

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



A Profile of the Scott 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

Scott County, located in central Illinois, covers an area of 251 square miles and had a 2003 population of 5,505, according to estimates by the U.S. Department of Commerce's Bureau of the Census. Using these figures, Scott County was the 8th smallest county in Illinois geographically, but 4th smallest in terms of population. Combining these two measures, Scott County had the 10th lowest population density per square mile among Illinois' 102 counties.

As with the previous reports, information specific to Scott 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 lay within a Metropolitan Statistical Area (MSA) (Appendix 1, page 21). 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, Scott County is one of Illinois' 66 rural counties. Throughout this report, the criminal justice activity trends experienced in Scott County will be compared to those trends experienced in the other rural 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 Scott 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 that 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.

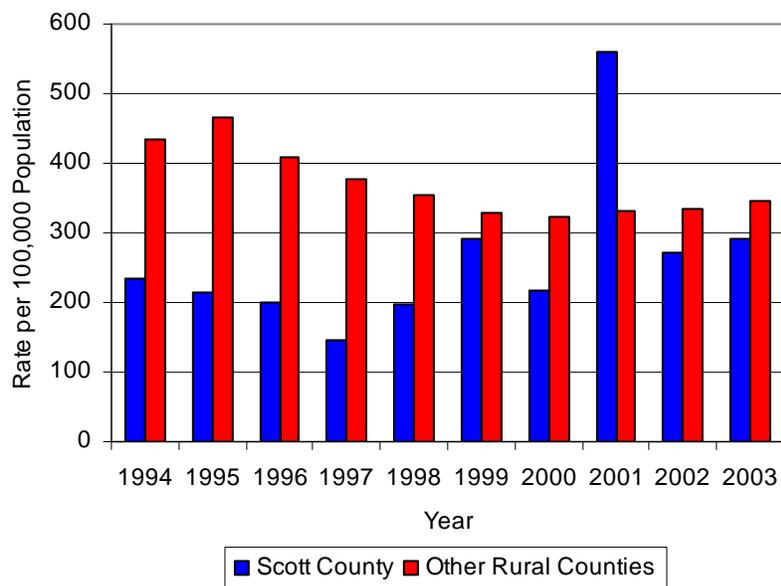
Violent Index Offenses Reported to the Police in Scott County

The number of violent Index offenses reported to the police increased in Scott County between 1994 and 2003, from 13 to 16. As in previous years and in most other counties, aggravated assault offenses accounted for the majority (100 percent) of violent Index offenses reported in Scott County in 2003.

Between 1994 and 2003, the violent Index offense rate in Scott County increased 25 percent, from 233 to 291 offenses per 100,000 population (Figure 1). During that same period, the violent Index offense rate in the other rural counties decreased 20 percent, from 434 to 346 offenses per 100,000 population. The 2003 violent Index offense rate in Scott County was 16 percent lower than the rate in the other rural counties.

Figure 1

Total Violent Index Offense Rates in Scott and Other Rural Counties



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

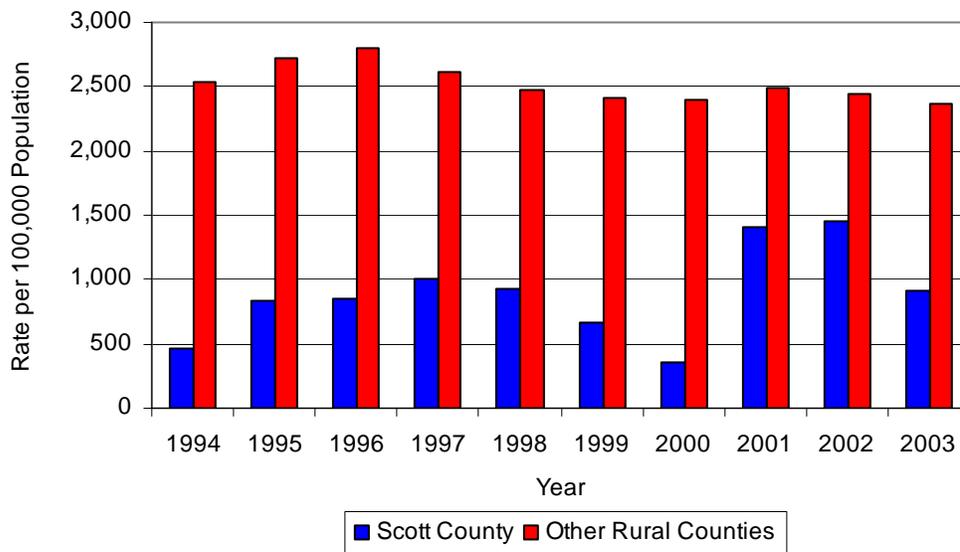
Property Index Offenses Reported to the Police in Scott County

Between 1994 and 2003, the number of property Index offenses reported to the police in Scott County nearly doubled, from 26 to 50. Thefts accounted for 68 percent of all property Index offenses reported in Scott County during 2003.

Between 1994 and 2003, the property Index offense rate in Scott County also nearly doubled, from 466 to 908 offenses per 100,000 population. During the same period, the property Index offense rate in the other rural counties decreased 6 percent, from 2,529 to 2,367 offenses per 100,000 population. Scott County's 2003 property Index offense rate was 62 percent lower than the rate in the other rural counties (Figure 2).

Figure 2

**Total Property Index Offense Rates in
Scott and Other Rural Counties**



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

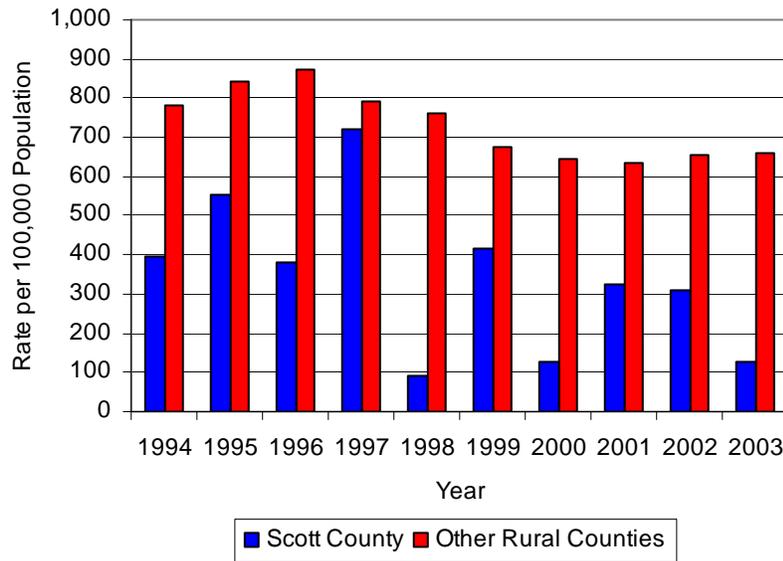
Index Arrests by Scott County Law Enforcement Agencies

Between 1994 and 2003, arrests for total Index offenses by law enforcement agencies in Scott County decreased 68 percent, from 22 to seven. The majority of Index arrests were for property Index offenses. Of the seven Index arrests made in Scott County during 2003, two were for violent Index crimes and five were for a property Index crime. Arrests for theft accounted for the majority (71 percent) of property Index arrests, and aggravated assault accounted for all of the violent Index arrests in Scott County during 2003.

Between 1994 and 2003, the Index arrest rate in Scott County also decreased 68 percent, from 394 to 127 arrests per 100,000 population (Figure 3). During the same period, the Index arrest rate in the other rural counties decreased 16 percent, from 784 to 658 arrests per 100,000 population. In 2003, Scott County's Index arrest rate was 81 percent lower than the Index arrest rate in the other rural counties.

Figure 3

Index Arrest Rates in Scott and Other Rural Counties



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

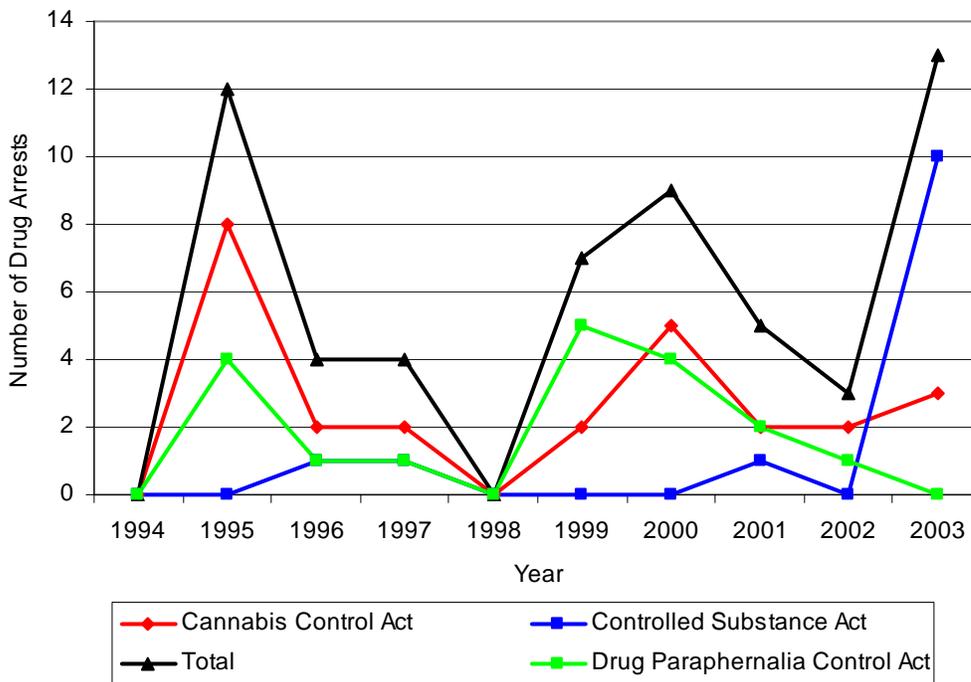
Drug Offense Arrests in Scott County

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 from zero to 13 in Scott County (Figure 4).

Throughout most of the period, arrests for violations of Illinois' Cannabis Control Act (which prohibits the possession, sale, and cultivation of cannabis) in Scott County have 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, there were 26 arrests for violations of the Cannabis Control Act in Scott County, compared to 13 arrests for violations of the Controlled Substances Act and 18 arrests for violation of the Drug Paraphernalia Control Act (Figure 4).

Figure 4

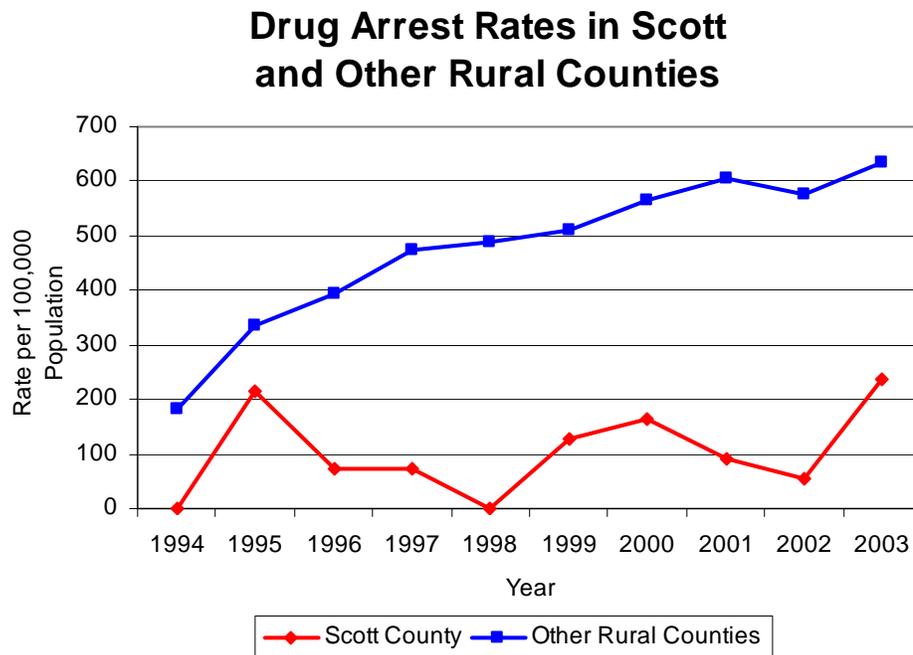
Drug Arrests in Scott County



Source: Illinois State Police

Between 1994 and 2003, the arrest rate for all drug law violations in Scott County increased from zero per 100,000 population to 236 per 100,000 population (Figure 5). The total drug arrest rate in the other rural counties more than tripled between 1994 and 2003, from 181 to 634 per 100,000 population.

Figure 5



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

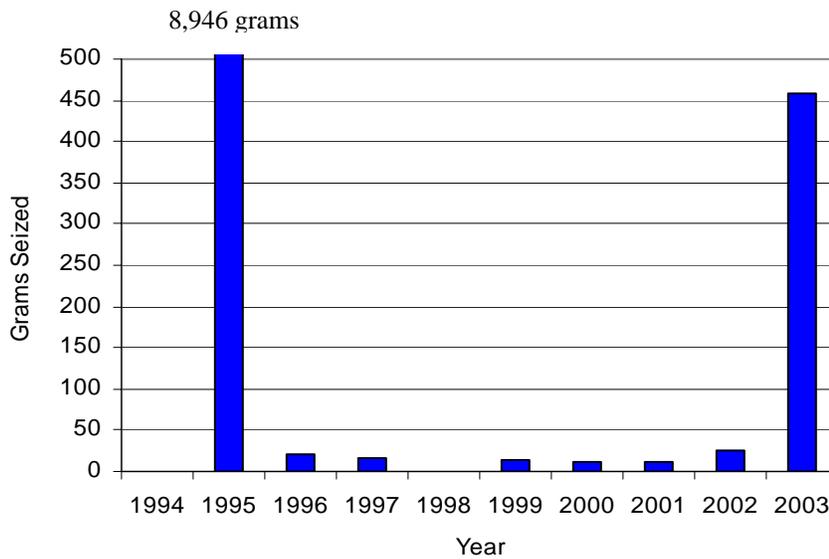
Drugs Seized in Scott County

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 Scott County.

Cannabis Seized in Scott County

Cannabis accounts for the majority of drugs seized in Scott County and in most Illinois jurisdictions. Although there were large variations in the number of grams of cannabis seized between 1994 and 2003, the quantity of cannabis seized in Scott County increased from one gram to 458 grams, while reaching a high of 8,946 grams seized in 1995 (Figure 6).

Figure 6
Cannabis Seized in Scott County



Source: Illinois State Police

During the period between 1994 and 2003, the quantity of cannabis seized in the other rural counties decreased 55 percent, from 608,148 grams to 272,185 grams. In 2003, Scott County had a cannabis seizure rate of 8,320 grams per 100,000 population, 48 percent lower than the rate of 16,151 grams per 100,000 population in the other rural counties.

Cocaine and Methamphetamine Seized in Scott County

During the past decade, it is clear that methamphetamine “activity” in the state has increased dramatically 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.

Between 1994 and 2003, cocaine was seized in only one year-1995, when less than one gram was seized. No crack cocaine was seized in Scott County during the period analyzed. Also, between 1994 and 2003, methamphetamine was seized in only 2003, when 33 grams were seized.

The quantity of powder cocaine seized in the other rural counties decreased 79 percent, from 71,279 grams in 1994 to 15,170 grams in 2003, while the quantity of crack cocaine seized increased 79 percent, from 1,177 grams to 2,106 grams. The amount of methamphetamine seized in other rural counties increased dramatically between 1994 and 2003, from 2,619 grams to 13,184 grams.

In 2003, 598 grams of methamphetamine per 100,000 population was seized in Scott County. Also in 2003, 900 grams of powder cocaine per 100,000 population were seized in the other rural counties, while 125 grams of crack cocaine per 100,00 population and 782 grams of methamphetamine per 100,000 population were seized in other rural counties.

III. Adult and Juvenile Court Activity in Scott 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 Scott County and the other rural counties.

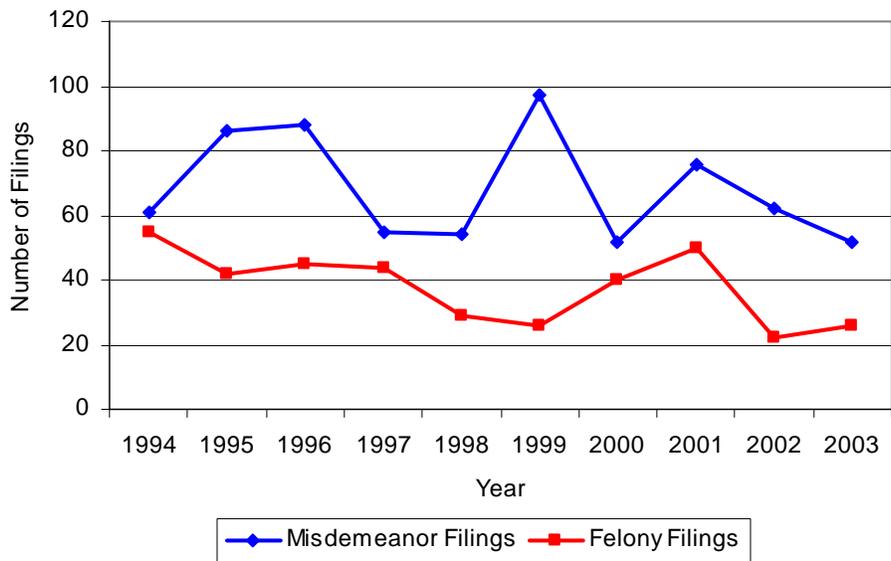
Misdemeanor and Felony Filings in Scott County

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 6 percent of all filings in Scott County’s courts (civil, traffic, family, and other). Between 1994 and 2003, the number of felony filings in Scott County decreased 53 percent, from 55 to 26 (Figure 7). During the same period, misdemeanor filings decreased 15 percent, from 61 in 1994 to 52 in 2003. In 2003, misdemeanor filings out-numbered felony filings by two to one.

Figure 7

**Felony and Misdemeanor Filings
in Scott County**

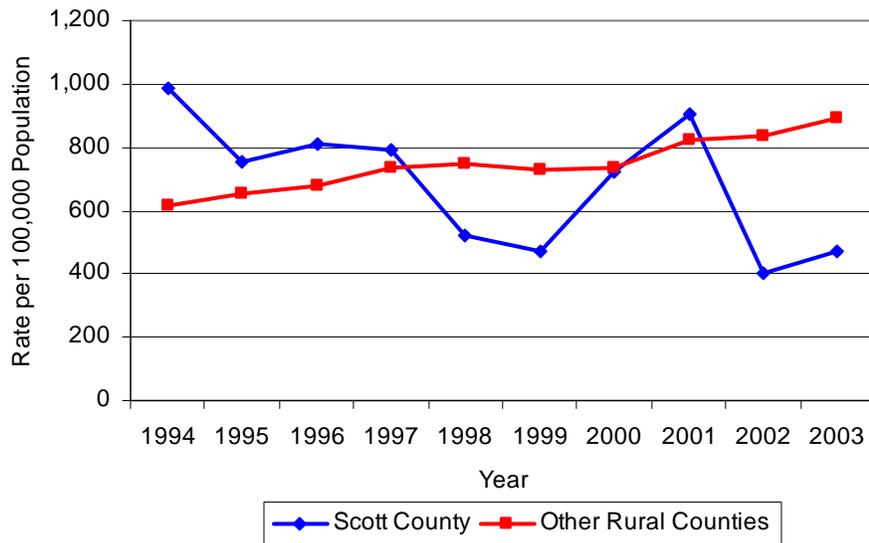


Source: Administrative Office of the Illinois Courts

Between 1994 and 2003, the felony-filing rate in Scott County decreased 52 percent, from 986 to 472 cases per 100,000 population (Figure 8). On the other hand, the felony-filing rate in the other rural counties increased 45 percent during this period, from 613 to 890 cases per 100,000 population. In 2003, the felony-filing rate in Scott County was 47 percent lower than the rate in the other rural counties.

Figure 8

Felony Filing Rates in Scott and Other Rural Counties



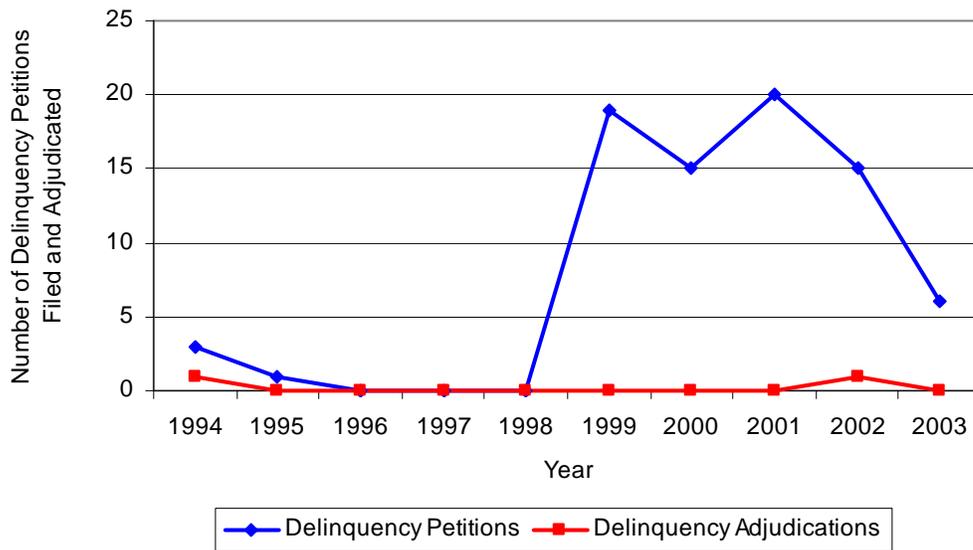
Source: Administrative Office of the Illinois Courts and U.S. Census Bureau data

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 Scott County doubled from three to six (Figure 9). Two juveniles were adjudicated delinquent in between 1994 and 2003. Between 1994 and 2003, delinquency adjudications decreased from one to zero.

Figure 9

Juvenile Delinquency Petitions Filed and Adjudicated in Scott County



Source: Administrative Office of the Illinois Courts

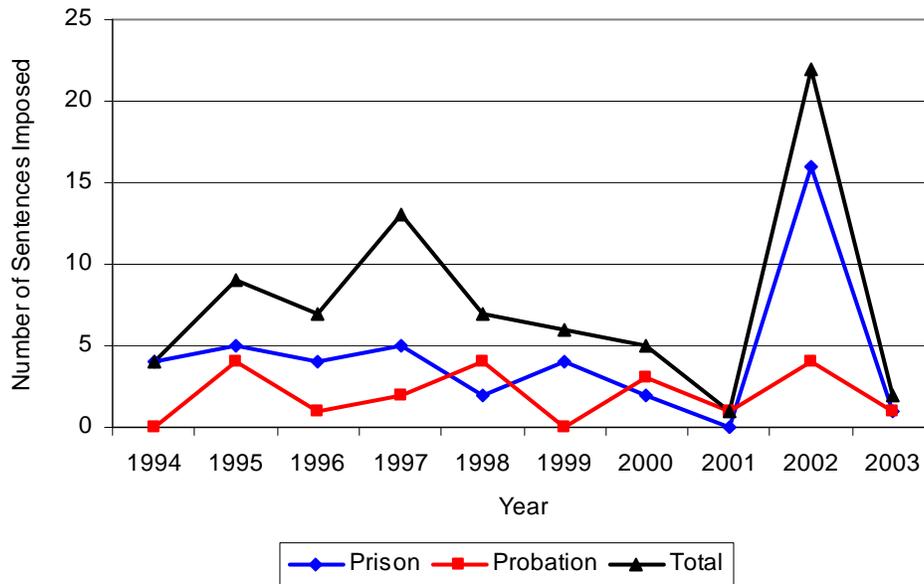
Between 1994 and 2003, the delinquency petition-filing rate in Scott County more than doubled, from 491 to 1,054 per 100,000 juveniles. During the same period, the delinquency petition-filing rate in the other rural counties increased 13 percent, from 2,017 to 2,270 petitions per 100,000 juveniles.

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 Scott County decreased from four to two (Figure 10). The number of convicted felons sentenced to probation during this period increased from zero to one, while the number of felony prison sentences decreased from four to one. As a result, felony probation sentences increased as a proportion of total felony sentences, increasing from zero percent in 1994 to 50 percent in 2003. Between 1994 and 2003, the proportion of felons sentenced to prison decreased from 100 percent to 50 percent. In 2003, no convicted felon was sentenced to something other than prison or probation.

Figure 10

Sentences Imposed on Felons Convicted in Scott County



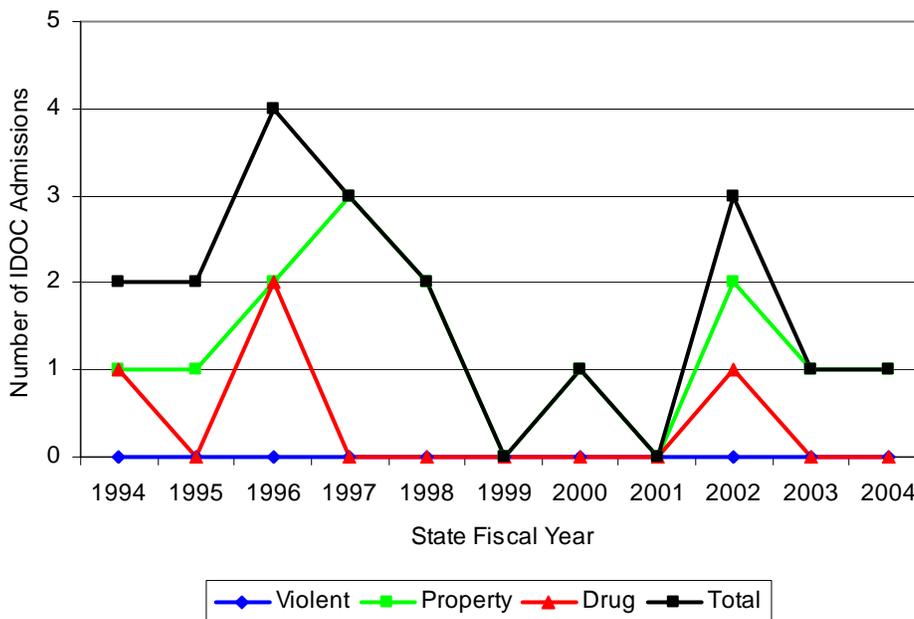
Source: Administrative Office of the Illinois Courts

Adult Prison Admissions from Scott County

Between State Fiscal Years (SFYs) 1994 and 2004, the number of admissions to the Illinois Department of Corrections' Adult Division from Scott County decreased from two to one (Figure 11). The number of violent offender admissions remained unchanged at zero and the number of property offender admissions remained unchanged at one in both SFYs 1994 and 2004, while drug offender admissions decreased from one to zero.

Figure 11

IDOC New Court Commitments from Scott County, by Offense Type



Source: Illinois Department of Corrections

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 two court commitments to the IDOC's Juvenile Division from Scott County.

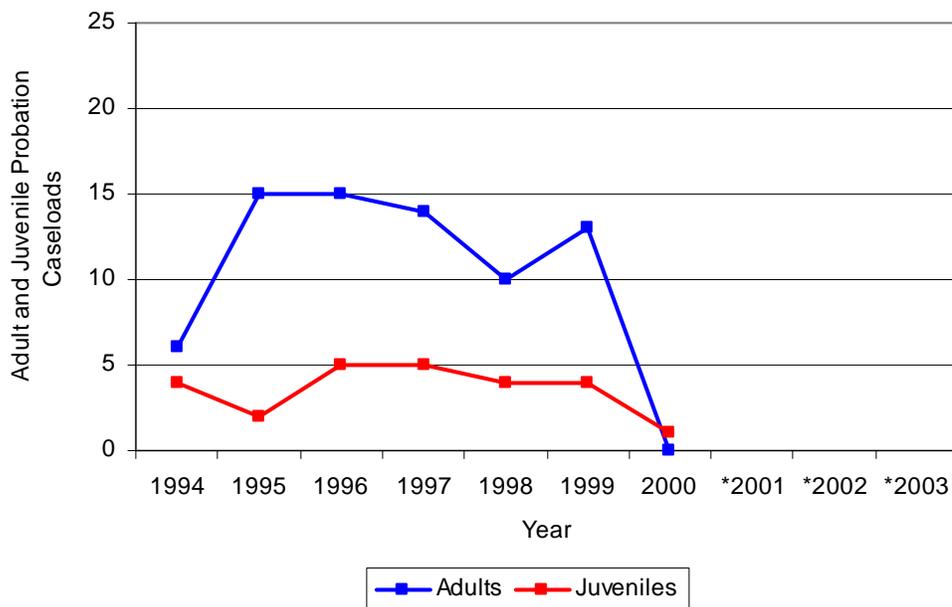
In SFY 2004, rate of commitment to the IDOC's Juvenile Division from the other rural counties combined was 230 commitments per 100,000 juveniles.

Adult and Juvenile Probation Caseloads in Scott County

Between December 31, 1994 and December 31, 2000, the number of active adult probation cases in Scott County decreased from six to zero (Figure 12). Between 1994 and 2000, the number of juveniles supervised by the Scott County Juvenile Probation Department decreased from four to one. By comparison, the number of active adult probation cases in the other rural counties increased 39 percent between 1994 and 2003, while the juvenile probation caseloads remained unchanged.

Figure 12

Total Adult and Juvenile Active Probation Cases in Scott County



Source: Administrative Office of the Illinois Courts

* 2001, 2002 and 2003 total adult and juvenile probation data not available

The active adult probation caseload rate per 100,000 population in Scott County decreased between 1994 and 2000, from 107 to zero cases per 100,000 population. During that same period, the active adult probation caseload rate increased 40 percent in the other rural counties, from 747 to 1,047 cases per 100,000 population.

IV. Indicators of Child Abuse and Neglect in Scott County

Substance-Exposed Infants in Scott 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 State Fiscal Years 1994 and 2004, 96 of Illinois' 102 counties reported at least one case of a substance-exposed infant.

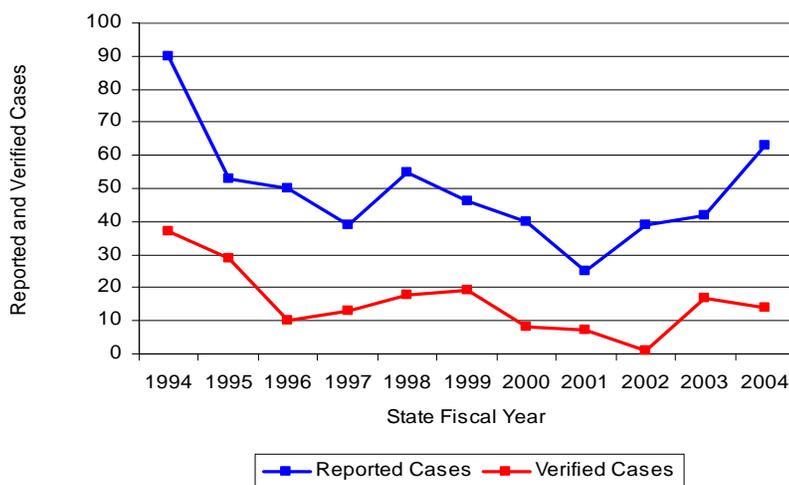
Between State Fiscal Years 1994 and 2004, there were no reported cases of a substance-exposed infant in Scott County. During the same period, the number of reported cases of substance-exposed infants in the other rural counties increased 23 percent, from 83 to 102, while the number of verified cases of substance-exposed infants increased 43 percent, from 44 to 63.

Child Abuse and Neglect Cases Reported and Verified in Scott 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.

Between State Fiscal Years 1994 and 2003, the number of child abuse and neglect cases reported in Scott County decreased 30 percent, from 90 to 63 (Figure 13). During that same period, 173 cases, or 32 percent of all cases reported, were verified by a DCFS investigation. Verified cases of child abuse and neglect in Scott County decreased 62 percent between SFYs 1994 and 2004, from 37 to 14.

Figure 13
Reported and Verified Cases of Child Abuse and Neglect in Scott County



Source: Illinois Department of Children and Family Services

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.

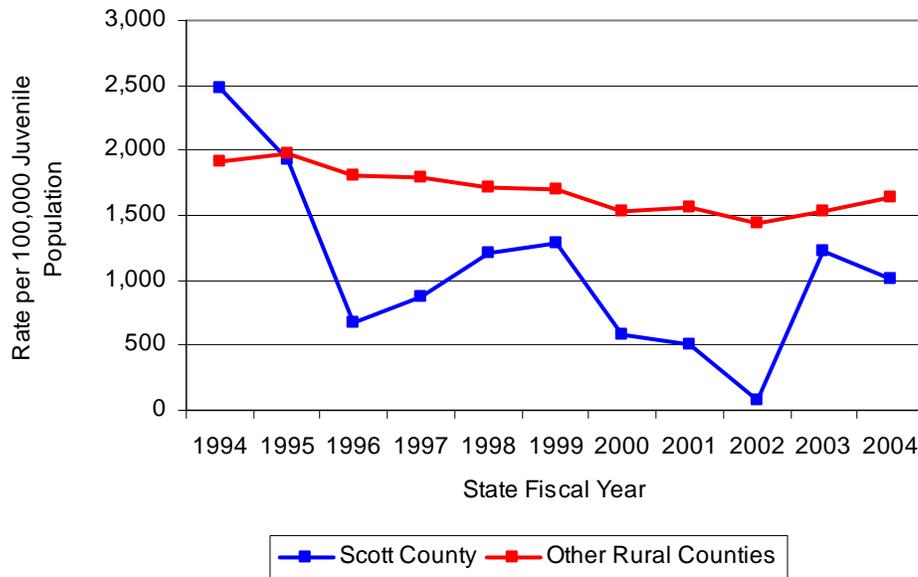
² Kelly, B., Thornberry, T. and Smith, C. 1997. “In the Wake of Childhood Maltreatment.” *Juvenile Justice Bulletin*. Washington, D.C.: U.S. Government Printing Office.

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 State Fiscal Years 1994 and 2004, the rate of verified cases of child abuse and neglect in Scott County decreased from 2,478 to 1,006 per 100,000 juveniles, a 59 percent decrease (Figure 14). During the same period, the rate of verified child abuse and neglect cases decreased 14 percent in the other rural counties, from 1,907 to 1,637 per 100,000 juveniles. In SFY 2003, the rate of verified cases of child abuse and neglect in Scott County was 39 percent lower than in the other rural counties.

Figure 14

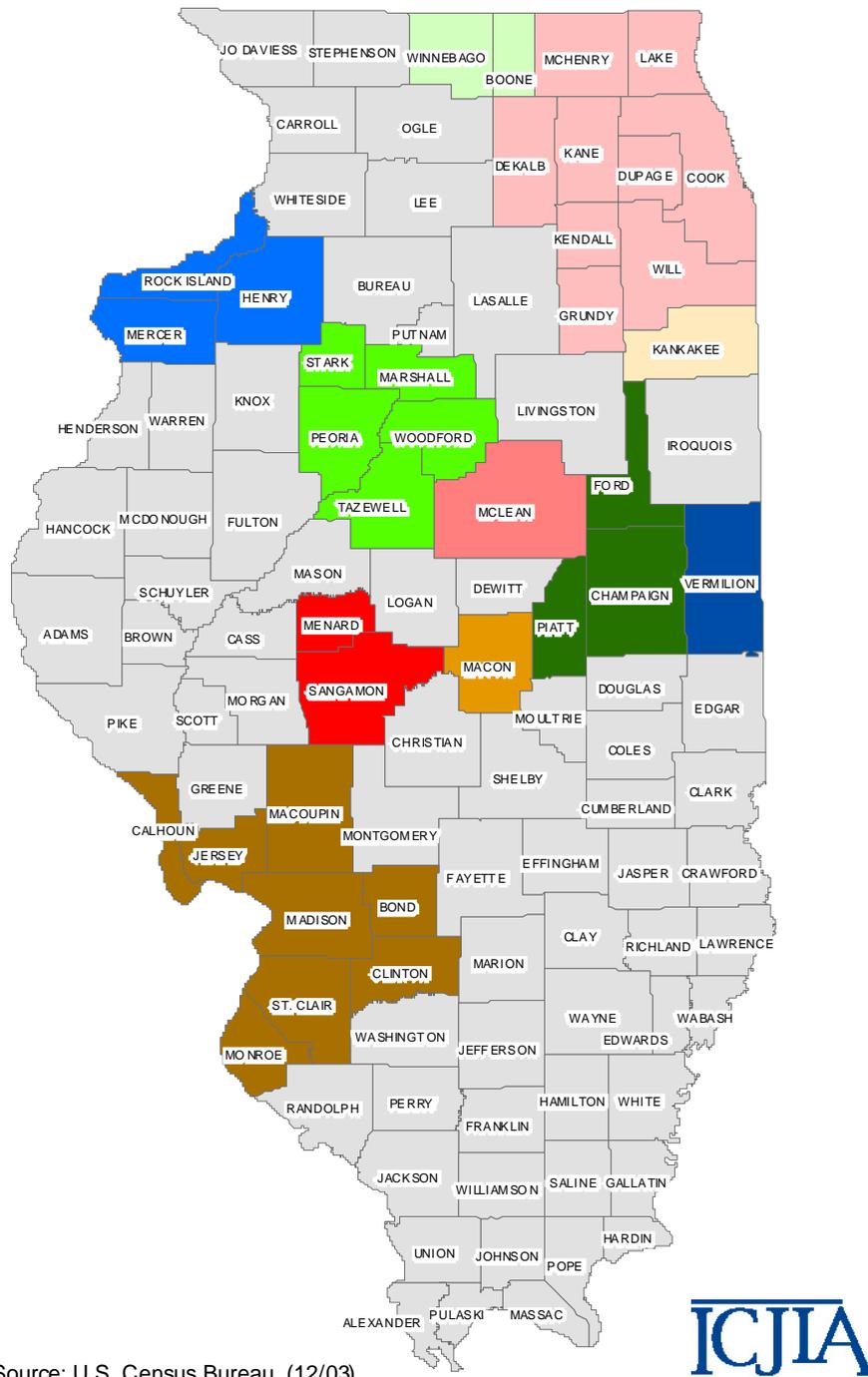
Rate of Verified Cases of Child Abuse and Neglect, Scott and Other Rural Counties



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

V. 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