

STATUS OFFENSES

Kansas Court Referrals
1976



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STATISTICAL ANALYSIS CENTER
GOVERNOR'S COMMITTEE ON CRIMINAL ADMINISTRATION

STATUS OFFENSES: KANSAS COURT REFERRALS - 1976

January, 1978

Prepared by the Statistical Analysis Center, Governor's Committee on Criminal Administration.

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Kansas Bureau of Investigation
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Shawnee County Data Processing Department
Juvenile Courts of Kansas

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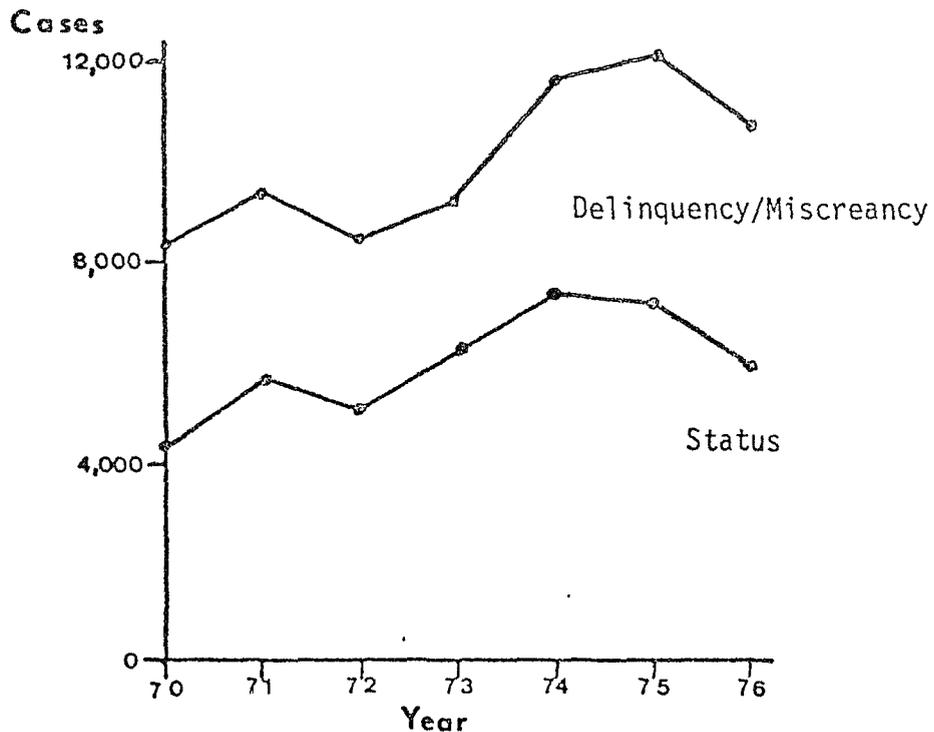
ACQUISITION

THE JUVENILE STATUS OFFENDER

From 1970 to 1976, the percentage of delinquency and miscreancy court referrals to delinquency and miscreancy arrests has increased from 38.7 to 53.3. This increase is mostly do to variations in reporting procedures and the manner in which juveniles are handled. During this seven year period, the number of status offenders referred to juvenile court has paralleled the number of delinquency and miscreancy court referrals, at a rate slightly greater than 1 status referral per 2 delinquency and miscreancy referrals.

COURT REFERRALS

DELINQUENCY/MISCREANCY VS. STATUS

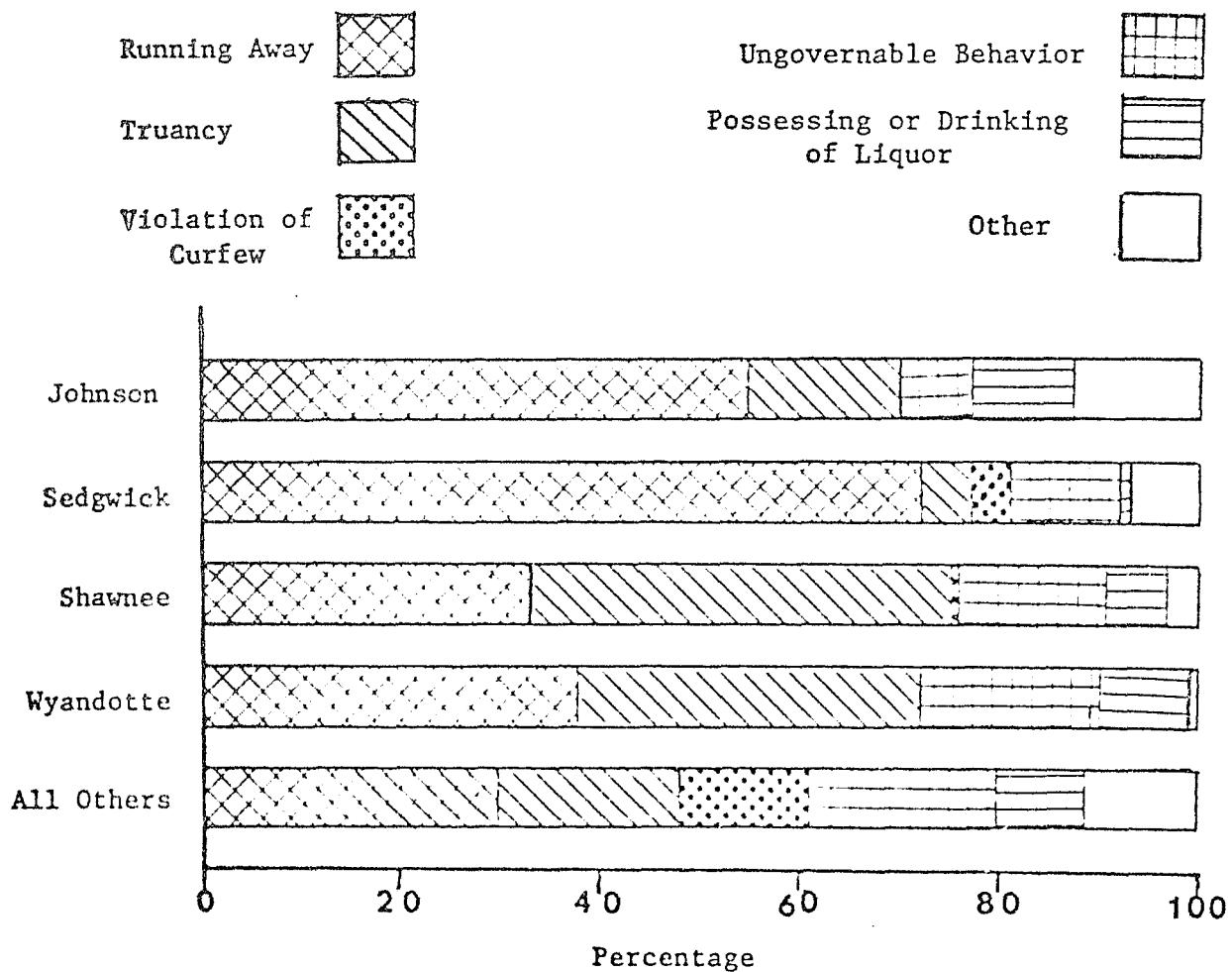


Since more juveniles were referred to the court per juvenile arrest in 1976 than any of the previous five years, investigation of the 1976 data should be the most meaningful.

In 1976, there were 5,827 status offenders referred to the juvenile court; 3,575 of which were in the metropolitan area courts (Johnson, Sedgwick, Shawnee and Wyandotte counties), and 2,252 in the other

COUNTY BREAKDOWN OF REFERRALS

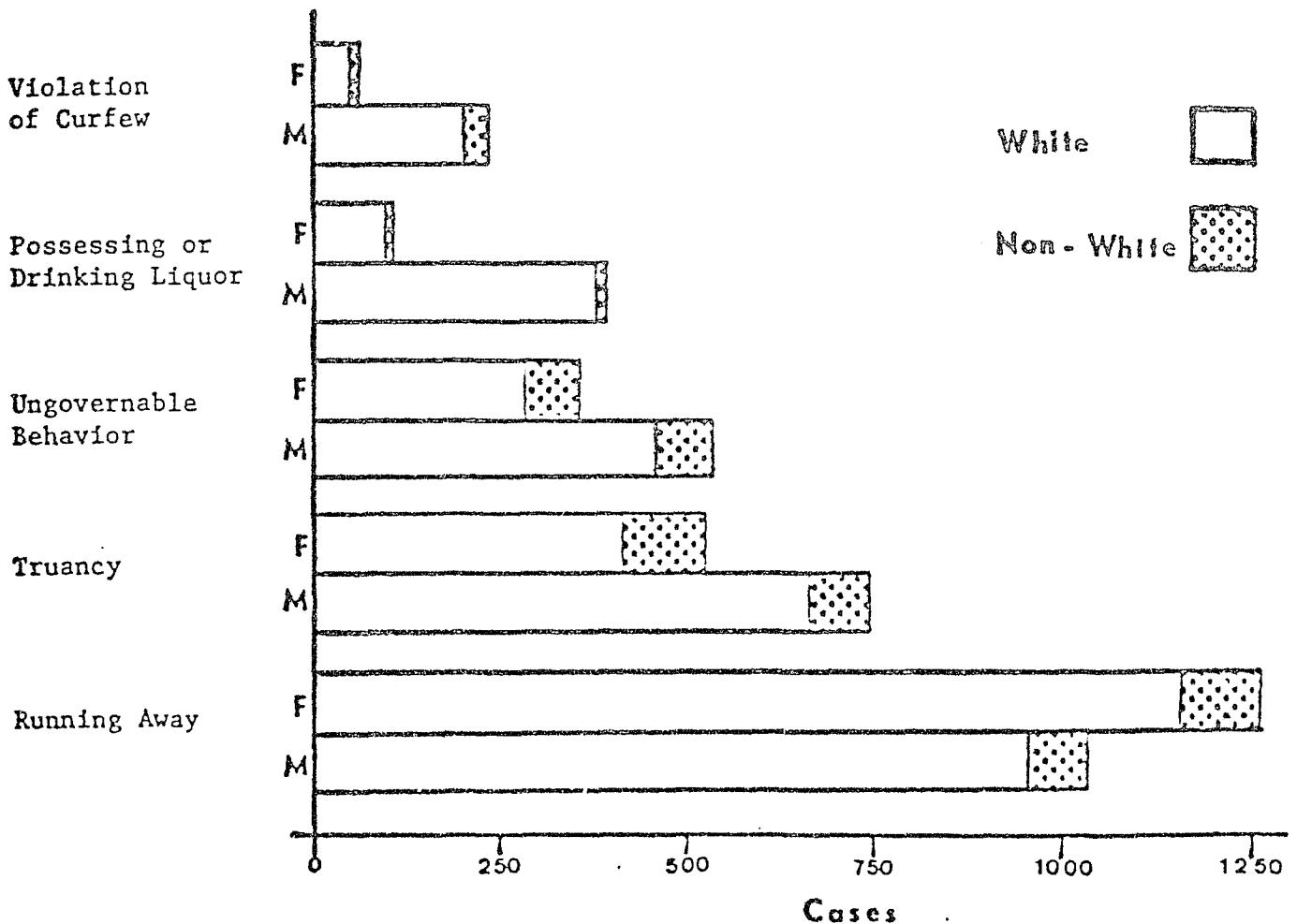
By Reason For Referral



juvenile courts. However, since in Sedgwick County informal cases are generally handled by intake personnel and probation officers, Sedgwick County reported only 249 status court referrals.

The reported status referrals were 28.9 percent 15 year olds with 92.5 percent over the age of 13. They were 57.4 percent male, and 88.3 percent white. Although only 11.7 percent were non-white, the state's juvenile population is only 6.7 percent non-white. This means that the white referral rate is only half (54.2 percent) that of the non-whites.

RACE AND SEX BREAKDOWN OF REFERRALS By Reason For Referral

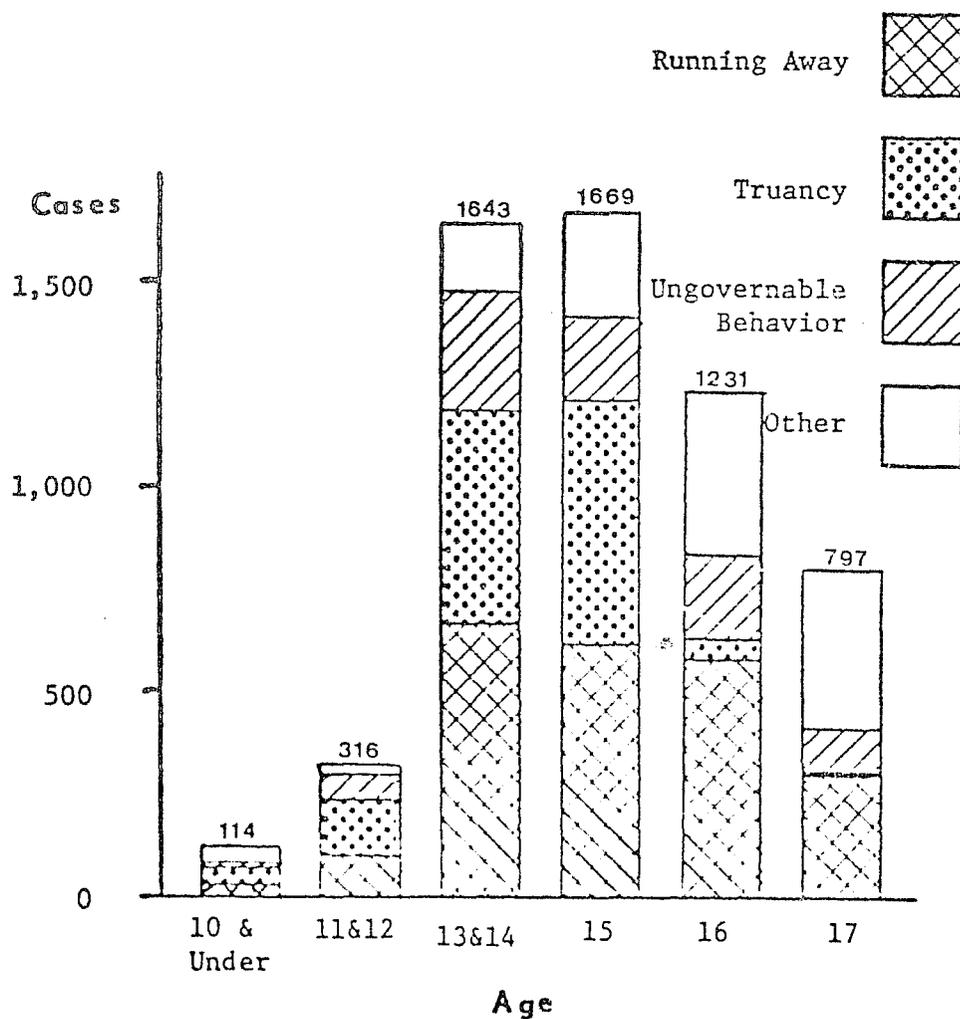


The status offenses are reported under five major categories; running away, truancy, violation of curfew, ungovernable behavior, and possessing or drinking of liquor. Since dependent and neglect cases are classified as non-offenses, rather than status offenses, by the Federal Juvenile Justice Delinquency and Prevention Act of 1974, they are not included.

Runaways make up 39.4 percent of all reported status court referrals. Of the reported runaway cases, 27.1 percent are 15 year olds with 94.4

AGE BREAKDOWN OF REFERRALS

By Reason For Referral



percent being over the age of 13. They are 54.7 percent male and 93.1 percent white. Of the 3,347 male status referrals, 1,031 were runaways or 30.8 percent as compared to 51.0 percent or 1,264 out of the total 2,480 female status referrals. Of the non-white status referrals, only 26.0 percent were runaways as compared to 41.2 percent of the whites.

The metropolitan counties handled 70.3 percent of the runaways. This means that 1,613 of the 2,295 runaways were referred to the juvenile court in a metropolitan county, but it does not imply that their county of residence was one of these four counties. It is probable that many of these were runaways from the rural counties. Since runaways make up 39.4 percent of all status referrals, and 70.3 percent of these are in the metropolitan areas, it follows that 61.4 percent of all status referrals are reported in the metropolitan areas.

Truancy accounted for the second largest part of the 1976 status referrals, 23.7 percent. Forty-three percent of the truants were age 15 with 82.3 percent being between the ages of 13 and 15. The 16 and 17 year olds only account for 3.8 percent of the 1,370 truancies. Since it is to the discretion of the parents/guardians whether or not a juvenile attends school after his 16th birthday, the low percentage is not surprising. The truants were 61.6 percent male, and 80.7 percent white. The 4 to 1 white/non-white ratio represents the highest non-white referral rate of all the status offenses.

Ungovernable behavior was the reason for 15.4 percent of the status referrals. The 887 ungovernable behavior cases were made up of 468 white males, 70 non-white males, 288 white females, and 68 non-white females. By age they were 2.1 percent 10 and under, 5.7 percent 11 and 12, 31.1 percent 13 and 14, 23.1 percent 15, 24.7 percent 16, and 13.2 percent 17 year olds.

There were 499 referrals for possessing or drinking of liquor. Of these 382 or 76.6 percent were 16 and 17 year olds. They were primarily male, 78.0 percent, and only 2.0 percent were non-white.

Violation of curfew accounted for 5.1 percent of the referrals, with 299. However, of these there were only 9 in Sedgwick, 3 in Shawnee, and none in Johnson and Wyandotte counties. In the rural communities, violation of curfew made up 12.7 percent of their status referrals. Of the violation of curfew referrals 78.3 percent were males and 89.3 percent whites.

How the status offender is cared for in Kansas is of major concern. More precisely, how many status offenders are being detained in jails or police stations, detention homes, or other types of lock-ups? Adequate data are not available to answer this question as accurately as generally desired. Weaknesses in the existing information arises from variation in reporting among the juvenile courts, and in less than ideal data classification. The unit for reporting juvenile court activity is a referral rather than an individual. With respect to type care pending disposition, detainment is reported as either no overnight detainment or overnight or longer detainment. This division does not conform to the Federal Juvenile Justice Delinquency and Prevention Act of 1974, which is concerned with the detainment of status offenders beyond a 24 hour limit. Also, the overnight detainment of status offenders is not reported when the child is placed in detention by a police officer or other persons not connected with the court. They are only reported when the court has made the decision to detain the juvenile.

Although there are deficiencies in the data, the information that is

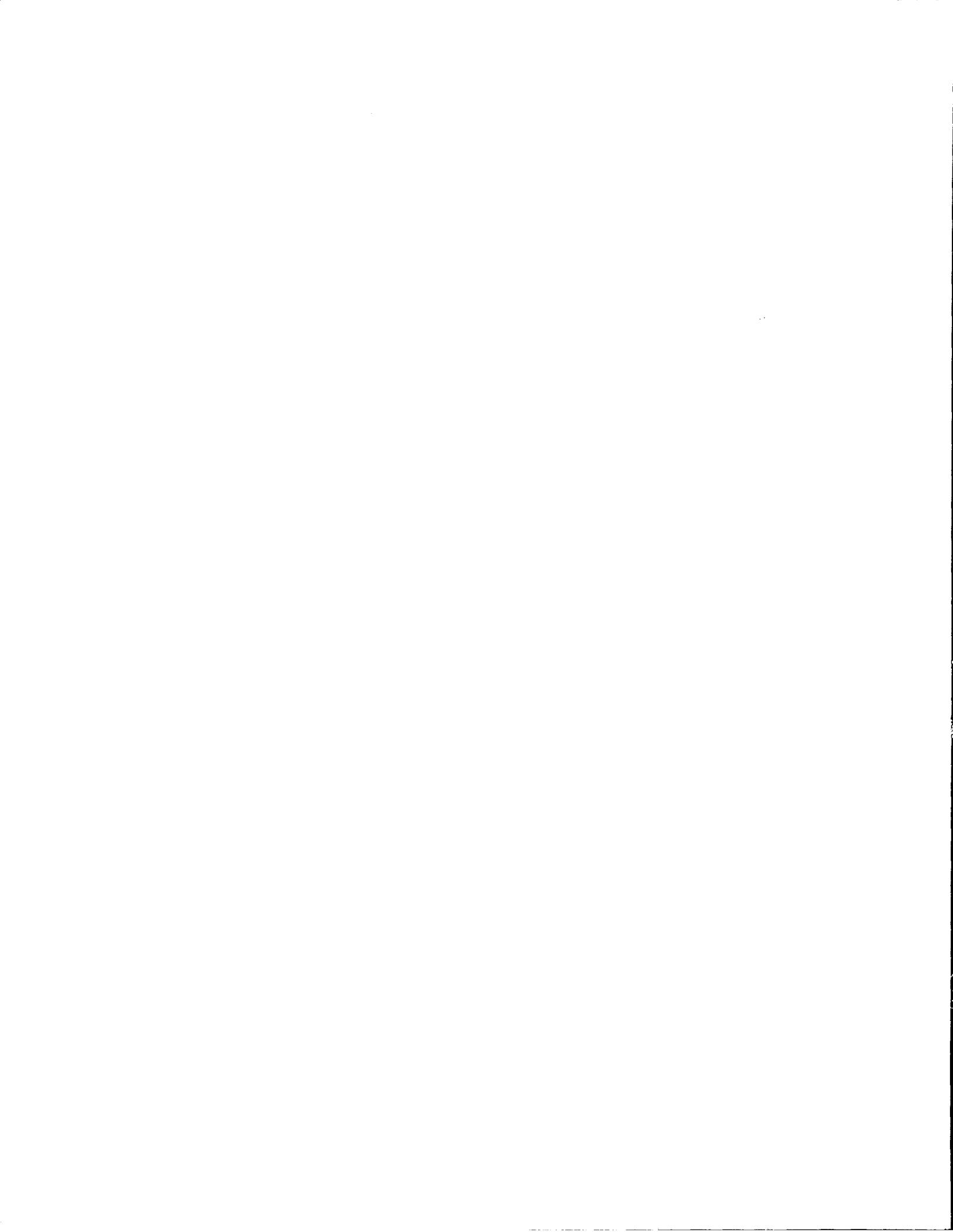
available is worth consideration. However, the reader should bear in mind these deficiencies and consider them accordingly.

CARE PENDING DISPOSITION

TYPE OVERNIGHT CARE	JOHNSON	SEDGWICK	SHAWNEE	WYANDOTTE	NON	
					METRO	STATE
None	1,075	38	666	882	1,332	3,993
Jail/Police Station	8	160	2	0	319	489
Detention Home	159	28	279	123	125	714
Foster Family Home	5	7	9	5	28	54
Other	1	7	17	72	94	191
Incomplete Reports	2	9	20	1	354	386
Total	1,250	249	993	1,083	2,252	5,827

Of the 5,827 reported status court referrals 32 metropolitan and 354 non-metropolitan reports (6.6 percent) were incomplete with respect to care pending disposition. There were 3,993 or 68.5 percent of the status offenders reported as not being detained overnight. The 24.9 percent which were detained overnight or longer were in most cases held in detention centers. Across the state, 714 status offenders were detained in detention homes prior to disposition, 489 in jails or police stations, 54 in foster family homes, and 191 elsewhere. There is a marked difference between the four major counties and the rest of the state in this respect. In the urban counties, 66.8 percent were detained in detention homes, 19.3 percent in jails or police stations, 2.9 percent in foster family homes, and 11.0 percent elsewhere. The rural county breakdown was 22.1 percent detention homes, 56.4 percent jails or police stations, 4.9 percent foster family homes, and 16.1 percent elsewhere. An influencing factor is the availability of the various facilities.

The data available regarding the disposition of a case and the type of after care the child received reveal very little about the detainment of status offenders. Although it is known how many status referrals there were, it is not known if the final substantiated complaint was status, miscreancy, or delinquency. However, from the fact that 5 of the status referrals resulted in a waiver to criminal court it is known that at least some of the reported status referrals are actually delinquency cases. Also, at least 1,827 (46.7 percent) of the status referrals are cases in which the juvenile had previously been referred to the courts. This suggests that some of the status referrals were prior delinquency or miscreancy referrals.



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