

# 10. Juvenile Arrests

## What It Is

Juvenile felony and misdemeanor arrests are calculated per 1,000 juveniles ages 10 to 17. Felonies involve injury or substantial property loss, while misdemeanors are offenses of a less serious nature.

## Why It Is Important

Although juvenile crime is decreasing, to the public at large it remains one of the most salient indicators of social breakdown. For this reason it is important to look at what these data actually show about the prevalence of serious juvenile crime. Negative peer influence is one of the strongest correlates of juvenile crime. A history of abuse or neglect, mental health problems, and family disorganization is also associated with juvenile crime. Boys are more likely to be arrested than girls. Nationally, young people of color are statistically over-represented as victims of crimes. They are also over-represented throughout the entire juvenile justice system for arrests, convictions, and sentencing.

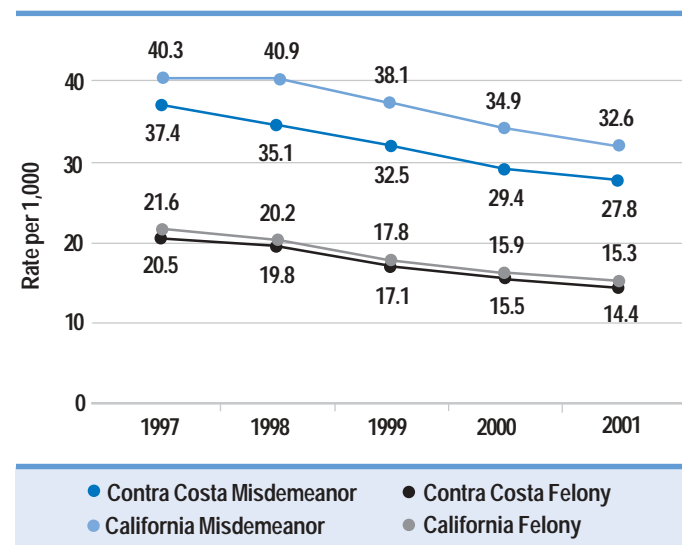
The sense of disenfranchisement that can be associated with poverty is also a contributing factor to juvenile crime. Providing economic opportunity through employment and education can help protect against juvenile crime. It is also important that the community promote youth assets through opportunities for youth leadership, including involvement in decision-making and community service. Other successful strategies include involvement with a caring adult, faith based organizations, or other social institution and healthy activities such as sports, music, art, and drama.

## How We Are Doing

Corresponding with state and national trends, the juvenile arrest rate in Contra Costa County decreased during the past five years, and remained lower than the statewide rate. In 2001, there were 3,003 juvenile misdemeanor arrests in Contra Costa County, a rate of 27.8 misdemeanor arrests per 1,000 youth ages 10 to 17 compared to a rate of 32.6 statewide. In 2001, there were 1,558 juvenile felony arrests in Contra Costa County, or 14.4 felony arrests per 1,000 youth ages 10 to 17 compared to a rate of 15.3

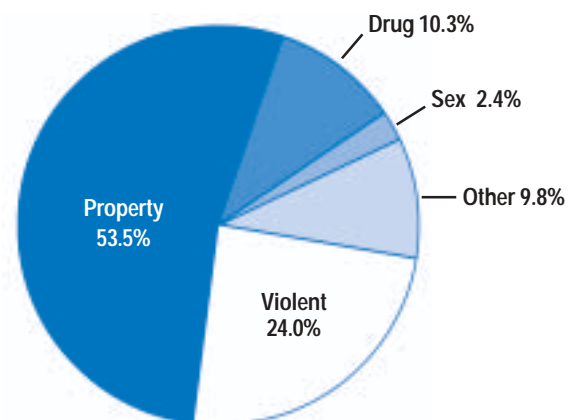
statewide. The majority of local felony arrests (53.5%) were for property crimes. Another 24.1% were violent crimes (homicide, rape, robbery, assault and kidnapping), 10.3% were drug offenses, 2.4% were sex crimes, and 9.8% were other types of felony arrests.

Figure 10.1 — Juvenile Arrest Rates for Felony and Misdemeanor Crimes Ages 10 to 17



Source: California Department of Justice, Criminal Justice Statistics Center, 2002.

Figure 10.2 — Contra Costa County Percentage of Juvenile Felony Crimes by Type, 2001



Source: California Department of Justice, Criminal Justice Statistics Center, 2002.