstrate best practice interventions and reasonable outcomes would help provide a standard by which Arizona could evaluate its efforts.

OJJDP is also requested to provide technical assistance and share resources that have helped other states make significant gains toward achieving their R/ED goals. It is always helpful when OJJDP provides training and professional development for new staff members.

6. What safeguards will you put in place to ensure that as you work to reduce R/ED, you are equipping youth to live productive lives?

Collaboration and communication across Arizona systems impacting juveniles are critical for ensuring that efforts to reduce R/ED have addressed the need to reduce risk factors and increase protective factors to equip youth to live productive lives. Inclusion of representation from institutions tasked with protecting the public and advocating for victims will lead to interventions limited to addressing systemic inequality and achieving fairness within the juvenile justice system. The R/ED workgroup and AJJC will continue to conduct stakeholder meetings, including law enforcement, mental health professionals, and community members. The diverse makeup of these groups will ensure appropriate considerations are made throughout the planning process and subsequent action steps to achieve outcomes that do not lead to an increased risk to the community or the youth's future lives in mind.

Exhibit A. Alternative Data Comparison

We conducted the analyses in two distinct ways to provide a comprehensive understanding of racial/ethnic disparities in the data. The first method, adhering to OJJDP standards, compares the total percent distribution of each racial/ethnic group to its overall population distribution (i.e., the denominator is the total number of youth in that racial/ethnic group in the population). This approach helps identify disparities by showing how the representation of each group within the system compares to their presence in the general population. Our second method changes the denominator. It uses the number of "referred" youth within each racial/ethnic group as the denominator. This approach provides insights into how individuals from each racial/ethnic group are treated once they enter the system (i.e., after referral). By using both methods, we can capture a broader and more nuanced picture of potential biases and inequities.

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Race		White	Black	American Indian	Asian	Hispanic
Population		386,060	58,991	48,674	34,673	417,853
Referral	Number	5,914	1,745	717	86	4,316
	Percentage¹	1.53%	2.96%	1.47%	0.25%	1.03%
Diversion	Number	2,699	519	219	43	1,539
	Percentage²	45.64%	29.74%	30.54%	50.00%	35.66%
Detention	Number	710	423	143	18	759
	Percentage²	12.01%	24.24%	19.94%	20.93%	17.59%
Secure Confinement	Number	38	26	6	0	75
	Percentage²	0.64%	1.49%	0.84%	0.00%	1.74%
Adult Transfer	Number	60	72	6	2	119
	Percentage²	1.01%	4.13%	0.84%	2.33%	2.76%

Maricopa County - R/ED Data						
Race		White	Black	American Indian	Asian	Hispanic
Population		255,965	46,406	12,532	28,065	264,790

<u>Referral</u>	<u>Number</u>	2,708	1,182	196	52	1,426
	<u>Percentage¹</u>	1.06%	2.55%	1.56%	0.19%	0.54%
<u>Diversion</u>	<u>Number</u>	1,376	341	73	29	553
	<u>Percentage²</u>	50.81%	28.85%	37.24%	55.77%	38.78%
<u>Detention</u>	<u>Number</u>	311	305	51	13	380
	<u>Percentage²</u>	11.48%	25.80%	26.02%	25.00%	26.65%
<u>Secure Confinement</u>	<u>Number</u>	17	22	3	0	39
	<u>Percentage²</u>	0.63%	1.86%	1.53%	0.00%	2.73%
<u>Adult Transfer</u>	<u>Number</u>	34	54	3	1	57
	<u>Percentage²</u>	1.26%	4.57%	1.53%	1.92%	4.00%

<u>All Other Counties - R/ED Data</u>						
<u>Race</u>		<u>White</u>	<u>Black</u>	<u>American Indian</u>	<u>Asian</u>	<u>Hispanic</u>
<u>Population</u>		130,095	12,585	36,142	6,608	153,063
<u>Referral</u>	<u>Number</u>	3,206	563	521	34	2,890
	<u>Percentage¹</u>	2.46%	4.47%	1.44%	0.51%	1.89%
<u>Diversion</u>	<u>Number</u>	1,323	178	146	14	986
	<u>Percentage²</u>	41.27%	31.62%	28.02%	41.18%	34.12%
<u>Detention</u>	<u>Number</u>	399	118	92	5	379
	<u>Percentage²</u>	12.45%	20.96%	17.66%	14.71%	13.11%
<u>Secure Confinement</u>	<u>Number</u>	21	4	3	0	36
	<u>Percentage²</u>	0.66%	0.71%	0.58%	0.00%	1.25%
<u>Adult Transfer</u>	<u>Number</u>	26	18	3	1	62
	<u>Percentage²</u>	0.81%	3.20%	0.58%	2.94%	2.15%

¹ Percentage of youth in population.

² Percentage of youth referred.