

120 S. Riverside Plaza,
Suite 1016
Chicago, Illinois 60606

Tel: (312) 793-8550
Fax: (312) 793-8422
TDD: (312) 793-4170

www.icjia.state.il.us

Prepared by

**The Research and
Analysis Unit**

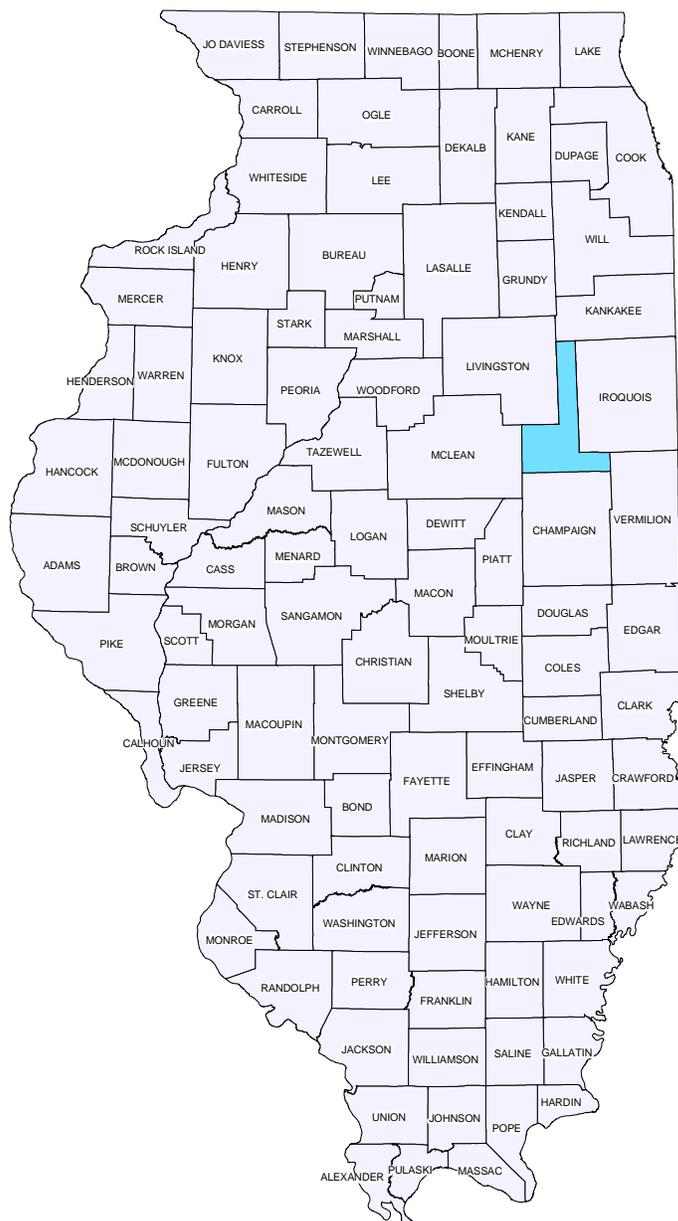
Rod R. Blagojevich
Governor

Sheldon Sorosky
Chairman

Lori G. Levin
Executive Director

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2004

Research and Program Evaluation in Illinois: The Extent and Nature of Drug and Violent Crime in Illinois' Counties



A Profile of the Ford County Criminal and Juvenile Justice Systems

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Illinois Criminal Justice Information Authority
120 S. Riverside Plaza, Suite 1016
Chicago, Illinois 60606-3997
Telephone (312) 793-8550
Telefax (312) 793-8422
World Wide Website <http://www.icjia.state.il.us>

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This document was put together by the following Research and Analysis Unit staff:

Sharyn Adams
Jessica Ashley
Robert Bauer
Christopher Humble
Christine Martin
Adriana Perez
Idetta Phillips
Michelle Repp

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FOREWORD

The Illinois Criminal Justice Information Authority is a state agency created in 1983 to promote community safety by providing public policymakers, criminal justice professionals and others with information, tools and technology needed to make effective decisions that improve the quality of criminal justice in Illinois. The Authority provides an objective system-wide forum for identifying critical problems in criminal justice, developing coordinated and cost-effective strategies, and implementing and evaluating solutions to those problems. The specific powers and duties of the Authority are delineated in the Illinois Criminal Justice Information Act (Illinois Compiled Statutes, Ch. 20, Sec. 393/7). Two of the Authority's many responsibilities are serving as a clearinghouse of information and research on criminal justice and undertaking research studies to improve the administration of criminal justice.

Since 1989, the Authority's Research and Analysis Unit has received funds under the federal Anti-Drug Abuse Act of 1988 to document the extent and nature of drug and violent crime in Illinois and the criminal justice system's response to these offenses. As a result of these efforts, the Authority has amassed a large amount of data measuring the extent and nature of drug and violent crime in Illinois and the impact these crimes have had on the criminal justice system. To put this information into the hands of Illinois' criminal justice policymakers in a useful summary format, the Authority's Research and Analysis Unit has developed profiles of the criminal justice system for each county in Illinois. In 1994, the Illinois Criminal Justice Information Authority produced a series of reports detailing criminal justice system activity levels for each of Illinois' 102 counties. As a result of the positive response by local criminal justice officials, in 1996 the Authority updated and expanded the scope of these reports to reflect current criminal and juvenile justice activity. It is hoped that these 2004 updated reports will be as valuable, if not more, than the original versions. In addition to providing policymakers with an overview of activities across the components of the justice system in their county (law enforcement, courts and corrections), the profiles also provide perspective by including trends experienced in counties with similar population sizes.

While the data presented in this report are by no means inclusive of all indicators, they do provide a general overview of crime and the criminal justice system's response. In addition, these data are readily available and consistently defined through existing statewide data collection mechanisms.

The information presented in this profile has been provided to the Authority by a number of state agencies, specifically: the Illinois State Police, the Administrative Office of the Illinois Courts, the Illinois Department of Corrections, and the Illinois Department of Children and Family Services. The support and cooperation of these agencies and their staffs have helped make this report an informative and timely source of information on the activities of the criminal justice system in Illinois.



The Illinois Criminal Justice Information Authority's
Web-based clearinghouse of criminal justice data available at:

<http://www.icjia.state.il.us>.

I. Introduction

Ford County, located in central Illinois, covers an area of 486 square miles and had a 2003 population of 14,094, according to estimates by the U.S. Department of Commerce's Bureau of the Census. Using these figures, Ford County was the 56th largest county in Illinois geographically, but 22nd smallest in terms of population. Combining these two measures, Ford County had the 18th lowest population density per square mile among Illinois' 102 counties.

As with the previous reports, information specific to Ford County is presented in comparison with similar counties. To provide more useful comparisons, counties have been separated into four types; 1) Cook County, 2) Collar counties, 3) urban counties (outside of Cook and the Collar counties), and 4) rural counties. Because of its size, Cook County is compared to the rest of the state. The Collar counties are the five that border Cook County (DuPage, Lake, Kane, McHenry, and Will). Urban and rural counties are defined by whether or not they lie within a Metropolitan Statistical Area (MSA) (Appendix 1, page 26). Based on these definitions, there are 36 counties in Illinois that are part of a MSA (Cook, Collar, and urban counties) and 66 counties that are not part of a MSA (in other words, rural).

Recent changes to the standard definitions of MSAs have affected the classification of several Illinois counties. The United States Office of Management and Budget (OMB) defines metropolitan and micropolitan statistical areas according to published standards that are applied to Census Bureau data. The general concept of a metropolitan or micropolitan statistical area is that of a core area containing a substantial population nucleus, together with adjacent communities having a high degree of economic and social integration with that core. Currently defined metropolitan and micropolitan statistical areas are based on the application of 2000 standards to 2000 decennial census data and were announced by OMB on June 6, 2003.

Standard definitions of metropolitan areas have changed over time. The term "metropolitan area" (MA) was adopted in 1990 and referred collectively to metropolitan statistical areas (MSAs), consolidated metropolitan statistical areas (CMSAs), and primary metropolitan statistical areas (PMSAs). More recently, the term "core based statistical area" (CBSA) became effective in 2000 and refers collectively to metropolitan and micropolitan statistical areas.

The 2000 standards require that each CBSA must contain at least one urban area of 10,000 or more population. Each metropolitan statistical area must have at least one urbanized area of 50,000 or more inhabitants. Each micropolitan statistical area must have at least one urban cluster of at least 10,000 but less than 50,000 population.

Under the standards, the county (or counties) in which at least 50 percent of the population resides within urban areas of 10,000 or more population, or that contain at least 5,000 people residing within a single urban area of 10,000 or more population, is identified as a "central county" (counties). Additional "outlying counties" are included in the CBSA if they meet specified requirements regarding residents commuting to or from the central counties.

Changes in the definitions of these statistical areas since the 1950 census have consisted chiefly of: 1) the recognition of new areas as they reached the minimum required city or urbanized area population, and 2) the addition of counties to existing areas due to new decennial census data. In some instances, formerly separate areas have been merged, components of an area have been transferred from one area to another, or components have been dropped from an area. The large majority of changes have taken place on the basis of decennial census data.

Because of these historical changes in geographic definitions, users must be cautious in comparing data for these statistical areas from different dates. For more information, contact the Population Distribution Branch at (301) 763-2419 (U. S. Census Bureau).

Based on these characteristics, Ford County is one of Illinois' 30 urban counties. Throughout this report, the criminal justice activity trends experienced in Ford County will be compared to those trends experienced in the other urban counties. This comparison will be realized through the calculation of rates for the activities being analyzed, with the number per 100,000 population the format for all the rates.

II. Law Enforcement Activities in Ford County

One of the most commonly used indicators of the level of crime in a particular jurisdiction is the number of *Index offenses* reported to the police. There are eight separate offenses which constitute the Crime Index, including murder, criminal sexual assault, robbery, aggravated assault (violent Index offenses), burglary, theft, motor vehicle theft, and arson (property Index offenses). Although these eight offenses do not account for all crimes reported to the police, they are considered to be the most serious, frequent, pervasive, and consistently defined by different law enforcement agencies.

An indicator of the workload that law enforcement agencies place on other components of the justice system is the number of arrests made by police, including those for violent and property Index offenses and drug offenses. Unlike offenses, which are what police must respond to, arrests represent those offenders who may eventually be processed through other components of the justice system, including the courts, county jails, and state and local correctional programs.

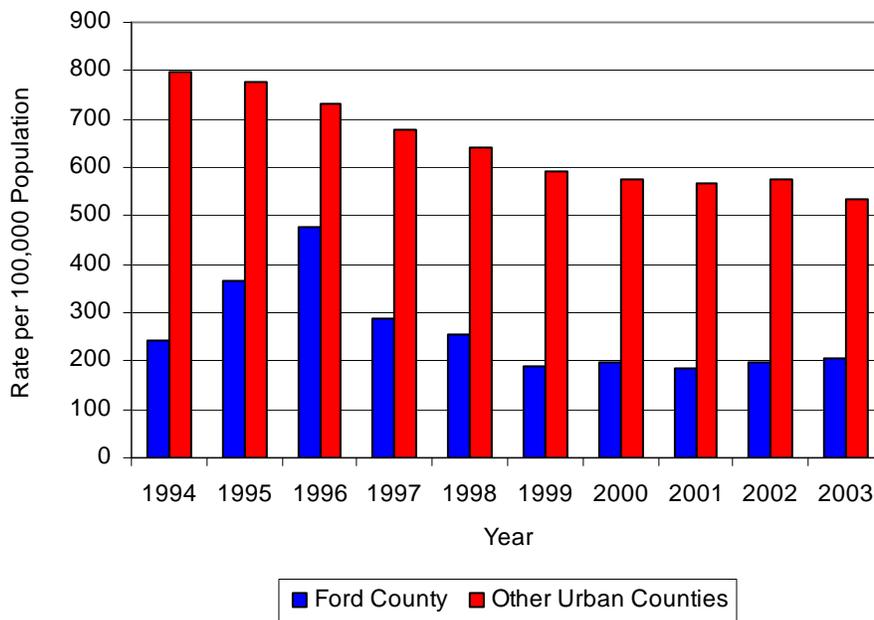
Violent Index Offenses Reported to the Police in Ford County

The number of violent Index offenses reported to the police decreased 15 percent in Ford County between 1994 and 2003, from 34 to 29. As in previous years and in most other counties, aggravated assault offenses accounted for the majority (79 percent) of violent Index offenses reported in Ford County in 2003.

Between 1994 and 2003, the violent Index offense rate in Ford County also decreased 15 percent, from 243 to 206 offenses per 100,000 population (Figure 1). The violent Index offense rate in the other urban counties decreased 33 percent, from 796 to 535 offenses per 100,000 population. The 2003 violent Index offense rate in Ford County was 62 percent lower than the rate in the other urban counties.

Figure 1

Total Violent Index Offense Rates in Ford and Other Urban Counties



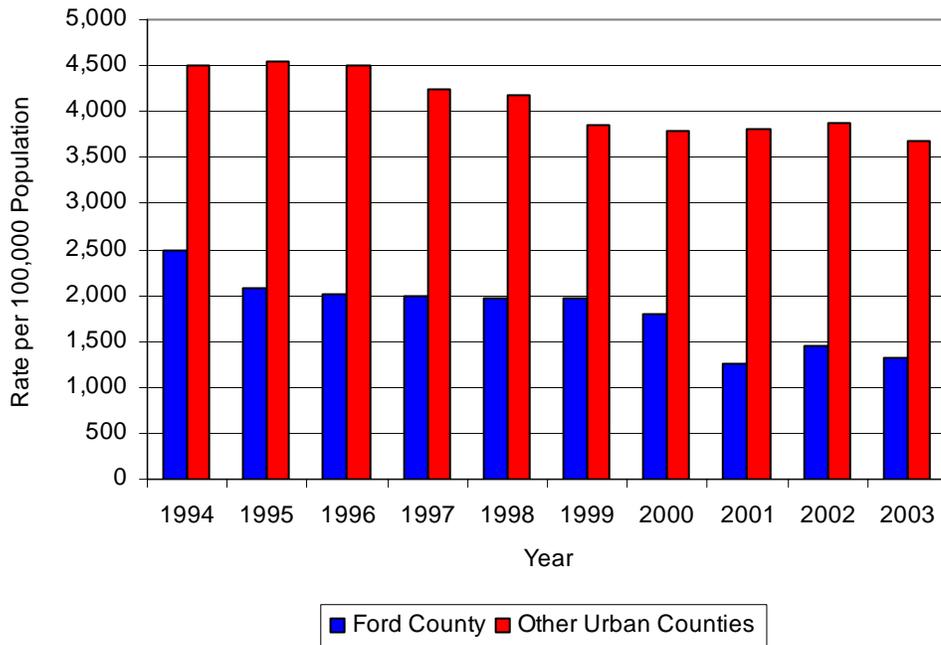
Source: ICJIA calculation using Illinois State Police and U.S. Census Bureau data

Property Index Offenses Reported to the Police in Ford County

Between 1994 and 2003, the number of property Index offenses reported to the police in Ford County decreased 47 percent, from 350 to 185. Thefts accounted for 74 percent of all property Index offenses reported in Ford County during 2003.

Between 1994 and 2003, the property Index offense rate in Ford County decreased 47 percent, from 2,498 to 1,313 offenses per 100,000 population (Figure 2). During that same period, the property Index offense rate in the other urban counties decreased 18 percent, from 4,499 to 3,688 offenses per 100,000 population. Ford County's 2003 property Index offense rate was 64 percent lower than the rate in the other urban counties.

Figure 2
Total Property Index Offense Rates in Ford and Other Urban Counties



Source: ICJIA calculation using Illinois State Police and U.S. Census Bureau data

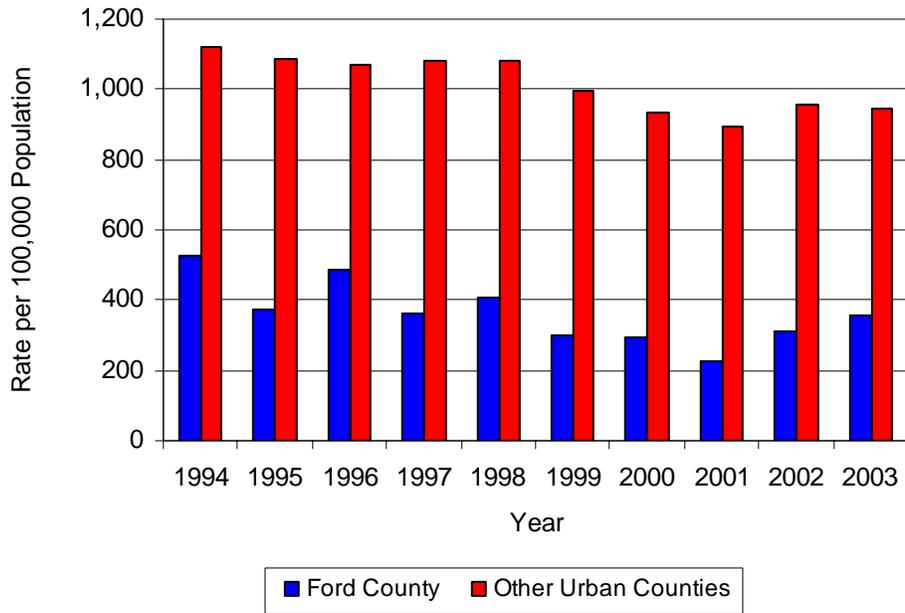
Index Arrests by Ford County Law Enforcement Agencies

Between 1994 and 2003, arrests for total Index offenses by law enforcement agencies in Ford County decreased 32 percent, from 74 to 50. The majority of Index arrests was for property Index offenses. Of the 50 Index arrests made in Ford County during 2003, 28 percent were for violent Index crimes and 72 percent were for property Index crimes. Arrests for theft and aggravated assault accounted for the largest proportions of property and violent Index arrests in Ford County during 2003. Of all violent Index arrests, 93 percent were arrests for aggravated assault, while thefts accounted for 47 percent of all property Index arrests.

Between 1994 and 2003, the Index arrest rate in Ford County decreased 33 percent, from 528 to 355 arrests per 100,000 population (Figure 3). During the same period, the Index arrest rate in the other urban counties decreased 16 percent, from 1,122 to 945 arrests per 100,000 population. In 2003, Ford County's Index arrest rate was 62 percent lower than the rate in the other urban counties.

Figure 3

Index Arrest Rates in Ford and Other Urban Counties



Source: ICJIA calculation using Illinois State Police and U.S. Census Bureau data

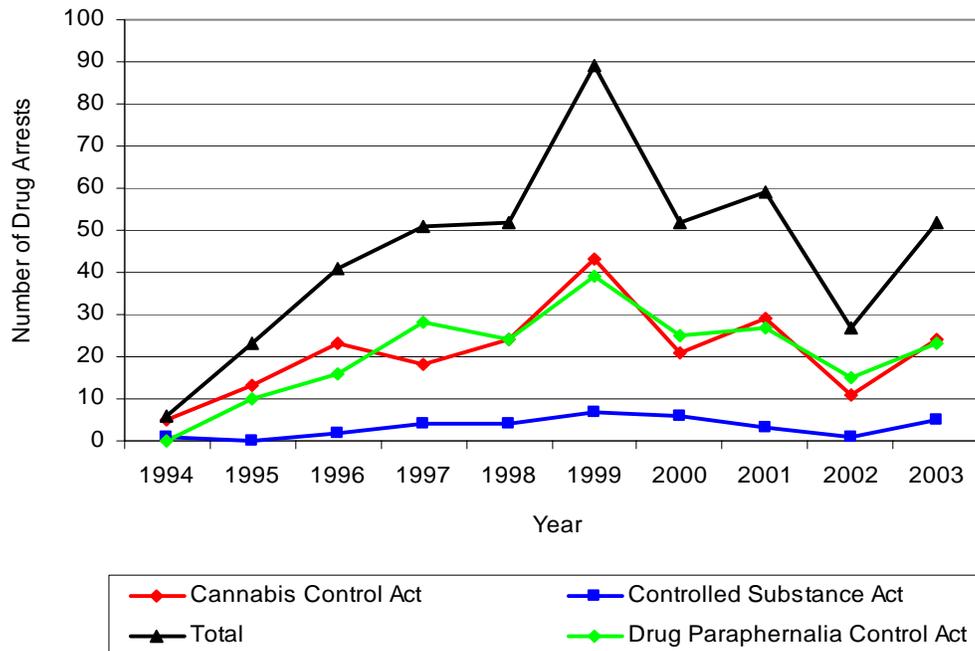
Drug Offense Arrests in Ford County

Between 1994 and 2003, arrests for total drug offenses (including violations of Illinois' Cannabis Control Act, Controlled Substances Act, Drug Paraphernalia Control Act, and the Hypodermic Syringes and Needles Act) increased nearly eight-fold in Ford County, from six to 52 (Figure 4). Total drug arrests in Ford County increased steadily between 1994 and 1998 and remained level except for a dramatic spike in 1999, due mainly to a doubling of Cannabis Control Act (which prohibits the possession, sale, and cultivation of cannabis) arrests that year, and a marked decrease in 2002. Cannabis Control Act violations accounted for the majority of the increase in total drug arrests, increasing from five arrests in 1994 to 24 in 2003, although Drug Paraphernalia Control Act arrests also played a role in the increase in total drug arrests during that time. Arrests for violations of the Cannabis Control Act comprised 46 percent of all drugs arrests in 2003. That year, Drug Paraphernalia Control Act arrests comprised 44 percent of total drug arrests in Ford County. In 1994, no Drug Paraphernalia Control Act arrests were made, and between 1995 and 2003, arrests for violations of the Drug Paraphernalia Control Act in Ford County doubled, from ten to 23 arrests.

During the period analyzed, arrests for violations of Illinois' Cannabis Control Act in Ford County consistently out-numbered arrests for violations of the Controlled Substances Act (which prohibits the possession, sale, distribution, or manufacture of all other illegal drugs such as cocaine and opiates). Between 1994 and 2003, the number of arrests for violations of the Controlled Substances Act increased, but remained relatively low (Figure 4).

Figure 4

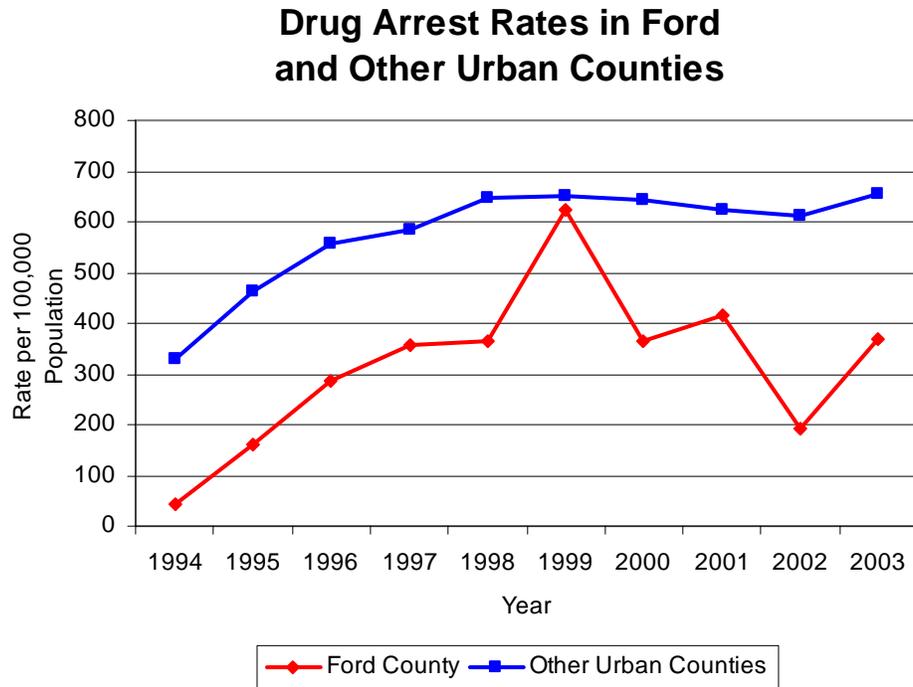
Drug Arrests in Ford County



Source: Illinois State Police

Between 1994 and 2003, the arrest rate for all drug law violations in Ford County increased dramatically, from 43 to 369 per 100,000 population (Figure 5). The total drug arrest rate in the other urban counties doubled between 1994 and 2003, from 331 to 656 per 100,000 population. In 2003, the drug arrest rate in Ford County was 44 percent lower than the rate in the other urban counties.

Figure 5



Source: ICJIA calculation using Illinois State Police and U.S. Census Bureau data

Drugs Seized in Ford County

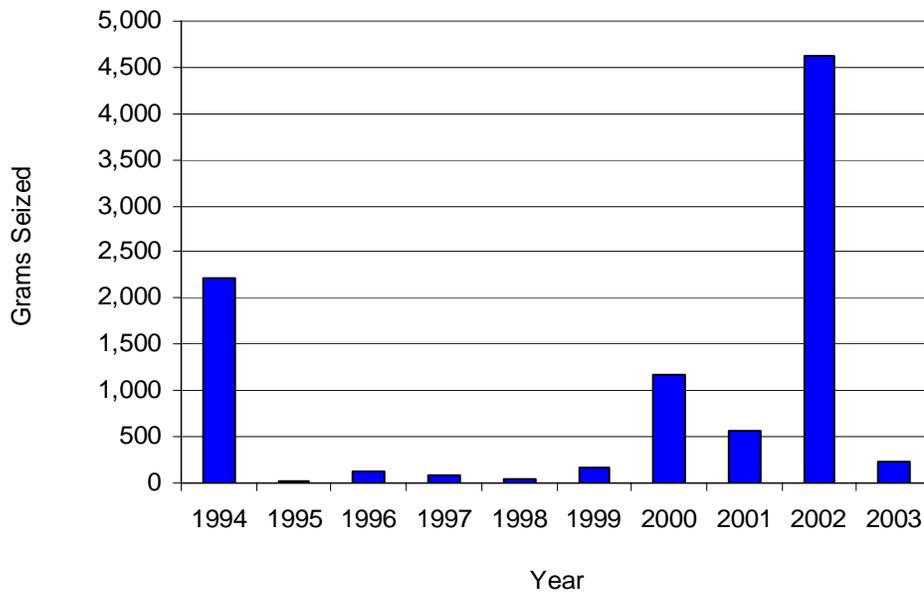
Drugs seized by law enforcement agencies are another indicator of the extent and nature of the illegal drug trade in a jurisdiction. When illegal drugs are seized by law enforcement agencies in Illinois, they are submitted to a crime lab for analysis. Most agencies submit drugs to one of the Illinois State Police crime labs. These labs record the quantity of drugs submitted from each county. This section discusses the quantities of illegal drugs seized and submitted to the Illinois State Police from law enforcement agencies in Ford County.

Cannabis Seized in Ford County

Cannabis accounts for the majority of drugs seized in Ford County and in most Illinois jurisdictions. Between 1994 and 2003, there were large variations in the number of grams of cannabis seized in Ford County, with a period high of 4,618 grams seized in 2002. The quantity of cannabis seized in Ford County between 1994 and 2003 decreased 90 percent, from 2,225 grams to 223 grams (Figure 6).

Figure 6

Cannabis Seized in Ford County



Source: Illinois State Police

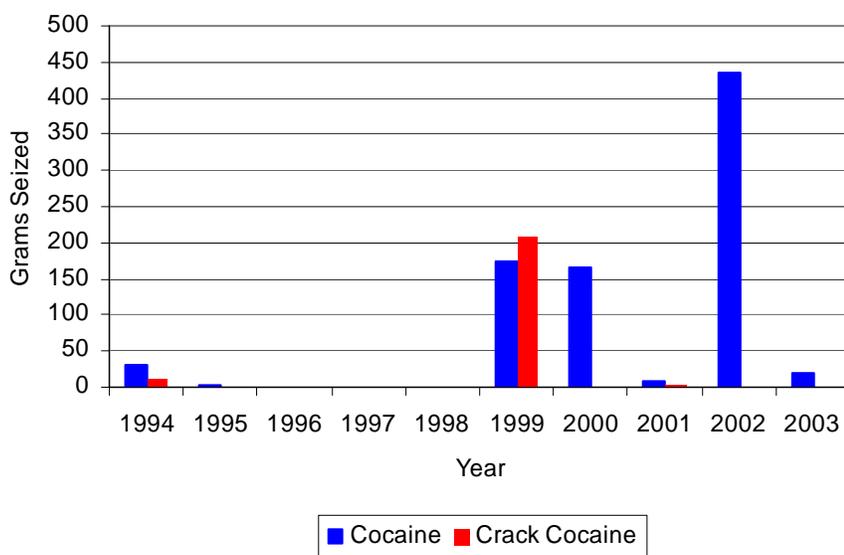
Between 1994 and 2003, the quantity of cannabis seized in the other urban counties decreased 61 percent, from 1,309,541 grams to 514,411 grams. In 2003, Ford County had a cannabis seizure rate of 1,580 grams per 100,000 population, 92 percent lower than the rate of 19,360 grams per 100,000 population in the other urban counties.

Cocaine and Crack Cocaine Seized in Ford County

The quantity of powder cocaine seized in Ford County decreased 34 percent between 1994 and 2003, from 30 grams to 20 grams (Figure 7). Similar to most other counties, crack cocaine accounted for a relatively small portion of all cocaine seized in Ford County, 21 percent between 1994 and 2003. Between 1994 and 2003, the quantity of crack cocaine seized in Ford County decreased from 12 to zero grams (Figure 7).

Figure 7

Cocaine and Crack Cocaine Seized in Ford County



Source: Illinois State Police

The quantity of powder cocaine and crack cocaine seized in the other urban counties decreased during the period analyzed. Between 1994 and 2003, the amount of powder cocaine seized decreased 24 percent in the other urban counties, from 48,384 grams to 36,554 grams, while the quantity of crack cocaine seized decreased from 11,426 grams to 6,290 grams. In 2003, 140 grams of powder cocaine per 100,000 population were seized in Ford County, 90 percent lower than the 1,376 grams of powder cocaine per 100,000 population seized in the other urban counties.

Methamphetamine Seized in Ford County

During the past decade, it is clear that methamphetamine “activity” in the state has increased drastically and has become a significant drug problem in many jurisdictions. Further, the extent to which law enforcement agencies are encountering methamphetamine has also dispersed across

a large area of the state, with most of this being fueled by activities taking place in Illinois' rural jurisdictions.

Although total methamphetamine seizures in Ford County are relatively low, discussion is merited because of the recent exponential increases in methamphetamine seizures in Illinois. There were 210 grams of methamphetamine seized in Ford County between 1994 and 2003, slightly lower than the amount of crack cocaine seized during this time. While the quantity of methamphetamine seized in Ford County increased only slightly during the time period examined, from zero grams in 1994 to just over one gram in 2003, Ford County methamphetamine seizures climbed to a highpoint of 206 grams in 2002. Between 1994 and 2003, methamphetamine seizures in the other urban counties increased twelve-fold, from 620 grams to 8,084 grams. Total crack seizures between 1994 and 2003 in the other urban counties were twice as high as total methamphetamine seizures during that time. The methamphetamine seizure rate of nine grams per 100,000 population in Ford County in 2003 was 97 percent lower than the rate of 304 grams per 100,000 population in the other urban counties that year.

III. Adult and Juvenile Court Activity in Ford County

Although Illinois has one of the best court reporting systems in the country, the Administrative Office of the Illinois Courts only collects information regarding the aggregate number of court filings, dispositions, and probation caseloads. Currently, there are no statewide data available on court filings, dispositions, and convictions by offense type. However, detailed offense data are available from the Illinois Department of Corrections for those convicted felons sentenced to prison.

Trends in the number of delinquency petitions filed and adjudicated in juvenile court are also presented. Illinois statutes define delinquency offenses as those committed by someone younger than 17 years old that would be considered crimes if committed by someone 17 years of age or older.

In Illinois, county probation departments are overseen by the Administrative Office of the Illinois Courts' Probation Division. This section also presents data on active misdemeanor and felony adult caseloads and the number of juveniles under the supervision of the probation departments in Ford County and the other urban counties.

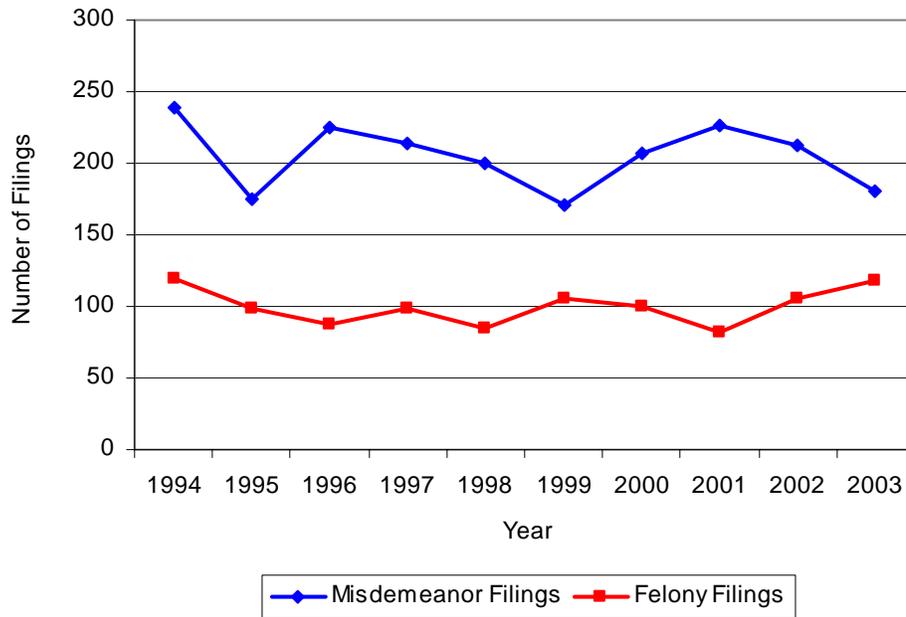
Misdemeanor and Felony Filings in Ford County

The Administrative Office of the Illinois Courts reports data on criminal court cases in two categories: misdemeanors and felonies. After screening a case and deciding it warrants further action, the state's attorney must file formal charges in court. Misdemeanor cases are less serious than felonies and can be punished by a probation sentence of one year or less and less than one year of incarceration. Felony cases, on the other hand, are more serious and can be punished by a probation term up to four years and incarceration for more than one year. When comparing the number of filings across time and across counties, it should be noted that differences in reporting practices exist. For example, when two or more defendants are involved in a single case, some state's attorneys file a single case charging all defendants, while others file a separate case for each suspect.

In 2003, felony and misdemeanor court filings accounted for 9 percent of all filings in Ford County's courts (civil, traffic, family, and other). Between 1994 and 2003, the number of felony filings in Ford County decreased 2 percent, from 120 to 118 (Figure 8). During the same period, misdemeanor filings decreased 25 percent, from 239 in 1994 to 180 in 2003.

Figure 8

Felony and Misdemeanor Filings in Ford County

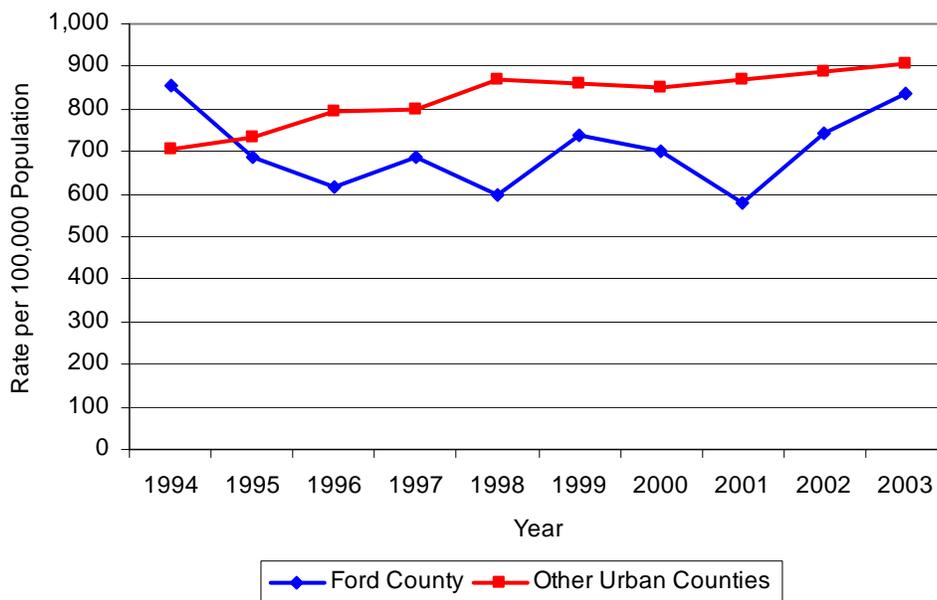


Source: Administrative Office of the Illinois Courts

Between 1994 and 2003, the felony-filing rate in Ford County also decreased 2 percent, from 856 to 837 cases per 100,000 population (Figure 9). Conversely, the felony-filing rate in the other urban counties increased 28 percent during this period, from 707 to 906 cases per 100,000 population. In 2003, the felony-filing rate in Ford County was 8 percent lower than the rate in the other urban counties.

Figure 9

Felony Filing Rates in Ford and Other Rural Counties



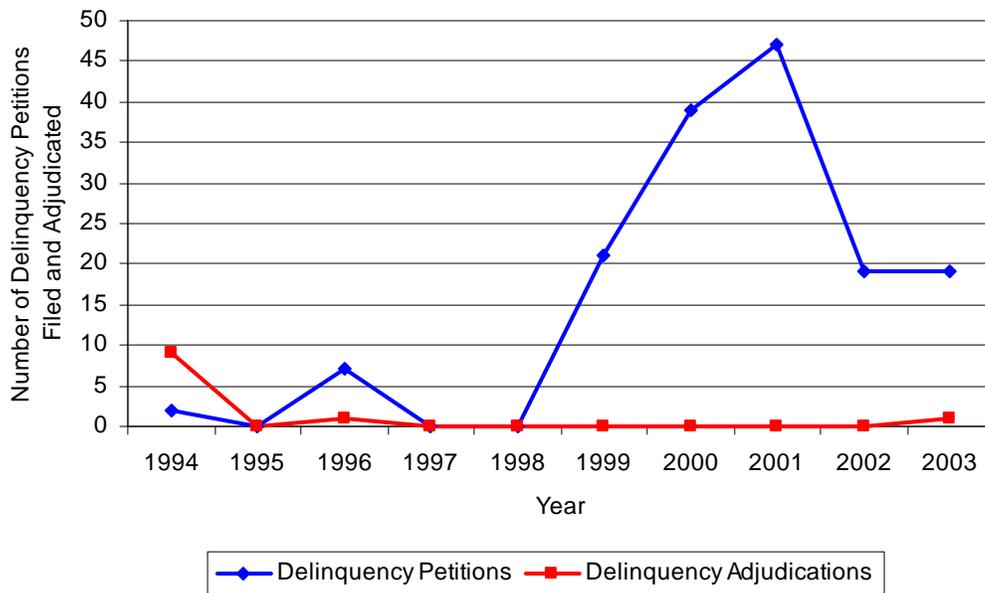
Source: Administrative Office of the Illinois Courts and U.S. Census Bureau data

Illinois’ juvenile court system differs in several key aspects from the adult criminal court system. One aspect revolves around the difference in treatment between juveniles and adults: the juvenile court process is somewhat less formal and adversarial; authorities are given much more latitude in determining the proper response to each case. Traditionally, the terminology used to describe juvenile proceedings has been less harsh than that used for the adult criminal process. For example, Illinois’ juvenile courts accept “petitions of delinquency” rather than misdemeanor or felony criminal complaints. However, pursuant to the Juvenile Court Reform Act of 1998, criminal court terms, such as “trial” and “sentencing,” have replaced the less harsh “adjudicatory hearing” and “dispositional hearing” terms.

Between 1994 and 2003, the number of juvenile delinquency petitions filed in Ford County increased from two to 19 (Figure 10). In 2003, 5 percent of the juveniles named in delinquency petitions were adjudicated delinquent. The percentage of juveniles named in delinquency petitions and adjudicated delinquent in 1994 could not be determined because Ford County reported that nine juveniles were adjudicated delinquent but only two were named in petitions. This likely occurred because some adjudications carried over from the previous year. During the period analyzed, delinquency adjudications decreased from nine in 1994 to one in 2003.

Figure 10

Juvenile Delinquency Petitions Filed and Adjudicated in Ford County



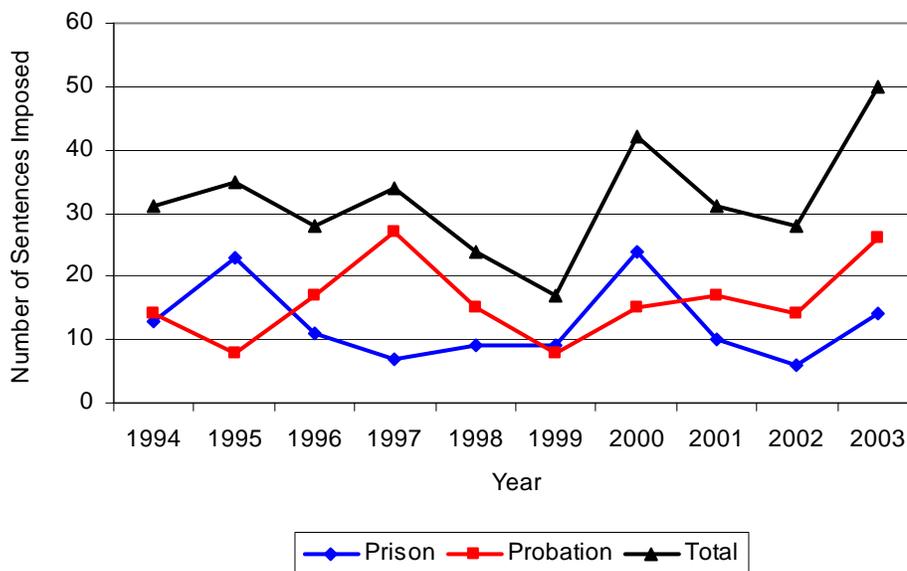
Source: Administrative Office of the Illinois Courts

Between 1994 and 2003, the delinquency petition-filing rate in Ford County increased from 134 to 1,211 petitions per 100,000 juveniles. During the same period, the delinquency petition-filing rate in the other urban counties decreased 7 percent, from 1,893 to 1,746 petitions per 100,000 juveniles.

Anyone convicted of a felony in Illinois can be sentenced either to prison or probation, or receive a conditional discharge. A number of factors influence the type and length of sentence imposed on convicted felons, including the severity of the crime, the offender’s criminal and social history, safety of the community, and legislation affecting certain types of offenses. For some types of convictions a sentence to prison is required by state statute.

Between 1994 and 2003, the number of offenders convicted of a felony and sentenced in Ford County increased from 31 to 50 (Figure 11). The number of convicted felons sentenced to probation during this period nearly doubled, from 14 to 26, while the number of felony prison sentences remained about the same, increasing from 13 in 1994 to 14 in 2003. As a result, felony probation sentences increased as a proportion of total sentences. In 1994, 45 percent of all convicted felons were sentenced to probation, compared to 52 percent in 2003. Between 1994 and 2003, the proportion of felons sentenced to prison decreased from 42 percent to 28 percent.

Figure 11
Sentences Imposed on Felons
Convicted in Ford County



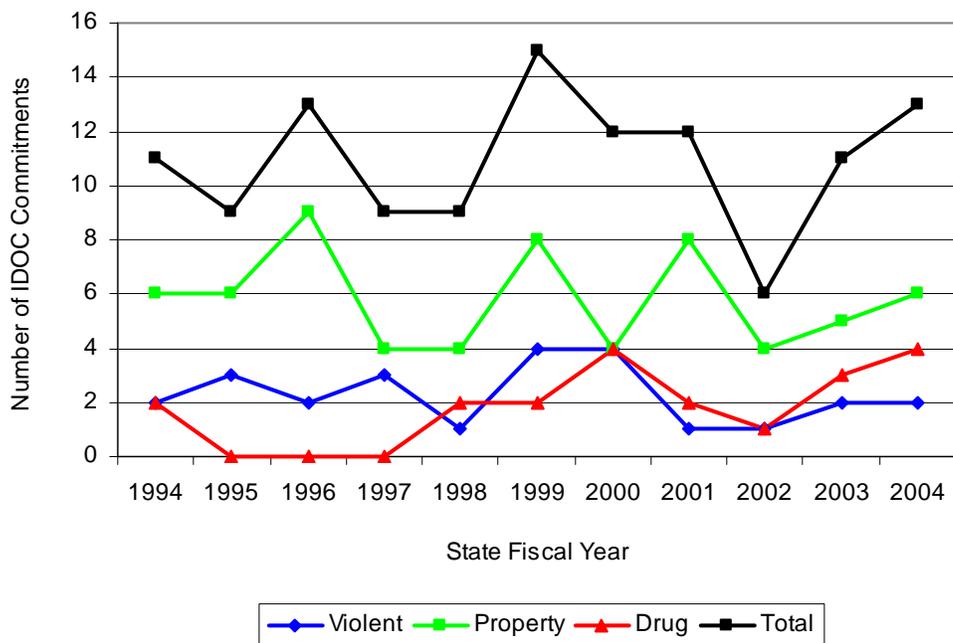
Source: Administrative Office of the Illinois Courts

Adult Prison Commitments from Ford County

Between State Fiscal Years (SFYs) 1994 and 2004, the number of commitments to the Illinois Department of Corrections' Adult Division from Ford County increased from 11 to 13 (Figure 12). During this period, the number of drug offender commitments increased, while the number of violent and property offender commitments remained unchanged in SFYs 1994 and 2004. The number of violent offender commitments remained at two in both SFYs 1994 and 2004, the number of property offender remained at six in both years, while the number of drug offender commitments increased from two to four.

Figure 12

IDOC New Court Commitments from Ford County, by Offense Type



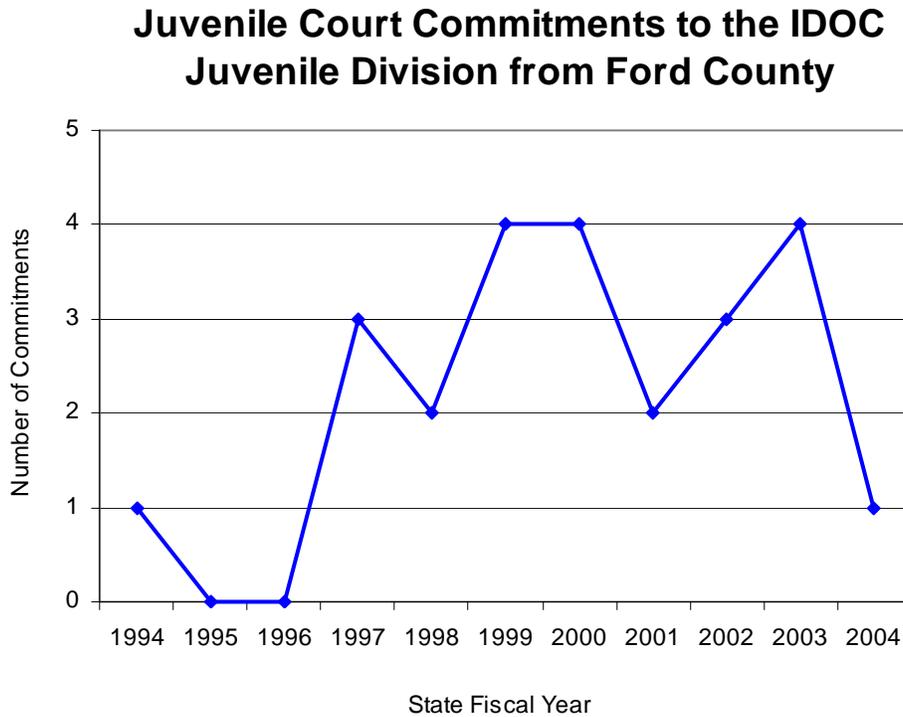
Source: Illinois Department of Corrections

In SFY 2004, violent offenders accounted for 15 percent of all commitments from Ford County, while property offenders accounted for 46 percent. Only the percentage of drug offender commitments from Ford County showed an increase between SFYs 1994 and 2004. During that time, drug offenders increased from 18 percent to 31 percent of all commitments from Ford County.

Juvenile Court Commitments to the Illinois Department of Corrections

The Illinois Department of Corrections' Juvenile Division provides long-term custody for youths, 13 to 17 years old, who have been found delinquent by the juvenile court and committed to the IDOC. Youths may remain in an IDOC juvenile facility until they are 21. Between SFYs 1994 and 2004, there were 24 court commitments to the IDOC's Juvenile Division from Ford County (Figure 13).

Figure 13



Source: Illinois Department of Corrections

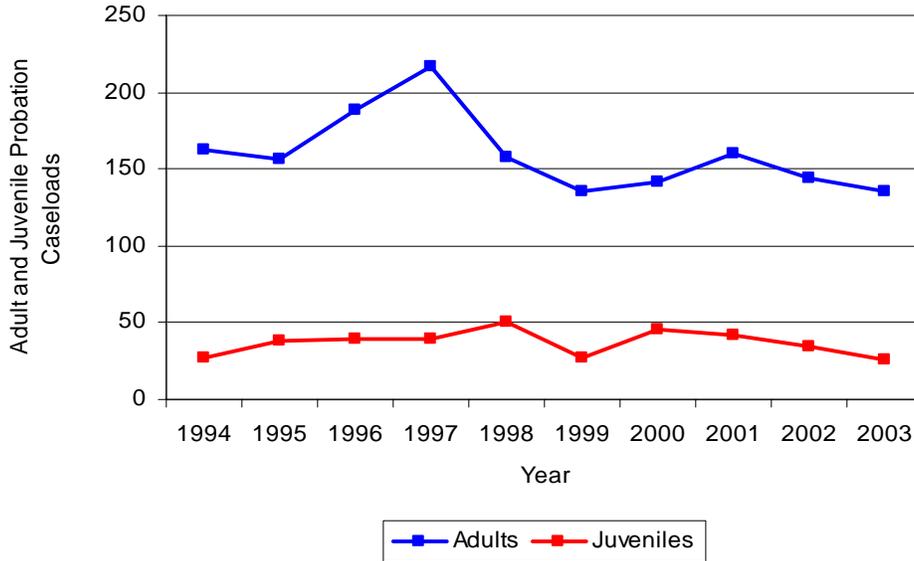
In SFY 2004, Ford County had a rate of 74 commitments per 100,000 to the IDOC's Juvenile Division, 75 percent lower than the rate of 297 commitments per 100,000 juveniles from the other urban counties.

Adult and Juvenile Probation Caseloads in Ford County

Between December 31, 1994 and December 31, 2003, the number of active adult probation cases in Ford County decreased 17 percent, from 162 to 135 (Figure 14). In 2003, felony offenders accounted for 22 percent of Ford County's active adult probation caseload. Between 1994 and 2003, the number of juveniles supervised by the Ford County Juvenile Probation Department decreased slightly, from 27 to 26. By comparison, the number of active adult probation cases in the other urban counties increased 29 percent between 1994 and 2003, while the juvenile probation caseloads increased 36 percent.

Figure 14

Total Adult and Juvenile Active Probation Cases in Ford County



Source: Administrative Office of the Illinois Courts

The active adult probation caseload rate per 100,000 population in Ford County also decreased 17 percent between 1994 and 2003, from 1,156 to 958 cases per 100,000 population. During that same period, the active adult probation caseload rate increased 24 percent in the other urban counties, from 652 to 810 cases per 100,000 population. In 2003, the active adult probation caseload rate in Ford County was 18 percent higher than the rate in the other urban counties.

IV. Jail Populations in Ford County

Jail data in Illinois are collected by the Illinois Department of Corrections' Bureau of Inspections and Audits. As with court data, data are not available detailing the specific offenses for which offenders were held in county jails. In addition, between SFYs 1992 and 1994, the IDOC did not collect Illinois jail population data. Data presented for SFY 1994 were estimated by the Authority using the reported SFYs 1991 and 1995 data.

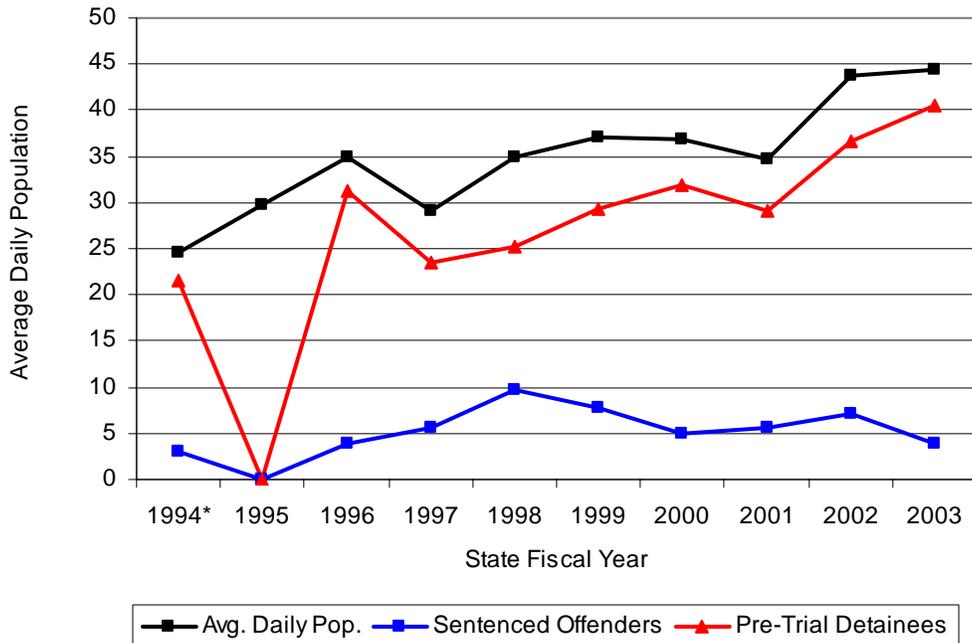
Average Daily Population of the Ford County Jail

The Ford County Jail was one of 91 county jails in operation in Illinois during SFY 2003. There were 11 counties that did not operate a jail of their own; they relied on other counties to house their pretrial detainees and sentenced offenders at either a per-diem or contracted rate.

Between SFYs 1994 and 2003, the average daily population of the Ford County Jail increased 80 percent, from 25 to 44 inmates (Figure 15). During this period, pretrial detainees (those individuals who have been arrested for a crime and are awaiting trial) accounted for an increased percentage of the average daily population. Pre-trial detainees in the Ford County Jail increased from 88 percent in SFY 1994 to 91 percent in SFY 2003. Sentenced offenders (those offenders who have been convicted and sentenced to the county jail) accounted for a decreased percentage, decreasing from 13 percent in SFY 1994 to 9 percent in SFY 2003.

Figure 15

Average Daily Population of the Ford County Jail

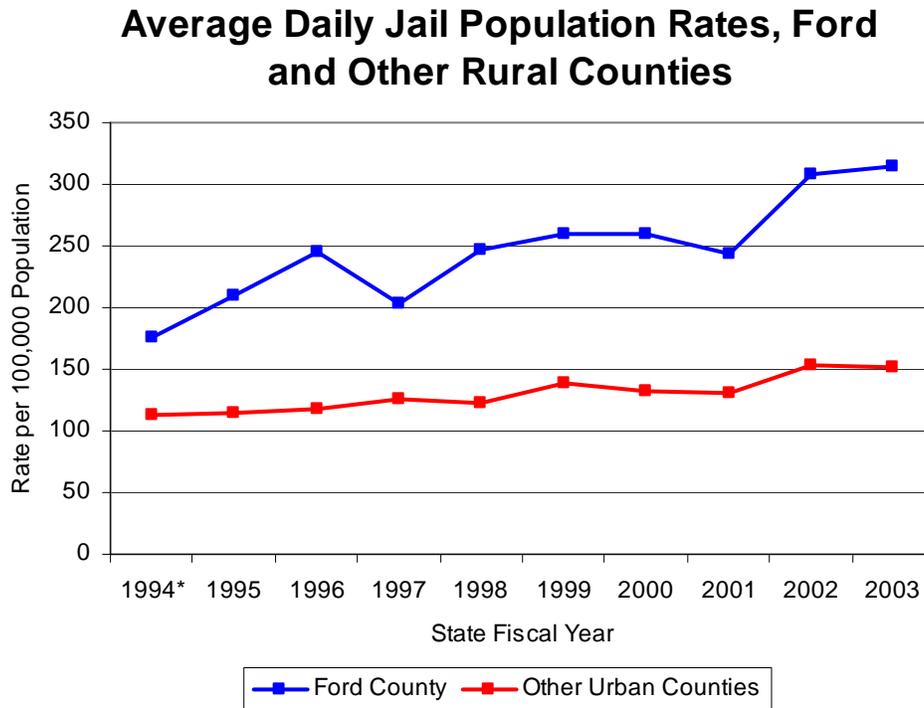


Source: Illinois Department of Corrections

* Information estimated by ICJIA

Between SFYs 1994 and 2003, the average daily jail population rate in Ford County increased 79 percent, from 176 to 315 per 100,000 population (Figure 16). During this same period, the average daily jail population rate in the other urban counties increased 35 percent, from 113 to 152 per 100,000 population. In SFY 2003, the Ford County Jail had an average daily jail population rate more than double the rate in the other urban counties.

Figure 16



Source: ICJIA calculation using Illinois Department of Corrections and U.S. Census Bureau data

* Information estimated by ICJIA

V. Indicators of Child Abuse and Neglect in Ford County

Substance-Exposed Infants in Ford County

Illinois continues to experience the effects of prenatal substance abuse. In Illinois, if a baby is born and thought to have been exposed to illegal substances or alcohol, either through observation by physicians or toxicology tests, the case is reported to the Illinois Department of Children and Family Services (DCFS). These cases are then investigated by DCFS to verify the child's prenatal exposure to either alcohol or illegal substances. Between SFYs 1994 and 2004, 96 of Illinois' 102 counties reported at least one case of a substance-exposed infant.

Between SFYs 1994 and 2004, there were no cases of substance-exposed infants reported in Ford County. Between SFYs 1994 and 2004, the number of reported cases of substance-exposed infants in the other urban counties decreased 41 percent, from 364 to 215, while the number of verified cases of substance-exposed infants decreased 43 percent, from 342 to 196.

Child Abuse and Neglect Cases Reported and Verified in Ford County

Recent research on the relationship between maltreatment of youth and delinquency has revealed an important distinction between child maltreatment and adolescent maltreatment. Using data from the Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention's Program of Research on the Causes and Correlates of Delinquency, researchers have found that youth that were abused during childhood (12 years of age or less) were no more likely to become delinquent than youth who were not abused, but youth who were abused during adolescence (after age 12) were significantly more likely to be delinquent.¹ While prior child abuse may not be linked to juvenile delinquency, studies examining prior child abuse have shown that childhood victimization may be linked to other poor outcomes in youth, including low academic achievement, teenage parenthood (particularly for females), drug use, and symptoms of mental illness.² Additionally, research examining adolescent victimization (including physical and sexual assaults) and adult outcomes has found a correlation between previous victimization and substance abuse, depression, and post-traumatic stress disorder in adulthood.³ In Illinois, DCFS investigates reported cases of child abuse.

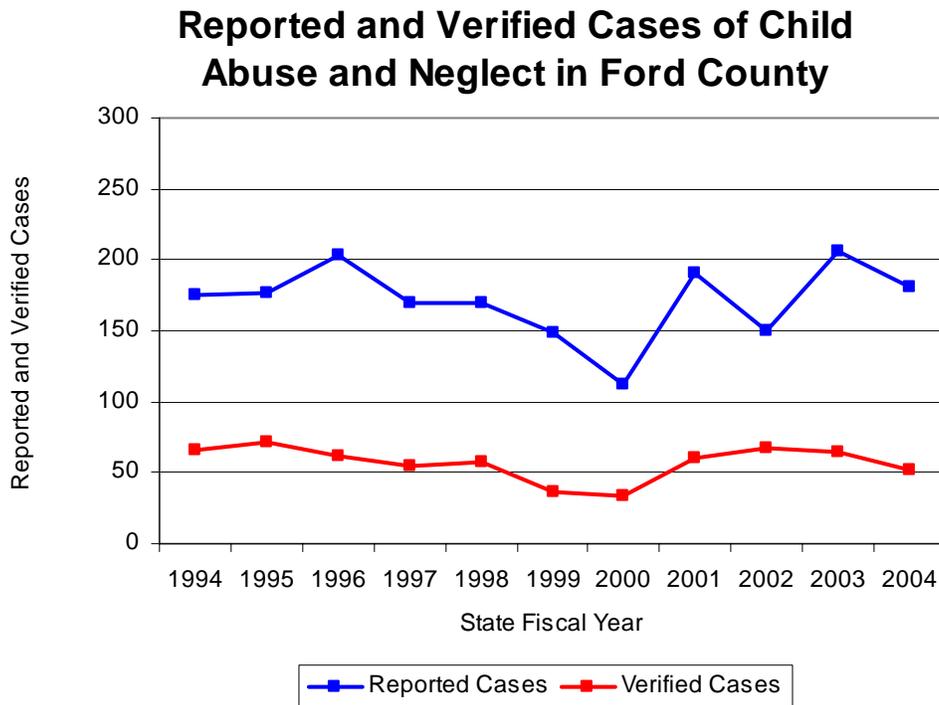
¹ Thornberry, Terence P., David Huizinga and Rolf Loeber. 2004. "The Causes and Correlates Studies: Findings and Policy Implications." *Juvenile Justice Journal*. 9:1. Washington, D.C. : U.S. Government Printing Office.

² Kelly, B., Thornberry, T. and Smith, C. 1997. "In the Wake of Childhood Maltreatment." *Juvenile Justice Bulletin*. Washington, D.C.: U.S. Government Printing Office.

³ Menard, S. 2002. 2002. "Short and Long-Term Consequences of Adolescent Victimization." *Youth Research Bulletin*. Washington, D.C.: U.S. Government Printing Office.

Between SFYs 1994 and 2004, the number of child abuse and neglect cases reported in Ford County increased 3 percent, from 175 to 181 (Figure 17). During that same period, 625 cases, or 33 percent of all cases reported, were verified by a DCFS investigation. Verified cases of child abuse and neglect in Ford County decreased 21 percent between SFYs 1994 and 2004, from 66 to 52.

Figure 17

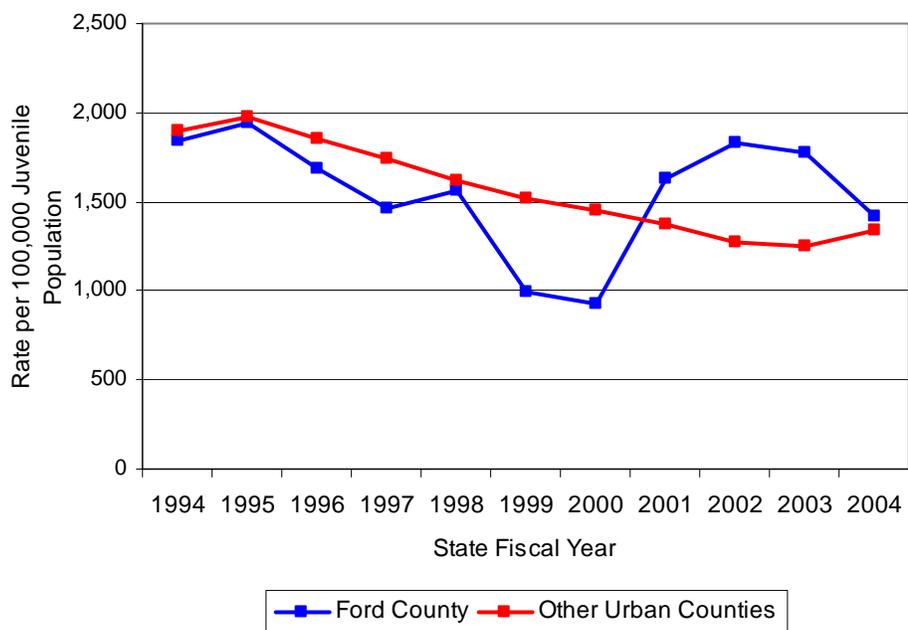


Source: Illinois Department of Children and Family Services

Between SFYs 1994 and 2004, the rate of verified cases of child abuse and neglect in Ford County decreased 23 percent, from 1,840 to 1,417 cases per 100,000 juveniles (Figure 18). During the same period, the rate of verified child abuse and neglect cases in the other urban counties decreased 29 percent, from 1,893 to 1,336 per 100,000 juveniles. In SFY 2004, the rate of verified cases of child abuse and neglect in Ford County was 6 percent higher than the rate in the other urban counties.

Figure 18

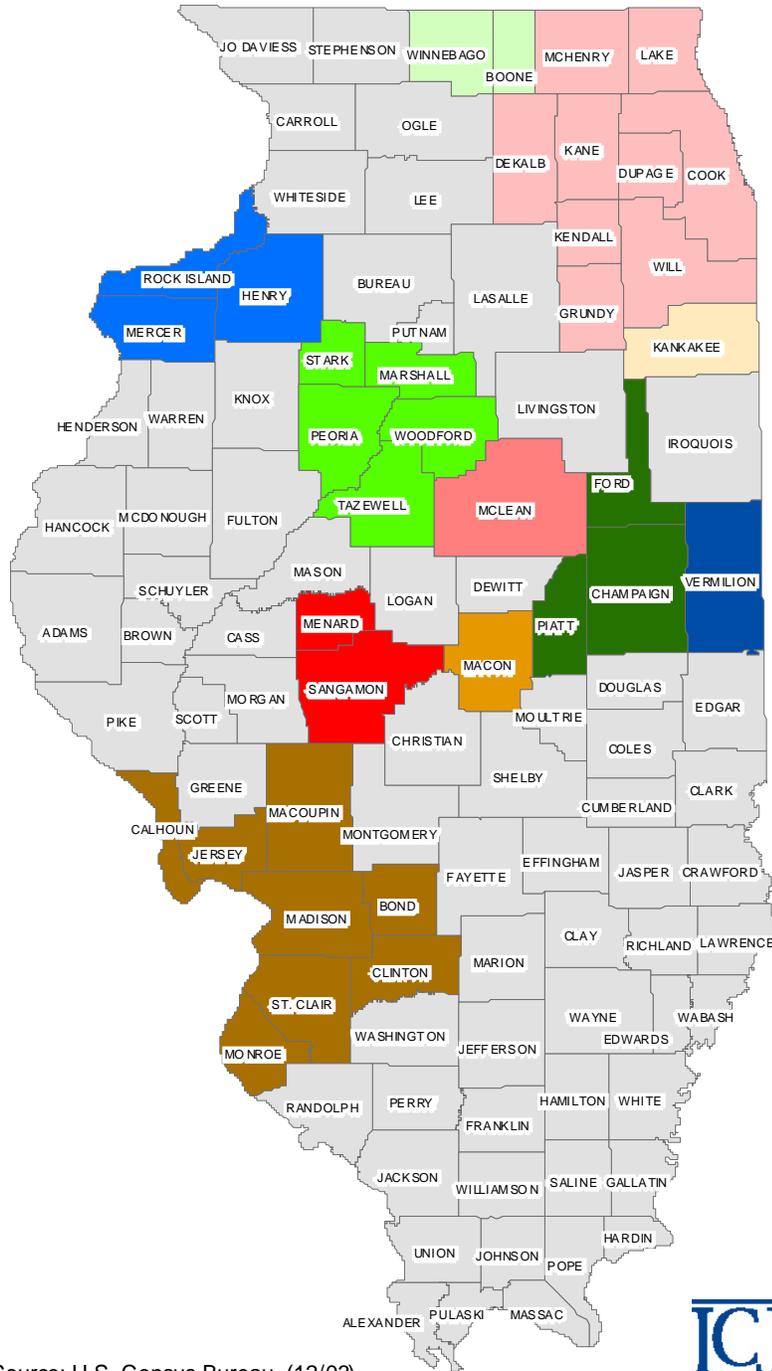
Rate of Verified Cases of Child Abuse and Neglect, Ford and All Other Rural Counties



Source: ICJIA calculation using Illinois Department of Children and Family Services and U.S. Census Bureau data

VI. Appendix I (Map of Illinois Counties within a Metropolitan Statistical Area)

Illinois Counties, by Metropolitan Statistical Area*



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Illinois Criminal Justice Information Authority

120 S. Riverside Plaza, Suite 1016
Chicago, Illinois 60606
Telephone: 312-793-8550
TDD: 312-793-4170
Fax: 312-793-8422
www.icjia.state.il.us



Rod R. Blagojevich, Governor
Sheldon Sorosky, Chairman
Lori G. Levin, Executive Director