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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 Williamson County Criminal and Juvenile Justice Systems

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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

Williamson County, located in southern Illinois, covers an area of 424 square miles and had a 2003 population of 62,448, according to estimates by the U.S. Department of Commerce's Bureau of the Census. Using these figures, Williamson County was the 68th largest county in Illinois geographically, but 23rd largest in terms of population. Combining these two measures, Williamson County had the 20th highest population density per square mile among Illinois' 102 counties.

As with the previous reports, information specific to Williamson 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 24). 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, Williamson County is one of Illinois' 66 rural counties. Throughout this report, the criminal justice activity trends experienced in Williamson 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 Williamson 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.

In addition to local law enforcement agencies, the Southern Illinois Enforcement Group (SIEG) also serves Williamson County. Throughout most of the period analyzed, there were 21 Metropolitan Enforcement Groups (MEGs) and task forces operating in Illinois. A county is considered to be served by a MEG or task force if at least one law enforcement agency within that county participated in that MEG or task force either by providing personnel or financial resources.

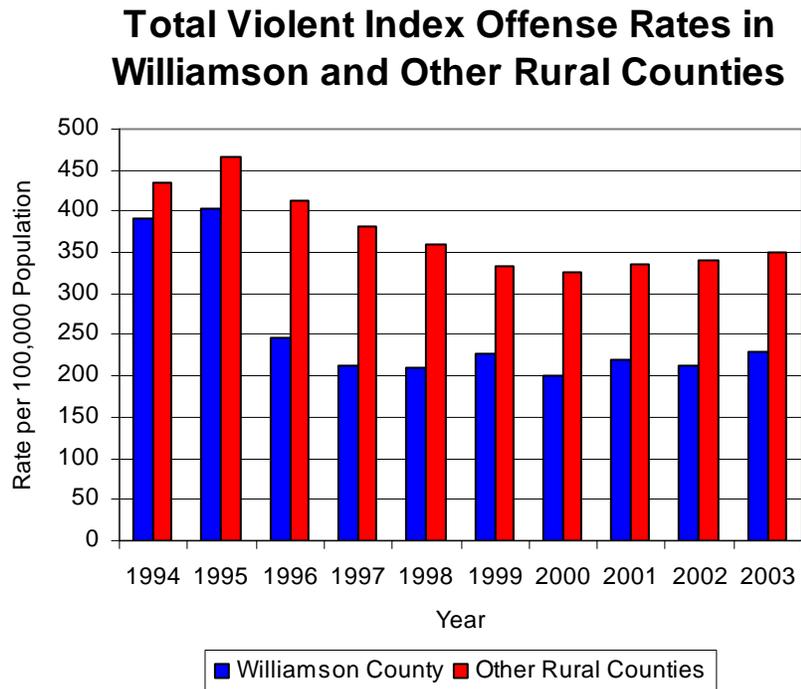
To learn more about the drug enforcement activities of Southern Illinois Enforcement Group and Illinois' other MEGs and task forces, profiles of each of the units were developed by the Authority's Research and Analysis Unit and are available through the Authority's Criminal Justice Information Clearinghouse or can be downloaded from the Authority's Website at www.icjia.state.il.us.

Violent Index Offenses Reported to the Police in Williamson County

The number of violent Index offenses reported to the police decreased 39 percent in Williamson County between 1994 and 2003, from 235 to 143. As in previous years and in most other counties, aggravated assault offenses accounted for the majority (61 percent) of violent Index offenses reported in Williamson County in 2003.

Between 1994 and 2003, the violent Index offense rate in Williamson County decreased 42 percent, from 392 to 229 offenses per 100,000 population (Figure 1). During that same period, the violent Index offense rate in the other rural counties decreased 19 percent, from 435 to 350 offenses per 100,000 population. The 2003 violent Index offense rate in Williamson County was 35 percent lower than the rate in the other rural counties.

Figure 1



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

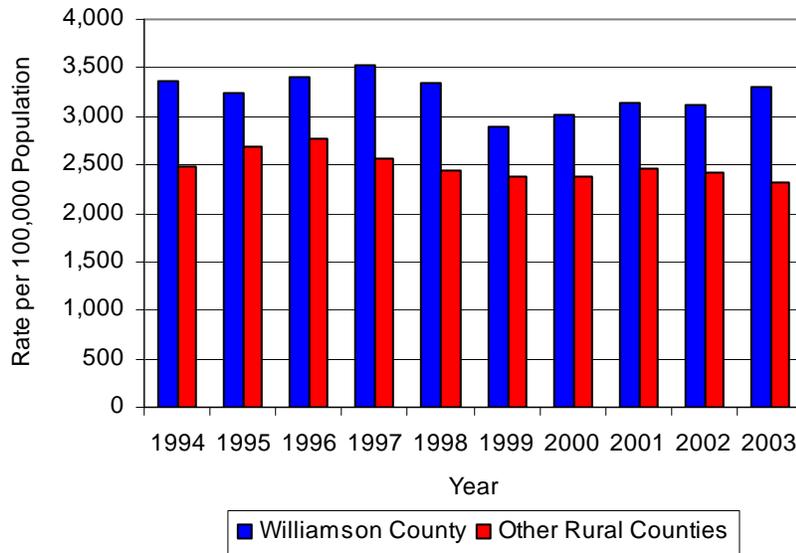
Property Index Offenses Reported to the Police in Williamson County

Between 1994 and 2003, the number of property Index offenses reported to the police in Williamson County increased 2 percent, from 2,023 to 2,066. Thefts accounted for 72 percent of all property Index offenses reported in Williamson County during 2003.

Between 1994 and 2003, the property Index offense rate in Williamson County decreased slightly (less than 2 percent), from 3,374 to 3,308 offenses per 100,000 population (Figure 2). The property Index offense rate in the other rural counties decreased 7 percent, from 2,491 to 2,326 offenses per 100,000 population. Williamson County's 2003 property Index offense rate was 42 percent higher than the rate in the other rural counties.

Figure 2

Total Property Index Offense Rates in Williamson and Other Rural Counties



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

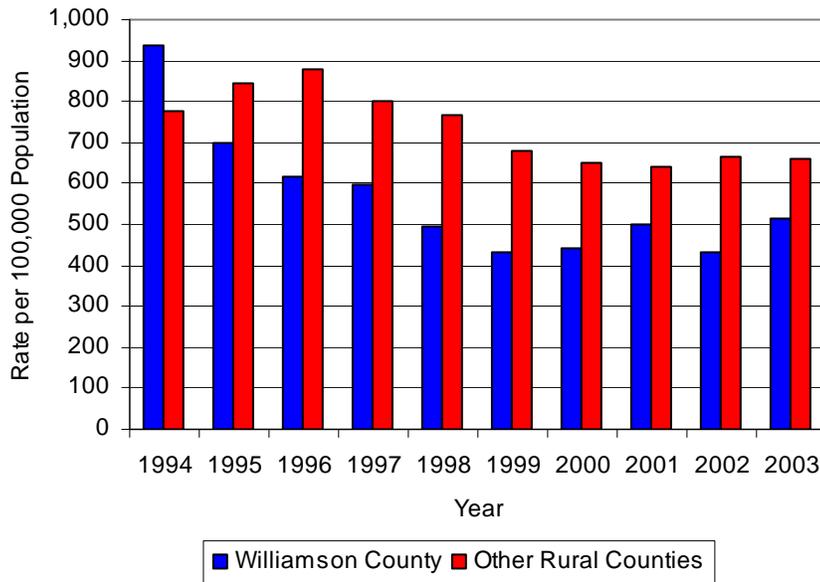
Index Arrests by Williamson County Law Enforcement Agencies

Between 1994 and 2003, arrests for total Index offenses by law enforcement agencies in Williamson County decreased 43 percent, from 561 to 321. The majority of Index arrests were for property Index offenses. Of the 321 Index arrests made in Williamson County during 2003, 18 percent were for violent Index crimes and 82 percent were for property Index crimes. Arrests for theft and aggravated assault accounted for the majority of property and violent Index arrests in Williamson County during 2003. Of all violent Index arrests, 79 percent were arrests for aggravated assault, while thefts accounted for 77 percent of all property Index arrests.

Between 1994 and 2003, the Index arrest rate in Williamson County decreased 45 percent, from 936 to 514 arrests per 100,000 population (Figure 3). During the same period, the Index arrest rate in the other rural counties decreased 15 percent, from 777 to 662 arrests per 100,000 population. In 2003, Williamson County's Index arrest rate was 22 percent lower than the rate in the other rural counties.

Figure 3

**Index Arrest Rates in Williamson
and Other Rural Counties**



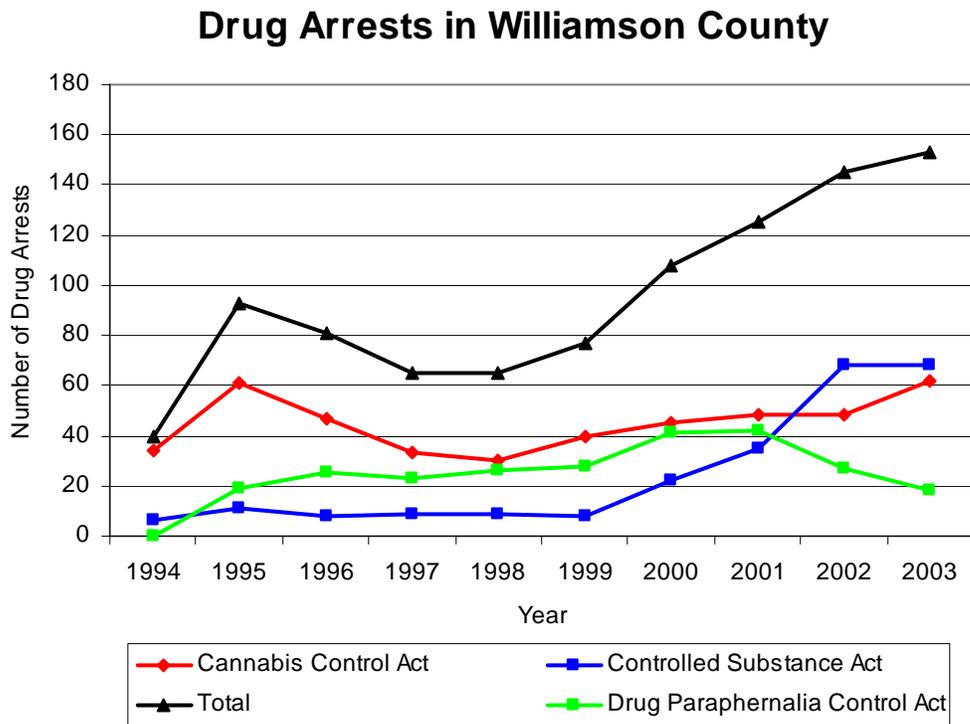
Source: ICJIA calculation using Illinois State Police and U.S. Census Bureau data

Drug Offense Arrests in Williamson 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) nearly tripled in Williamson County, from 40 to 153 (Figure 4). Drug Paraphernalia Control Act violations accounted for the majority of the increase in total drug arrests, increasing from zero arrests in 1994 to 18 in 2003.

During the period analyzed, arrests for violations of Illinois' Cannabis Control Act (which prohibits the possession, sale, and cultivation of cannabis) in Williamson County have outnumbered 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) for all years except 2002 and 2003. Between 1994 and 2003, the number of arrests for violations of the Cannabis Control Act in Williamson County increased from 34 to 62, while arrests for violations of the Controlled Substances Act increased from six to 68, during the same period (Figure 4).

Figure 4

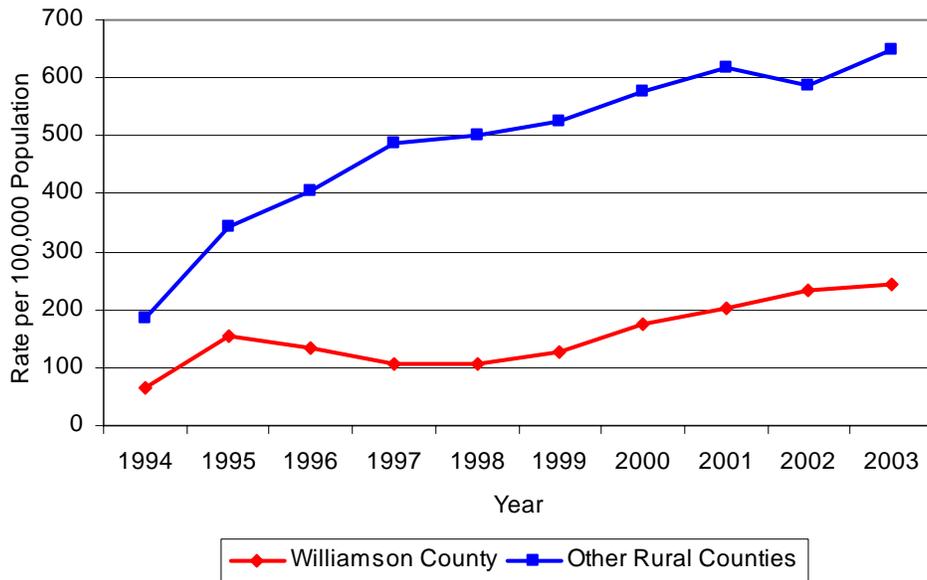


Source: Illinois State Police

Between 1994 and 2003, the arrest rate for all drug law violations in Williamson County nearly quadrupled, from 67 to 245 per 100,000 population (Figure 5). The total drug arrest rate in the other rural counties more than tripled between 1994 and 2003, from 185 to 647 per 100,000 population. In 2003, the drug arrest rate in Williamson County was 62 percent lower than the rate in the other rural counties.

Figure 5

Drug Arrest Rates in Williamson and Other Rural Counties



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

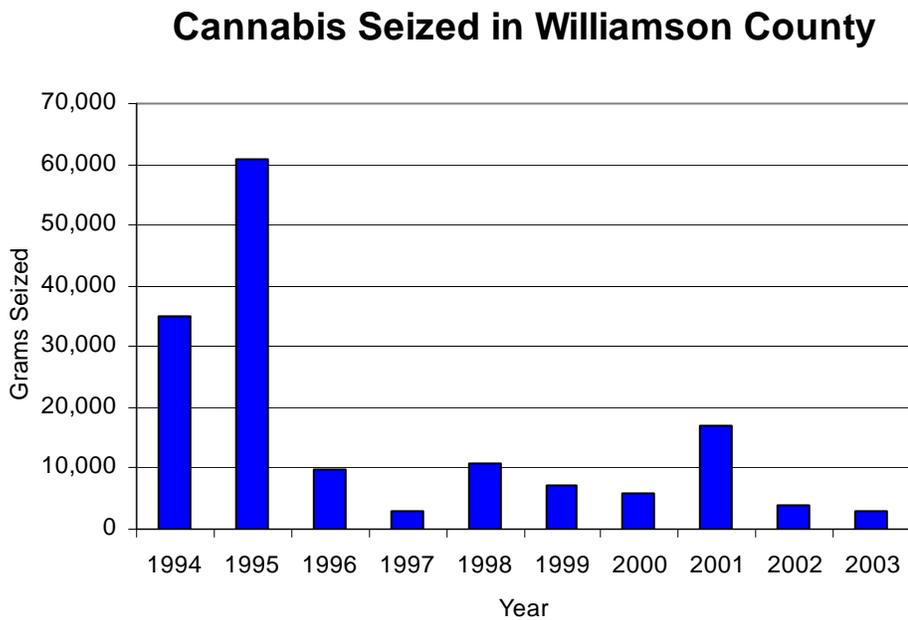
Drugs Seized in Williamson County

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 Williamson County.

Cannabis Seized in Williamson County

Cannabis accounts for the majority of drugs seized in Williamson 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 Williamson County decreased 91 percent, from 34,889 grams to 3,062 grams (Figure 6).

Figure 6



Source: Illinois State Police

During the period between 1994 and 2003, the quantity of cannabis seized in the other rural counties decreased 53 percent, from 573,260 grams to 269,581 grams. In 2003, Williamson County had a cannabis seizure rate of 4,904 grams per 100,000 population, a rate 70 percent lower than the rate of 16,556 grams per 100,000 population in the other rural counties.

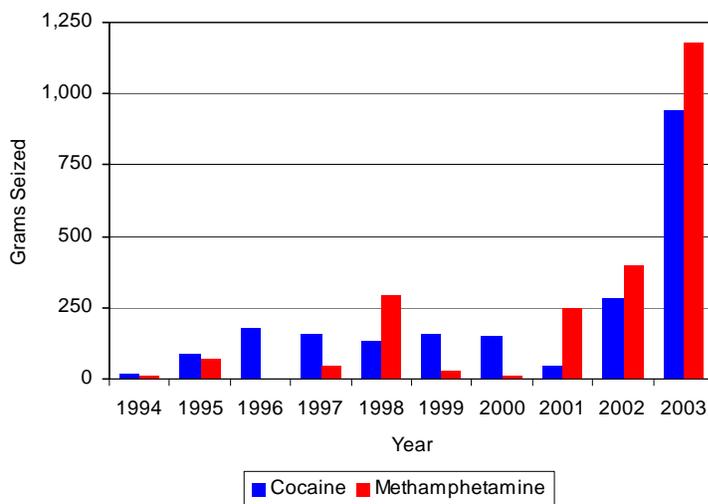
Cocaine and Methamphetamine Seized in Williamson County

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.

The quantity of cocaine seized in Williamson County increased between 1994 and 2003, as did the quantity of methamphetamine seized. The quantity of cocaine seized in Williamson County increased dramatically, from 18 grams in 1994 to 941 grams in 2003. Between 1994 and 2003 in Williamson County, crack cocaine comprised 37 percent of cocaine seizures and powder cocaine comprised 63 percent of cocaine seizures. Between 1994 and 2003, the quantity of methamphetamine seized in Williamson County increased dramatically from 14 grams to 1,179 grams (Figure 7).

Figure 7

Cocaine* and Methamphetamine Seized in Williamson County



Source: Illinois State Police

*Cocaine includes both powder and crack cocaine

The quantity of cocaine seized in the other rural counties decreased from 71,261 grams in 1994 to 14,226 grams in 2003. In 2003, 1,512 grams of cocaine per 100,000 population were seized in Williamson County, 73 percent higher than the rate of 874 grams of cocaine per 100,000 population seized in the other rural counties. Between 1994 and 2003, the amount of methamphetamine seized in other rural counties increased from 2,605 grams to 12,038 grams. In 2003, 1,887 grams of methamphetamine per 100,000 population were seized in Williamson County, more than double the 739 grams of methamphetamine cocaine per 100,000 population seized in the other rural counties.

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

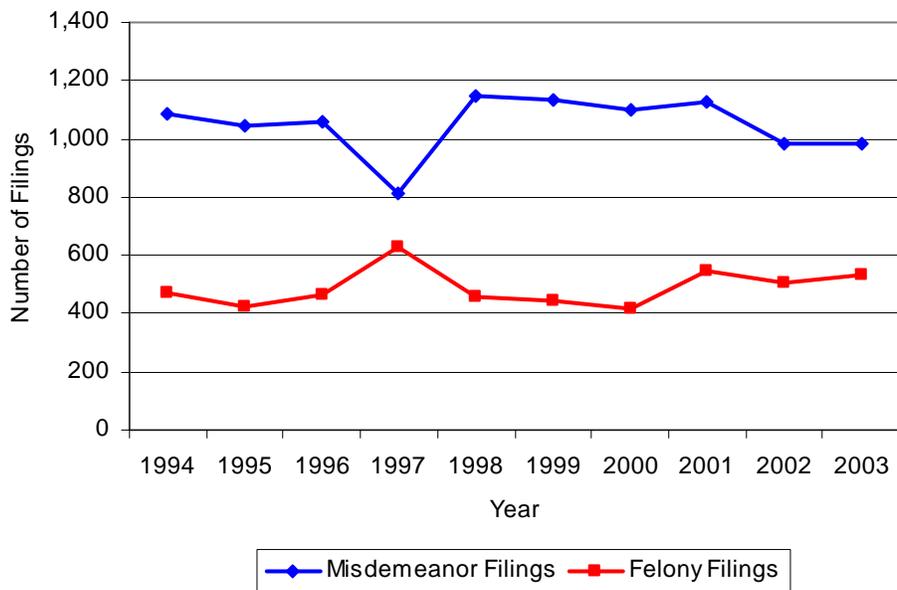
Misdemeanor and Felony Filings in Williamson County

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 nearly 8 percent of all filings in Williamson County’s courts (civil, traffic, family, and other). Between 1994 and 2003, the number of felony filings in Williamson County increased 13 percent, from 474 to 535 (Figure 8). During the same period, misdemeanor filings decreased 10 percent, from 1,086 in 1994 to 981 in 2003. In 2003, misdemeanor filings have out-numbered felony filings by almost two to one.

Figure 8

**Felony and Misdemeanor Filings
in Williamson County**

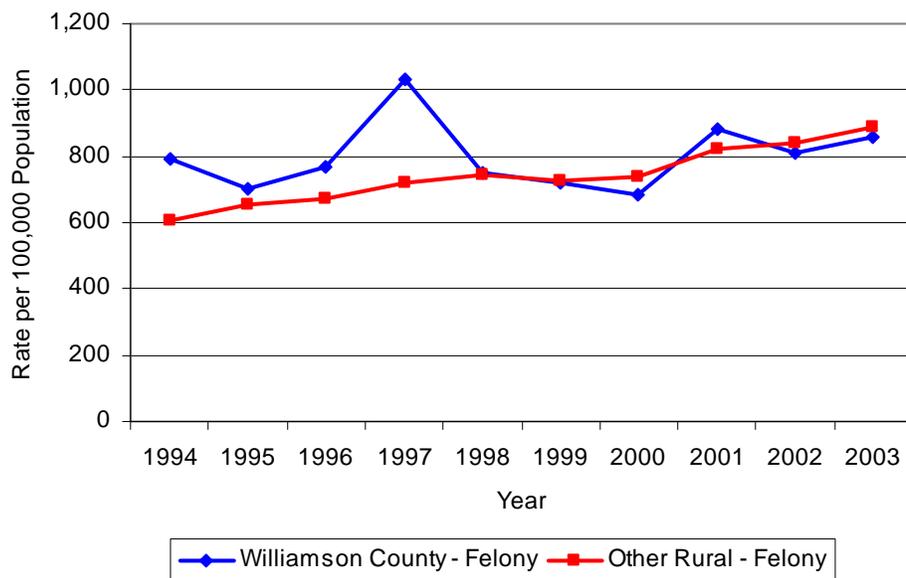


Source: Administrative Office of the Illinois Courts

Between 1994 and 2003, the felony-filing rate in Williamson County increased 8 percent, from 791 to 857 cases per 100,000 population (Figure 9). The felony-filing rate in the other rural counties increased 46 percent during this period, from 608 to 890 cases per 100,000 population. In 2003, the felony-filing rate in Williamson County was 4 percent lower than the rate in the other rural counties.

Figure 9

Felony Filing Rates in Williamson and Other Rural Counties



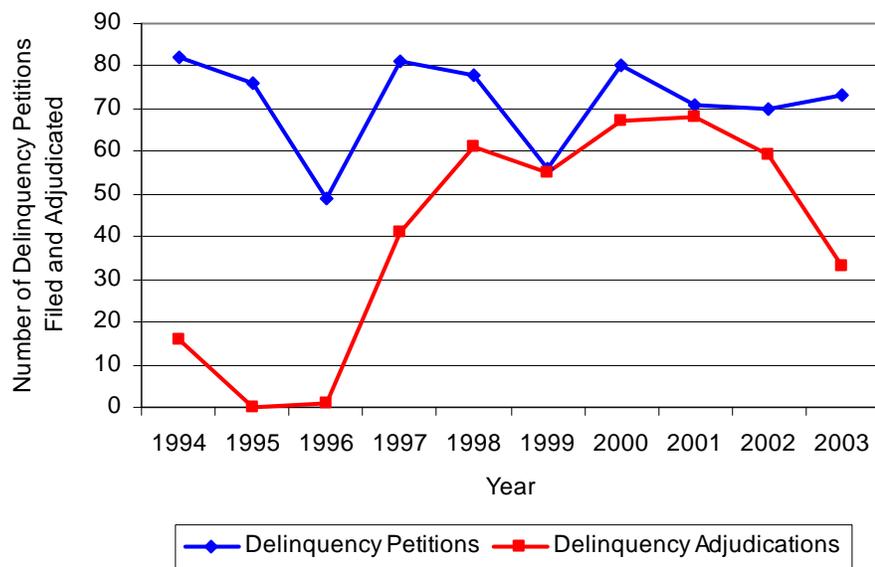
Source: Administrative Office of the Illinois Courts and U.S. Census Bureau data

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 Williamson County decreased 11 percent, from 82 to 73 (Figure 10). In 2003, 45 percent of the juveniles named in delinquency petitions were adjudicated delinquent. Between 1994 and 2003, delinquency adjudications more than doubled, from 16 to 33.

Figure 10

Juvenile Delinquency Petitions Filed and Adjudicated in Williamson County



Source: Administrative Office of the Illinois Courts

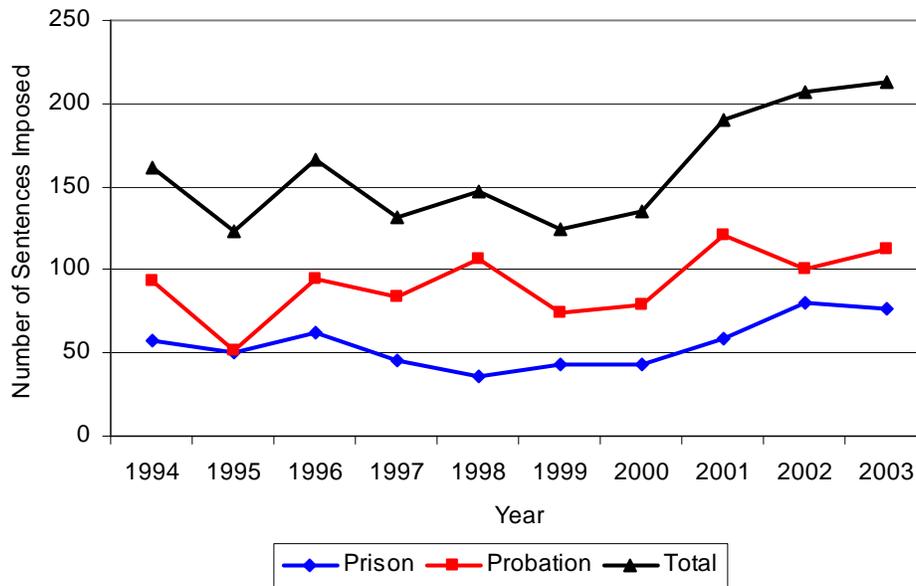
Between 1994 and 2003, the delinquency petition-filing rate in Williamson County decreased 9 percent, from 1,405 to 1,284 per 100,000 juveniles. During the same period, the delinquency petition-filing rate in the other rural counties increased 13 percent, from 2,033 to 2,300 petitions per 100,000 juveniles. In 2003, the delinquency petition rate in Williamson County was 44 percent lower than the rate in the other rural counties.

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 Williamson County increased 31 percent, from 162 to 213 (Figure 11). The number of convicted felons sentenced to prison during this period increased 33 percent, from 57 to 76. The number of felony probation sentences, increased 22 percent, from 93 in 1994 to 113 in 2003. Felony probation sentences decreased as a proportion of total sentences, decreasing from 57 percent in 1994 to 53 percent of all convicted felons in 2003. On the other hand, the proportion of felons sentenced to prison increased from 35 percent in 1994 to 36 percent in 2003. In 2003, 11 percent of convicted felons in Williamson County were sentenced to something other than prison or probation.

Figure 11

**Sentences Imposed on Felons
Convicted in Williamson County**

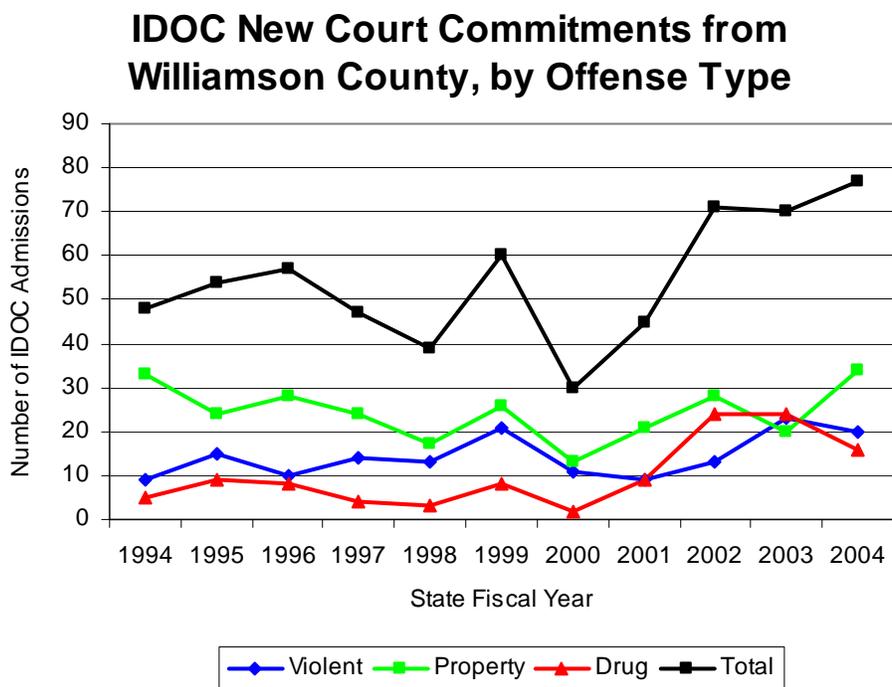


Source: Administrative Office of the Illinois Courts

Adult Prison Admissions from Williamson County

Between State Fiscal Years (SFYs) 1994 and 2004, the number of admissions to the Illinois Department of Corrections' Adult Division from Williamson County increased 60 percent, from 48 to 77 (Figure 12). During this period, the number of violent, property, and drug offender admissions increased. The number of violent offender admissions more than doubled between SFYs 1994 and 2004, from nine to 20, while the number of drug offender admissions more than tripled from five to 16. The number of property offender admissions also increased slightly, increasing from 33 to 34 during the same period.

Figure 12



Source: Illinois Department of Corrections

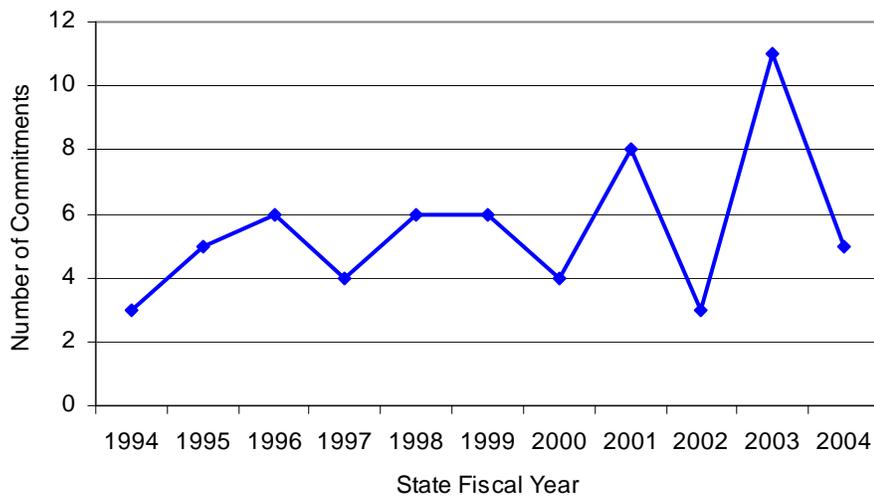
In SFY 2004, violent offenders accounted for 26 percent of all admissions from Williamson County, compared to 19 percent in SFY 1994, while property offenders accounted for a decreased proportion, decreasing from 69 percent in SFY 1994 to 44 percent in SFY 2004. Between SFYs 1994 and 2004, the proportion of admissions accounted for by drug offenders increased from 10 percent in SFY 1994 to 21 percent of all admissions from Williamson County in SFY 2004.

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, the number of court commitments to the IDOC's Juvenile Division from Williamson County increased from three to five (Figure 13).

Figure 13

Juvenile Court Commitments to the IDOC Juvenile Division from Williamson County



Source: Illinois Department of Corrections

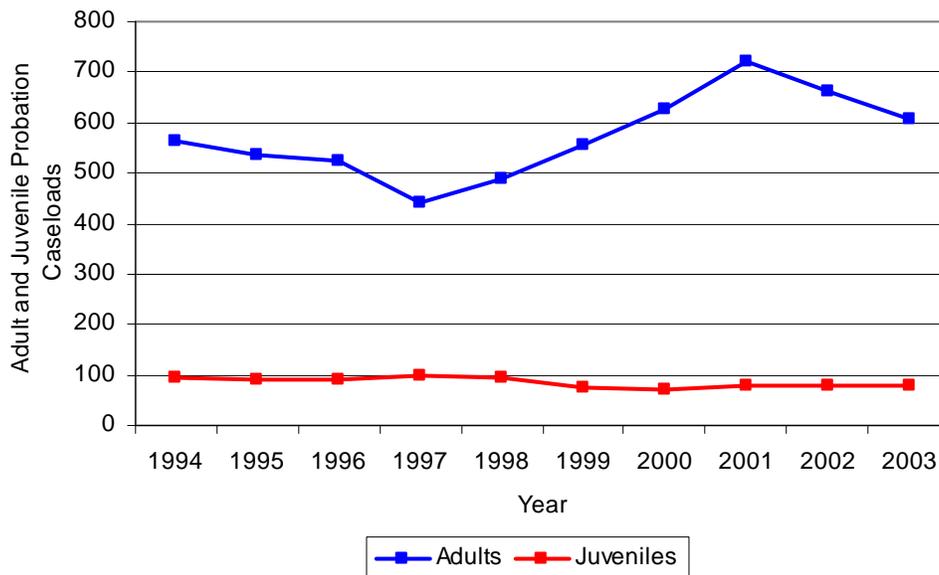
In SFY 2004, Williamson County's rate of commitments to the IDOC's Juvenile Division of 95 commitments per 100,000 juveniles was 59 percent lower than the 234 commitments per 100,000 juveniles from the other rural counties.

Adult and Juvenile Probation Caseloads in Williamson County

Between December 31, 1994 and December 31, 2003, the number of active adult probation cases in Williamson County increased 8 percent, from 562 to 607 (Figure 14). In 2003, felony offenders accounted for 43 percent of Williamson County's active adult probation caseload. Between 1994 and 2003, the number of juveniles supervised by the Williamson County Juvenile Probation Department decreased 17 percent, from 95 to 79. By comparison, the number of active adult probation cases in the other rural counties increased 40 percent between 1994 and 2003, while the juvenile probation caseloads increased 1 percent.

Figure 14

Total Adult and Juvenile Active Probation Cases in Williamson County



Source: Administrative Office of the Illinois Courts

The active adult probation caseload rate per 100,000 population in Williamson County increased 4 percent between 1994 and 2003, from 937 to 972 cases per 100,000 population. During that same period, the active adult probation caseload rate increased 42 percent in the other rural counties, from 737 to 1,046 cases per 100,000 population. In 2003, the active adult probation caseload rate in Williamson County was 7 percent lower than the rate in the other rural counties.

IV. Jail Populations in Williamson 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.

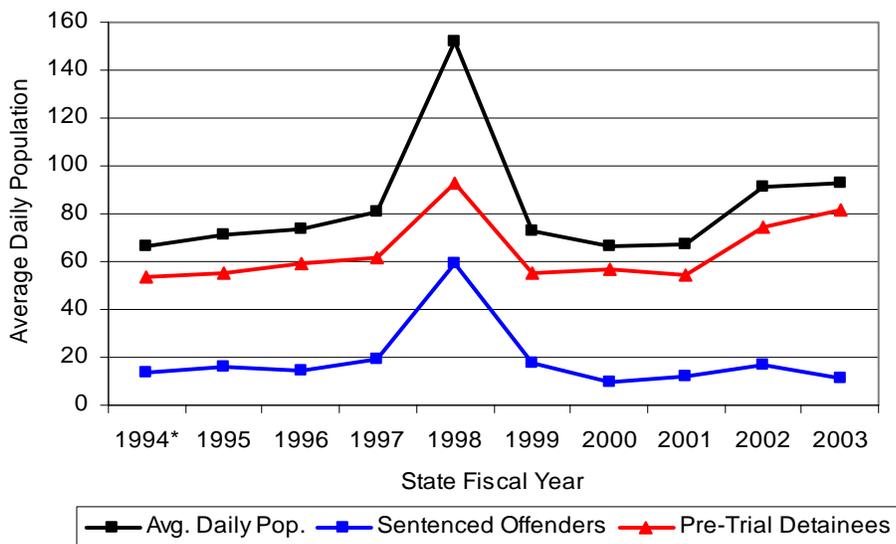
Average Daily Population of the Williamson County Jail

The Williamson County Jail was one of 91 county jails in operation in Illinois during State Fiscal Year 2003. There are 11 counties that did not operate a jail of their own; they rely 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 Williamson County Jail increased 39 percent, from 67 to 93 inmates (Figure 15). During this period, the number of pretrial detainees (those individuals who have been arrested for a crime and are awaiting trial) increased 53 percent, from 53 to 82, while the number of sentenced offenders (those offenders who have been convicted and sentenced to the county jail) decreased 20 percent, from 14 to 11. Pretrial detainees accounted for an increased percentage of the average daily population, increasing from 80 percent in SFY 1994 to 88 percent in SFY 2003. Conversely, the number of sentenced offenders accounted for a decreased percentage, increasing from 20 percent in SFY 1994 to 12 percent in SFY 2003.

Figure 15

Average Daily Population of the Williamson County Jail



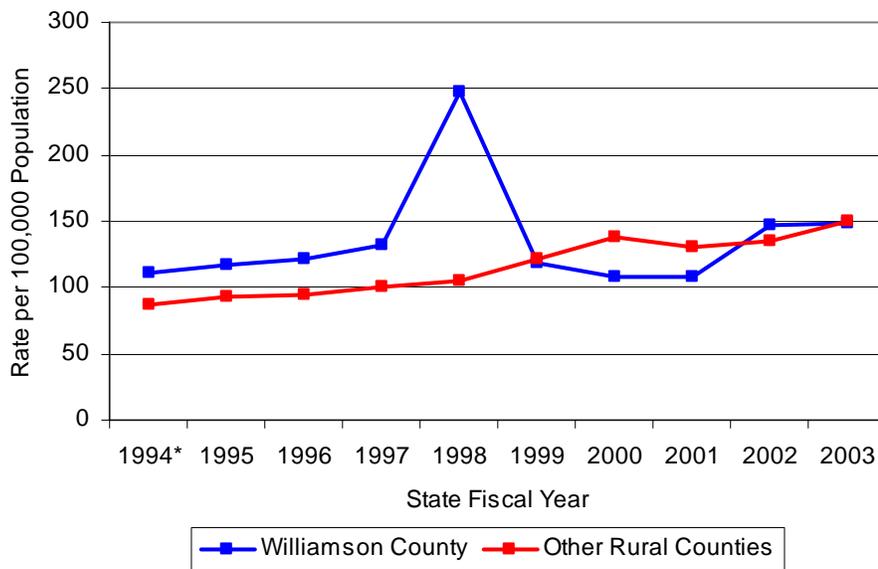
Source: Illinois Department of Corrections

* Information estimated by ICIIA

Between State Fiscal Years 1994 and 2003, the average daily jail population rate in Williamson County increased 33 percent, from 111 to 148 per 100,000 population (Figure 16). During this same period, the average daily jail population rate in the other rural counties increased 73 percent, from 87 to 150 per 100,000 population. In SFY 2003, the Williamson County Jail had an average daily jail population rate 1 percent lower than the other rural counties.

Figure 16

**Average Daily Jail Population Rates,
Williamson and Other Rural Counties**



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

* Information estimated by ICJIA

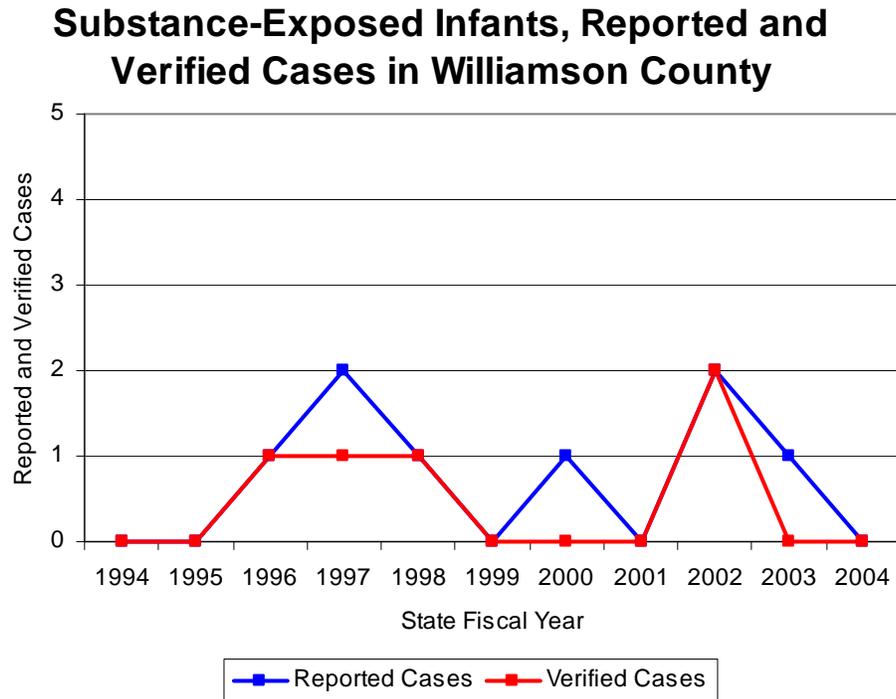
V. Indicators of Child Abuse and Neglect in Williamson County

Substance-Exposed Infants in Williamson 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 eight cases of substance-exposed infants reported in Williamson County; five of which were verified (Figure 17).

Figure 17



Source: Department of Children and Family Services

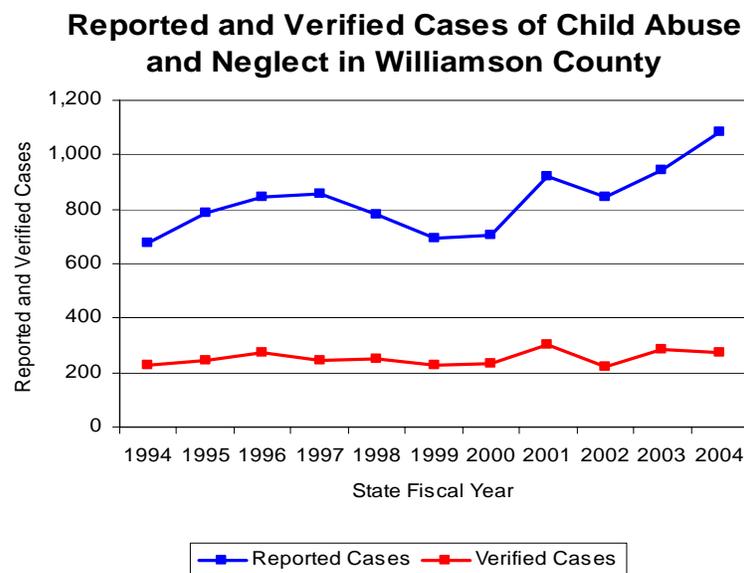
Between State Fiscal Years 1994 and 2004, the number of reported cases of substance-exposed infants in the other rural counties increased 23 percent, from 83 to 102, while the number of verified cases of substance-exposed infants increased 43 percent, from 44 to 63.

Child Abuse and Neglect Cases Reported and Verified in Williamson 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 2004, the number of child abuse and neglect cases reported in Williamson County increased 61 percent, from 675 to 1084 (Figure 18). During that same period, 2,790 cases, or 31 percent of all cases reported, were verified by a DCFS investigation. Verified cases of child abuse and neglect in Williamson County increased 20 percent between SFYs 1994 and 2004, from 229 to 274.

Figure 18



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.

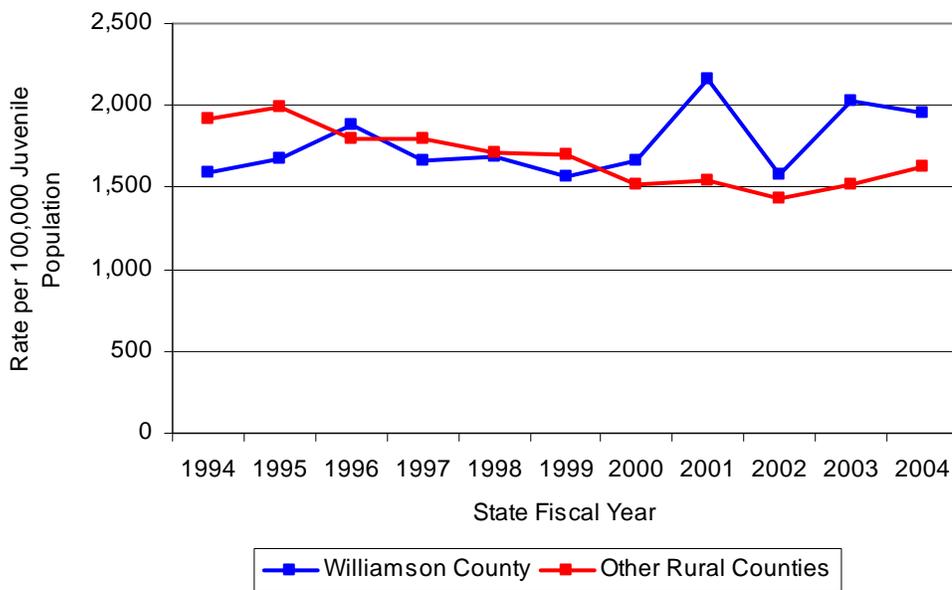
² Kelly, B., Thornberry, T. and Smith, C. 1997. "In the Wake of Childhood Maltreatment." *Juvenile Justice Bulletin*. Washington, D.C.: U.S. Government Printing Office.

³ Menard, S. 2002. "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 Williamson County increased from 1,591 to 1,950 per 100,000 juveniles, a 23 percent increase (Figure 19). During the same period, the rate of verified child abuse and neglect cases decreased 15 percent in the other rural counties, from 1,920 to 1,624 per 100,000 juveniles. In SFY 2004, the rate of verified cases of child abuse and neglect in Williamson County was 20 percent higher than the rate in the other rural counties.

Figure 19

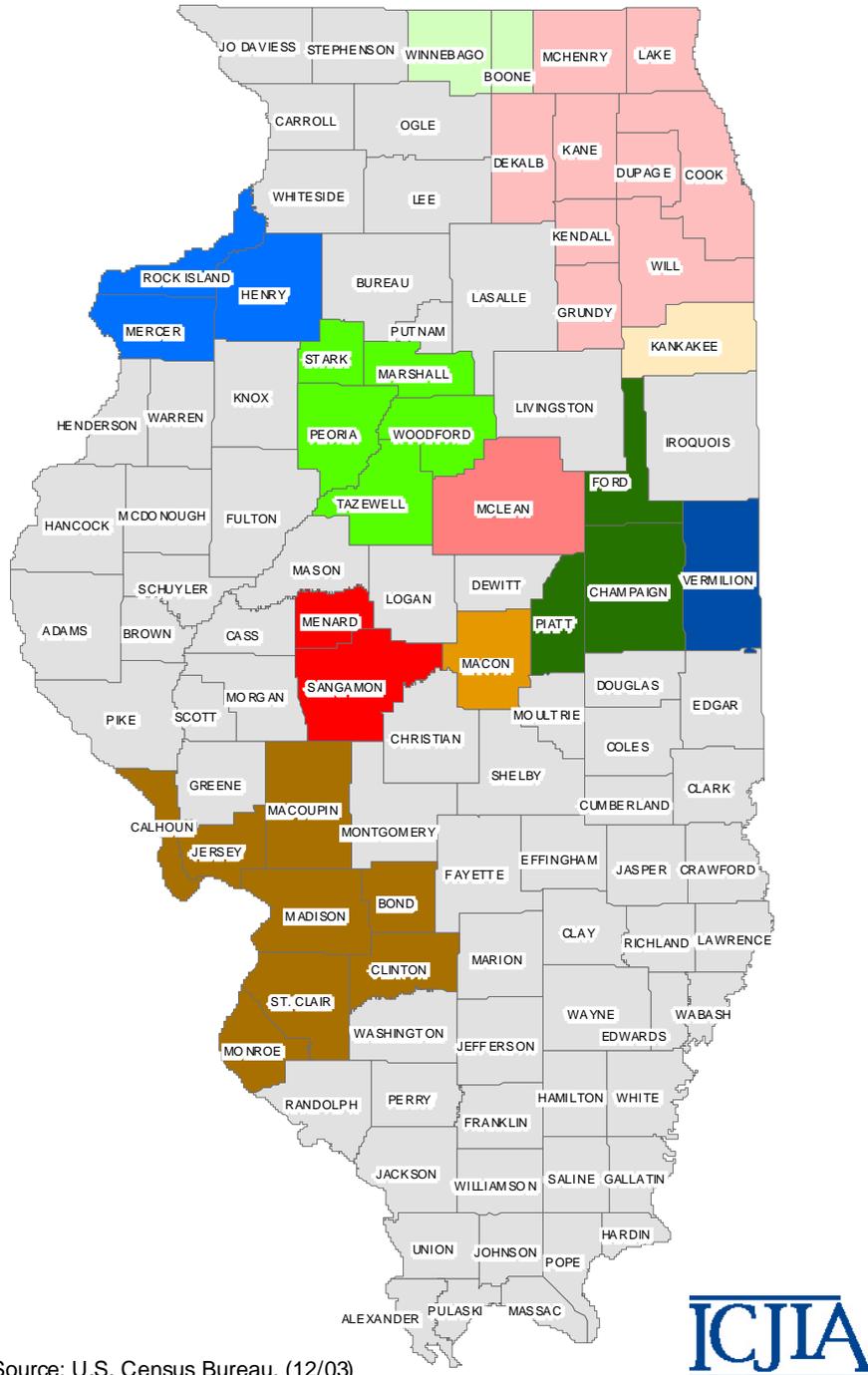
Rate of Verified Cases of Child Abuse and Neglect, Williamson and Other Rural Counties



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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