

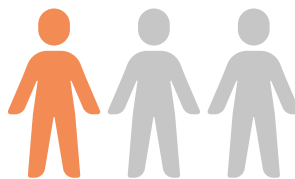
**Continue progress toward a trauma-informed youth justice system aimed at increasing community safety, reducing recidivism, supporting youth development and increasing community involvement.**

**Recommendations**

Fully implement the evidence-based services outlined in the Juvenile Justice Reform Act.

Fund innovation and pilot programs to address juvenile offenses without court involvement.

Invest in community-based programs to support youth as they transition back to their communities after detention.



By age 23, nearly 1 in 3 Americans have been arrested for a crime.<sup>1</sup>

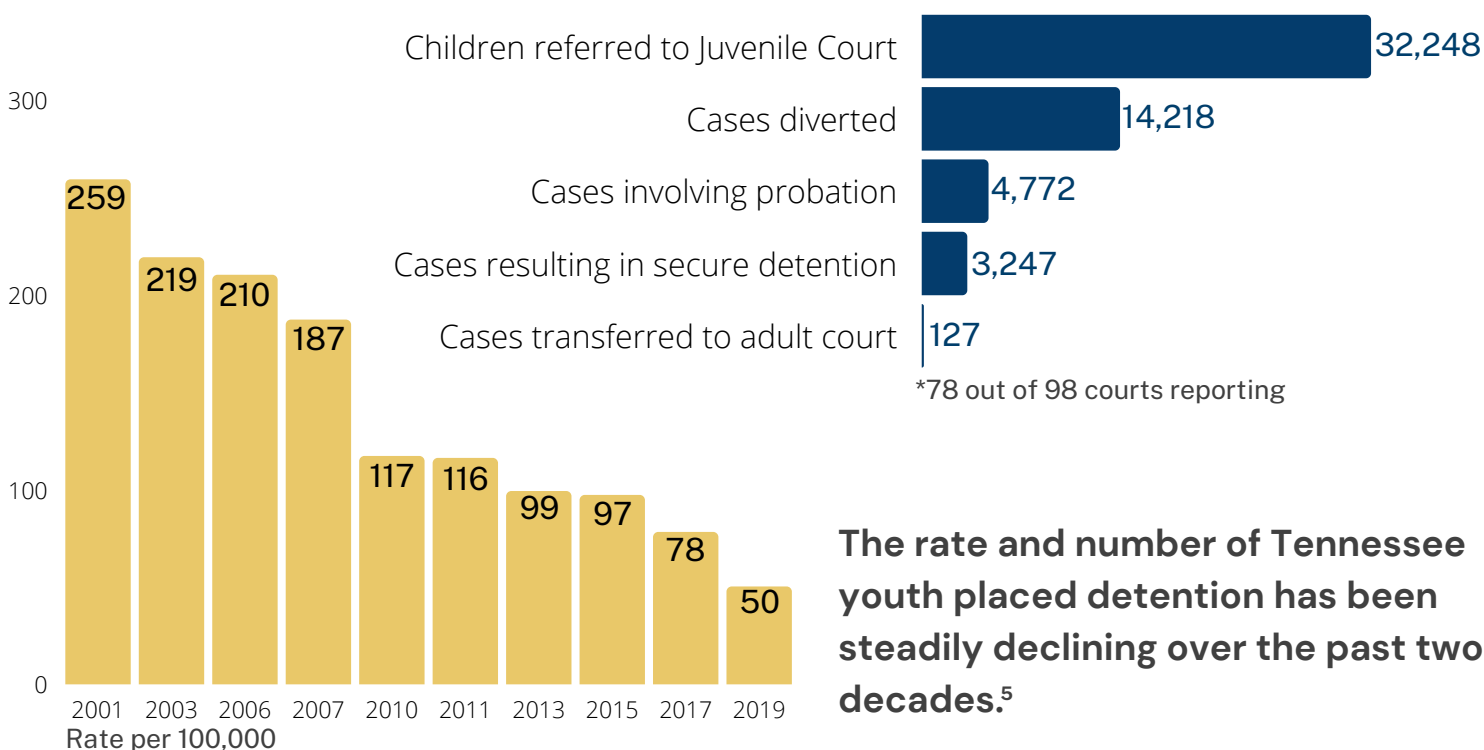
**70%** of youth in custody reported they had something very bad or terrifying happen to them.<sup>2</sup>

**67%** reported they had seen someone severely injured or killed.<sup>2</sup>

**"For some youth, the juvenile justice experience may itself be retraumatizing, eliciting feelings of loss of control, and triggering memories and reactions of prior trauma." - American Bar Association<sup>3</sup>**

**Tennessee Juvenile Court Case Outcomes<sup>4</sup>**

January 1, 2020–December 31, 2020



**The rate and number of Tennessee youth placed detention has been steadily declining over the past two decades.<sup>5</sup>**

**Continue progress toward a trauma-informed youth justice system aimed at increasing community safety, reducing recidivism, supporting youth development and increasing community involvement.**

**Diversion from Court to Community-Based Resources**

The justice system, can become like a maze, with many ways in and few out. Diversion from court to community-based resources can prevent youth from getting stuck in the system, a frequently costly, ineffective outcome.

Often, when provided the resources, communities, families and schools can hold young people accountable for their actions through evidence-based interventions while engaging them in positive experiences like school, work, volunteer service and sports.

When we divert youth from the court system to community based resources, they receive a faster, more tailored response. This results in a more efficient system, treating the unique needs of each youth while lowering the risk of recidivism.

"Research shows that the longer a child is out of his or her home, the greater his or her likelihood is of reoffending. **The goal should be to rectify the behavior and return the child to his or her home environment as soon as possible.**" - Beacon Center of Tennessee<sup>6</sup>

**Youth who were diverted pre-arrest were 2.5x less likely to reoffend than non-diverted peers.**<sup>7</sup>

**Youth who committed serious offenses and participated in a restorative justice diversion were 44% less likely to recidivate than those prosecuted in court for the same offenses.**<sup>8</sup>

**Those harmed by a young person's offenses report higher satisfaction from restorative justice than the court process, one study reported 91 percent would participate again.**<sup>8,9</sup>

**Restorative Justice**

While Restorative Justice practices can be implemented in adult and youth justice systems, they are particularly impactful among youth due to their developmental stage and capacity for change. University of Wisconsin Law outlines the goals and principles of restorative justice below.

"Restorative justice seeks to examine the **harmful impact of a crime and then determines what can be done to repair that harm while holding the person who caused it accountable for his or her actions.** Accountability for the offender means accepting responsibility and acting to repair the harm done. Outcomes seek to both repair the harm and address the reasons for the offense, while reducing the likelihood of re-offense. Rather than focusing on the punishment meted out, restorative justice measures results by how successfully the harm is repaired.

**Restorative Justice Principals**

1. **Crime is a violation of people and relationships.** Crime hurts individual victims, communities, and offenders and creates obligations to put things right. Restoration means repairing the harm done and rebuilding relationships in the community.
2. **Victims and the community are central to the justice process.** All parties should be a part of the response to a crime — victim (if he or she chooses to be involved), community, and the offender.
3. **A primary focus of a justice process is to assist victims and address needs.** The victim's perspective is key to determining how to repair the harm resulting from the crime.
4. **The secondary focus is restoring the community to the degree possible.** The offender has a personal responsibility to victims and to the community for wrongs committed. Parties involved in the restorative justice process share responsibility for repairing harm through partnerships for action. The community has a responsibility for the well-being of all its members, including both victims and offenders.
5. **All human beings have dignity and worth.** Victim and offender are both able to move forward with respect, and dignity, and are re-integrated into the broader community as much as possible."<sup>10</sup>