

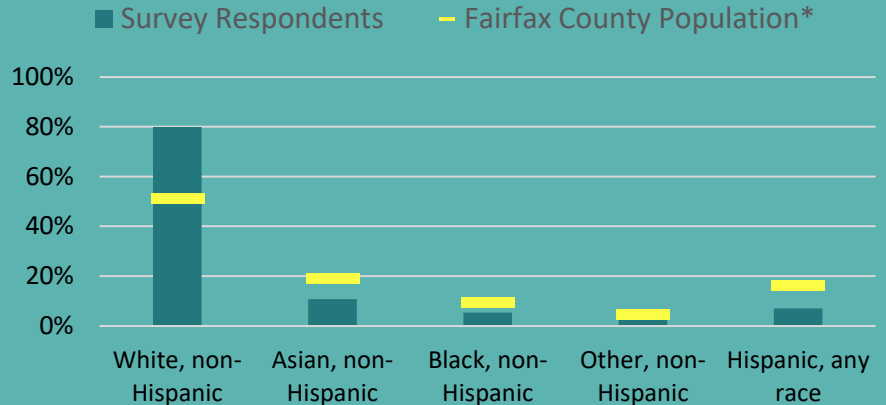
Fairfax County Juvenile Justice Survey



Results from the 2020 Community Survey, a partnership with George Mason University

Who Responded

During the Spring of 2020, Fairfax County households were surveyed about their attitudes and beliefs on juvenile justice. A total of 978 surveys were used for analysis. Survey respondents were largely white, non-Hispanic (79%). Respondent gender was mostly representative of the county population, with females at 55.3%.



83.3%

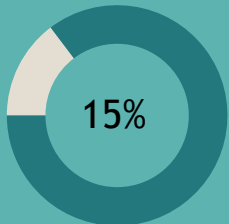
had a Bachelor's degree or higher, compared to just 61.1% of the county population.

55.7%

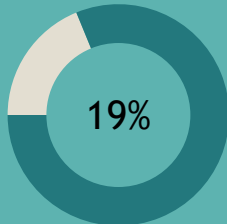
Were age 55 or older, compared to just 20.5% of the Fairfax County population being age 55 or older.

Exposure to the System

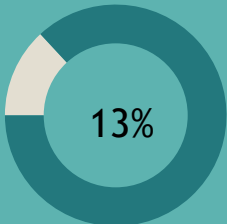
Few respondents have ever been on probation or detained.



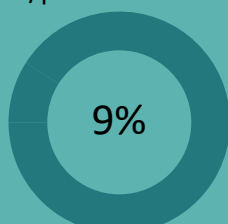
have been on probation as an adult



have spent time in jail/prison as an adult



have been on probation as a juvenile



have spent time in a detention facility as a juvenile

Around a quarter have been victimized by a juvenile.

10%

have been a victim of a violent crime

26%

have been a victim of a crime committed by a juvenile

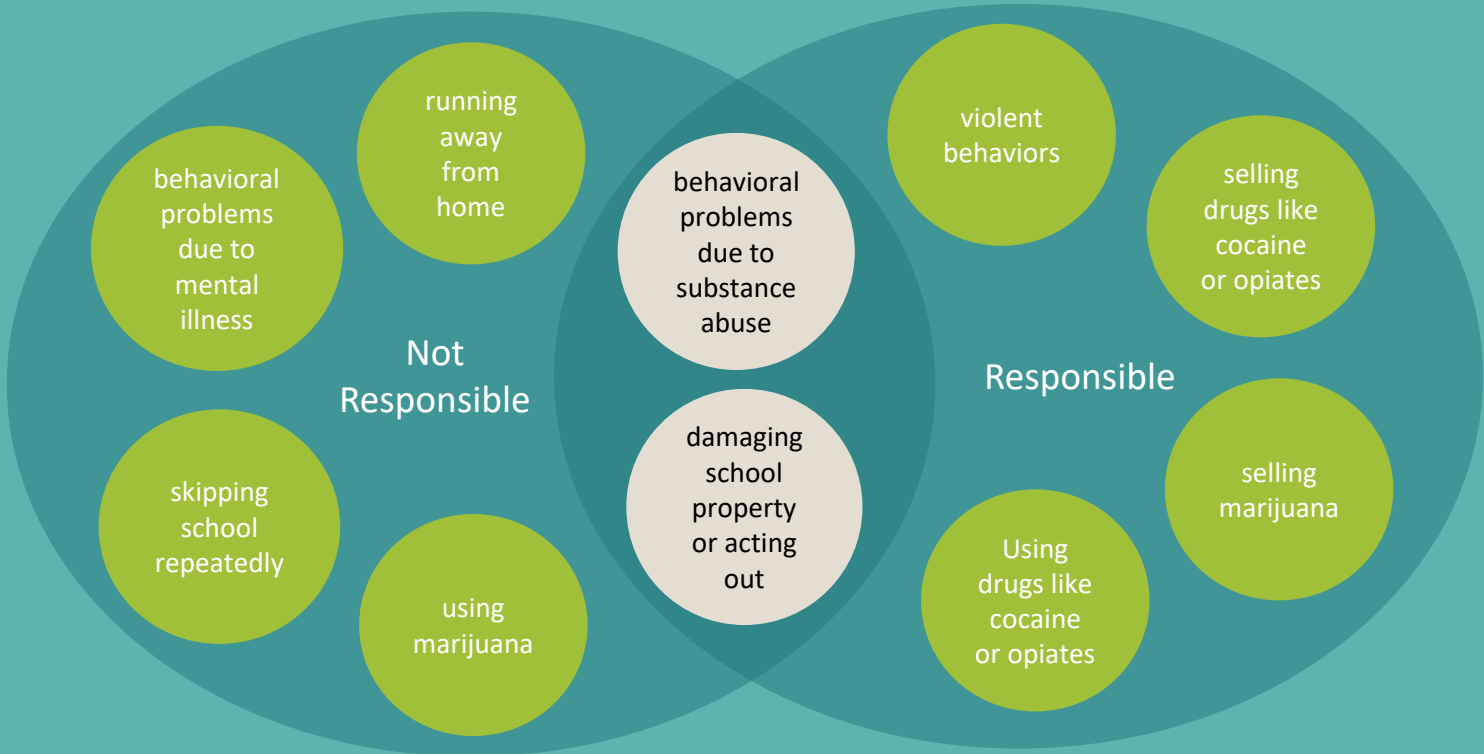
19%

have been a victim of a serious property crime

System Responsibilities



The majority of respondents felt the juvenile justice system should handle selling drugs like cocaine or opiates, but were split regarding behaviors like damaging school property and behavioral problems due to substance abuse. The majority (70%) felt the juvenile justice system *should not* handle behaviors such as skipping school or running away from home.



Use of Secure Detention



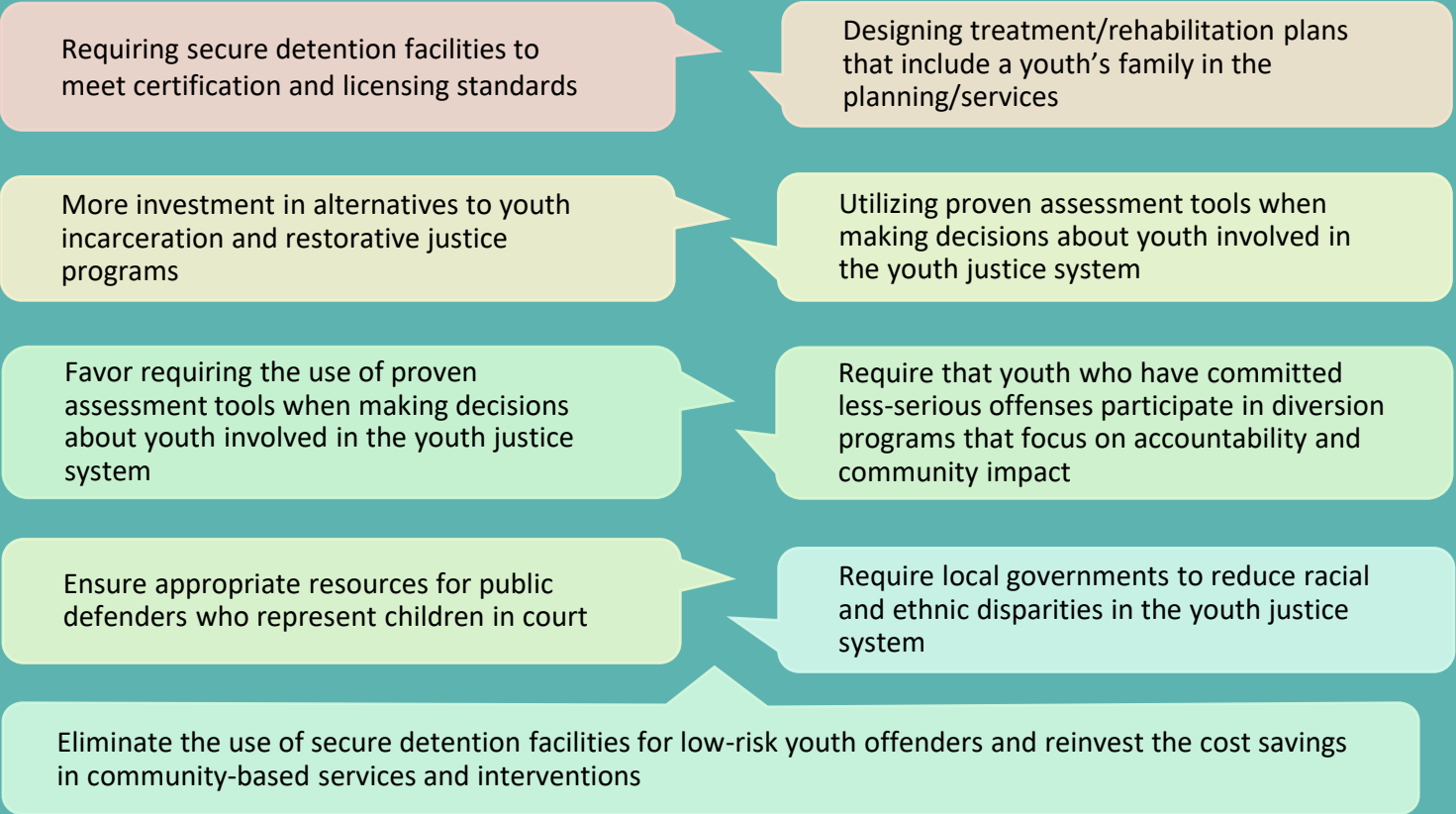
To further understand public view on juvenile justice, respondents were asked to indicate if they believed secure detention should be used for a variety of offenses. Support for secure detention was strong for violent crimes against a person and stealing more than \$500.



Support for Youth Justice Reformation



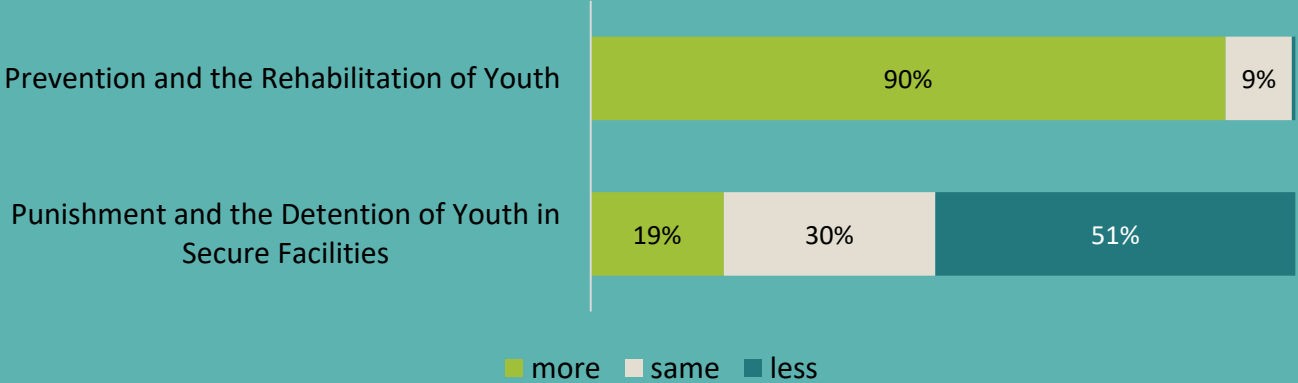
The survey presented nine juvenile justice reform statements to respondents. Fairfax County households largely supported the proposals listed below, with over **70%** of respondents indicating support for each.



Rehabilitation versus Punishment

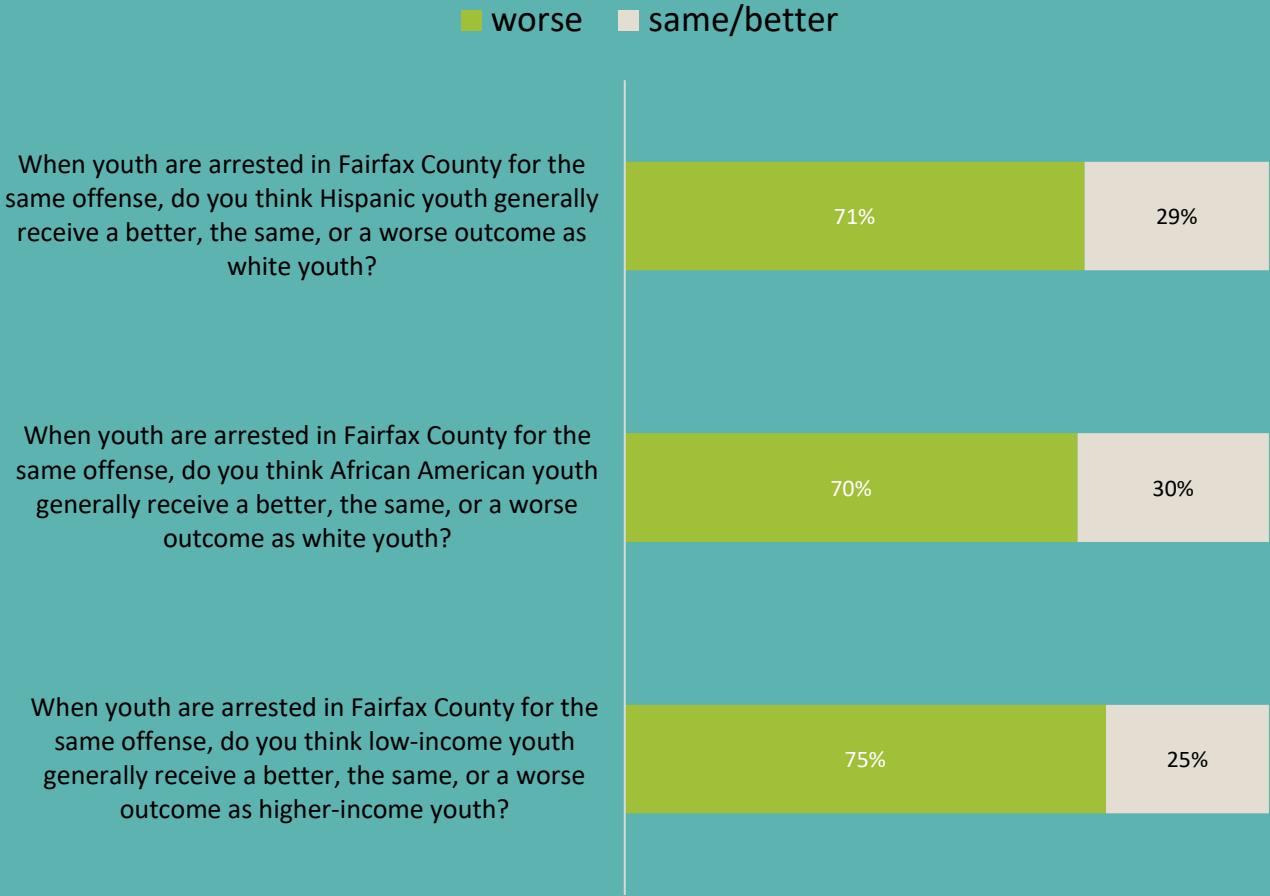


Respondents indicated the amount of emphasis there should be on the prevention/rehabilitation of youth compared to the punishment and the secure detention of youth. Around 90% felt there should be a greater emphasis on prevention/rehabilitation.



Support for Youth Justice Reformation

Nationwide, research has shown significant racial and ethnic disparities exist within the juvenile justice system, as they do in the adult system (OJJDP, 2019). Research further documents that perceptions of justice systems and the fairness of justice carried out within the system vary and can be influenced by demographics (Rocque, 2011; Woolard, Harvell, & Graham, 2008). To ascertain community perceptions of differential treatment (or lack thereof) within the juvenile justice system as it relates to race, ethnicity, and socioeconomic status, survey respondents rated pairs of youth in terms of how they would be treated compared to one another when arrested within Fairfax County.



Summary

Fairfax County residents believe young offenders should be treated differently than adults, with most agreeing that youth who commit non-violent offense are capable of growth. By and large, residents favor rehabilitation efforts over emphasis on punishment, especially for lower-level offenses. Proposals for system reforms such as providing resources for public defenders and diversion programs experienced broad support. Many residents also perceive disparities in how youth offenders are treated in Fairfax depending on their income and race/ethnicity. These opinions from Fairfax residents mirror recent research and public opinion polling on attitudes toward youth justice.

- Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention (OJJDP), (2019). *Statistical Briefing Book*. <https://www.ojjdp.gov/ojstatbb>.
- Rocque, Michael. (2011). Racial Disparities in the Criminal Justice System and Perceptions of Legitimacy A Theoretical Linkage. *Race and Justice*. 1. 292. 10.1177/2153368711409758.
- Woolard, J. L., Harvell, S. A. S., & Graham, S. (2008). Anticipatory injustice among adolescents: Age and racial/ethnic differences in perceived unfairness of the justice system. *Behavioral Sciences & the Law*, 26, 207-226. doi:10.1002/bsl.805