

Juvenile Arrests

DEFINITION

This indicator reports the number of juvenile arrests for serious crimes per 10,000 youth in 2008.

There are several problems with these data, as described below, but they have been used because they are the best data available that break down arrests by county. Other sources report much higher juvenile arrest rates for the state (Office of Juvenile Justice and Protection 2009, U.S. Census Bureau 2010). These sources do not use the category of “serious crimes” but two related categories of “violent crime” and “property crime.” The Office of Juvenile Justice and Protection (2009) includes a statistic on “reporting coverage.” New Hampshire’s rate is 78 percent compared to 100 percent for Maine, so state by state comparisons may be problematic.

Furthermore, a 2004 report issued by the New Hampshire Center for Public Policy Studies states that New Hampshire’s “estimated number of arrests” is based on voluntary reporting by police departments to the New Hampshire Department of Safety and that communities with approximately one third of the state’s population, including the city of Nashua, do not report arrests to the state (Merrow 2004, 6). It is not known if this is still an accurate representation of New Hampshire’s reporting system.

CONTEXT

Serious crimes include murder and non-negligent manslaughter, rape, robbery, aggravated assault, burglary, larceny-theft, motor vehicle theft, and arson.

The legal age of adult criminal responsibility in New Hampshire is 17 years of age. In New Hampshire, a juvenile delinquent is a person younger than 17 years who has committed an offense that would be a misdemeanor or a felony if committed by an adult. The juvenile justice system and the adult justice system are two separate systems. When a juvenile is charged with an offense, he or she is tried before a judge in a district or family court. If the juvenile is found to have committed the offense, he or she might be ordered to complete a rehabilitative treatment program, be referred to a residential program, perform community service or restitution. A limited number of serious or repeat offenders may be committed to the state’s secure facility: the Sununu Youth Services Center.

Juvenile Arrests for Serious Crimes By County, 2008

	Per 10,000 youth
STATE TOTAL	84
Belknap County	64
Carroll County	91
Cheshire County	52
Coos County	66
Grafton County	110
Hillsborough County	107
Merrimack County	95
Rockingham County	46
Strafford County	115
Sullivan County	47

NEW HAMPSHIRE FINDINGS

In 2008, there were 84 juvenile arrests for serious crimes per 10,000 youth in New Hampshire. This rate varied greatly by county from 46 per 10,000 in Rockingham County to 115 per 10,000 in Strafford County. In the less populous counties, a small change in the number of arrests in one year may have a significant effect on the rate of juvenile arrests. (see table on previous page)

New Hampshire's rate of 84 juvenile arrests per 10,000 youth was much lower than the U.S. rate of 133 per 10,000 youth. In New England, New Hampshire's juvenile arrest rate was much lower than the 168 per 10,000 for Maine but higher than the 66 per 10,000 rate for Vermont (Carsey).

From 1991 to 2008, the rate of juvenile arrests in the United States declined by 57 percent, whereas in New Hampshire the rate of arrests fell by 44 percent (Carsey).

SOURCE OF DATA FOR ILLUSTRATION/METHODOLOGY

The Carsey Institute Indicator Website. (Carsey) www.nneindicators.unh.edu.

Original data source: 1990-2008: Federal Bureau of Investigation, Uniform Crime Reports, and National Archive of Criminal Justice Data, Uniform Crime Reporting Data.

REFERENCES

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