



SENTENCING SNAPSHOT

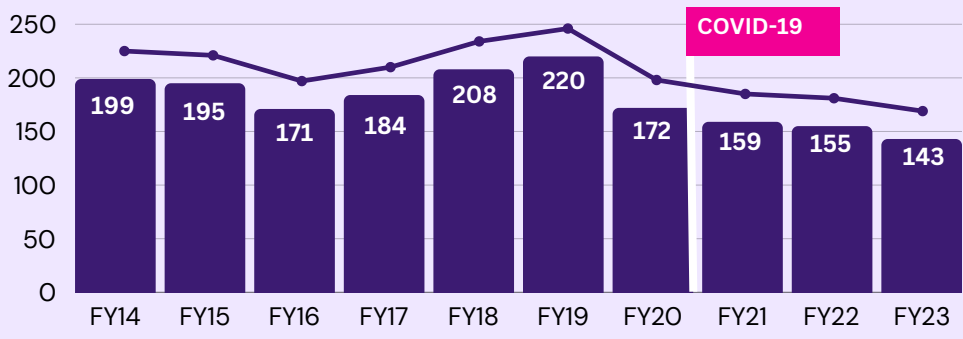


ISSUE 12—JUNE 2024

SENTENCING TRENDS FOR JUVENILES IN MARYLAND CIRCUIT COURTS

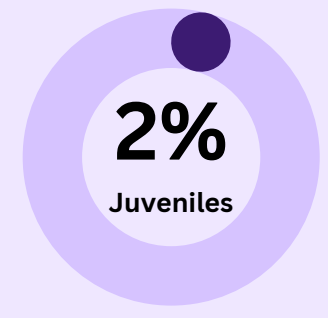
This Sentencing Snapshot examines juveniles (i.e., individuals under the age of 18 as of the date of offense) sentenced as adults in Maryland circuit courts in fiscal years (FY) 2014 through 2023. Additional information, including methodology, may be found on the [MSCCSP website](#).

JUVENILES SENTENCED AS ADULTS IN MARYLAND



The number of juveniles sentenced in adult circuit courts has steadily declined since FY 2020. This decline continued even after courts resumed normal post-COVID operations.

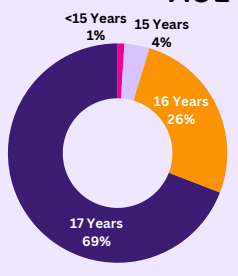
JUVENILES VS ADULTS



2% of guidelines-eligible individuals sentenced from FY 2014 through FY 2023 were juveniles at the time of the offense.

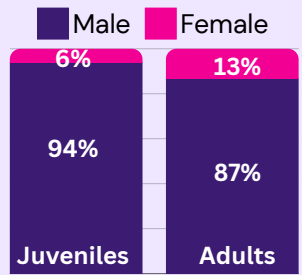
CHARACTERISTICS OF JUVENILES SENTENCED IN ADULT CIRCUIT COURTS FY 2014- FY 2023

AGE



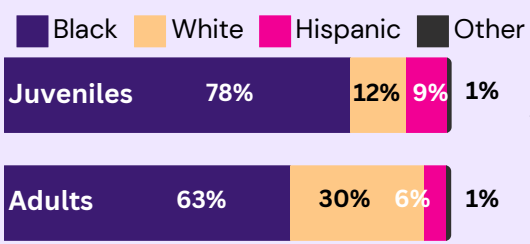
5% of juveniles sentenced in adult circuit courts were **less than 16 years old** at the time of the offense. The youngest defendant was 11 years old.

SEX



Juveniles sentenced in adult courts were **less likely** than adults to be **female**.

RACE



Juveniles sentenced in adult courts were **more likely** than adults to be **Black** or **Hispanic**.

MOST COMMON OFFENSES

- Robbery w/ Dangerous Weapon
- Robbery
- Assault, 2nd Degree
- Possession of a Firearm, < 21 Yrs
- Assault, 1st Degree
- Firearm Use in a COV or Felony
- Wear, Carry, or Transport a Handgun

JUVENILE DELINQUENCY



Nearly half of juveniles sentenced in adult circuit courts had been previously **adjudicated delinquent** one or more times.

31%

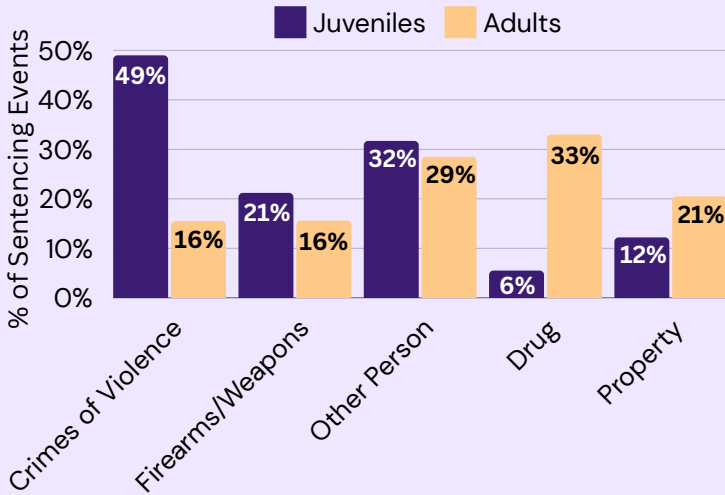
Misdemeanors Only

31% of juveniles sentenced in adult circuit courts were sentenced for **misdemeanors** only.



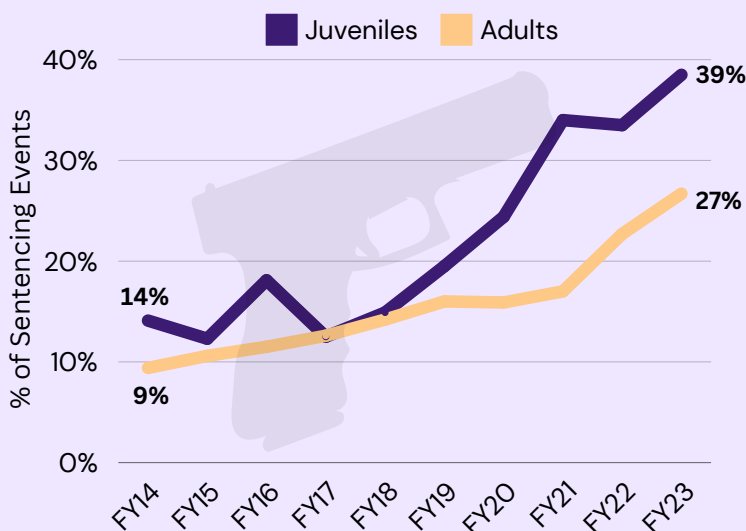
SENTENCING TRENDS FOR JUVENILES IN MARYLAND CIRCUIT COURTS

OFFENSE TYPE FY 2014 - FY 2023



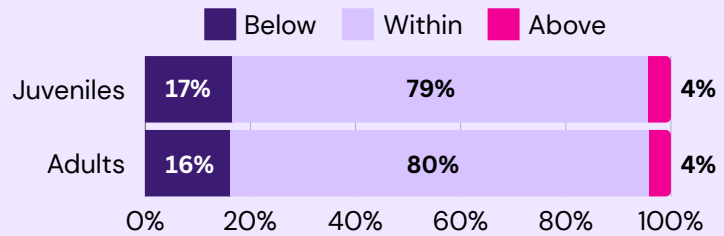
Juveniles were **more likely** than adults to be sentenced in adult courts for **crimes of violence**. This finding is not surprising, as juveniles are typically sentenced in adult courts for only the most serious offenses. Youth 16 years or older must be charged in adult courts for most crimes of violence, though they can be waived to the juvenile court under certain conditions. CJ, §§ 3-8A-03, 3-8A-06.

FIREARM/WEAPONS OFFENSE CONVICTIONS



The percentage of guidelines-individuals sentenced for firearm/weapons offenses increased substantially over the past decade. Among **juveniles**, the percentage of sentencing events involving a **firearm/weapons offense** **increased** from 14% to 39% from FY 2014 to FY 2023.

SENTENCING GUIDELINES COMPLIANCE

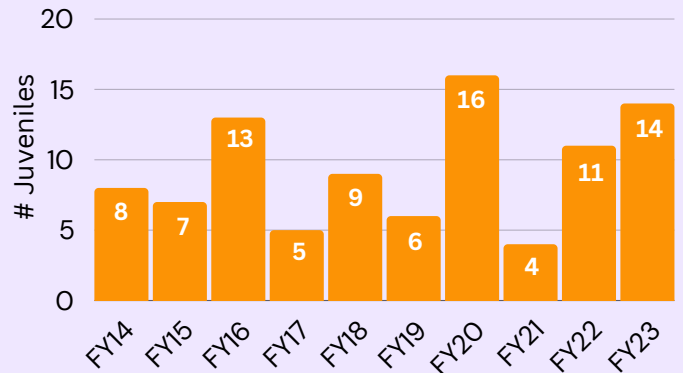


Sentencing guidelines **compliance** is **nearly identical** for juveniles and adults sentenced in adult circuit courts from FY 2014 through FY 2023.

LIFE-ELIGIBLE OFFENSES

Life-eligible offenses carry a statutory maximum penalty of life incarceration and include **Murder, 1st Degree, Rape, 1st Degree**, and attempts, conspiracies, and solicitations of these offenses.

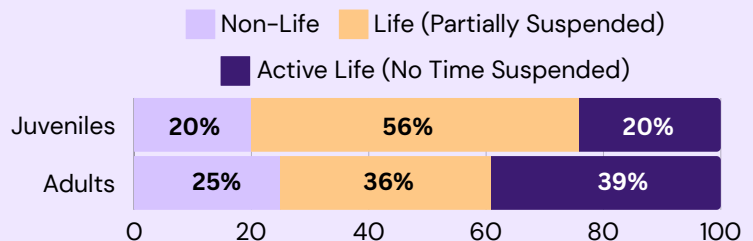
JUVENILES SENTENCED FOR LIFE-ELIGIBLE OFFENSES



9
Average number of juveniles sentenced for life-eligible offenses per year

2
Average number of juveniles sentenced to active life sentences per year

SENTENCE TYPE



Juveniles were **more likely** than adults to receive **partially suspended life sentences** for life-eligible offenses. Adults were more likely than juveniles to receive active life sentences.