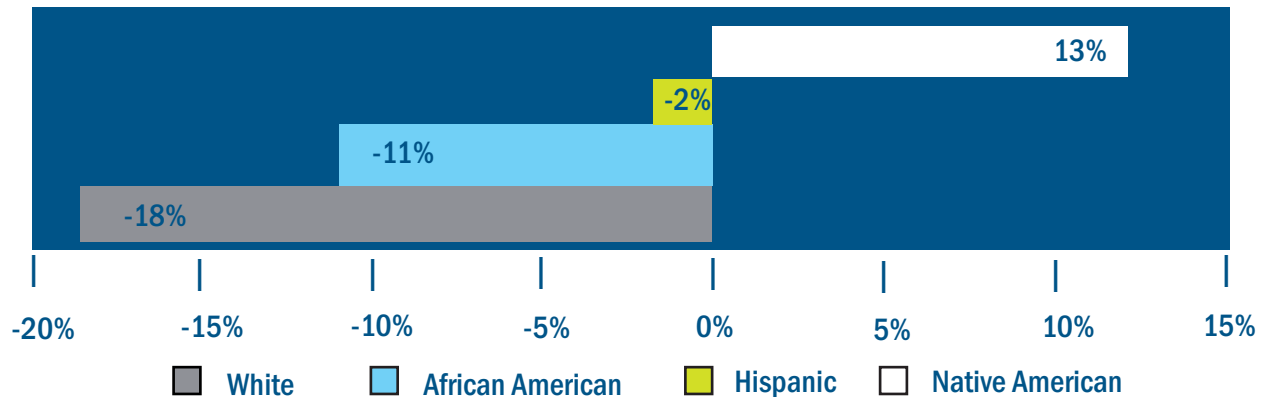




## Youth Involvement in Juvenile Justice System Declines, Racial/Ethnic Disparities Persist

The number of youths involved in the juvenile justice system has significantly decreased over the past decade, according to a recent report from the National Council on Crime and Delinquency.<sup>1</sup> Between 1997 and 2006, the number of youths in custody<sup>2</sup> fell 12%, from 105,055 to 92,854, peaking in 1999 at 107,667. (While there are various factors behind this decrease, it is not a result of an increase in youths transferred to adult jails and prisons; the number of such transfers concurrently decreased by 38%, dropping from 13,652 to 8,494 between 1999 and 2006.) The youth arrest rate also declined 28% over the past decade, from 9,198 to 6,632 per 100,000. However, disparities in custody rates among racial/ethnic groups have persisted. The number of Native American youths in custody increased 13%, from 1,615 to 1,828, whereas the number of White youths decreased 18%, from 39,445 to 32,495, the number of African American youths decreased 11%, from 41,896 to 37,337, and the number of Hispanic youths decreased 2%, from 19,322 to 19,027. African American youths continue to make up almost 40% of the population in custody despite accounting for less than 15% of the total youth population.

**Percentage Change in Number of Youths in Custody Between 1997 and 2006, by Racial/Ethnic Group**



**Source:** Davis, A., Tsukida, C., Marchionna, S., and Krisberg, B. (2008). The declining number of youth in custody in the juvenile justice system. *Focus*. Oakland, CA: National Council on Crime and Delinquency. Retrieved August 19, 2008, from [http://www.nccd-crc.org/nccd/pubs/2008\\_focus\\_JJS\\_custody\\_decline.pdf](http://www.nccd-crc.org/nccd/pubs/2008_focus_JJS_custody_decline.pdf).

<sup>1</sup> The authors utilized data from the Census of Juveniles in Residential Placement (CJRP) Databook of the Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention (OJJDP).

<sup>2</sup> Youth "in custody" includes those detained or committed. "Detained" youth are held in custody before adjudication or awaiting post-adjudication placement. "Committed" youth have been sent to a placement facility as ordered by the court or a diversion agreement.

Prepared by the Center for Health and Justice (CHJ) at TASC. CHJ works to build, enhance, and sustain strong and vibrant communities by promoting policies and practices that stop the cycle of drugs and crime. We conduct research and evaluations, and offer policy analysis, trainings, and technical assistance in the fields of health and justice. For more information, visit us online at [www.centerforhealthandjustice.org](http://www.centerforhealthandjustice.org).

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