



# Racial and Ethnic Disparities in Confinement

PbS Data Snapshot August 2023

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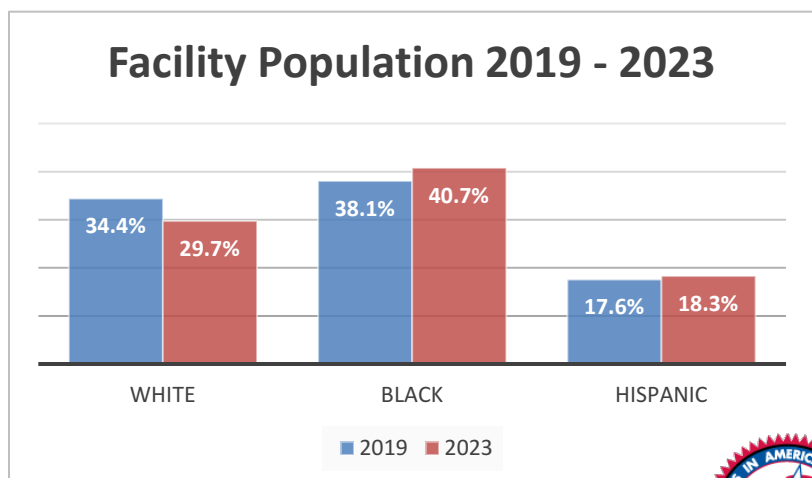
Efforts over the past two decades to decrease the number of young people sent to juvenile justice out-of-home placement in the United States have resulted in a significant reduction in facility populations – as much 77% according national data from 2020.<sup>i</sup> But the reduction has not impacted the overrepresentation of young people of color. The same data showed that Black youth comprised 15% of the population younger than 18 years old in the United States and 41% of those sent to all residential facilities and programs. That disparity is compounded when Black young people stay longer in facilities awaiting court processing and where they are placed following adjudication.

In April 2023, national data from the Performance-based Standards (PbS) Learning Institute, Inc. showed that the proportion of Black young people detained or committed to secure facilities increased and that they stayed longer. In addition to exacerbating the disparate treatment that likely resulted in their incarceration, the longer lengths of stay (LOS) weaken bonds to their families, affects their development and makes it more likely they will be rearrested or reincarcerated when they are released. LOS data provides important information that can help target interventions to reduce disparity and coordinate efforts of juvenile court judges, agency leaders, parole boards and justice professionals.

PbS data is a comparable subset to the national facility census data with similar composition of young peoples' ages, genders, races/ethnicities and offense types. It is reported by 49 agencies in 29 states who use the PbS standards and data continuous improvement program to achieve positive outcomes for young people, staff and families. This PbS Data Snapshot shares the aggregate data from more than 2,500 records of young people who were released from facilities Nov. 1, 2022 through April 30, 2023. The 2023 data supports recent research<sup>ii</sup> that found young people of color in facilities experience more control-oriented interventions than White youth, longer LOS and fewer connections to reentry services.

**From 2019 to 2023, the percentage of Black young people in correction, detention and assessment facilities increased by almost 3% and the percentage of White young people decreased by about 5%.**

Many factors that contribute to the disproportionate number of Black young people in facilities: They are more likely to be arrested for violent offenses and referred to court and less likely to receive diversion or probation options than their White counterparts.<sup>iii</sup> American Indian and Alaskan Native (AIAN), Asian and Pacific Islanders (API) and other races and ethnicities comprised about 10% both years.

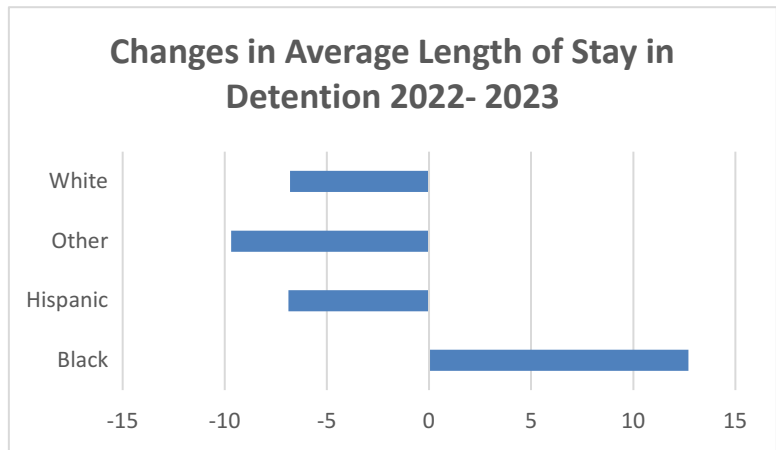




**Black young people stayed 13 days longer in detention facilities in 2023 than in 2022 and 2 days longer in correction facilities.**

Detention services are intended to be used by the courts for short periods of time to detain a young person who is at risk of fleeing or a danger to the public until the case is processed. Detention centers are increasingly being relied upon to provide services for more young people who in the past would have been sent to a long-term correction facility.

Comparing data from one year ago, PbS found that the average LOS in detention and correction increased only for Black young people. The average LOS of all detained young people dropped from 41 days to 40 days, the average LOS for Hispanic young people dropped from 43 days to 36 days and for White young people, the average LOS dropped from 36 days to 29 days. Due to the small numbers, API, AIAN and other young people were aggregated into the "Other" category. Their average LOS in detention was reduced by from about 46 days to 36 days. The average LOS for Black young people increased by nearly 2 weeks from 40 days to 53 days - a total of about 7.5 weeks.



In correction facilities, intended to provide long-term rehabilitation services and programming for young people after being adjudicated by the court, Black and Hispanic young people had the shortest average LOS in April 2023 of about 7.4 months. The average LOS for Black young people had increased 2 days since the previous year and the average LOS for Hispanic young people decreased by 37 days. The combined "Other" category of young people stayed the longest- 9.8 months and the average decreased by 10 days since 2022. The average LOS for White young people was about 9.4 months, about one week shorter than the previous year.

For more information about PbS, please visit our website or email: [help@pbstandards.org](mailto:help@pbstandards.org)

The PbS data is available to researchers at [pbstandards.org/researchers](https://pbstandards.org/researchers).

<sup>i</sup> Puzanchera, C., Sladky, A. and Kang, W. (2021). "Easy Access to Juvenile Populations: 1990-2020." Online. Available: <https://www.ojjdp.gov/ojstatbb/ezapop/>

<sup>ii</sup> Newsome, K. (2023) "Experiences of Youth in Confinement: Pathways of Racial-Ethnic Disparities in Juvenile Corrections." Online. Available: [pbstandards.org/blog/posts/2023/june/experiences-of-youth-in-confinement-pathways-of-racial-ethnic-disparities-in-juvenile-corrections/](https://pbstandards.org/blog/posts/2023/june/experiences-of-youth-in-confinement-pathways-of-racial-ethnic-disparities-in-juvenile-corrections/)

<sup>iii</sup> Puzanchera, C., Sladky, A. and Kang, W. (2021). "Easy Access to Juvenile Populations: 1990-2020." Online. Available: <https://www.ojjdp.gov/ojstatbb/ezapop/>