

MASSACHUSETTS

JUVENILE JUSTICE DATA BRIEF

**Spotlight on
Racial and Ethnic Disparities
Fiscal Year 2025**

*A Three-Part Series from the
Office of the Child Advocate*

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mass.gov/oca/jjbriefts

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About the Office of the Child Advocate

The [Office of the Child Advocate](#) (OCA) is an independent executive branch agency with oversight and ombudsperson responsibilities, established by the Massachusetts Legislature in 2008. The OCA’s mission is to ensure that children receive appropriate, timely and quality state services, with a particular focus on ensuring that the Commonwealth’s most vulnerable and at-risk children have the opportunity to thrive. Through collaboration with public and private stakeholders, the OCA identifies gaps in state services and recommends improvements in policy, practice, regulation, and/or law. The OCA also serves as a resource for families who are receiving, or are eligible to receive, services from the Commonwealth.

Introduction and Background

This brief is one in a three-part series from the Office of the Child Advocate (OCA) that explores disparities in Massachusetts' juvenile justice system, including those [related to geography, race/ethnicity, and gender and sexual orientation](#).

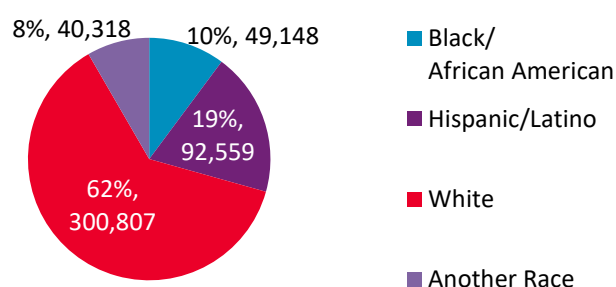
This brief analyzes Massachusetts juvenile justice system data from fiscal year 2025 (July 1, 2024 – June 30, 2025) with each data point presented broken down by race/ethnicity. The data, which is presented by key data takeaway,¹ highlights **how similarly situated youth may experience the juvenile justice system differently depending on their race/ethnicity**.

The data findings in this report raise important questions about equity and consistency in how Massachusetts youth experience the juvenile justice system. Disparities across race/ethnicity may stem from:

1. Differences in youth offending behavior;
2. Uneven access to community-based diversion programs;
3. Variations in policy and use of discretion across the state's 300+ police departments and 11 district attorney's offices; and/or
4. Individual or institutional decision-making by police, clerks, and judges.

Stakeholders should use this data, and [the corresponding data summary infographics](#), as a **starting point for continued inquiry**—to identify what drives system involvement and ensure that responses to youth are **fair, consistent, and community-oriented**. Advancing this understanding is essential to **promoting public safety, reducing unnecessary court involvement, and improving outcomes** for youth across Massachusetts.

Figure 1:
Massachusetts Youth (12-17) Populations (CY23)

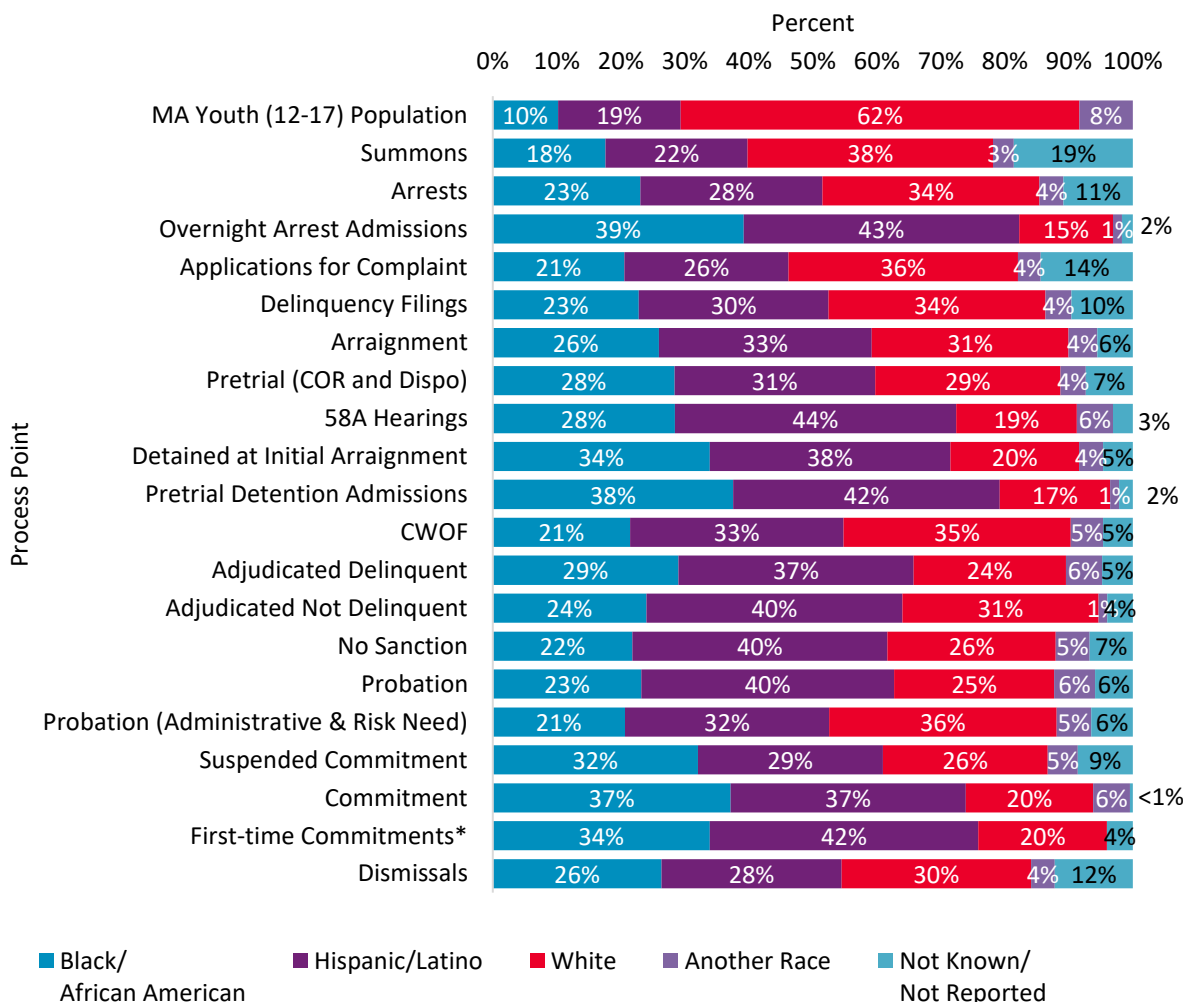


¹ For each data takeaway, there is a brief description of the juvenile justice system process point provided. Please refer to the Board's Annual Report for a full description of each process point: <https://www.mass.gov/doc/jipad-2024-annual-report/download>

Data Findings and Recommendations

As shown in Figure 2, **Black and Latino youth remained overrepresented at each process point in the juvenile justice system.**²

Figure 2:
Race/Ethnicity Data Breakdowns Across Process Points (FY25)



*Note: FY25 "Another race" first-time commitment data omitted from this chart due to cell suppression requirements to protect youth confidentiality. Source: Massachusetts population data retrieved from EZAPOP here: <https://www.ojdp.gov/ojstatbb/ezapop/>. Summons, arrest, applications for complaint, delinquency filings, arraignments, 58A hearings, and dispositions retrieved between 10/2025 and 1/2026 from the Massachusetts Trial Court's Tableau Public page here: <https://public.tableau.com/app/profile/drap4687/vizzes>. FY25 data excludes expunged cases at each court point except Applications for Complaint and Delinquency Filings. Overnight arrest admissions, pretrial detention, and first-time commitment data provided to the OCA by the Department of Youth Services. Pretrial supervision/monitoring cases, and post adjudication probation case starts provided to the OCA by the Massachusetts Probation Service.

² See Table 6 in Appendix A of this brief.

Summary of Data Findings

In FY25, juvenile justice system use varied depending on a young person's race/ethnicity. Key data findings include:

1. **Racial and ethnic disparities are greatest at the “front” door of the juvenile justice system, particularly in the use of arrest.** Black and Latino youth were more likely to enter the system via an arrest rather than a summons compared to their white peers. Black and Latino youth arrested were younger than their white peers, and Black girls were arrested more frequently than their Latina and white peers. These higher arrest rates drove disproportionately higher delinquency filings for youth of color compared to white youth.
2. **Black and Latino youth experience more intensive juvenile justice involvement at the pretrial phase.** Black and Latino youth are over-represented in arraignments, 58A hearings, and were more likely to be released with pretrial conditions of release than white youth. Black and Latino youth were more likely to be detained pretrial.
3. **Black and Latino youth were more likely be adjudicated delinquent and less likely to receive a CWOFF than white youth. Black and Latino youth were more likely to be committed to DYS.** Of youth committed to DYS, Black and Latino youth were more likely to be committed as a youthful offender and less likely to have DCF involvement at time of commitment.
4. **Black and Latino youths' cases were dismissed at higher rates than white youths' cases.** While most cases ultimately result in dismissal, the high rate of dismissals raises concern that Black and Latino youth are formally processed through the court system when diversion at an earlier stage might have better served a youth.

Recommendations

These persistent racial and ethnic inequities in the Commonwealth's juvenile justice system stem from a long history of systemic racism at the local, state, and federal levels as well as in our society at large. The findings summarized below reflect trends across the juvenile justice system and identify potential opportunities for intervention, including:

1. **Reducing entry at the front door of the system.** The OCA echoes the JJPAD Board's recommendation in prior reports that police departments increase the use of diversion, and when diversion is not possible, increase the use of summons in lieu of arrest. Police departments are specifically urged to consider department practices with regards to arresting younger youth, as the data in this brief demonstrates that statewide, disparities are greatest for Black and Latino youth aged 12 to 14. Further, police departments should require officers to document *why* they decided to arrest a youth instead of issuing a summons for arrests and publish their findings.

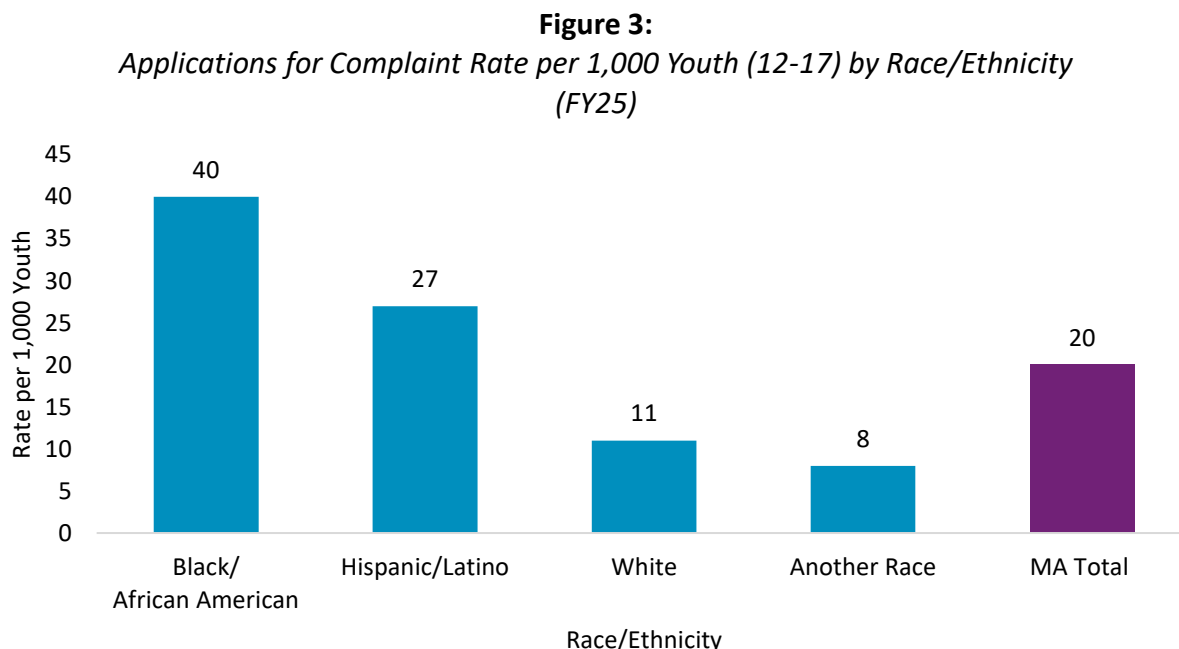
2. **Preventing deeper system involvement for youth at the pretrial phase.** The Juvenile Court and individual judges should review their practices to understand whether more youth can be released on personal recognizance (PR) without conditions rather than defaulting to setting pretrial conditions that increase the likelihood of technical violations and pretrial detention.
3. **Reviewing police department, district attorney, and courtroom policies, practices, and data:** Police departments, district attorneys' offices, and the Juvenile Court should analyze their internal data to determine whether the state level disparities identified in this brief are also present at the agency, office, or individual level, and use those findings to inform future policy, practice, and training recommendations.

The Initial Stages of the Juvenile Justice System³



In FY25, for every 1,000 Black youth (12-17) in Massachusetts, 40 had a delinquency case initiated with the Juvenile Court. For everyone 1,000 Latino youth, 27 had a case initiated with Juvenile Court. For every 1,000 white youth, 11 had a case initiated with Juvenile Court (Figure 3).

³ The initial phases of the juvenile justice system include data on the use of applications for complaint including the manner in which youth come to the Juvenile Court's attention (i.e., via an arrest or summons).



Source: Applications for complaint data retrieved on 10/2025 from the Massachusetts Trial Court's Tableau Public page here: <https://public.tableau.com/app/profile/drap4687/viz/DemographicsofSelectedJuvenileMatters/JuvenileMattersbyRaceEthn>

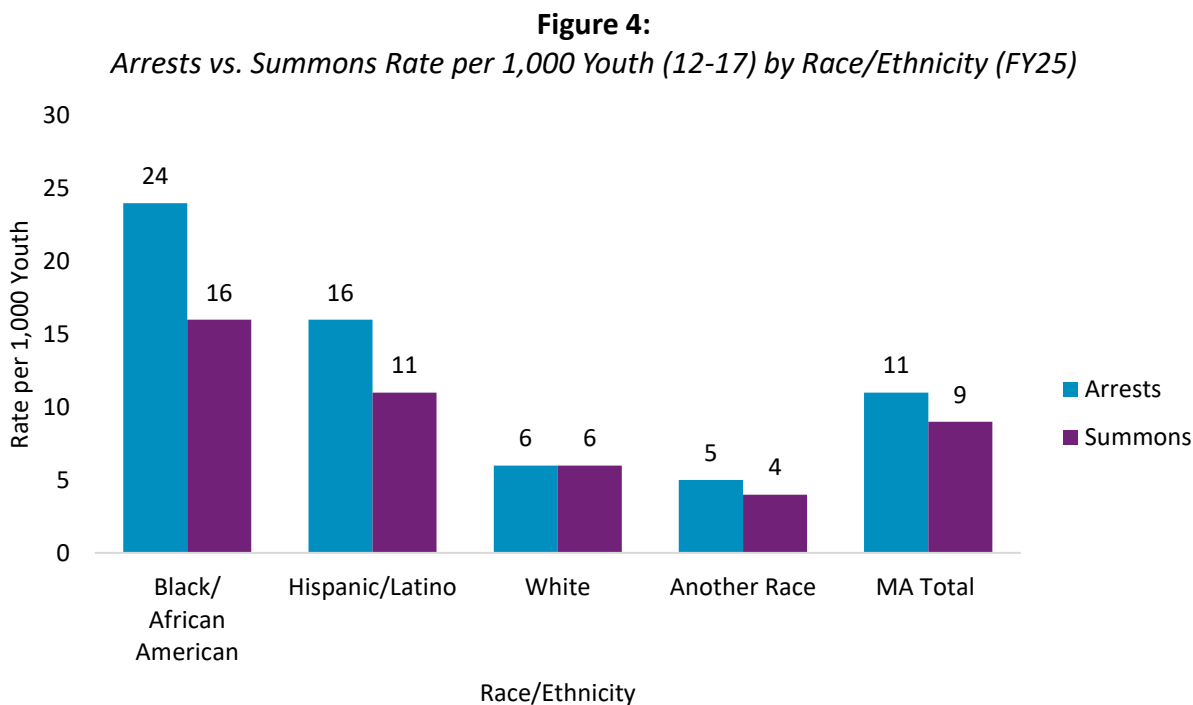
The **way a youth enters the juvenile court matters**. In Massachusetts, an application for complaint can be initiated by a police officer **issuing a summons** for the youth to appear before the Juvenile Court on a set date or **physically arresting the youth**.

Massachusetts police officers are trained that a summons is the preferred method of bringing a juvenile to court, and they are instructed to reserve arrests for when an alleged offense threatens public safety, or if there is “reason to believe the child will not appear upon a summons.”⁴

KEY TAKEAWAY #1: Black and Latino youth were more likely to enter the system via an arrest rather than a summons compared to white youth.

- Black youth were 4.2 times more likely to be arrested and 2.8 times more likely to be summonsed than white youth
- Latino youth were 2.7 times more likely to be arrested and 1.9 times more likely to be summonsed than white youth

⁴ In certain instances, police officers do not have the option to seek a summons and must use an arrest (e.g., violation of an Abuse Prevention Order (209A) or Harassment Prevention Order (258E)); this statutory requirement applies to adults as well as juveniles. For all other offenses, however, police officers have the sole discretionary authority to decide whether to arrest a youth, seek a summons, or give them a warning or offer diversion. MPTC Legal Standards & Procedures for Police Interactions with Youth, September 2021.



Source: Arrest and Summons data retrieved on 1/2026 from the Massachusetts Trial Court's Tableau Public page here: <https://public.tableau.com/app/profile/drap4687/viz/MassachusettsTrialCourtApplicationsforDelinquentComplaint/SummaryCaseInitiationbyDivision>.

Additionally, **arrests were used more frequently in felony cases for Black (88%) and Latino (87%) youth** compared to white youth (79%) (Table 1).⁵ **Arrests were also used more frequently for Black and Latino youth in misdemeanor cases.**

Table 1: Applications for Complaint by Summons vs. Arrest and Race/Ethnicity (FY25)			
Race/Ethnicity	AC Initiated By	Felony	Misdemeanor
Black/African American	Arrest	88%	34%
	Summons	12%	66%
	Total Applications	100%	100%
Latino	Arrest	87%	37%
	Summons	13%	63%
	Total Applications	100%	100%
White	Arrest	79%	30%
	Summons	21%	70%

⁵ For arrest and summons data by offense type, and offense severity see Appendix A.

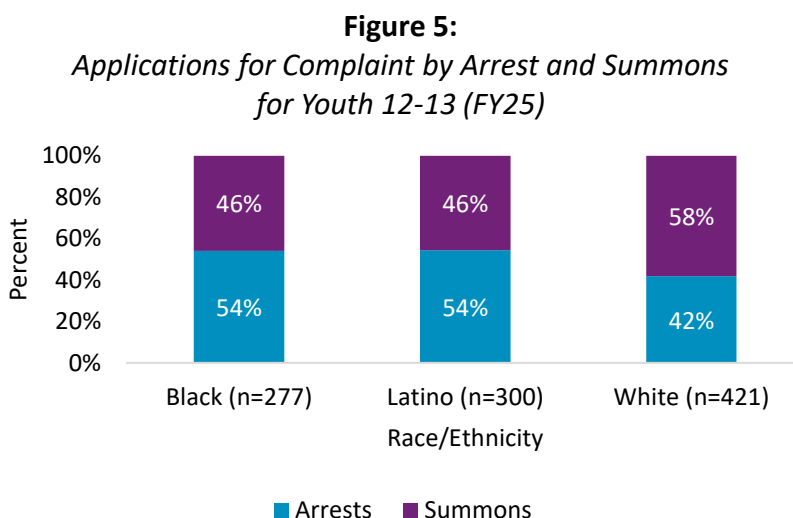
Table 1: Applications for Complaint by Summons vs. Arrest and Race/Ethnicity (FY25)

	Total Applications	100%	100%
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Source: Application for complaint data retrieved 3/2026 from the Massachusetts Trial Court's website:
<https://public.tableau.com/app/profile/drap4687/viz/MassachusettsTrialCourtApplicationsforDelinquentComplaint/SummaryCaseInitiationbyDivision>

KEY TAKEAWAY #2: Black and Latino youth were arrested at younger ages than their peers, with disparities affecting all genders and being especially severe for Black girls and Black boys.

Among the youngest children in the juvenile justice system (12, and 13-year-olds) arrests (versus summons) are used more for Black (54% of applications for complaint) and Latino (54% of applications for complaint) youth compared to white youth (42% of applications for complaint).



Source: Arrest and summons data retrieved 3/2026 from the Massachusetts Trial Court's website:

<https://public.tableau.com/app/profile/drap4687/viz/MassachusettsTrialCourtApplicationsforDelinquentComplaint/SummaryCaseInitiationbyDivision>

Table 2: Applications for Complaint by Summons vs. Arrest by Age and Race/Ethnicity (FY25)

Race/Ethnicity	AC Initiated By	12 to 13	14 to 15	16 to 17	18+
Black	Arrest	54%	61%	61%	71%
	Summons	46%	39%	39%	29%
	Total Applications	100%	100%	100%	100%
Latino	Arrest	54%	59%	61%	60%
	Summons	46%	41%	39%	40%
	Total Applications	100%	100%	100%	100%
White	Arrest	42%	47%	54%	57%
	Summons	58%	53%	46%	43%

Table 2: Applications for Complaint by Summons vs. Arrest by Age and Race/Ethnicity (FY25)

	Total Applications	100%	100%	100%	100%
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Source: Arrest and summons data retrieved 3/2026 from the Massachusetts Trial Court's website:

<https://public.tableau.com/app/profile/drap4687/viz/MassachusettsTrialCourtApplicationsforDelinquentComplaint/SummaryCaseInitiationbyDivision>

Black girls were arrested (versus summonsed) more frequently (55% of applications for complaint) compared to Latina girls (46% of applications for complaint) and white girls (38% of applications for complaint) (Table 3).

Additionally, Black (62% of applications for complaint) and Latino boys (64% applications for complaint) were arrested more frequently compared to white boys (55% of applications for complaint) (Table 3).

Table 3: Applications for Complaint by Summons vs. Arrest by Gender and Race/Ethnicity (FY25)

Race/Ethnicity	AC Initiated By	Girls	Boys
Black	Arrest	55%	62%
	Summons	45%	38%
	Total Applications	100%	100%
Latino	Arrest	46%	64%
	Summons	54%	36%
	Total Applications	100%	100%
White	Arrest	38%	55%
	Summons	62%	45%
	Total Applications	100%	100%

Source: Arrest and summons data retrieved 3/2026 from the Massachusetts Trial Court's website:

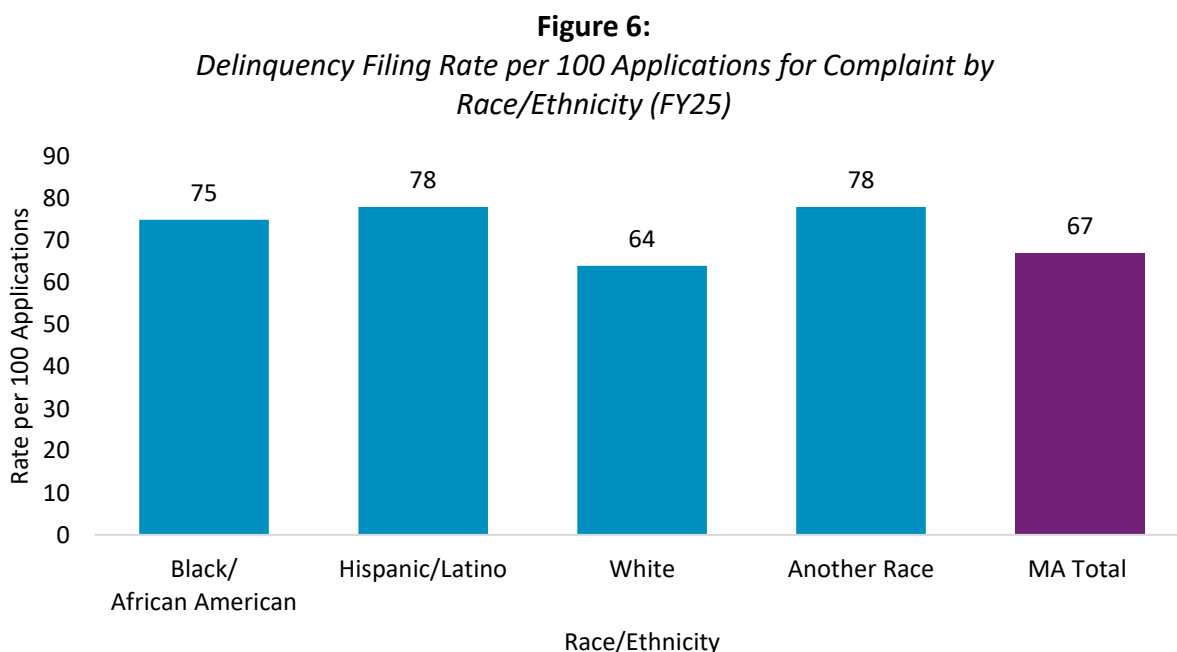
<https://public.tableau.com/app/profile/drap4687/viz/MassachusettsTrialCourtApplicationsforDelinquentComplaint/SummaryCaseInitiationbyDivision>

KEY TAKEAWAY #3: Higher delinquency filings for youth of color compared to white youth are in part driven by disparities in the use of arrests (versus summons).

If an application for complaint is initiated by a summons, the clerk magistrate determines if there is probable cause to believe that the youth committed the alleged delinquent offense. If a clerk determines there is probable cause on a summons, they issue a "delinquency filing."

Clerks can also dismiss or divert a case at this point. **Cases initiated by arrest typically cannot be dismissed or diverted by a clerk.**⁶

Latino youth and youth of “another race” had the highest rate of delinquency filings per 100 applications for complaint (78 filings each), followed by Black youth, who had the second highest rate. This was partially driven by Black and Latino youth having a higher arrest rate than white youth (Figure 6), as arrests typically cannot be dismissed or diverted by a clerk.



Source: Delinquency filing data retrieved on 10/2025 from the Massachusetts Trial Court's Tableau Public page here: <https://public.tableau.com/app/profile/drap4687/viz/DemographicsofSelectedJuvenileMatters/JuvenileMattersbyRaceEthn>.

Arraignments and Pretrial Proceedings⁷



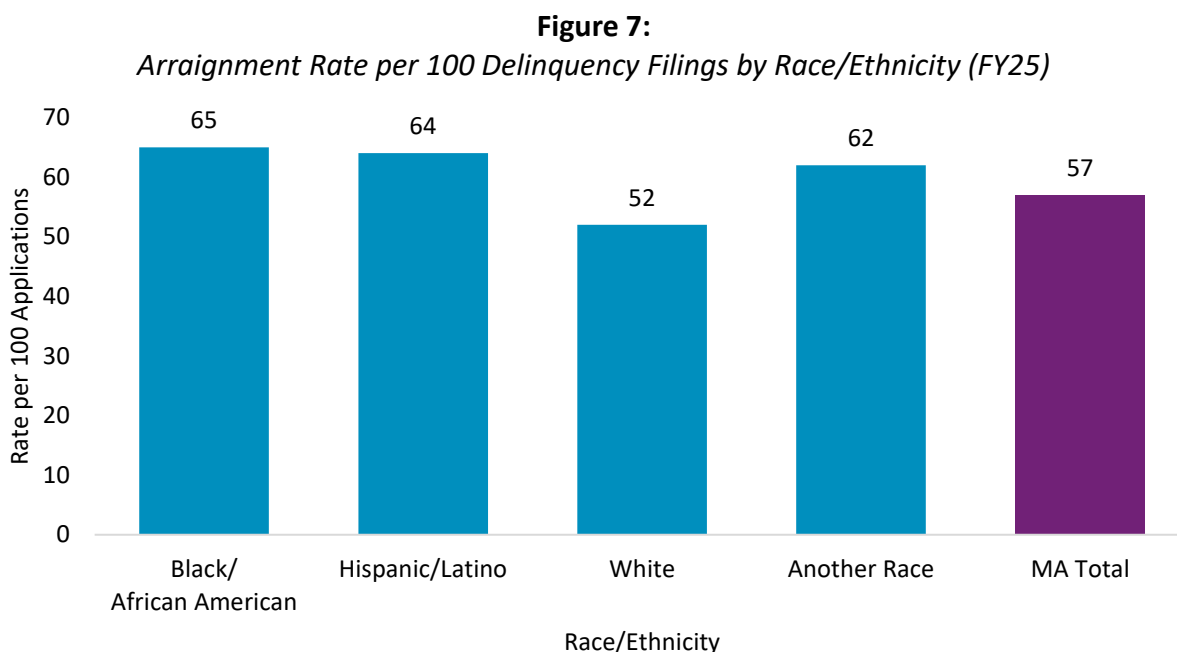
KEY TAKEAWAY #4. Compared to their white peers, Black and Latino youth were more likely to be detained pretrial. For youth *not* detained pretrial, Black and Latino youth were given

⁶ Arrests, typically, go right to the “Delinquency Filing” stage, skipping the clerk magistrate’s hearing. The exception to this is if an arrest or summons is for a first-time offense for a youth, and that offense is a misdemeanor for which the punishment is a fine, imprisonment in a jail or house of correction for not more than 6 months, the complaint does not issue, and the youth’s case is dropped.

⁷ This part of the juvenile justice system includes data on 58A (“dangerousness”) hearings, pretrial supervision and monitoring, pretrial detention admissions, and the reasons why youth are detained pretrial. To learn more about the Pretrial Phase of the Juvenile Justice system, check out the Board’s 2025 report on this topic: <https://www.mass.gov/doc/improving-massachusetts-juvenile-pretrial-phase-an-assessment-of-the-current-pretrial-system-and-recommendations-for-improvement/download>

conditions of release more frequently than white youth, who were released on personal recognizance more.⁸

An arraignment marks the point when a youth is formally charged in court—an event that leaves a lasting mark on their record.⁹ **In FY25, Black and Latino youth had the highest arraignment rate at 65 and 64 per 100 delinquency filings, respectfully (Figure 7).**



Source: Arraignment data retrieved on 12/2025 from the Massachusetts Trial Court's Tableau Public page here: <https://public.tableau.com/app/profile/drap4687/viz/JuvenileCourtCasesArrested/CountyMapCharacteristics>.

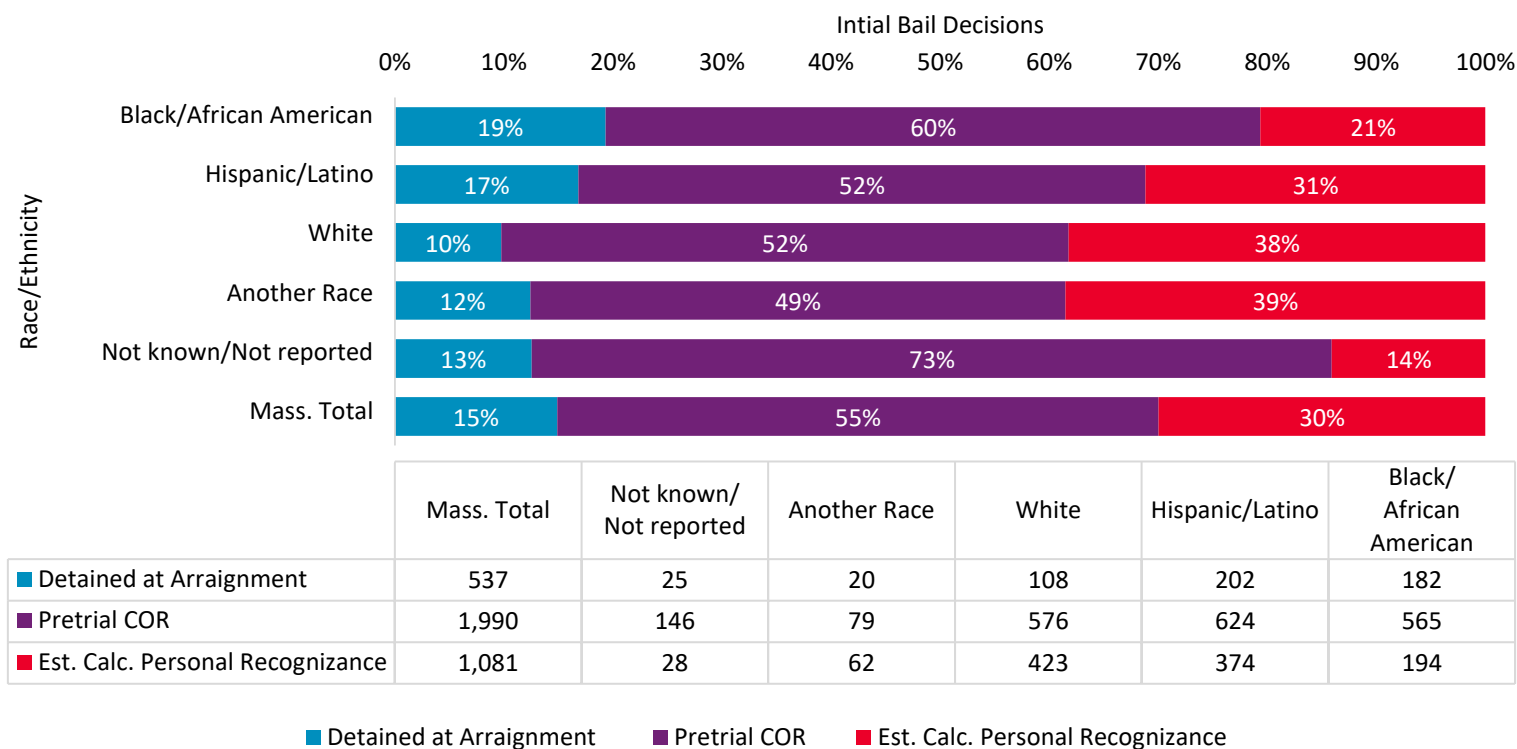
At an arraignment, judges decide whether to release a youth on personal recognizance, impose conditions of release, or order pretrial detention. **A larger percentage of white youth (38%) are released on personal recognizance, compared to Black (21%) and Latino youth (31%) (Figure 8).**¹⁰

⁸ This part of the juvenile justice system includes data on 58A (“dangerousness”) hearings, pretrial supervision and monitoring, pretrial detention admissions, and the reasons why youth are detained pretrial. To learn more about the Pretrial Phase of the Juvenile Justice system, check out the Board’s 2025 report on this topic: <https://www.mass.gov/doc/improving-massachusetts-juvenile-pretrial-phase-an-assessment-of-the-current-pretrial-system-and-recommendations-for-improvement/download>

⁹ This is the point at which an official “Criminal Offender Record Information” (CORI) record is created. Massachusetts also has “Court Activity Record Information” (CARI) records for youth once the court process begins before an arraignment.

¹⁰ At the time of this report, the number of youth released pretrial on their own personal recognizances is not reported. Therefore, the OCA has estimated the number by taking the total number of youth not detained pretrial and subtracting the number of youth released on pretrial conditions of release and pretrial probation as a disposition.

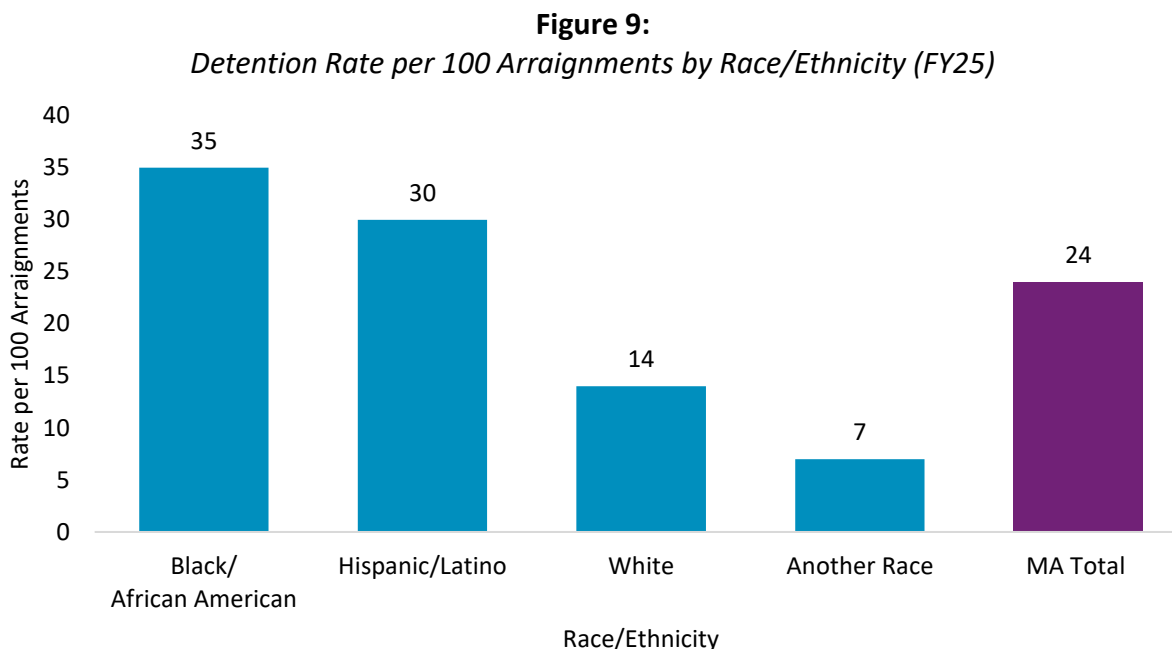
Figure 8:
Initial Bail Decisions by Race/Ethnicity (FY25)



Due to the way MPS reported FY25 data, pretrial conditions of release (COR) data primarily reflect youth supervised at the county level ("Category B" cases), rather than youth monitored by the statewide pretrial unit ("Category A" cases). A small number of cases assigned to "Category A" as well as youth assigned to pretrial probation as a disposition are reported here as well. Personal recognizance cases are an estimated calculation by OCA by subtracting the number of COR from the total number of cases not held at arraignment reported by the Trial Court on its public dashboards.

Source: Data on youth not detained and detained at the initial arraignment appearance retrieved 11/12/2025 from the Massachusetts Trial Court's Tableau Public page here:
<https://public.tableau.com/app/profile/drap4687/viz/MassachusettsJuvenileCourtDelinquencyInitialBailDecisions/InitialDecisionbyDivision>.

Youth may be detained pretrial at arraignment due to a 58A ("Dangerousness") hearing or if they are unable to meet bail requirements. Detention can also occur later in the pretrial process due to probation violations or the revocation of bail or personal recognizance.



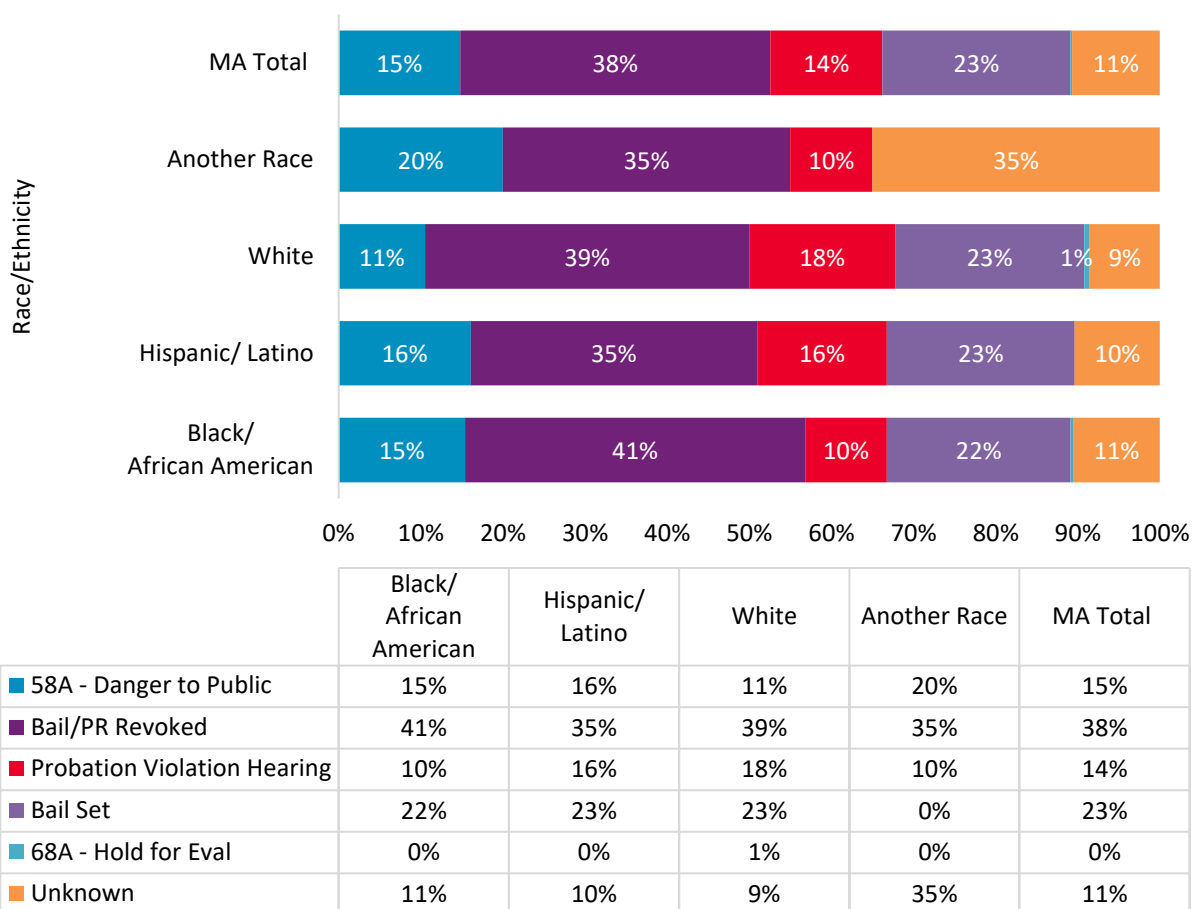
Source: Detention admission data provided to the OCA by the Department of Youth Services

As shown in Figure 10, Black and Latino youth were more likely to be detained pretrial than white youth. The most common reason for pretrial detention across all youth is bail or personal recognizance being revoked. However, detention drivers differ by race/ethnicity. Compared to white youth arraigned in Massachusetts:

- Black youth were 1.8 times more likely to be subjects of a 58A hearing, resulting in more frequent detention admissions as a result.
- Latino youth were 2.2 times more likely to be subjects of a 58A hearing, resulting in more frequent detention admissions as a result.

Black and Latino youth were less likely than white youth to be detained as a result of a probation violation hearing (Figure 10).

Figure 10:
Reason Detained by Race/Ethnicity (FY25)



Source: Detention admission data provided to the OCA by the Department of Youth Services

Black youth spent the longest time in detention, with an average length of stay of 56 days, and a median length of stay of 30 days.

Table 4: Detention Length of Stay by Race/Ethnicity (FY25)

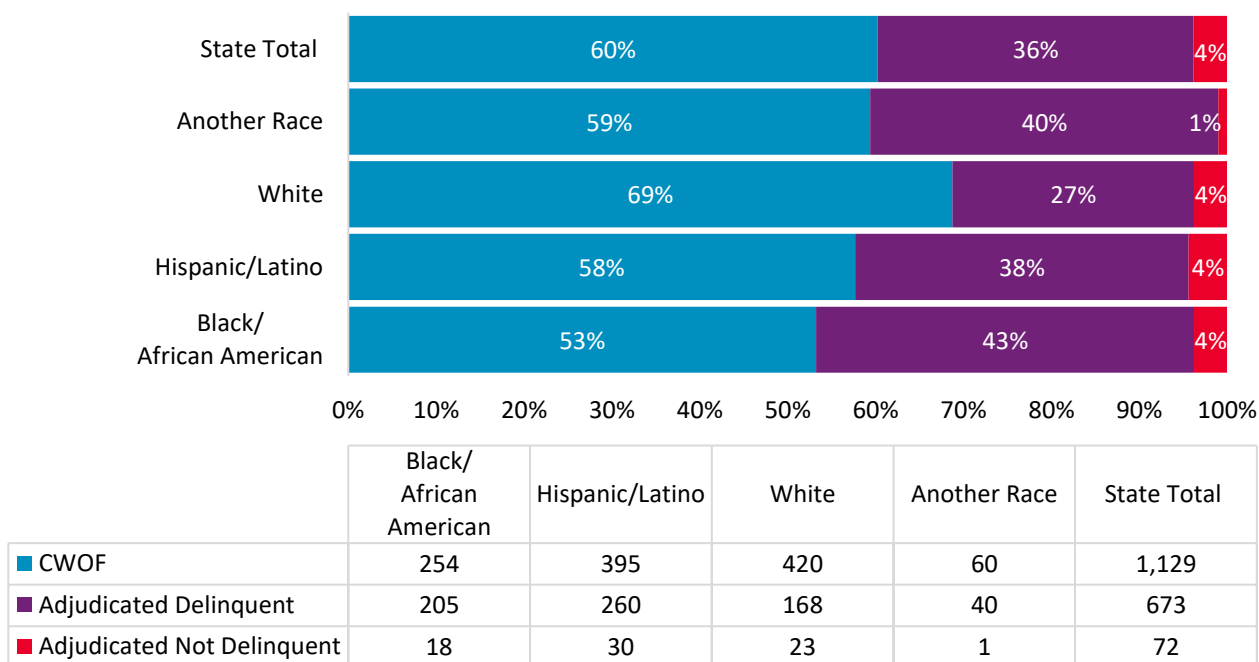
Measure	Black/African American	Hispanic/Latino	White
Median	30	22	24
Mean (average)	56	48	44
Maximum	1,022	835	624

Source: Data provided to the OCA by DYS' Department of Research

Sanctions and Dismissals¹¹

When a youth's case reaches disposition, they may be adjudicated delinquent ("guilty") or not delinquent ("not guilty"). A youth's case may also be resolved via a CWO ("continued without a finding").

Figure 11:
Initial Disposition by Race/Ethnicity (FY25)



Source: Disposition data retrieved 11/2025 from the Massachusetts Trial Court's Tableau Public page here:
<https://public.tableau.com/app/profile/drap4687/viz/MassachusettsJuvenileCourtDelinquencyDismissalsandAdjudications/AdjudicationRates>

KEY TAKEAWAY #5. Black and Latino youth were more likely be adjudicated delinquent and less likely to have their case resolved via CWO. In FY25, compared to white youth arraigned in Massachusetts:

- Black youth were less likely to have their case resolved via a CWO and 1.5 times more likely to be adjudicated delinquent

¹¹ Data regarding dispositions and sanctions are reported at the time of the initial disposition. In some instances, dispositions may change throughout the life of a case (e.g., a CWO can turn into a Delinquent Adjudication). In this report, dismissals are counted separately from dispositions. A case can be dismissed prior to a plea or trial due to a number of procedural or legal reasons. That data is reported in the below.

- Latino youth were less likely to have their case resolved via a CWO and 1.4 times more likely to be adjudicated delinquent

KEY TAKEAWAY #6. Black and Latino youth were more likely be committed to DYS.¹²

Sanctions are the outcomes imposed when a youth is adjudicated delinquent—the juvenile court’s equivalent of a “sentence” in adult court. Common sanctions include:¹³

- **Commitment to DYS custody**, sometimes extending up to a youth’s 21st birthday;¹⁴
- **Suspended DYS commitment**, where the youth is supervised by Massachusetts Probation Services (MPS) and only committed if they fail to meet conditions;
- **Probation** supervision through MPS; or
- **No sanction** at all.¹⁵

In FY25, compared to white youth adjudicated delinquent in Massachusetts,

- Black youth were 1.5 times more likely to be committed to DYS
- Latino youth were 1.2 times more likely to be committed to DYS

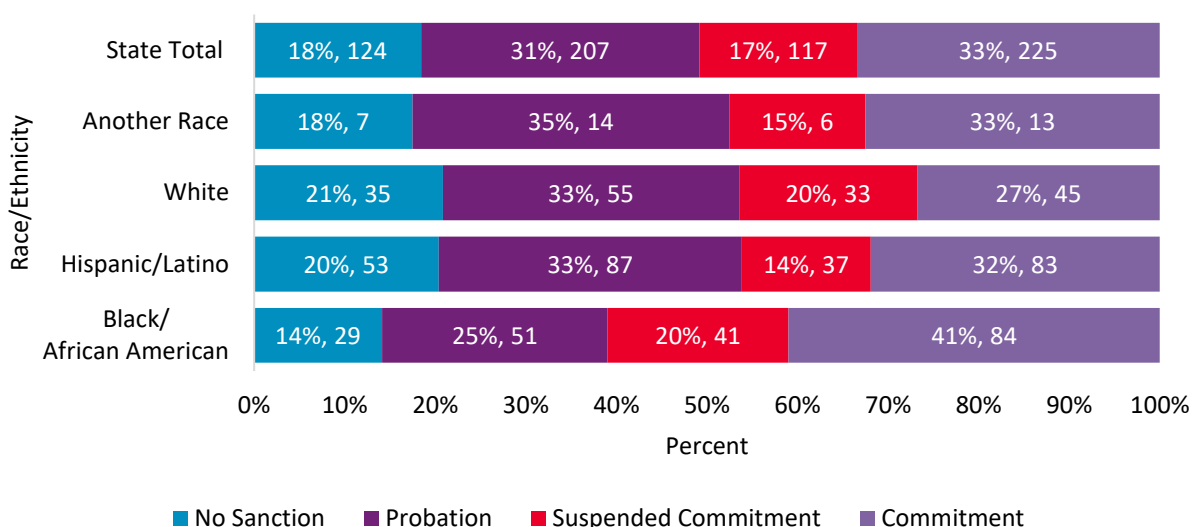
¹² Data on sanctions by race and offense severity or type is not currently publicly available. It is therefore unclear if the underlying cases involving Black and Latino youth who are committed to DYS are more likely to involve more serious offenses.

¹³ The Juvenile Court can also impose or suspend an adult sentence if the youth was adjudicated as a youthful offender. A youthful offender case involves a youth between 14 and 18 years old who is indicted by a grand jury for allegedly committing an offense which, if they were an adult, would be punishable by imprisonment in state prison and who meets any of the following criteria: (1) the youth has previously been committed to DYS; (2) the youth has committed an offense which involves the infliction or threat of serious bodily harm in violation of law; (3) the youth has committed certain firearms and weapons offenses. As defined in M.G.L c119 §52: <https://malegislature.gov/Laws/GeneralLaws/PartI/TitleXVII/Chapter119/Section52>

¹⁴ Youth charged as a juvenile, but whose cases are disposed after their 18th birthday can be committed to DYS until they are 19 or 20 years old. Youth with a youthful offender case can be committed to DYS until age 21. (MGL c. 119 §58.) While youth are committed to the physical custody of DYS, youth may live in the community or a DYS facility at different points throughout their commitment disposition.

¹⁵ In these cases, judges adjudicate a youth delinquent for a given case and put the case “on file” unless or until a certain circumstance occurs.

Figure 12:
Sanctions by Race/Ethnicity (FY25)



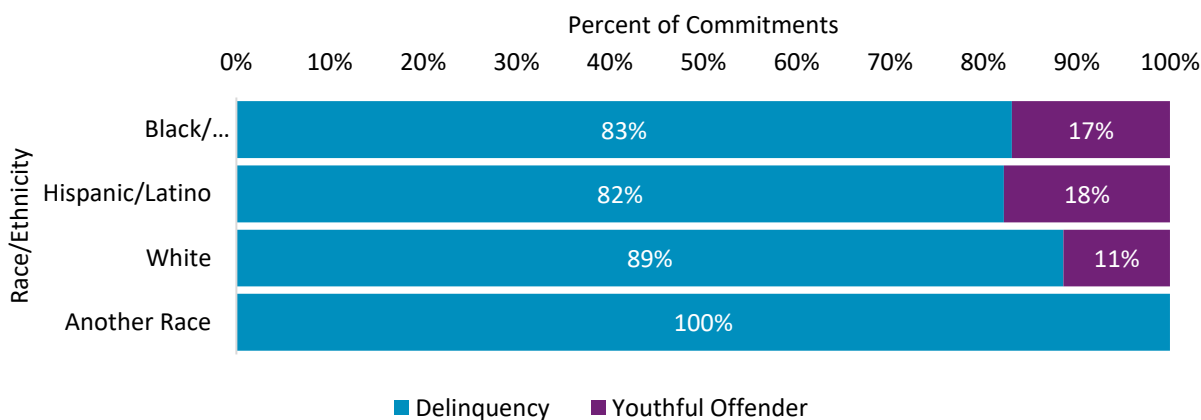
Source: Sanctions data retrieved 11/2025 from the Massachusetts Trial Court's Tableau Public page here:
<https://public.tableau.com/app/profile/drap4687/viz/MassachusettsJuvenileCourtDelinquencyDismissalsandAdjudications/AdjudicationRates>

Data on first-time commitments to DYS reflects the number of committed youth who have never previously been committed to DYS's custody.¹⁶

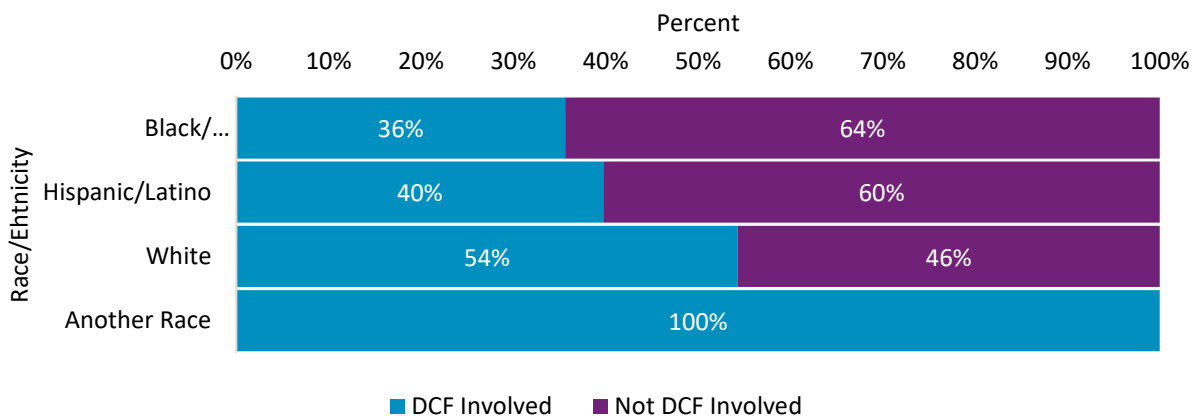
Compared to white youth committed, Black and Latino youth were:

- **more frequently committed as a youthful offender, rather than adjudicated on a delinquency case** (Figure 13).
- **less likely to be involved with DCF at the time of first-time commitment** (Figure 14).

¹⁶ First-time commitment data does not include youth who have been committed previously and are subsequently recommitted to DYS on new charges.

Figure 13:*First-Time Commitments by DYS Docket Type and Race/Ethnicity (FY25)*

Source: Data provided to the OCA by DYS' Department of Research

Figure 14:*First-Time Commitments by DCF Status and Race/Ethnicity (FY25)*

Source: Data provided to the OCA by DYS' Department of Research

KEY TAKEAWAY #7: Black and Latino youth had higher rates of case dismissals than white youth.

Cases may be dismissed by a judge at any point in the juvenile justice process post delinquency filing. Cases may be dismissed for several reasons, including because a case was diverted, because a judge or clerk found there was not probable cause, because there was insufficient evidence to continue prosecuting the case at any point pre- or during a trial, or in situations

where a victim does not wish to testify. The Trial Court does not report whether the case was dismissed by a judge or withdrawn/*nolle prossed*¹⁷ by a prosecutor.¹⁸

Data on case dismissals from the Juvenile Court indicates that youth across ethnicities and races have their cases dismissed at varying rates (Table 5).¹⁹

For example, **Black youth had the highest dismissal rate (77), higher than the statewide rate (67) and substantially higher than white youth (58). Latino youth also had a higher dismissal rate (63) compared to white youth.**

Process Point	Total Count	Black/ African American	Hispanic/ Latino	White	Another Race
Dismissals	4,294	1,132	1,209	1,270	160
Dismissals Per 100 Delinquency Filings	67	77	63	58	61
Source: Dismissal data retrieved between 10/2025 and 11/2025 from the Massachusetts Trial Court's Tableau Public page here: https://public.tableau.com/app/profile/drap4687/vizzes .					

While most cases ultimately result in dismissal, the high rate of dismissals raises concern that a disproportionate number of Black and Latino youth may be formally processed through the court system when diversion at an earlier stage might have better served a youth.

The relatively high percentage of cases involving youth that were ultimately dismissed raises important questions:

- Did the case meet the legal threshold for arrest and filing? A high dismissal rate may indicate that a significant number of cases are filed with insufficient legal or evidentiary support to proceed to adjudication.
- Are similarly situated youth being treated differently at the decision point where someone chooses to formally charge the case rather than divert it or decline

¹⁷An entry on the record of a legal action denoting that the prosecutor will proceed no further in an action either as a whole or as to some count or as to one or more of several defendants. See: <https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/nolle%20prosequi>

¹⁸ This number does not include the cases in which youth successfully complete their terms of probation as a result of a case being “continued without a finding” (CWO). In this report, dismissals are reported separately from dispositions to align with the Juvenile Court’s public reporting.

¹⁹ The Trial Court does not report whether the case was dismissed by a judge or withdrawn/*nolle prossed* by a prosecutor. This number does not include the cases in which youth successfully complete their terms of probation as a result of a case being “continued without a finding” (CWO). In this report, dismissals are reported separately from dispositions to align with the Juvenile Court’s public reporting.

prosecution? Differences in dismissal rates may reflect differences in how prosecutors initially decide which cases to formally charge versus divert or decline.

- Even if the case technically met a filing threshold, should it have been handled outside of court in the first place?

Conclusion

Overall, FY25 data shows that a Black and Latino youth experience the state's juvenile justice system differently than white youth in consequential ways. These findings underscore the importance of a continued need for local, county, and state practitioners to review practices to reduce unnecessary system involvement, and ensure youth are treated equitably across the Commonwealth.

Appendix A: Juvenile Justice System Process Points by Race/Ethnicity

Table 6: Process Points by Race/Ethnicity (FY25)

Process Point	Total Count	Black/ African American	Hispanic/ Latino	White	Another Race	Not known/ Not reported
MA Youth (12-17) Population	482,832	49,148	92,559	300,807	40,318	0
Summons	4,470	787	993	1,714	145	831
Arrests	5,114	1,178	1,457	1,734	190	555
Overnight Arrest Admissions	643	252	277	94	9	11
Applications for Complaint	9,561	1,964	2,454	3,429	337	1,377
Delinquency Filings	6,437	1,468	1,908	2,182	263	616
Arraignment	3,653	948	1,215	1,124	163	203
Pretrial (COR and Dispo)	1,990	565	624	576	79	146
58A Hearings	355	101	156	67	20	11
Detained at Initial Arraignment	537	182	202	108	20	25
Pretrial Detention Admissions	881	331	367	152	12	19
CWOF	1,184	254	395	420	60	55
Adjudicated Delinquent	707	205	260	168	40	34
Adjudicated Not Delinquent	75	18	30	23	1	3
No Sanction	133	29	53	35	7	9
Probation	220	51	87	55	14	13
Probation (Administrative & Risk Need)	1,385	286	442	492	75	90
Suspended Commitment	128	41	37	33	6	11
Commitment	226	84	83	45	13	1
First-time Commitments*	174	59	73	35	*	*
Dismissals	4,294	1,132	1,209	1,270	160	523

*Note: FY25 "Another race" and "Not know/Not reported" first-time commitment data omitted from this chart due to cell suppression requirements to protect youth confidentiality. Source: Massachusetts population data retrieved from EZAPOP here: <https://www.ojdp.gov/ojstatbb/ezapop/>. Summons, arrest, applications for complaint, delinquency filings, arraignments, 58A hearings, and dispositions retrieved between 10/2025 and 1/2026 from the Massachusetts Trial Court's Tableau Public page here: <https://public.tableau.com/app/profile/drap4687/vizzes>. FY25 data excludes expunged cases at each court point except Applications for Complaint and Delinquency Filings. Overnight arrest admissions, pretrial detention, and first-time commitment data provided to the OCA by the Department of Youth Services. Pretrial supervision/monitoring cases, and post adjudication probation case starts provided to the OCA by the Massachusetts Probation Service.

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