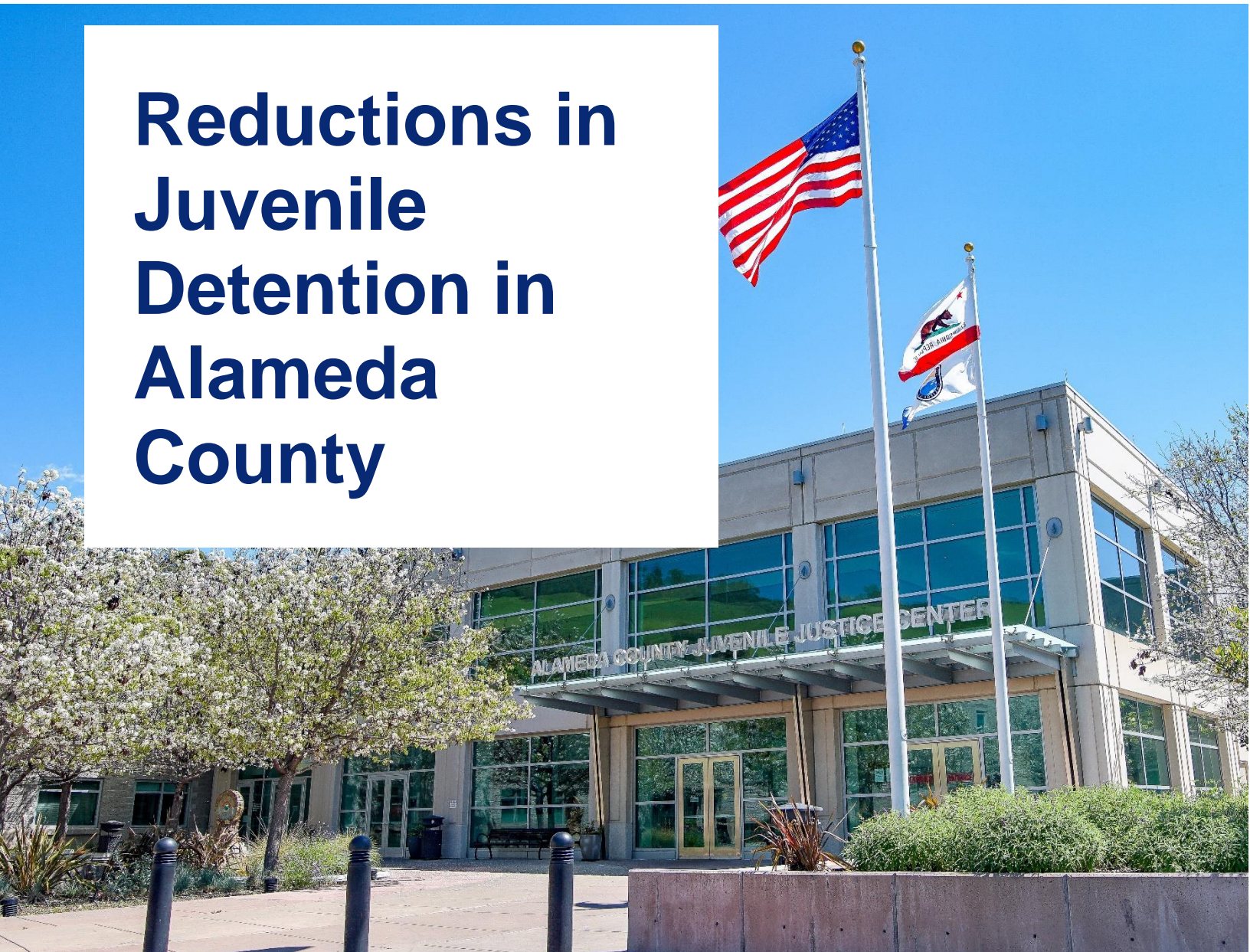


# Reductions in Juvenile Detention in Alameda County



**JULY 2019**

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**Alameda County Probation Department**  
**Wendy Still, MAS**  
**Chief Probation Officer**



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# Introduction

Over the last decade, Alameda County has experienced a dramatic reduction in the number of youth detained in Juvenile Hall or group-home placements. Alameda County's population declines have outpaced most other California counties and statewide averages, and they reflect the Alameda County Probation Department (ACPD)'s commitment to serving justice-involved youth in their communities, where they can be surrounded by natural support systems and local resources. Through collaborative efforts with other justice-system partners, ACPD has pursued efforts to support clients using the least restrictive means possible. ACPD has also implemented use of a placement grid to guide decisions on group-home placements. Today, Alameda County's Juvenile Hall population is almost entirely comprised of youth charged with serious and violent offenses.

This report provides a portrait of juvenile detention in Alameda County over the last decade using the most current data available from ACPD, the California Board of State and Community Corrections (BSCC), and the California Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation (CDCR). When possible, data are reported over several years to provide historical context. Several sections present a point-in-time snapshot of Juvenile Hall data during a recent month (April 2019) compared with data from the same month three years prior (April 2016). Key findings from each section of the report are provided below:

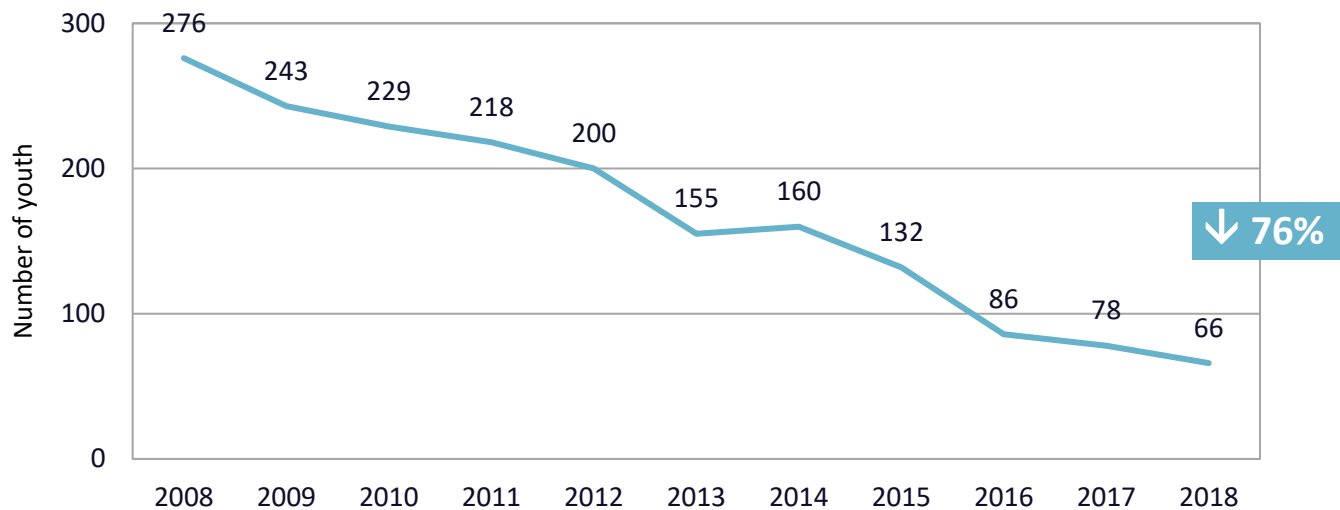
- **Overall Population Trends:** The total number of youth admitted to Juvenile Hall in Alameda County has declined by 65% over the last 10 years, from 3,876 in 2008 to 1,355 in 2018.
- **Demographics:** Reductions in total bookings and average daily population over the last 3 years were almost 2 and 3 times greater, respectively, for female versus male youth. Youth booked into Juvenile Hall are primarily African American or Hispanic, and the average age is 16.
- **Admission to Juvenile Hall:** The majority of youth are booked into Juvenile Hall for a new felony offense. The most common felony offenses are robbery, weapons possession, and property crime.
- **Release from Juvenile Hall:** The average length of stay for youth booked into Juvenile Hall fell by 25% over the last 3 years, from 24 days in April 2016 to 18 days in April 2019. Youth are most commonly released from Juvenile Hall to their community, with or without GPS monitoring. Youth released to a group home or private institution have the longest lengths of stay in Juvenile Hall.
- **Group-Home Placement:** The number of youth in group-home placements on January 15<sup>th</sup> of each year declined by 76% from 2013 to 2019. Over the same period of time, average daily population at Juvenile Hall and Camp Sweeney declined by 58%.
- **Direct Files in Adult Court and Department of Juvenile Justice Commitments:** The number of juvenile direct files in adult court fell to 0 after the passage of Proposition 57 in November 2016. Youth commitments to Department of Juvenile Justice (DJJ) facilities declined by 53% from 2014 (n=17) to 2018 (n=8).
- **Alameda County's Trends in Context:** Alameda County's Juvenile Hall occupancy rate declined from 78% in 2008 to 19% in 2018, a 76% overall decrease. This exceeds the statewide decrease of 59% during the same period of time. Alameda County also experienced a 50% decrease in its Juvenile Hall booking rate from 2013 to 2018 compared to a 41% statewide decrease. Alameda County has one of the lowest DJJ commitment rates of all California counties with DJJ commitments.

# Overall Population Trends

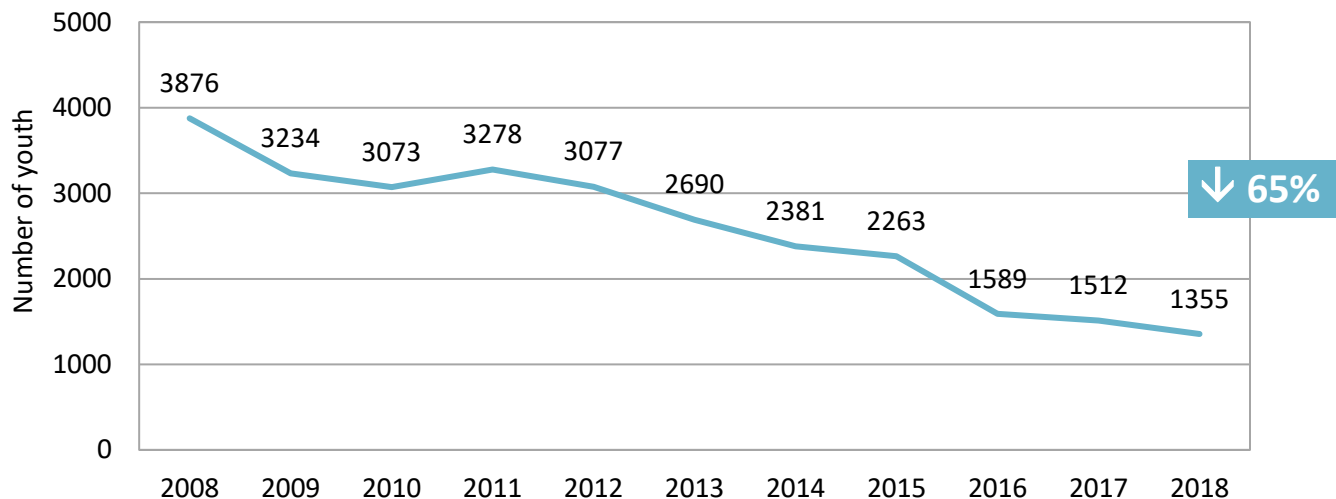
Alameda County's Juvenile Hall population has decreased dramatically over the past 10 years.

In 2008, an average of 276 youth were housed in Juvenile Hall per day (Figure 1). By 2018, this number had plummeted to an average of 66 youth detained per day, a 76% reduction. Total admissions to Juvenile Hall have also decreased significantly, from 3,876 youth in 2008 to 1,355 youth in 2018. This represents a 65% decrease over 10 years.

**Figure 1. Juvenile Hall Average Daily Population, 2008 – 2018**



**Figure 2. Total Youth Admitted to Juvenile Hall by Year, 2008 – 2018**



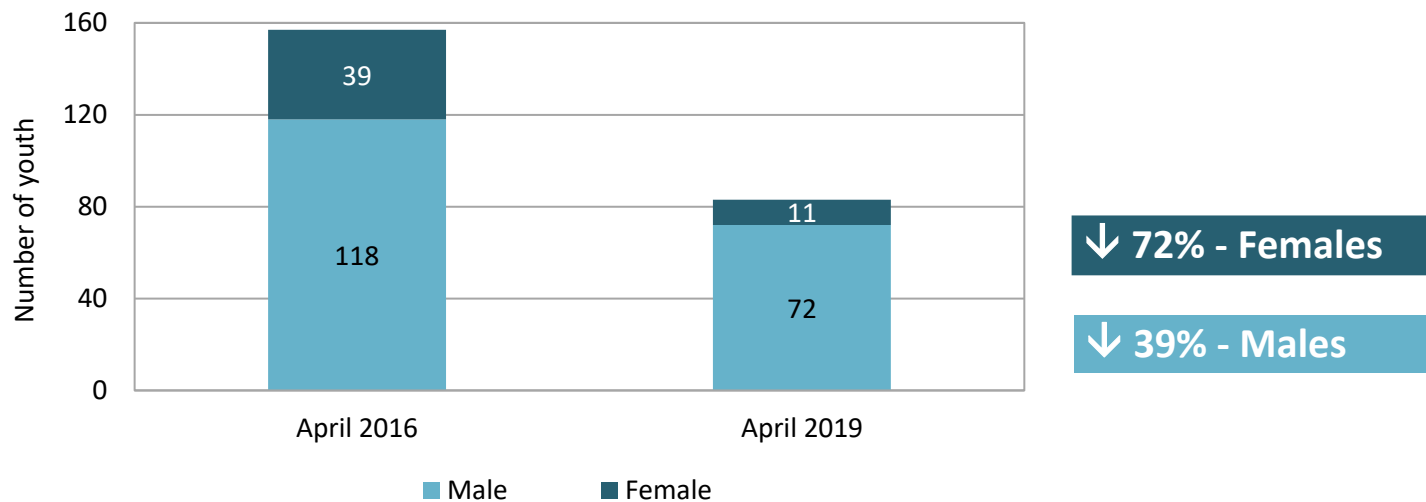


# Demographics

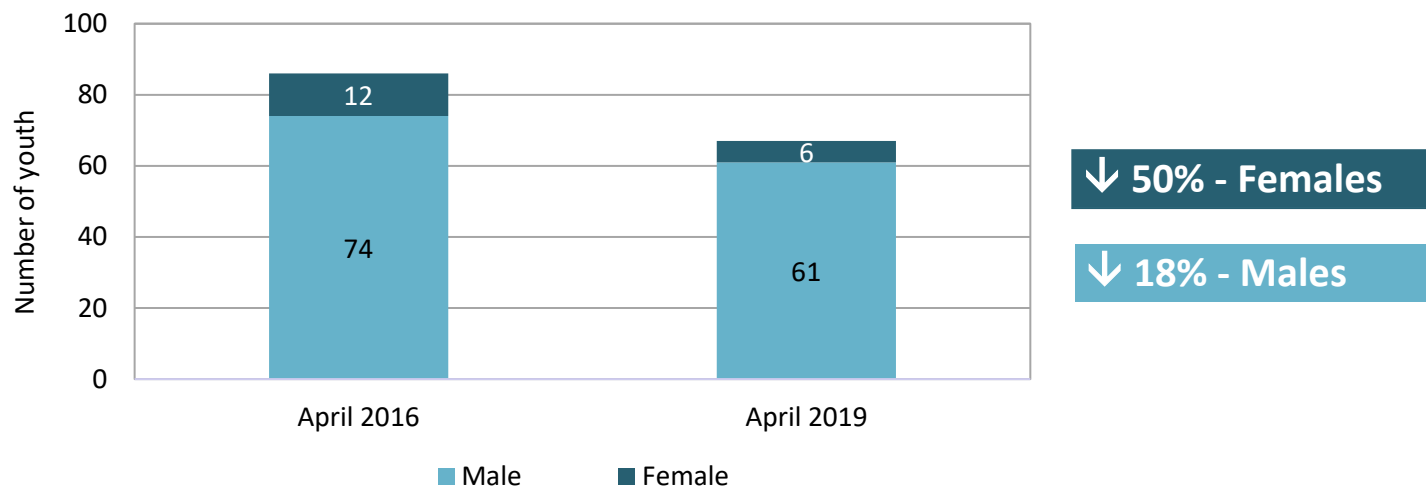
Reductions in monthly bookings and average daily population were almost 2 and 3 times greater, respectively, for female youth versus male youth over a 3-year period.

In April 2016, 118 males and 39 females were booked into Juvenile Hall (Figure 3). Booking numbers dropped to 72 males and 11 female three years later, in April 2019. This represents a 72% decrease in bookings for females and a 39% decrease in bookings for males. Average daily population also decreased over the same 3-year period, falling by 50% for females and 18% for males (Figure 4).

**Figure 3. Juvenile Hall Bookings by Gender, April 2016 (n=157) and April 2019 (n=83)**



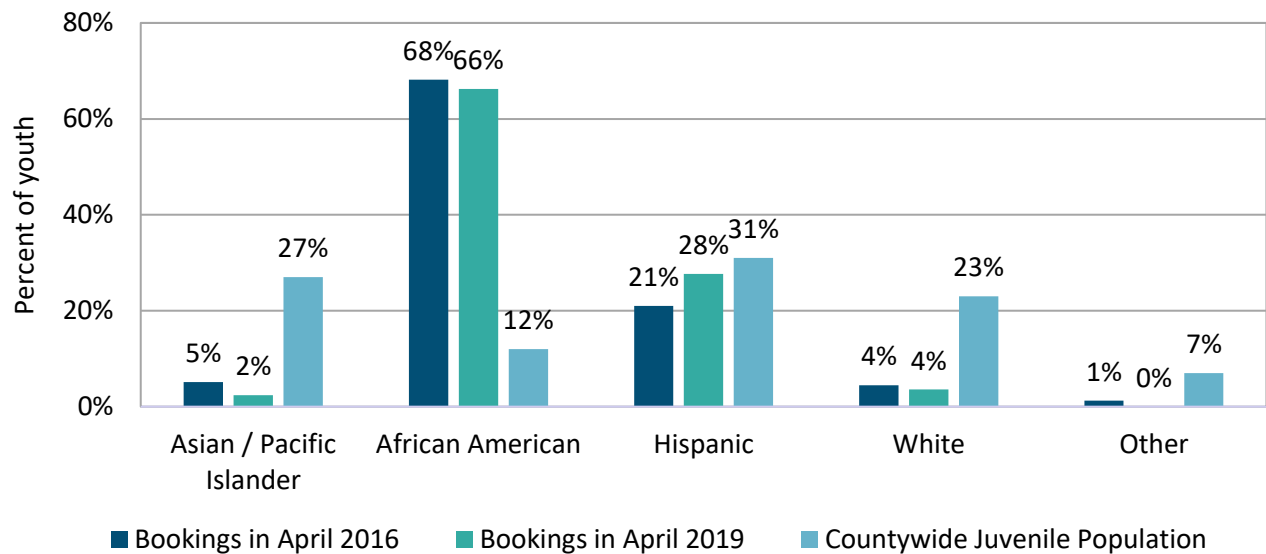
**Figure 4. Juvenile Hall Average Daily Population by Gender, April 2016 (n=86) and April 2019 (n=67)**



## Youth booked into Juvenile Hall are overwhelmingly African American or Hispanic, with an average age of 16.

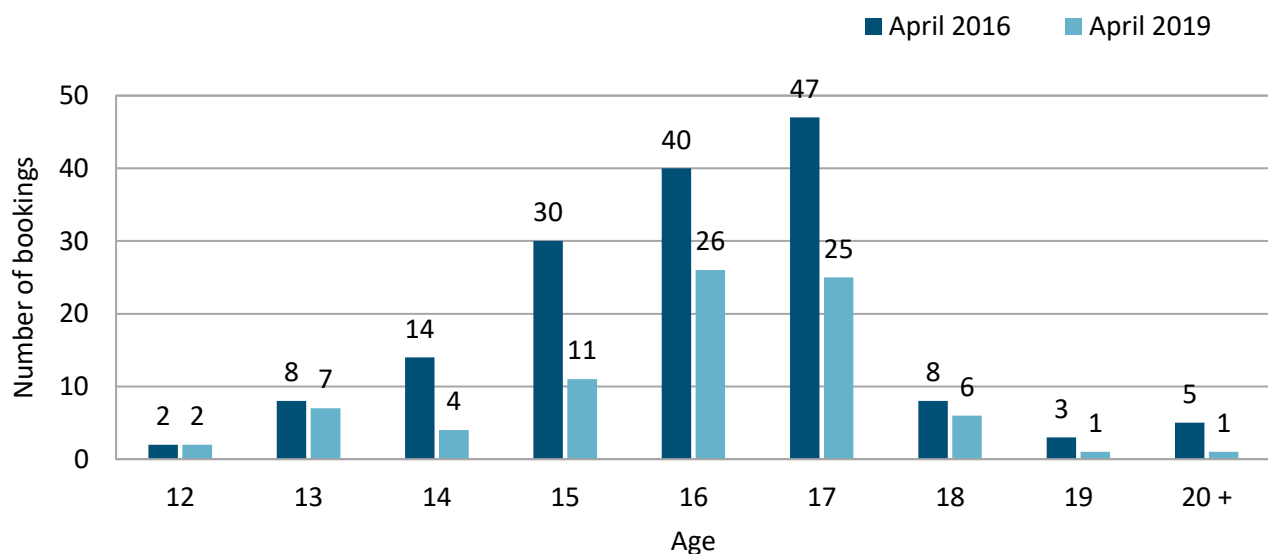
From April 2016 to April 2019, the percent of youth booked into Juvenile Hall who identified as Hispanic increased by 7%, while the percent of youth who identified as African American fell by 2% (Figure 5). The average age of individuals booked into Juvenile Hall in April 2016 and 2019 was 16 years old (Figure 6).

**Figure 5. Juvenile Hall Bookings by Race/Ethnicity Compared to Countywide Juvenile Population, April 2016 and April 2019**



Source: Juvenile population from California Department of Finance Population Projections, P-3: State and County Projections Dataset

**Figure 6. Juvenile Hall Bookings by Age, April 2016 (n=157) and April 2019 (n=83)**

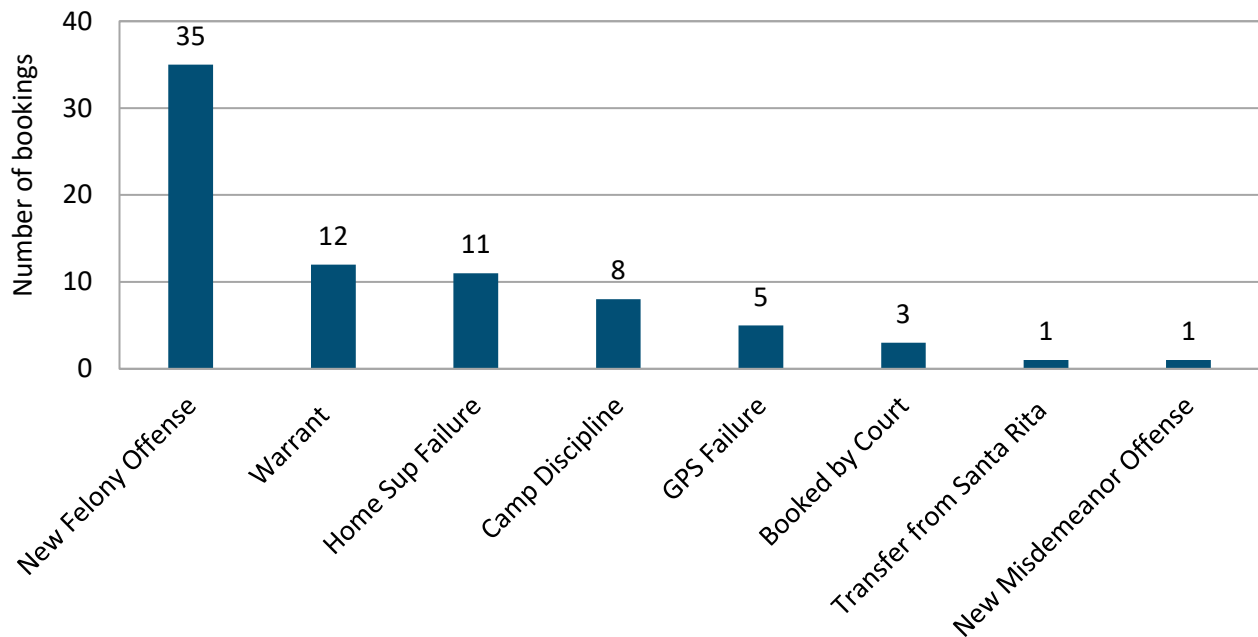


# Admission to Juvenile Hall

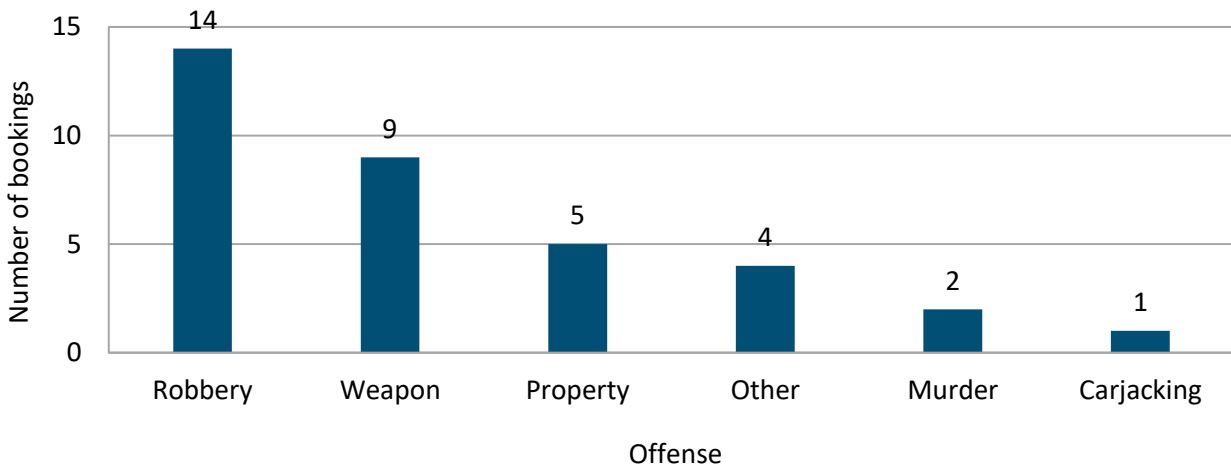
The majority of youth are booked into Juvenile Hall for a new felony offense. The most common felony offenses are robbery, weapons possession, and property crime.

Figure 7 depicts the reasons for all Juvenile Hall bookings that occurred in April 2019. Thirty-five out of 76 youth (46%) entered Juvenile Hall for a new felony offense. Of those 35 youth booked for a new felony offense, the most common offense was robbery, followed weapons possession and property crime (Figure 8).

**Figure 7. Juvenile Hall Bookings by Reason, April 2019 (n=76)**



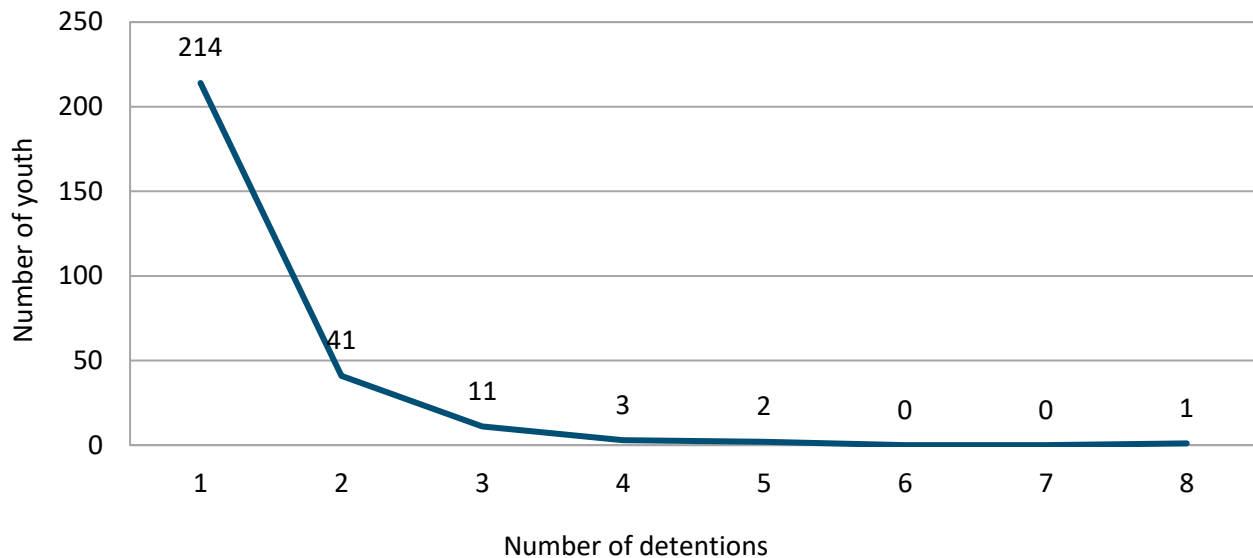
**Figure 8. Juvenile Hall Bookings for New Felony Offense by Offense Type, April 2019 (n=35)**



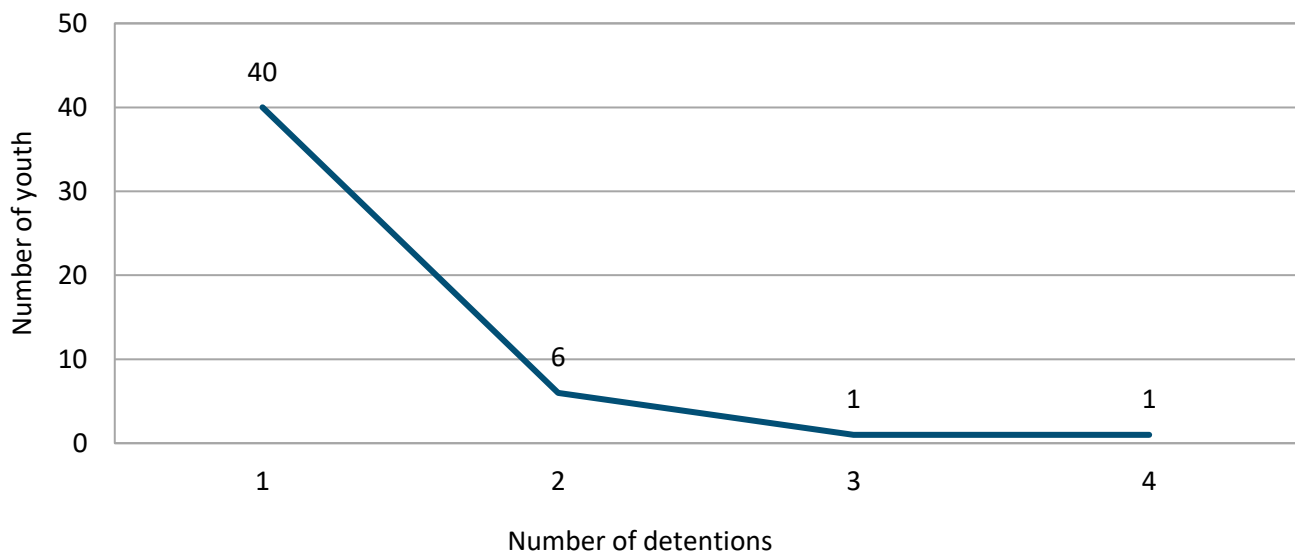
During the first third of 2019, only 21% of male youth and 17% of female youth were booked into Juvenile Hall two or more times.

Figures 9 and 10 provide a breakdown of youth detained in Juvenile Hall from January through April 2019 by the number of times they were booked. Fifty-eight male youth (21%) and 8 female youth (17%) were booked into Juvenile Hall more than once. Seventeen male youth (6%) and 2 female youth (4%) were booked into Juvenile Hall 3 times or more.

**Figure 9. Male Youth Detained in Juvenile Hall by Number of Detention Events, January to April 2019 (n=272)**



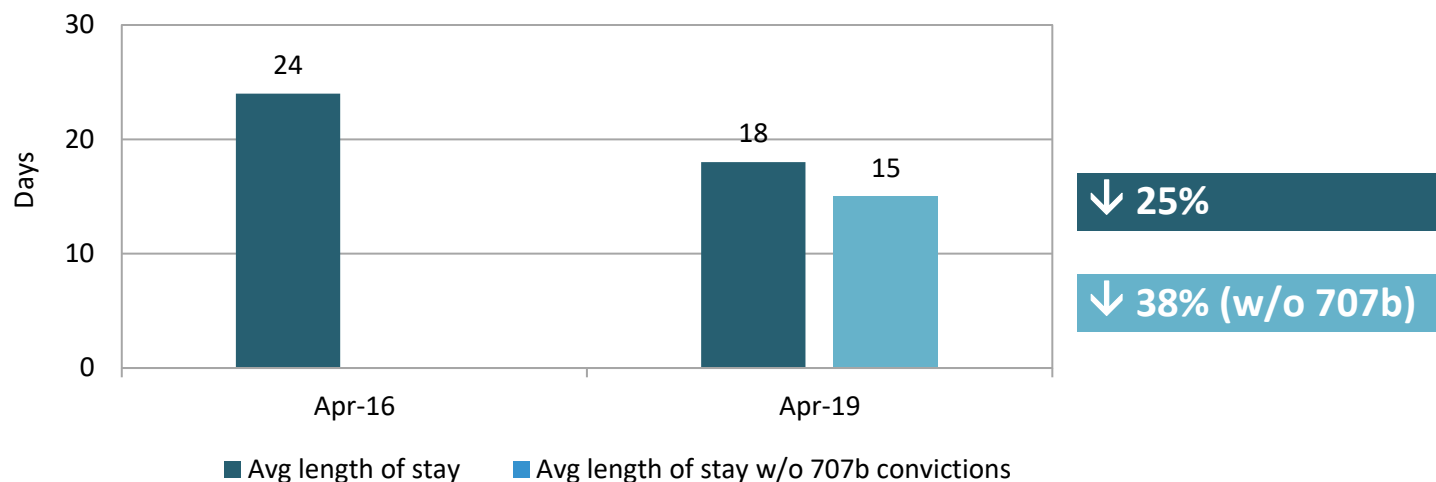
**Figure 10. Female Youth Detained in Juvenile Hall by Number of Detention Events, January to April 2019 (n=48)**



# Release from Juvenile Hall

Figure 11 presents the average length of stay for youth detained in April 2016 and April 2019, illustrating a 25% reduction in average length of stay over this 3-year period. To better contextualize the comparisons between 2016 and 2019, the light blue bar represents average length of stay for convictions in April 2019 excluding 707b offenses (serious and violent felonies). Proposition 57, which passed in November 2016, prevented youth from being remanded to adult court for a 707b offense, thus increasing the Juvenile Hall population for reasons unrelated to Alameda County practices. Excluding 707b offenses, the average length of stay in April 2019 drops to 15 days, a 38% decrease from 2016. Figure 12 presents the number of youth with a sustained 707(b) offense from 2014 to 2018 to illustrate how charges have changed over time.

**Figure 11. Average Length of Stay of Youth Released from Juvenile Hall, April 2016 and 2019**



**Figure 12. Youth with a Sustained 707(b) Offense, 2014-2019**

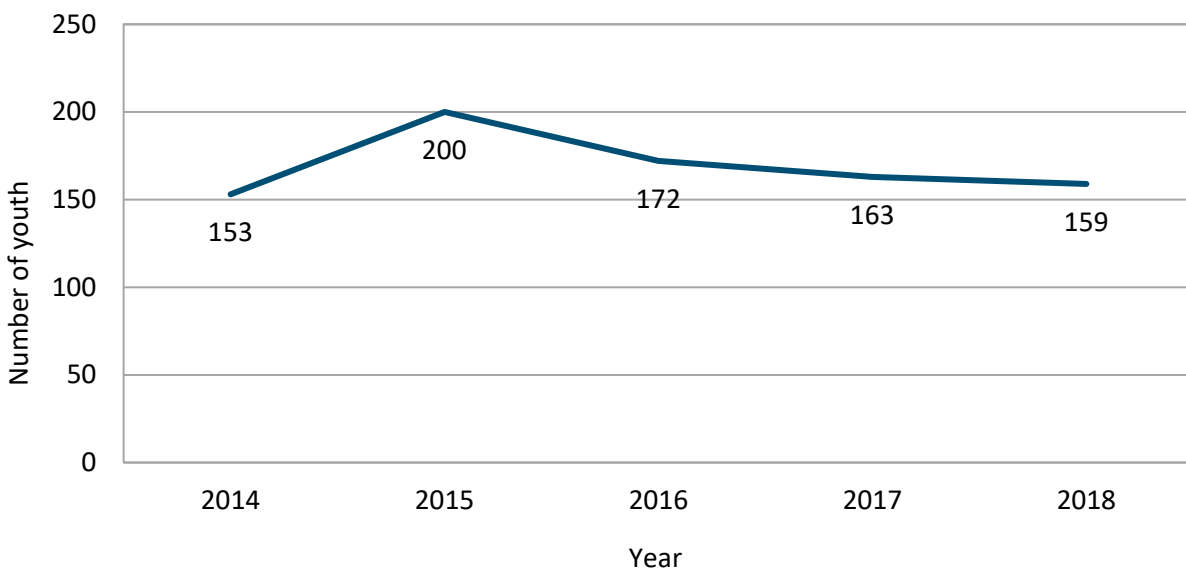
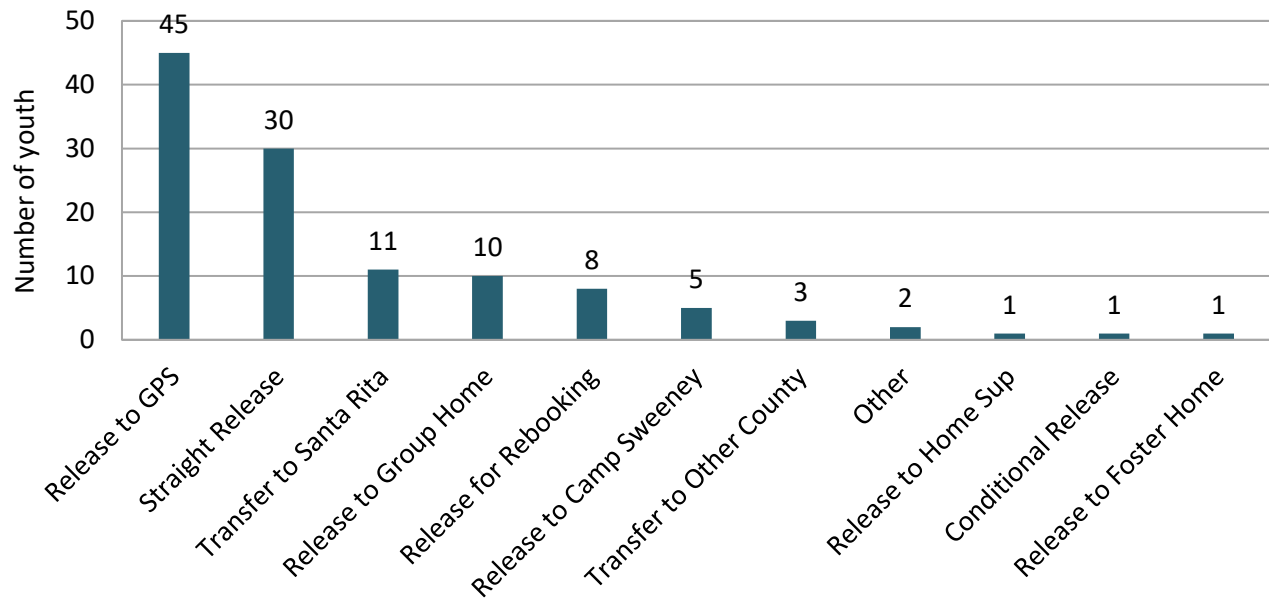




Figure 13 presents the number of releases from Juvenile Hall in April 2016 by type of release. Figure 14 presents the average length of stay associated with each type of release. In April 2016, the majority of youth released from Juvenile Hall were released to GPS monitoring (38%) and spent an average of 14 days in Juvenile Hall prior to their release. Youth released to a group home (9%) had the longest average length of stay prior to release (80 days).

**Figure 13. Youth Released from Juvenile Hall by Type of Release, April 2016 (n=117)**



**Figure 14. Average Length of Stay in Juvenile Hall by Type of Release, April 2016**

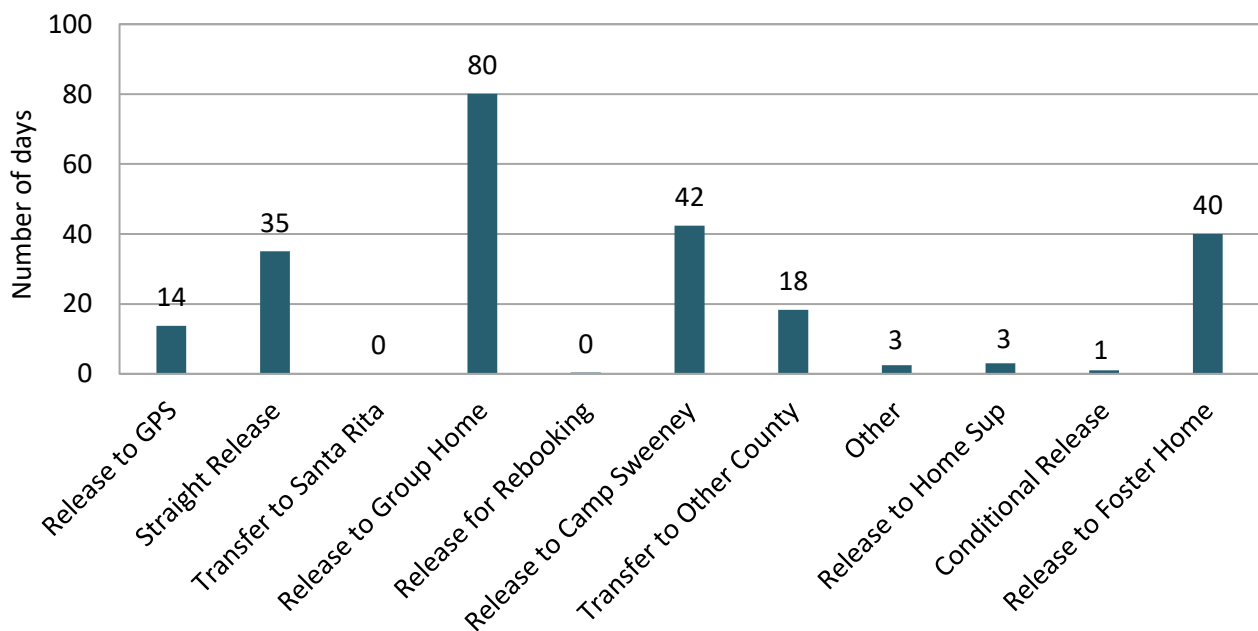
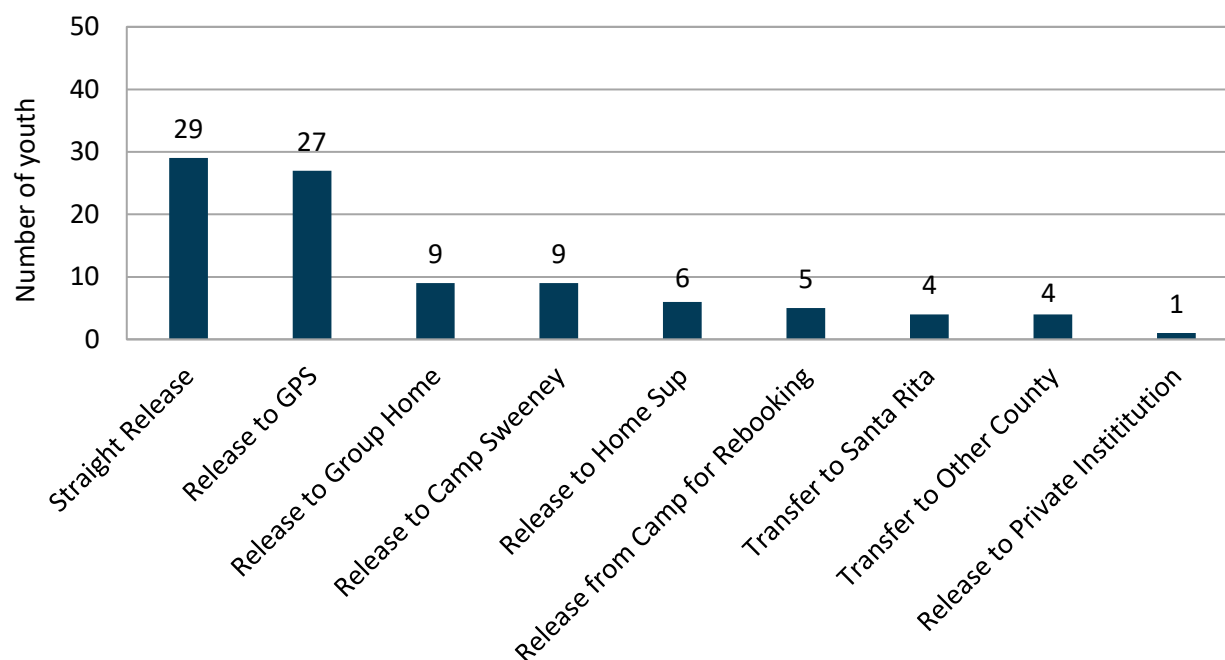
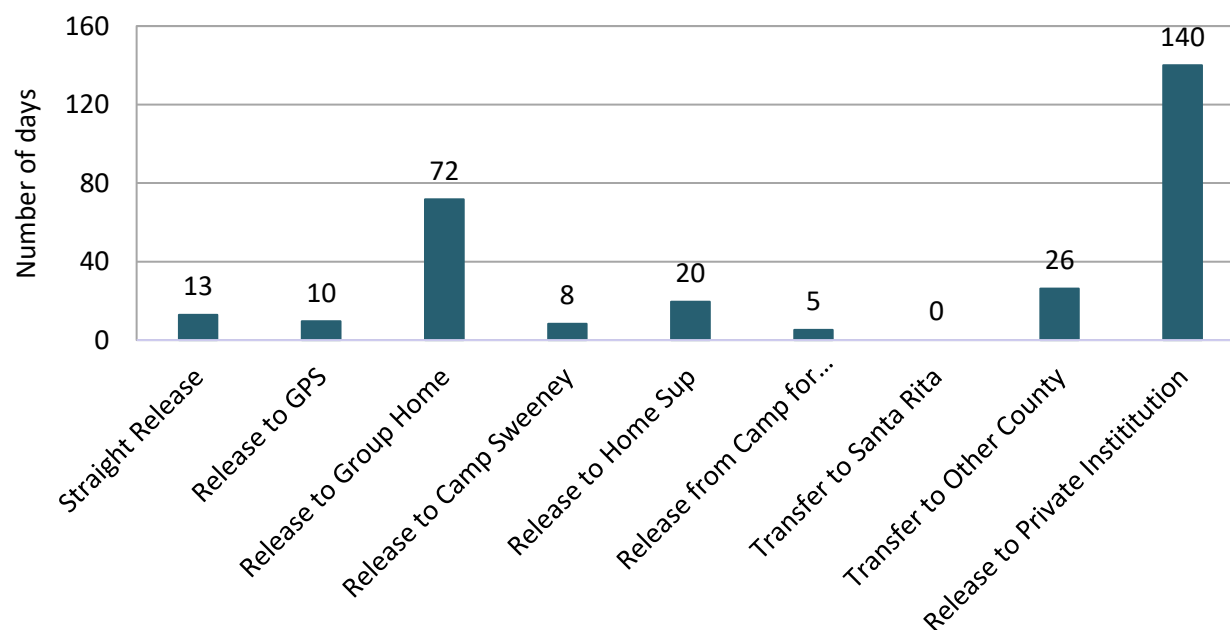


Figure 15 presents the number of releases from Juvenile Hall in April 2019 by type of release. Figure 16 presents the average length of stay associated with each type of release. In April 2019, the majority of youth released from Juvenile Hall were released directly to the community without GPS monitoring (31%) and spent an average of 13 days in Juvenile Hall prior to their release. One youth, released from Juvenile Hall to a private institution, had the longest length of stay prior to release at 140 days. This youth was held in Juvenile Hall while probation staff found a suitable out-of-home placement for him.

**Figure 15. Youth Released from Juvenile Hall and Average Length of Stay, April 2019 (n=94)**



**Figure 16. Average Length of Stay in Juvenile Hall by Type of Release, April 2019**

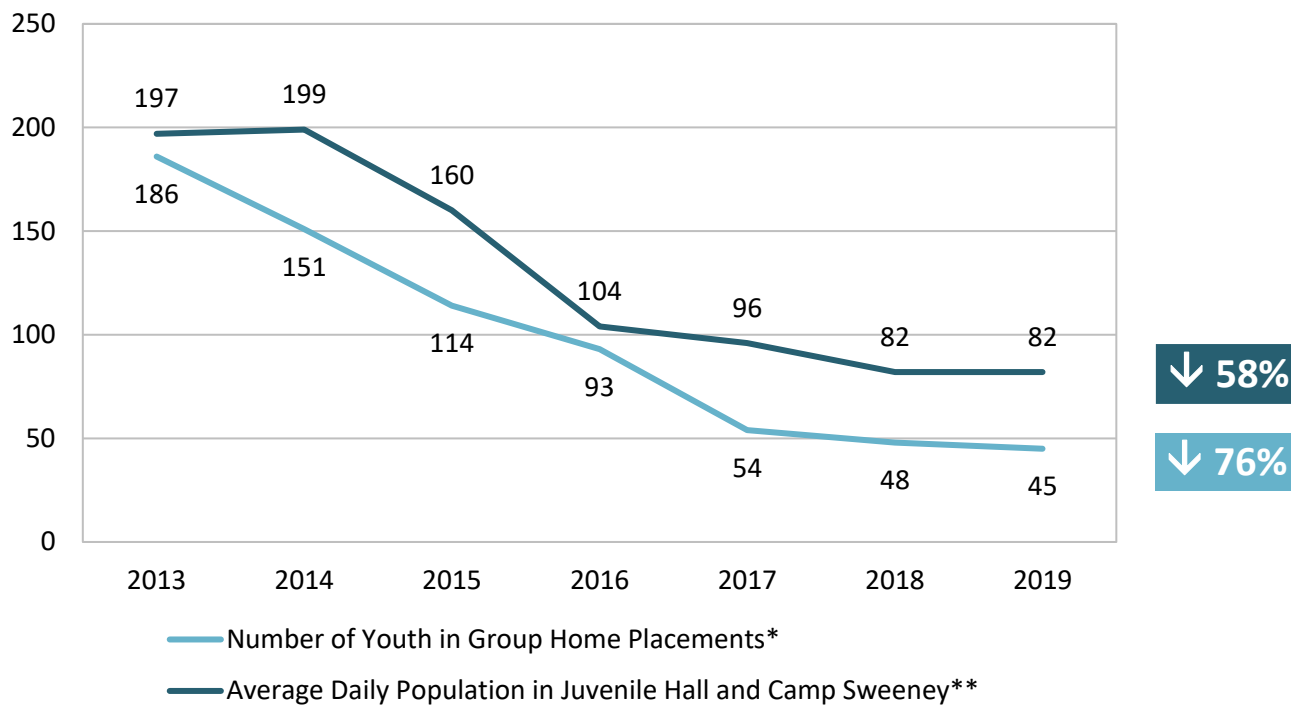


# Group-Home Placement

The number of juveniles in group-home placements has dropped significantly over the last six years.

Between 2013 and 2019, the number of juveniles in group home placements on January 15<sup>th</sup> of each year dropped from 186 to 45, a 76% decrease (Figure 17). Figure 17 also presents average daily population for each year, illustrating that the reduction in group home placements has not resulted in an commensurate increase in youth detentions in secure facilities.

**Figure 17. Youth in Group Home Placements and Juvenile Facilities, 2013 – 2019**



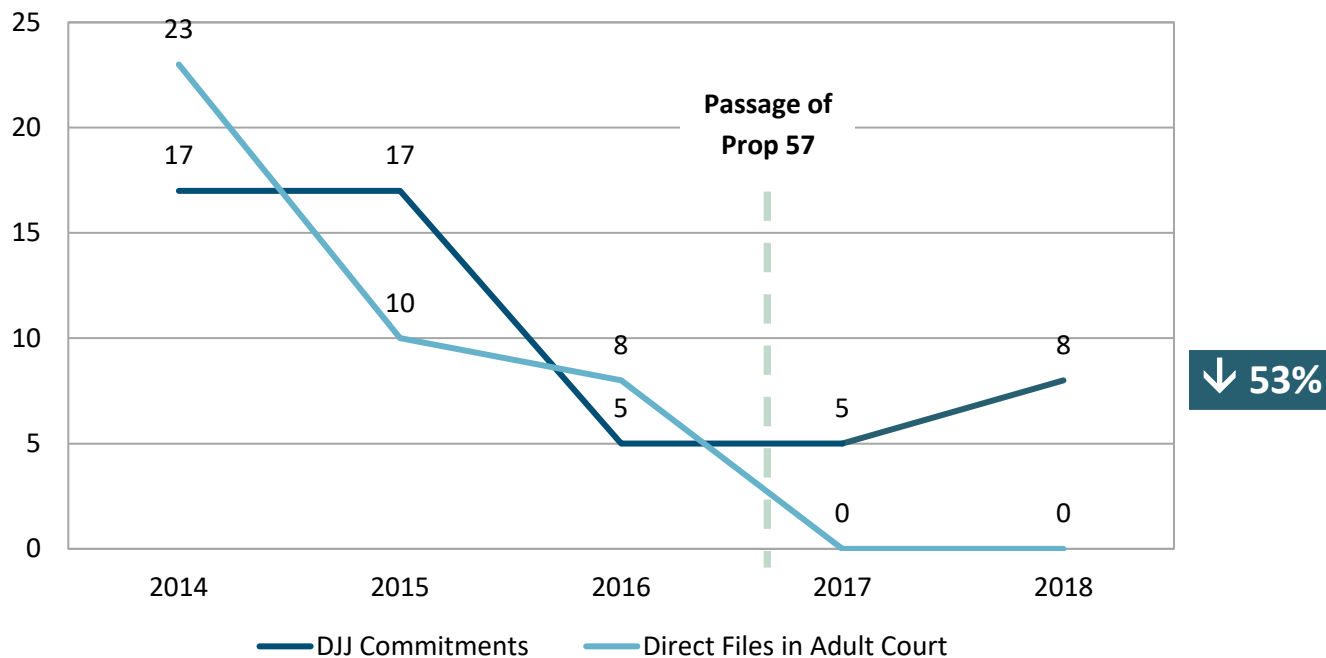
\*On January 15 of each year.

\*\*ADP for 2019 includes January through April.

# Direct Files in Adult Court and Department of Juvenile Justice Commitments

Proposition 57, passed in November 2016, ended the ability of prosecutors to send juvenile defendants to adult court for prosecution without petitioning a judge. As shown in Figure 18, Alameda County's number of juvenile direct files in adult court numbered as high as 23 in 2014 and fell to 0 after the passage of Proposition 57. Over this same time period, the number of juveniles sent to California Department of Juvenile Justice (DJJ) facilities from Alameda County declined from 17 in 2014 to 5 in 2016. After the passage of Proposition 57, the number of juveniles sent to DJJ began to rise again as a result of juvenile judges electing to retain jurisdiction of the cases but remained 53% lower in 2018 compared to 2014.

**Figure 18. Number of Direct Files and Commitments to Department of Juvenile Justice (DJJ)\* Facilities by Year, 2014 - 2018**



\*Includes those committed to DJJ facilities from adult courts.

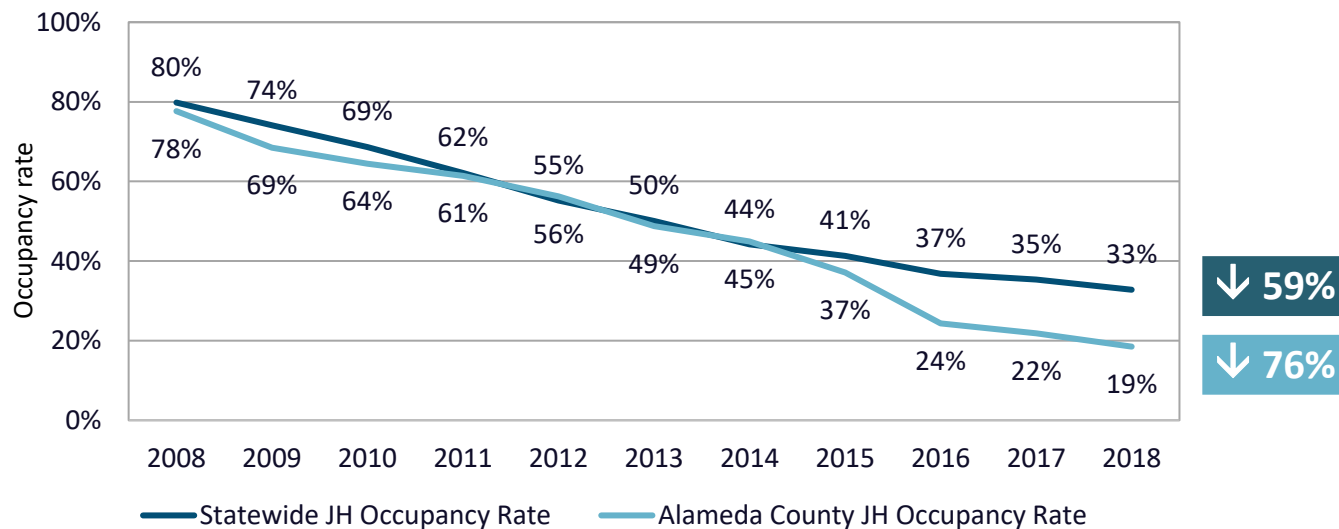
Source: DJJ Commitments from California Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation, Division of Juvenile Justice, Parole Region and County of First Commitment, 2014 – 2018.

# Alameda County's Trends in Context

Alameda County had exceeded the statewide reductions in Juvenile Hall occupancy rates and booking rates in recent years.

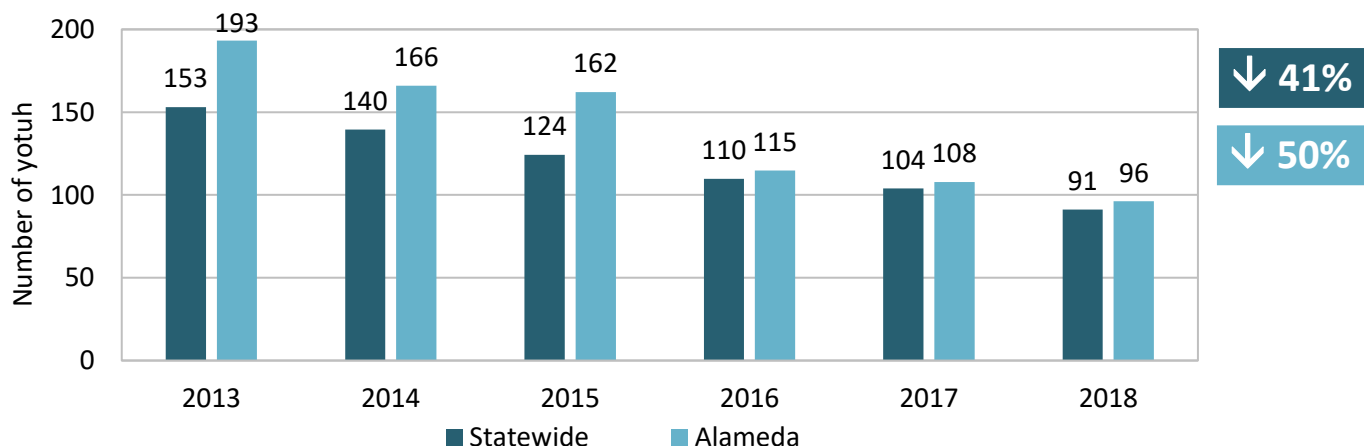
From 2008 to 2018, Alameda County's Juvenile Hall occupancy rate plummeted from 78% to 19%, a 76% overall decrease (Figure 19). The statewide average decreased by only 59% during this same period. An occupancy rate represents the percentage of available juvenile hall beds in a jurisdiction that are being used by detained youth on an annual basis. Alameda County's booking rate also declined by 50% from 2013 to 2018, exceeding the statewide reduction of 41% (Figure 20). A booking rate represents the average number of juveniles booked into Juvenile Hall each month per 100,000 juveniles aged 12-17 in the jurisdiction.

**Figure 19. Juvenile Hall Occupancy Rates in Alameda County and Statewide, 2008 - 2018**



Source: BSCC, Juvenile Detention Profile Survey, 2008 – 2018

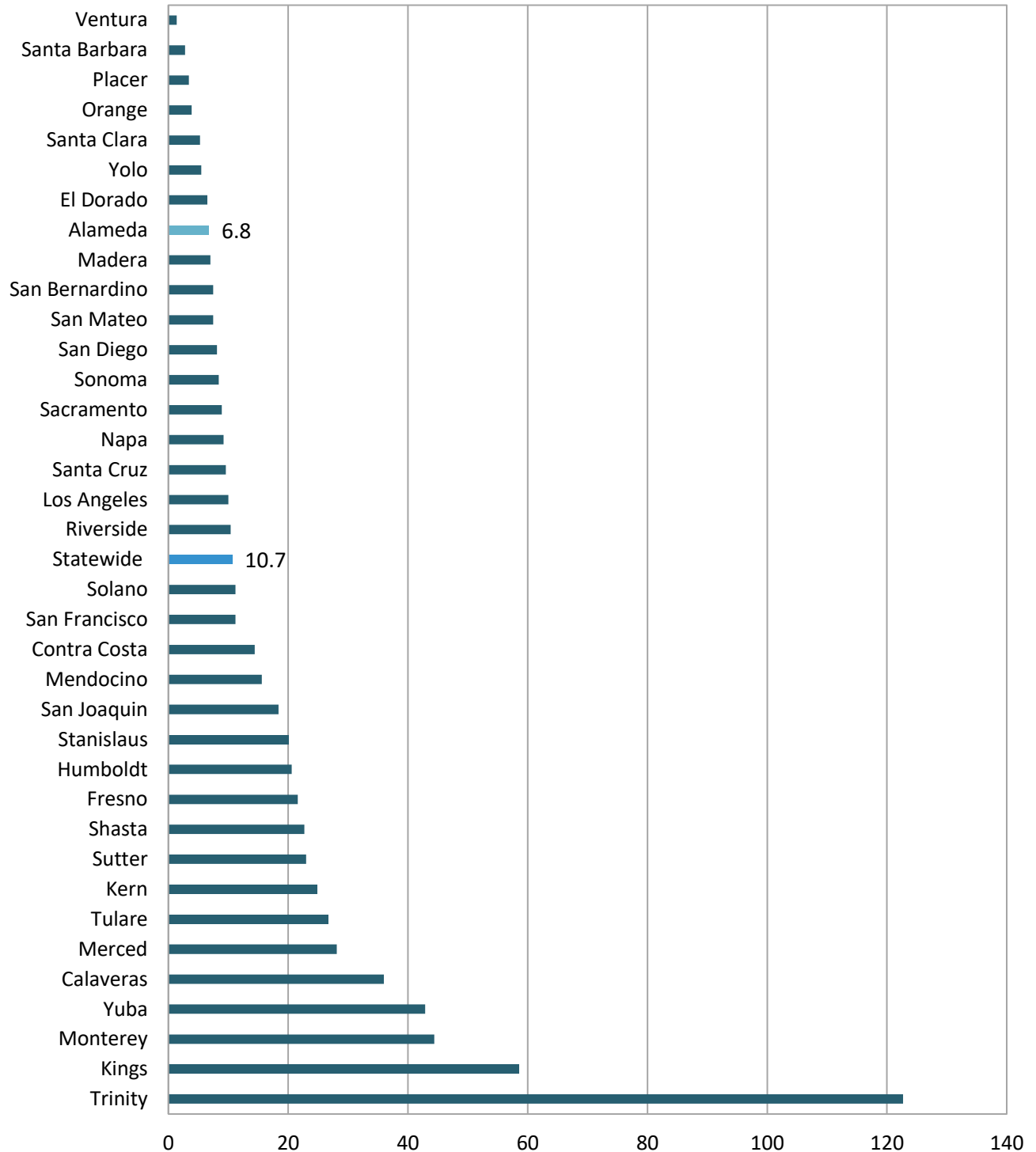
**Figure 20. Juvenile Hall Booking Rate in Alameda County and Statewide, 2013 - 2018**



Source: BSCC, Juvenile Detention Profile Survey, 2008 – 2018; California Department of Finance Population Projections

Figure 21 presents DJJ commitment rates for counties in 2018. Counties not included in this chart had no commitments in 2018. Alameda had a commitment rate of 6.8, which was substantially lower than the statewide average of 10.7. A DJJ commitment rate represents the number of youth committed by a county's courts to a state detention facility per 100,000 juveniles aged 12 -17 in the county.

**Figure 21. DJJ Commitment Rate in California Counties, 2018**



Source: CDCR, Division of Juvenile Justice, Parole Region and County of First Commitment, 2018