

Overview of Pennsylvania's Juvenile Justice System

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Summary of Contents

This chapter will provide a kind of diagram of Pennsylvania's juvenile justice system, with a brief account of its beginnings and the way it has changed over the years; a look at how the system's different elements are organized, administered, and funded; and a statistical overview of delinquency case processing in the state, based on recent arrest, disposition, and residential placement data.

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§ 3-1 The Origins and Development of Pennsylvania Juvenile Courts

Prior to the establishment of juvenile courts in Pennsylvania and elsewhere, the common law recognized no such category as “juvenile delinquents,” but divided all law-breakers into “infants” and adults. Children under 7 were conclusively presumed incapable of forming the intent to commit a crime—“felonious discretion” at such an age being considered “an impossibility in nature.”¹ This “infancy defense” was also available to children between 7 and 14, but in their case it was rebuttable. Prosecutors could and did present evidence to show that individual children in this age group were capable of criminal intent. And children over 14 could not use the infancy defense at all; they were always prosecuted and punished just like adult criminals.²

Widespread dissatisfaction with this approach during the 19th century sparked a number of local reforms intended to deal with young criminals more effectively and humanely, and in particular to isolate them from adults. Philadelphia saw the creation of one of the nation's first “Houses of Refuge” for children in 1826, and separate correctional institutions for

Pennsylvania's juvenile courts are over a century old.

children convicted of crimes, vagrancy, and “incurability” became common in subsequent years.³ By 1893, Pennsylvania law already required separate trials and trial dockets for children, and prohibited their confinement with alleged or convicted adult criminals.⁴

In 1899, Illinois established what is now generally regarded as the world's first juvenile court, in Cook County. The court used broad powers and informal procedures to deal with law-breaking children in an entirely new way—so that, as the new court's enabling legislation put it, “as far as practical they shall be treated not as criminals but as children in need of aid, encouragement, and guidance.”⁵ Most states followed suit soon afterwards. Pennsylvania passed its first Juvenile Court Act, modeled on the Illinois law, in 1901. While the 1901 law did not survive an initial constitutional challenge, an amended Juvenile Court Act of 1903 was immediately enacted and upheld by the Pennsylvania Supreme Court.

Originally, the juvenile court's jurisdiction in Pennsylvania extended only to minor crimes. The Juvenile Court Law of 1933, besides giving the court new authority to deal with “ungovernable” behavior and truancy, expanded the court's jurisdiction to cover all crimes except murder committed by children under 16. A 1939 amendment gave the court jurisdiction over children up to age 18.

While the juvenile court movement caught on quickly, it was not without critics. Despite the professed benevolence of the courts' intentions, their failure to afford basic due process safeguards to juveniles was regarded by many as unfair and inconsistent with our traditions. Eventually, the U.S. Supreme Court came to agree, concluding in a series of decisions, beginning with *Kent v. United States* in 1966, *In re Gault* in 1967, and *In re Winship* in 1970, that juveniles accused of delinquent acts were entitled to many of the basic rights enjoyed by adults accused of crimes.

In Pennsylvania, the legislature responded with the passage of the Juvenile Act of 1972. Based on the Uniform Juvenile Court Act, a model law developed by the National Conference of Commissioners on Uniform State Laws, the 1972 Act codified the rights of accused juveniles to receive written notice of charges against them, to be assisted by counsel, to confront accusers, and to be convicted only upon proof beyond a reasonable doubt.

Significant amendments to the Juvenile Act of 1972 were enacted in 1977, 1980, 1981, 1986 and 1989:

- The 1977 change established 10 as the minimum age at which a child could be considered delinquent, and deleted “ungovernable behavior” from the definition of “delinquent acts”—so that from then on courts would deal with cases of ungovernability as “dependency” rather than delinquency matters.
- A 1980 law authorized fingerprinting and photographing of juveniles and required that district attorneys receive notice before juveniles in secure custody could be stepped down to a less secure facility.
- In 1981, and again in 1986 and 1989, the Juvenile Act was amended to relax confidentiality restrictions related to the records of some categories of juvenile offenders.
- The 1986 amendments also for the first time gave victims and their counsel and supporters the right to attend juvenile hearings, and prohibited the entry of a consent decree without the district attorney's assent.

Pennsylvania's Juvenile Act took what is essentially its present shape in 1995, when the legislature acted to restrict the juvenile court's jurisdiction over a number of serious felonies (see § 4-4 for a listing of excluded offenses) and also redefined the court's basic mission to incorporate “balanced and restorative justice” principles (see discussion in Chapter 2, above).

§ 3-2 Basic Juvenile Justice Structure and Funding

Especially in comparison with most other states, Pennsylvania's is a highly decentralized juvenile justice system, characterized by an unusual amount of local control and experimentation and a very diverse mix of private delinquency service providers to supplement the public services network. There are states in which a single “Department of Juvenile Justice,” answerable to the governor, is responsible for everything. Pennsylvania isn't one of them. Here the state provides leadership, but the local juvenile courts run the probation departments. For the most part, the counties operate the detention centers. Judges decide where local juveniles will be committed, and relatively few end up in state-operated facilities. Even youth that are placed outside the home are far more likely to go to private institutions

Pennsylvania's county-based, public/private approach to delinquency has produced a model system.

than public ones. And wherever they go, they remain subject to local court custody and supervision.

This diversified approach has some weaknesses, but it has many more strengths, and Pennsylvania's juvenile justice system is generally considered a model for the nation. So, for example, as a widely acknowledged “bellwether” on juvenile justice issues, Pennsylvania was the first state chosen to participate in the John D. and Catherine T. MacArthur Foundation's Models for Change initiative, a long-term effort to create successful and replicable models of juvenile justice system reform through targeted investments in key states.⁶

Basic Elements of the System

The basic elements of the Pennsylvania juvenile justice system are the following:⁷

- *Juvenile Courts.* The Pennsylvania Constitution gives the Courts of Common Pleas in each of the state's 67 counties “unlimited original jurisdiction in all cases except as may otherwise be provided by law.”⁸ This general grant of authority extends to juvenile delinquency matters, among many others. Some counties have established permanent “juvenile divisions” of their Courts of Common Pleas, while others merely hold regularly scheduled “juvenile days.” By custom, however, whenever a Court of Common Pleas is hearing a juvenile matter, it is referred to as a “juvenile court,” and this usage will be observed throughout this work.
- *Court Administration.* In most counties, the administrative direction of the juvenile court is entrusted to an administrative judge designated by the president judge of the county. (In Philadelphia and Allegheny Counties, however, the administrative judge is appointed by the Supreme Court.) In a number of jurisdictions, the president judge functions as the administrative judge of the juvenile court. A chief juvenile probation officer is appointed by the court to oversee the county's juvenile probation department.
- *Juvenile Probation.* County juvenile probation officers in Pennsylvania are the juvenile court's foot soldiers, serving as the primary points of contact with court-involved youth from intake through case termination. They are responsible for initial screening, predisposition investigation, probation supervision, and “aftercare” or post-commitment supervision. In some counties, they play a role in victim services as well. Juvenile probation officers in Pennsylvania tend to be experienced, educated, and well-trained. To be hired, a juvenile probation officer must have a bachelor's degree with at least 18 credits in the social sciences, but about a quarter of all juvenile probation officers statewide hold graduate degrees. The annual turnover rate is about 10%.⁹ The Juvenile Court Judges' Commission offers an optional 40-hour orientation for new officers through its Center for Juvenile Justice Training and Research at Shippensburg University, and mandates 40 hours of continuing training annually. The JCJC also underwrites tuition for probation officers who complete a two-year weekend master's program at Shippensburg University that was developed especially for juvenile probation officers.
- *Detention.* There are a total of 22 secure juvenile detention facilities in operation in Pennsylvania—3 private facilities and 19 that are owned and operated by individual counties or several counties—accepting temporary custody of juveniles awaiting

adjudication, disposition or placement. Some house only youth from their own counties, and others serve regional catchment areas. With a combined total of approximately 780 beds, these facilities accept as many as 20,000 admissions in a typical year.¹⁰ The median length of stay in detention tends to be about 10 days.¹¹ Facility utilization rates (average daily population divided by bed capacity) tend to range from a low of about 40% to a high of about 150%.¹²

- *State-Operated Institutions.* The Bureau of Juvenile Justice Services (BJJ) within the Department of Public Welfare's Office of Children, Youth and Families (OCYF) administers and manages a network of Youth Development Centers, Youth Forestry Camps, and Secure Treatment Units. There are a total of 12 such state-operated facilities, one of which is operated for the state by a private contractor, with an overall capacity of 618 beds (365 secure and 253 non-secure, including a 16-bed community re-entry program and a 30-bed facility for females). Specialized programs serve sex offenders, substance abusers, emotionally disturbed offenders, developmentally delayed offenders, and dually-diagnosed offenders.
- *Private Providers.* Pennsylvania's array of private sector delinquency service providers is arguably the best in the nation. There are well over 500 separate programs for delinquent youth in Pennsylvania, including secure placement programs, group homes, day treatment programs, alternative schools, wilderness programs, shelter and foster care programs, and specialized mental health, drug and alcohol, and sex offender treatment programs, all privately run but inspected and approved by the Department of Public Welfare. Many have long and distinguished histories, and some—such as the Glen Mills Schools in Concordville and George Junior Republic in Grove City—have been in the business of rehabilitating young people since before there were juvenile courts.

State Leadership Organizations

Key state agencies and organizations with juvenile justice responsibilities in Pennsylvania include the following:

- *Department of Public Welfare.* The Department of Public Welfare, through its Office of Children, Youth and Families, runs the state's delinquency institutions, advises the courts regarding institutional placement decisions, and approves and licenses many local and private institutions for juveniles. The DPW also fixes each county's "needs-based budget" for purposes of state reimbursement of county-purchased services for juveniles (see discussion of "Act 148," below), and administers the state's "placement maintenance" program for juveniles placed outside their homes (see sidebar, "Title IV-E Reimbursement Under the Social Security Act").
- *The Pennsylvania Commission on Crime and Delinquency.* The Pennsylvania Commission on Crime and Delinquency is the agency responsible for statewide criminal and juvenile justice system planning, coordination, and policy analysis. The PCCD provides data analysis, research, and legislative recommendations to the Governor's Office and the General Assembly, and administers and supports a number of important juvenile justice grant funding initiatives that benefit local governments. The state's Victim/Witness Assistance Program and its Crime Victims' Compensation Fund are overseen by the PCCD as well. The PCCD's expenditure of federal and state juvenile

justice funds is guided by a formal advisory group of service providers and other professionals that sits as the *Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention Committee*.

- *The Juvenile Court Judges' Commission.* The Juvenile Court Judges' Commission is a statutorily created body that collects and disseminates Pennsylvania juvenile court statistics, establishes administrative and procedural standards for juvenile courts, and sets personnel practices and employment standards for juvenile probation departments. Local juvenile probation departments benefit from JCJC grants intended to improve probation practice and promote various kinds of specialized probation (including school-based, community-based, intensive, and aftercare probation), and receive training, continuing education and graduate education through the JCJC's *Center for Juvenile Justice Training and Research* at Shippensburg University. The JCJC's nine judge-members are nominated by the Chief Justice of the Pennsylvania Supreme Court and appointed by the Governor for three-year terms, and are served by a permanent staff in Harrisburg and at Shippensburg University.
- *The Pennsylvania Council of Chief Juvenile Probation Officers.* The “Chiefs' Council” is a membership organization of chief probation officers, deputy chiefs, supervisors, and probation staff that sponsors and responds to proposed juvenile justice legislation, and works with the Juvenile Court Judges' Commission on probation training, education, and planning issues.

Juvenile Justice Funding

Pennsylvania juvenile justice system costs—including the costs of housing, supervising, treating, and otherwise meeting the needs of youth in the system—may be paid for out of private,¹³ federal, state and county funds. In general, Pennsylvania law¹⁴ provides that no state or local funds may be expended on behalf of a juvenile until all available federal and private funds for which the juvenile is eligible have been exhausted. Costs not otherwise covered by federal or private sources are shared by the state and county. Their respective shares are determined by means of a detailed schedule of state reimbursements laid out in the Public Welfare Code.¹⁵ As is discussed more fully below (see “Act 148 Funds”), the state covers a higher proportion of some kinds of costs than of other kinds. But state reimbursement is “capped” rather than unlimited: each county is allocated a finite amount, determined through the “unified needs-based budgeting process,” to draw upon each year for services to dependent and delinquent children and youth. The county itself is liable for actual expenditures that exceed the cap.

The principal sources of funding for juvenile justice in Pennsylvania are as follows:

Federal

- *Title IV-E.* Established under Title IV-E of the federal Social Security Act, the Title IV-E Placement Maintenance program reimburses Pennsylvania counties for a substantial portion (about 53%) of the costs of maintaining eligible juveniles in court-ordered placements. (See sidebar, “Title IV-E Reimbursement Under the Social Security Act.”)

TITLE IV-E REIMBURSEMENT UNDER THE SOCIAL SECURITY ACT

Title IV-E is an open-ended entitlement program, administered since 1980 by the Children's Bureau of the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, which provides funds to help cover the expenses of maintaining needy children in foster homes and child care institutions. Under Sec. 472(a) of the Social Security Act, 42 U.S.C. §672, a juvenile who has been removed from the home-whether it is in connection with a dependency or a delinquency case-is "IV-E eligible" if (1) the juvenile or the juvenile's family meets AFDC financial need and other tests and (2) the removing court has examined the facts and determined that removal from the family home was necessary and could not reasonably have been avoided. Basically, Title IV-E placement assistance is available in delinquency cases if courts make the same determinations regarding such issues as child safety, permanency and well-being that they are required by law to make in dependency cases. The Juvenile Court Judges' Commission has Model Petitions and Court Orders specifically designed to help Pennsylvania courts comply with these requirements. The forms are available online at www.jcjc.state.pa.us.

Under 42 U.S.C. §671 and 45 CFR 1356.21, a county can access Title IV-E financial support only if its courts make detailed, timely, and clearly documented findings on three issues in the cases of juveniles who require out-of-home placement:

- *Necessity of removal.* The court authorizing a juvenile's removal from the home must make a fact-based determination that "continuation in the home would be contrary to the welfare" of the juvenile-because he poses a threat to himself if left at large, for example, or needs out-of-home treatment, or will otherwise continue offending and thereby risk injuries or further penalties. Moreover, the court must do so in the *first* order that sanctions the juvenile's removal, even temporarily. So, for example, in a delinquency case that commences with a juvenile's being taken into custody and placed in detention, the court must make a "contrary to the welfare" finding at the time of the detention hearing-even though detention is not a "placement" qualifying for IV-E funding. Failure to do so means that the costs of any subsequent placement-even in a qualifying institution-will not be reimbursable.
- *Efforts to prevent removal.* Within 60 days of removal, the court must find that "reasonable efforts" were made to prevent removal-or that, under the circumstances, a failure to make advance efforts to prevent removal was "reasonable."
- *Efforts to finalize permanency.* Within 12 months of the date that the juvenile enters IV-E eligible foster care-generally at a special "permanency hearing" that is required for juveniles who have remained that long in placement-the court must find that "reasonable efforts have been made to finalize a permanent placement for the child."

Title IV-E placement assistance helps cover the costs of "24-hour substitute care" in "licensed or approved" foster homes or child care institutions that fall within the federal definition of "foster care." Detention centers, training schools, forestry camps, and other facilities "operated primarily for the detention of children who are determined to be delinquent" are specifically disqualified. But even physically secure facilities may qualify if the restrictions imposed on residents are intended for treatment rather than detention.

- *Medicaid.* The costs of a wide variety of medically necessary in-patient and out-patient services for eligible juveniles are reimbursable under Pennsylvania's federally funded Medical Assistance program. The DPW implemented its Integrated Children's Services Initiative—often referred to as “Medicaid Realignment”—to maximize the use of federal Medical Assistance funding for “medically necessary” treatment services to dependent and delinquent youth. Through this initiative, DPW identified behavioral health treatment services across the state that could be funded through the Medical Assistance program. This was a complex process requiring agencies and services to adhere to licensing and accreditation standards, some of which are difficult to meet, particularly for some small or rural county services. Child welfare and juvenile justice services (including court ordered services) that do not fall under “medical necessity” continue to be paid for with state and local funds through the Needs-Based Budgeting mechanism (described below).

State

- *“Act 148” Funds.* After all other available funding sources have been tapped, including all available federal funding and funding from the parents of delinquent and dependent children, so-called “Act 148” funds from the state may be drawn on. Under 62 P.S. §704.1 of the Public Welfare Code, as amended by Act 148 of 1976 as well as other laws, the state provides reimbursement for some of the costs of county-purchased services for juveniles, including day treatment, counseling, foster and institutional care, and detention. Act 148 reimbursement varies from 50% to more than 80% of covered costs, with the remaining costs covered by local matching funds. For instance, in-home and community-based services that the state wishes to encourage (such as counseling, referral, and day treatment services) are generally 80%-reimbursed, while reimbursement rates are deliberately set lower for secure detention (50%), secure residential (60%), and non-community-based residential services (60%). But the total annual amount a county may receive from this source is limited. Every year a finite state allocation is set for each county, determined by the Department of Public Welfare on the basis of the county's “Children and Youth Services Plan and Budget Estimate” for dependent and delinquent youth, which is submitted jointly by the juvenile court and the local children and youth agency. The plan/budget must take into account the county's previous spending, the number of juveniles entering the system, projected trends, needed services, and so on, and must be arrived at with the participation of juvenile court judges as well as juvenile probation departments. To ensure that the judiciary has had input into the process and an opportunity to determine that the proposed budget estimate accurately reflects the needs of juveniles served by the court, judges are required to “sign off” on these estimates before they are submitted.
- *Special grants.* In addition to the above, the Pennsylvania Commission on Crime and Delinquency administers a number of grant programs that fund local juvenile justice agencies,¹⁶ and the Juvenile Court Judges' Commission administers a state-funded grant-in-aid program that supports staff positions in virtually all county juvenile probation departments.¹⁷ Many of these grants require the county to pay for some portion of the expense covered by the grant with its own matching funds.

Local

- *County budgets.* County tax dollars pay for everything that is not funded by the above sources, including juvenile court support staff, most probation staff, building and operating costs, local dollar matches required for state and federal grants, and amounts that exceed the Act 148 reimbursement cap.

§ 3-3 Statistical Overview of Case Processing

A quick look at statistical information available from a variety of sources will convey a broad sense of the kinds of cases the juvenile courts normally handle and how they dispose of them:

- *Overall volume.* Pennsylvania law enforcement authorities make more than 100,000 arrests a year involving persons under 18.¹⁸ Most of these arrests do not involve serious crimes—in fact, more than nine out of ten are for nonviolent offenses. But about a third of juvenile arrests result in referrals to juvenile courts. Pennsylvania juvenile courts and probation departments dispose of more than 40,000 delinquency referrals a year, about three-quarters of them from police sources.
- Probation is by far the most common judicial response to juvenile offending in Pennsylvania.***
- *Typical offenses.* The most common offenses disposed of in a typical year are thefts, burglaries, assaults, and drug offenses.¹⁹
 - *Formal v. informal handling.* About a third of all referrals are typically handled without petitioning, while the remaining two-thirds are petitioned.²⁰
 - *Dispositions.* Probation is the court's most frequent formal response to juvenile offending in Pennsylvania. Nearly one in five referrals receives a formal probation disposition. When you add in consent decrees and informal adjustments—each of which usually involves a mandated period of probation supervision as well—as many as half of all cases referred to the juvenile court in a typical year might result in probation. By contrast, only about one in ten dispositions involves court-ordered placement in a residential facility.²¹ And following the 1995 Juvenile Act amendments excluding a number of serious offenses from juvenile court jurisdiction (see § 6-1), judicial transfers to criminal court have become extremely rare also, with fewer than one in a hundred referrals resulting in transfer in a typical year.²²
 - *Types of placements.* Of the relatively small number of youth who receive placement dispositions in Pennsylvania, about a third go to private nonsecure institutions. Fewer than one in ten go to the most secure public institutions—the Youth Development Centers operated by the state DPW.²³

MANAGING THE INTERSTATE MOVEMENT OF JUVENILES

U.S. states have formally cooperated for more than half a century in managing the movement of juvenile delinquents and status offenders across state lines-including juveniles who run away, abscond or escape to other states, commit crimes while away from their home states, or need institutional or other services that are not available in their home states. The first Interstate Compact on Juveniles was concluded in 1955. Essentially a 50-state treaty governing the interstate movement of an estimated 20,000 to 30,000 juveniles annually, the Interstate Compact provided mechanisms for the return of interstate runaways; made it possible for juveniles under court supervision to travel or move between states, and for committed juveniles to receive institutional care or specialized services in other states; and served as a kind of extradition arrangement with respect to juvenile offenders, including absconders and escapees.

Since its creation in 1955, the existing Compact has been severely compromised due to the incomplete adoption of three subsequent amendments to the Compact and by the individual actions of states. Only Pennsylvania and six other states had adopted the original 1955 Compact and the three subsequent amendments. Consequently, judges should be aware that there is substantial inconsistency in the interpretation and application of the existing Compact. Essentially, common agreement among states concerning what types of juveniles can be sent to other states for supervision does not exist, and there is no authority to hold states accountable for following Compact rules.

The states are currently in the process of adopting an improved version of the Interstate Compact. Known as the "Interstate Compact for Juveniles," the new agreement is the result of a nationwide effort begun in 2000 as a joint initiative of the Council of State Governments, the federal Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention, and the Association of Juvenile Compact Administrators. It makes various needed changes to the original Compact, establishing an independent operating authority to administer ongoing Compact activity, providing for better funding and sanctioning systems to support essential Compact operations, and mandating the collection of standardized information. When effective and operational, the new Compact should be a major improvement over the existing agreement.

The existing Compact will be repealed when the new Compact, adopted in Pennsylvania by Act 54 of 2004 (see text at 11 P.S. §§890.1-890.6), becomes effective and operative between Pennsylvania and any other state. The effective date of the new Compact will be when the 35th jurisdiction enacts the Compact into law. As of September 2006, 30 states had enacted the necessary legislation. In addition to the states, the District of Columbia, the Commonwealth of Puerto Rico, the U.S. Virgin Islands, Guam, American Samoa, and the Northern Marianas islands are eligible to become "Compacting states."

- *Case processing times.* The amount of time it takes to bring a formal delinquency case to disposition varies considerably from county to county, from as few as four or five weeks to as many as twenty. In most years the statewide median for formally handled cases is about ten to twelve weeks. Processing times for informally handled cases range even more widely, but the statewide median is generally about six weeks.²⁴

ENDNOTES

- ¹ Blackstone, Sir William. *Commentaries on the Laws of England*.
- ² McCarthy, Pa. Juvenile Delinquency Prac. & Proc. (4th Ed.), § 1-2.
- ³ Bremner, R. (1971). *Children and Youth in America: A Documentary History*, Vols. 1 and 2. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.
- ⁴ See Anderson, J. (March 1999). "Pennsylvania's Juvenile Justice System: A Rich Heritage, Clear Mission, and Bright Future." *Pennsylvania Juvenile Justice* 8(3). Shippensburg, PA: Center for Juvenile Justice Training & Research. Except where otherwise noted, all subsequent material on the history of the Pennsylvania juvenile courts is taken from Anderson.
- ⁵ "An Act to Regulate the Treatment and Control of Dependent, Neglected and Delinquent Children," *Revised Statutes of the State of Illinois*, 1899, quoted in Trattner, W. (1999). *From Poor Law to Welfare State*. New York, NY: The Free Press.
- ⁶ Models for Change is a multi-state project that seeks to accelerate movement toward a more effective, fair, and developmentally sound juvenile justice system. More information is available at <http://www.jlc.org/mfc/>.
- ⁷ Except where otherwise noted, information in this section is taken from National Center for Juvenile Justice. (2002). "Pennsylvania." *State Juvenile Justice Profiles*. Pittsburgh, PA: NCJJ. Available online at <http://www.ncjj.org/stateprofiles/>.
- ⁸ Article V, Section 5, Pennsylvania Constitution.
- ⁹ Anderson, J. (March 1999). "Pennsylvania's Juvenile Justice System: A Rich Heritage, Clear Mission, and Bright Future." *Pennsylvania Juvenile Justice* 8(3). Shippensburg, PA: Center for Juvenile Justice Training & Research.
- ¹⁰ With a combined total of 763 beds, these facilities accepted 18,968 admissions in 2005. The Secure Detention Monitoring Project. (2005). *Federal Audit Report*. With a combined total of 763 beds, these facilities accepted 18,968 admissions in 2005.
- ¹¹ See Juvenile Court Judges' Commission. *Pennsylvania Juvenile Court Dispositions 2004*. Center for Juvenile Justice Training and Research: Shippensburg, PA. Note that the median length of stay reported here does not reflect data from Philadelphia's Youth Study Center. Current statistics are available from the JCJC website (<http://www.jcjc.state.pa.us/jcjc/site/default.asp>).
- ¹² See Juvenile Court Judges' Commission. *Pennsylvania Juvenile Court Dispositions 2004*. Center for Juvenile Justice Training and Research: Shippensburg, PA. Four detention centers exceeded their licensed bed capacities on an average day during the year 2004—which was a significant improvement from previous years.
- ¹³ For example, 62 P.S. §704.1(e) authorizes courts to order financially able parents to pay all or part of the cost of services to their minor children, in fulfillment of their general support obligations under 23 Pa.C.S. §4321.
- ¹⁴ 62 P.S. §704.2.
- ¹⁵ 62 P.S. §704.1.
- ¹⁶ Funding streams administered by the PCCD are described in the "Grants" section of the Commission's website at <http://www.pccd.state.pa.us/>.
- ¹⁷ The JCJC administers grants for a variety of specialized probation services, including aftercare, community-based, intensive, school-based, and intensive and aftercare probation for drug and alcohol offenders.
- ¹⁸ Unless otherwise noted, the source of arrest and offense information summarized in this part is Pennsylvania State Police Uniform Crime Reporting data analyzed in the Pennsylvania Electronic

Juvenile Justice Databook (discussed more fully at §11-1, below), while the source of disposition information is the Juvenile Court Judges' Commission's *Pennsylvania Juvenile Court Dispositions* series. The most up-to-date statistics are always available from the Databook website (<http://ncjj.servehttp.com/padatabook/>) and from the JCJC website (<http://www.jcjc.state.pa.us/jcjc/site/default.asp>). In the year 2004, Pennsylvania law enforcement authorities recorded almost 109,000 arrests involving persons under 18—out of a total under-18 population of about 2.8 million and a juvenile delinquency age (10-17) population of about 1.3 million. Note that the total juvenile arrest figure does not reflect the total number of juveniles arrested, since a single juvenile may be arrested multiple times. Likewise, a single youth may be involved in a number of dispositions during a calendar year, or may be referred to the court on more than one occasion and receive a single disposition.

¹⁹ For example, of all the cases disposed of in 2000, 61% involved one or another of these as the most serious charge.

²⁰ In 2004, about 70% of the cases handled were petitioned. The remaining 30% were disposed of without petitioning. Zawacki, Susanna. (Forthcoming). *Tracking the Trends: Crime and Court Involvement of Pennsylvania's Youth*. Pittsburgh, PA: National Center for Juvenile Justice.

²¹ In 2004, probation accounted for about 18.7% of all juvenile court dispositions, consent decrees for 17.5%, and informal adjustments for 15.7%. Court-ordered placements made up 10.4% of dispositions, counting both original dispositions and disposition reviews.

²² Only 172 transfers occurred in the whole state in 2004, accounting for less than half a percent of the total juvenile court dispositions

²³ In 2004, 32.1% of placements were to private nonsecure institutions, while 6.2% were to public secure facilities.

²⁴ For formally handled cases, the median number of days from referral to disposition varied in 2004 from a low of 33 days in one county to a high of 130 days in another. The statewide median for formally handled cases was 75 days. Counties' median processing times for informally handled cases ranged all the way from a low of 3 days to a high of 597 days; the statewide median was 41 days.