

St. Clair County



10 Years of Saving Our Future ... One Teen
at a Time

A Project of the St. Clair County Juvenile Justice Council

Peer Jury Cases

December 2014 - June 2024

Prepared By Ellen McDowell

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Teen Court Overview

The St. Clair County Teen Court serves as an alternative approach to juvenile justice that holds first-time, non-violent youth accountable for their actions through remedies imposed by their peers and restorative justice conferencing participants. The program emphasizes accountability and responsibility instead of applying traditional punitive measures, thereby focusing on balanced and restorative justice which is the policy statement of the Illinois Juvenile Court Act.

Through this restorative approach, special emphasis is placed on restoring individuals who have been harmed, the respondent who caused the harm, and taking steps toward broader community healing. As respondents assume responsibility for their actions, and through successful completion of their remedies, those cases will not be charged in juvenile court.

Our youth respondents have more opportunities to access housing, higher education, enlist into the armed forces, and other desirable career options as they successfully transition into adulthood. Each respondent is given (90) days to complete their restorative justice remedies to prevent the case from being returned to the St. Clair County State's Attorney's Office for prosecution. Teen Court is a collaborative effort administered by the St. Clair County Juvenile Justice Council in cooperation with the St. Clair County State's Attorney's Office, the St. Clair County Sheriff's Department, and the St. Clair County Regional Office of Education.

In this report, you will learn how Teen Court continues to meet the needs of young people. Over the past few years, we placed special emphasis on supporting the mental health and social-emotional needs of our youth, volunteers, and staff.

We Appreciate the Generosity of These Champions of Youth

Ameren Illinois
Weidmann Charitable Foundation
Illinois American Water
Illinois State Police
Sandberg Phoenix & Von Gontard
Southern Illinois Law Enforcement Commission (SILEC)
Southern Illinois Police Chief's Association (SIPCA)
St. Clair County Regional Office of Education
St. Clair County Sheriff's Department
St. Clair County State's Attorney's Office
Teen Court Peer Jurors and Volunteers

Program Highlights

Teen Court Presented with the Unit Award

In January 2023, the Teen Court program was awarded the [2023 Unit Award](#) by the Southern Illinois Law Enforcement Commission and Southern Illinois Police Chief's Association. Our law enforcement partners recognized Teen Court recognized for our restorative justice and community response efforts.

Teen Court Annual Peer Juror Training

In 2023-24, we partnered with Hoyleton Youth and Family Services to host (1) Human Trafficking Training for our peer jurors, volunteers, and staff. Over (50) participants learned about warning signs, vulnerabilities, and accessing community resources. We plan another training on Human Trafficking for 2024-25.

Restorative Justice Training for Community Partners

Our Teen Court Director facilitated Restorative Justice training sessions for School Resource Officers (SROs) and juvenile justice personnel. The training was developed to help our partners embed restorative approaches in schools and detention center operations.

Illinois State Police Youth Camp

For the fourth consecutive year, Teen Court has referred youth respondents to the Illinois State Police Youth Camp. This is a newer remedy and the camp reopened following the COVID-19 pandemic. The camp runs for an entire week at Principia College in Elsah, Illinois. Youth respondents learn about nature, building friendships, becoming leaders, and teamwork.

Linc. Inc. Partnership

In 2022-23, Teen Court formed a partnership with Linc, Inc. (Living Independently Now Center of Southern Illinois) to serve our respondents with remedy support and community services opportunities. LINC, Inc. provides services for individuals with disabilities in education, advocacy, and independent living.

Public Safety and Violence Reduction Program

In 2023-24, Teen Court started a partnership with the Public Safety and Violence Reduction Program through the Illinois State Police. Dr. Anita Bazille has served as the program's point of contact and attended multiple Teen Court sessions the past year. The program provides family assistance and therapy to our respondents.

The Benefits of Implementing a Restorative Justice-Based Diversion Program

Teen Court benefits Youth Respondents by:

- Providing each young person with an opportunity to recognize the consequences of his/her behavior, actions and to make conscience decisions for correction and improvement.
- Allowing each young person to be held responsible and provided with a second chance to pursue future goals and aspirations.
- Granting each young person with an opportunity to repair harm to restore self, victim(s), and community.
- Diverting youth through early interventions and restorative support, the program assists with rebuilding the whole person.
- Connecting youth to community service opportunities in partnership with area businesses and nonprofits. Youth are paired with a mentor, most often an off-duty sheriff's deputy to reinforce restorative justice principles highlighted in Teen Court sessions.

Teen Court benefits the Peer Jurors by:

- Giving them an opportunity to develop a sense of empathy and compassion as they interact with other young people from different racial/ethnic groups, socio-economic status, and communities.
- Increasing their knowledge, skills, and abilities: civic/community engagement, youth leadership, critical thinking, communication, teamwork, and social skills.
- Allowing jurors to be “change agents” within their schools and community by setting a positive example for other young people to consider.
- Preparing jurors for real life experiences.

Teen Court benefits the Community by:

- Serving as an early intervention and prevention program.
- Promoting the principles of Restorative Justice and Trauma-Informed Care.
- Connecting respondents to community-based resources and services to impact positive youth development outcomes.
- Educating youth about the legal system.
- Encouraging civic engagement and responsibility.
- Supporting a reduction in recidivism while improving youth development outcomes.

Teen Court Program History

Program Year 1: December 2014 – June 2015

TOTAL Participants	24 Respondents
Successful Completions	12 Graduates

Program Year 2: July 2015 – June 2016

TOTAL Participants	38 Respondents
Successful Completions	35 Graduates

Program Year 3: July 2016 – June 2017

TOTAL Participants	56 Respondents
Successful Completions	41 Graduates

Program Year 4: July 2017 - June 2018

TOTAL Participants	39 Respondents
Successful Completions	38 Graduates

Program Year 5: July 2018 - June 2019

TOTAL Participants	34 Respondents
Successful Completions	36 Graduates

Program Year 6: July 2019 - June 2020

TOTAL Participants	27 Respondents
Successful Completions	32 Graduates

Program Year 7: July 2020 – June 2021

TOTAL Participants	13 Respondents
Successful Completions	12 Graduates

Program Year 8: July 2021 – June 2022

TOTAL Participants	17 Respondents
Successful Completions	14 Graduates

Program Year 9: July 2022 – June 2023

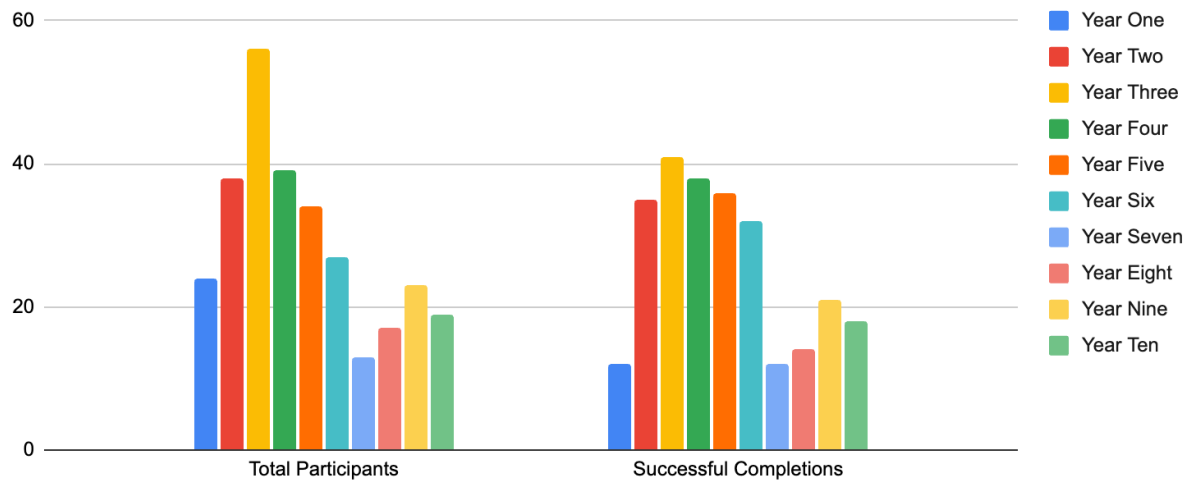
TOTAL Participants	23 Respondents
Successful Completions	21 Graduates

Program Year 10: July 2023 – June 2024

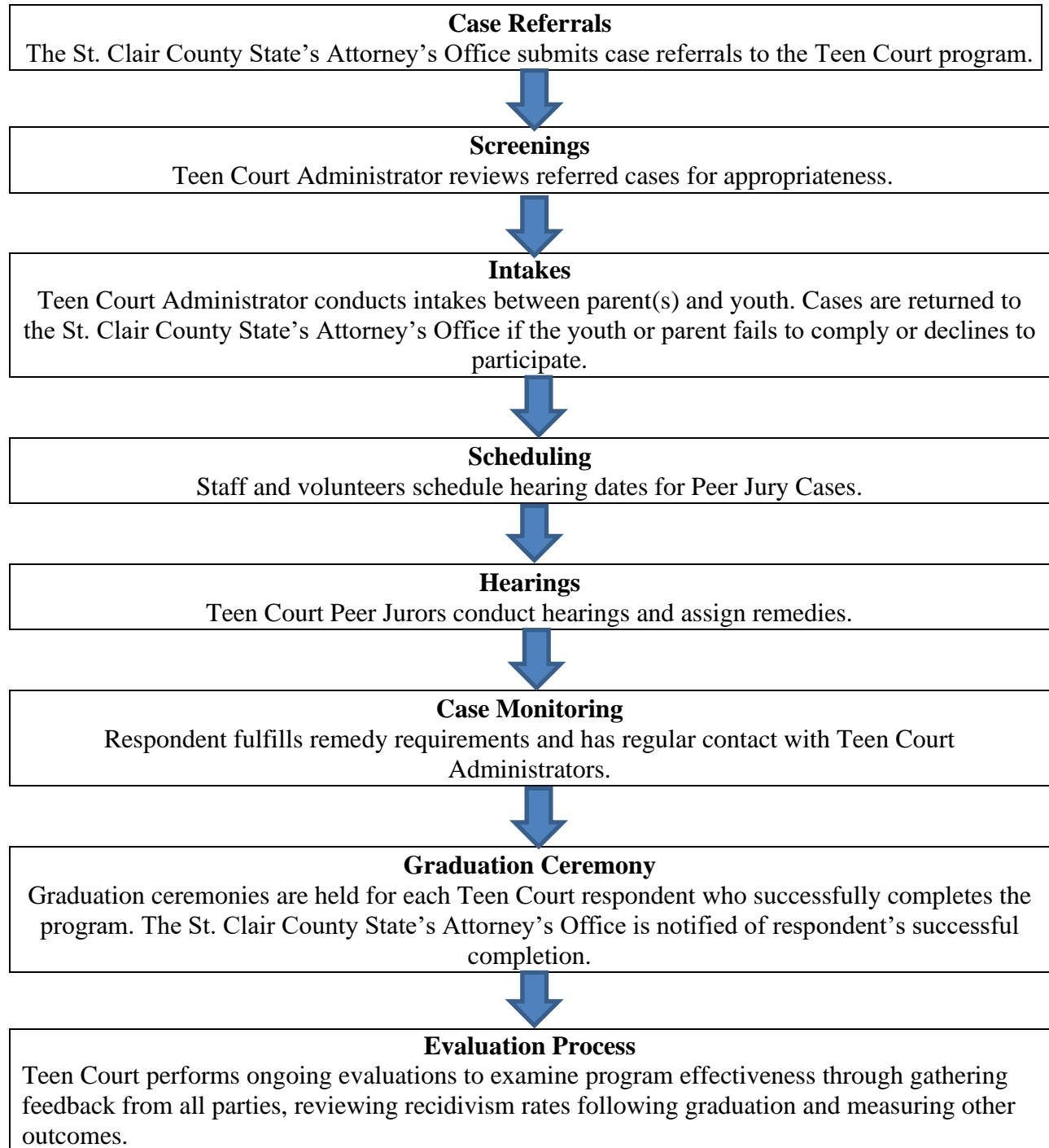
TOTAL Participants	19 Respondents
Successful Completions	18 Graduates

Figure 1. *Total Participants*

Total Participants



St. Clair County Teen Court Process

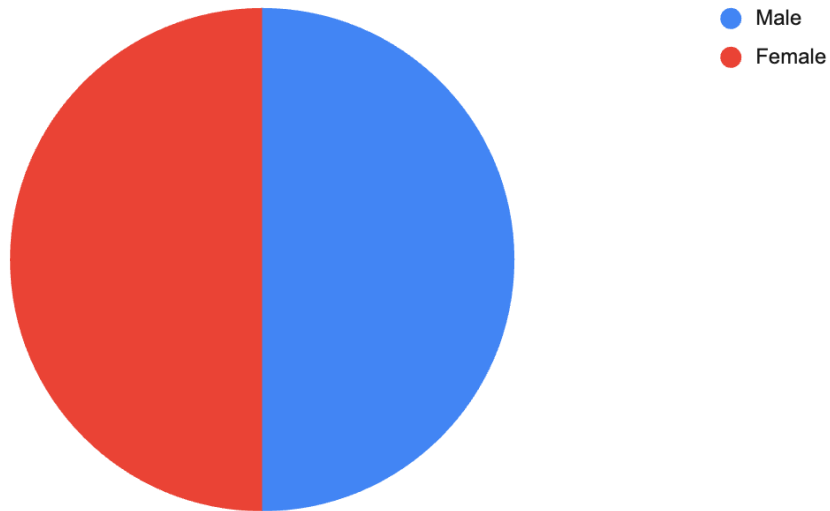


10 Years Summary Information December 2014 – June 2024

The chart below provides a breakdown of each respondent's gender appearing before Teen Court during the ten program years.

Figure 2. *Respondents by Gender*

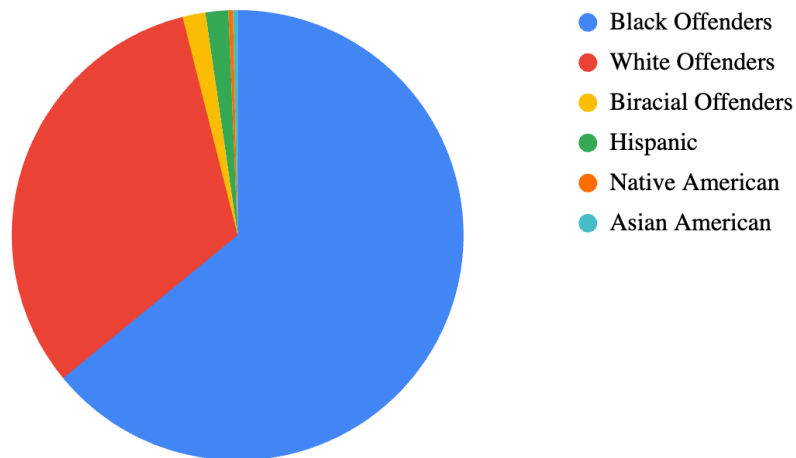
Participants By Gender



The chart below provides a breakdown of each respondent's race appearing before Teen Court during the December 2014 – June 2024 program year.

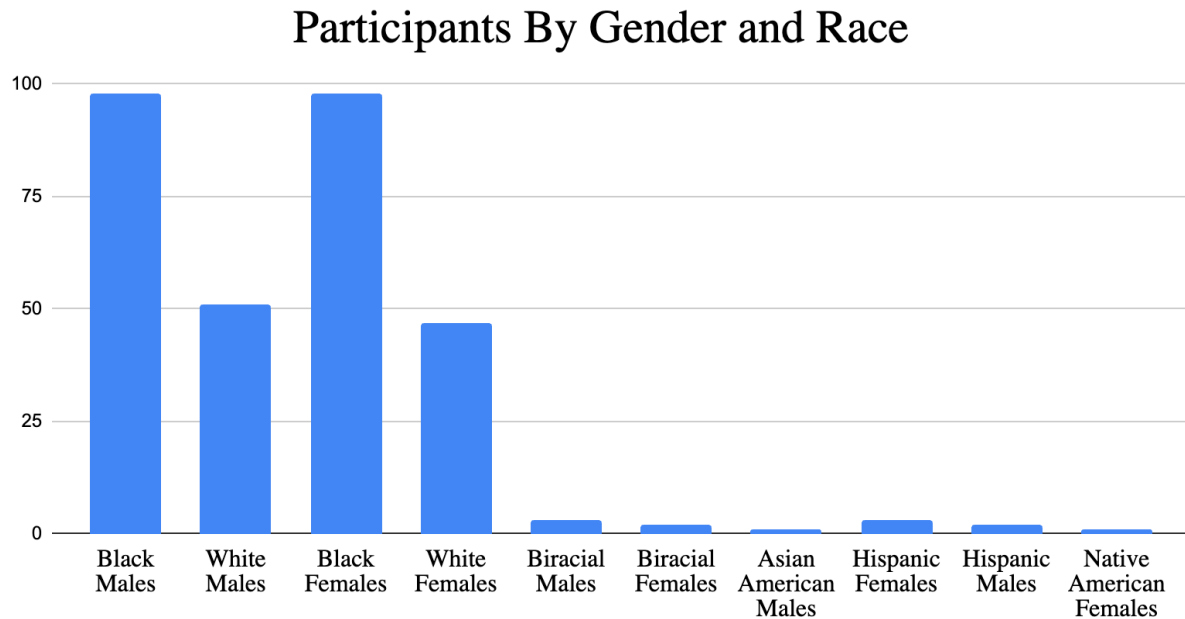
Figure 3. *Respondents by Race*

Participants By Race



The chart below provides a breakdown of each respondent's race and gender appearing before Teen Court during the December 2014 – June 2024 program year.

Figure 4. Respondents by Race and Gender



Respondents by Race, Gender, and Age

The chart below provides a breakdown of each respondent's race and gender appearing before Teen Court during the December 2014 – June 2024 program year.

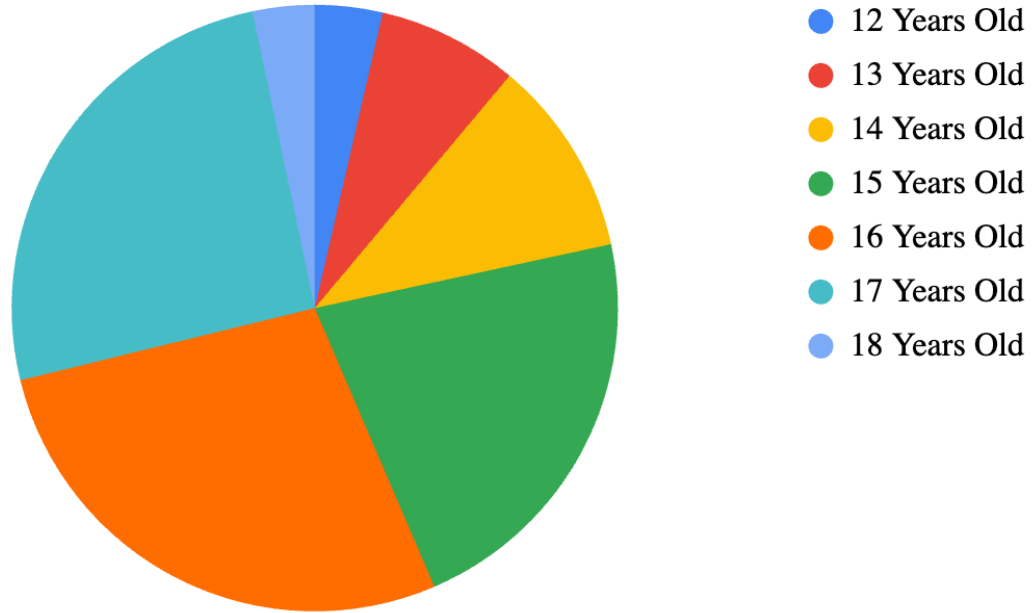
Figure 5. Respondents by Race and Gender

Race	Male	Female	Total
Black	98	98	196
White	51	47	98
Biracial	3	2	5
Hispanic	2	3	5
Native American	0	1	1
Asian American	1	0	1

The chart below provides a breakdown of each respondent's age appearing before Teen Court during the December 2014 – June 2024 program year.

Figure 6. Respondents by Age

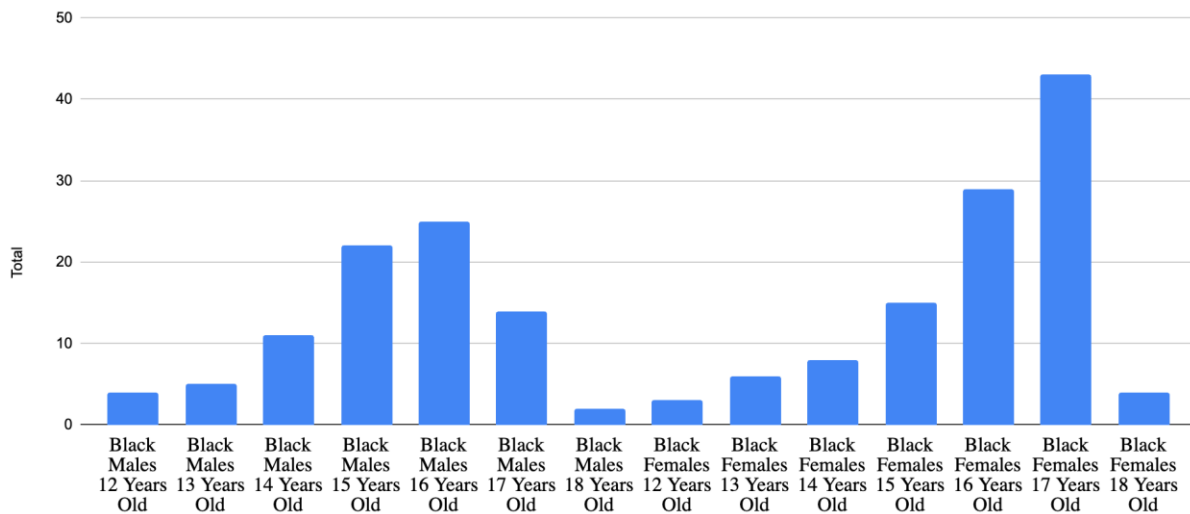
Participants By Age



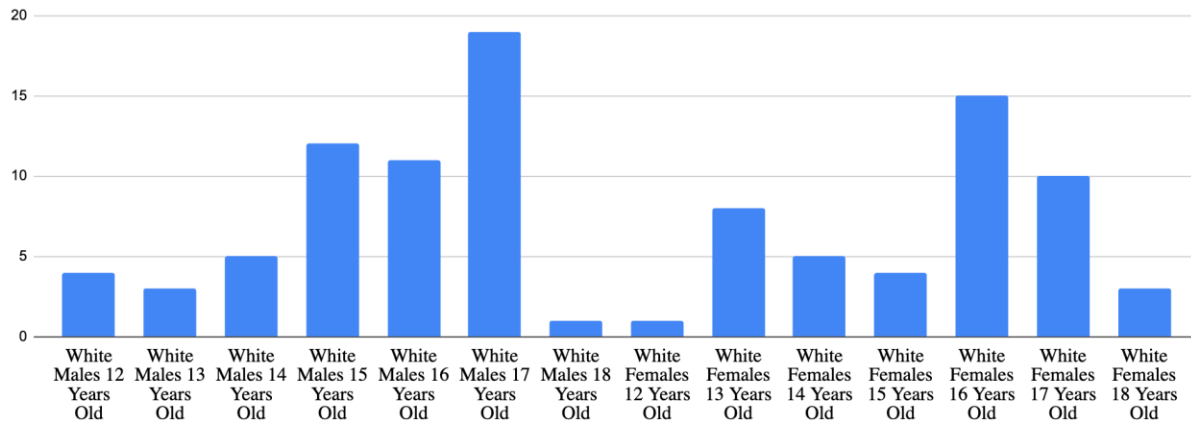
The chart below provides a breakdown of each respondent's gender, race, and age appearing before Teen Court during the December 2014 – June 2024 program year.

Figures 7 - 10. Respondents by Gender, Race, and Age

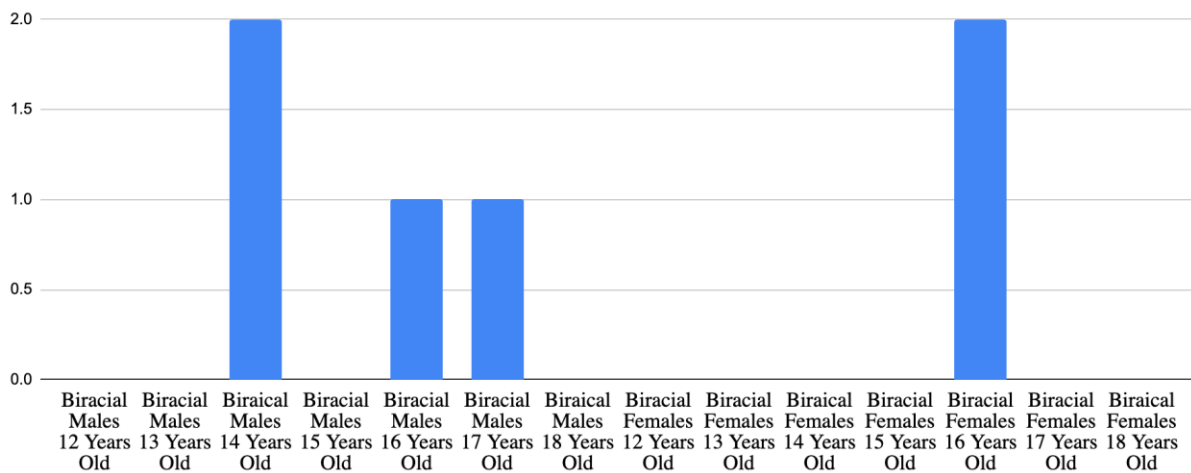
Participants By Gender, Age, and Race Part One



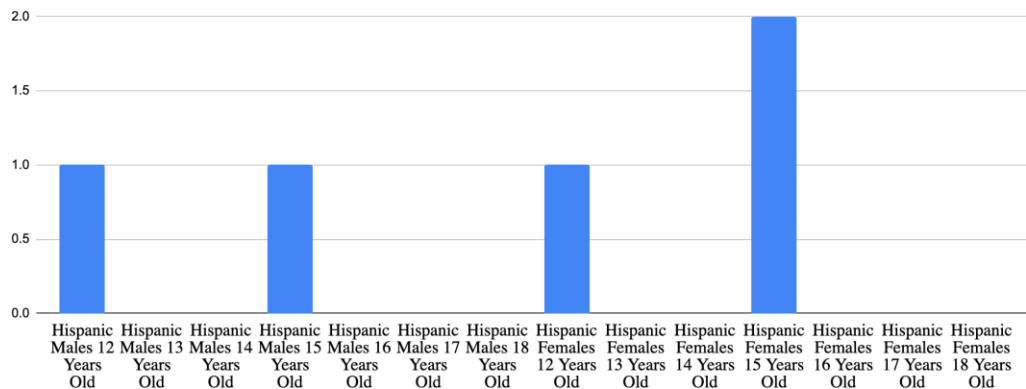
Participants By Gender, Age, and Race Part Two



Participants By Gender, Age, and Race Part Three



Participants By Gender, Age, and Race Part Four



Respondents by School

The chart below provides a breakdown of schools attended by each respondent appearing before Teen Court during the December 2014– June 2024 program year.

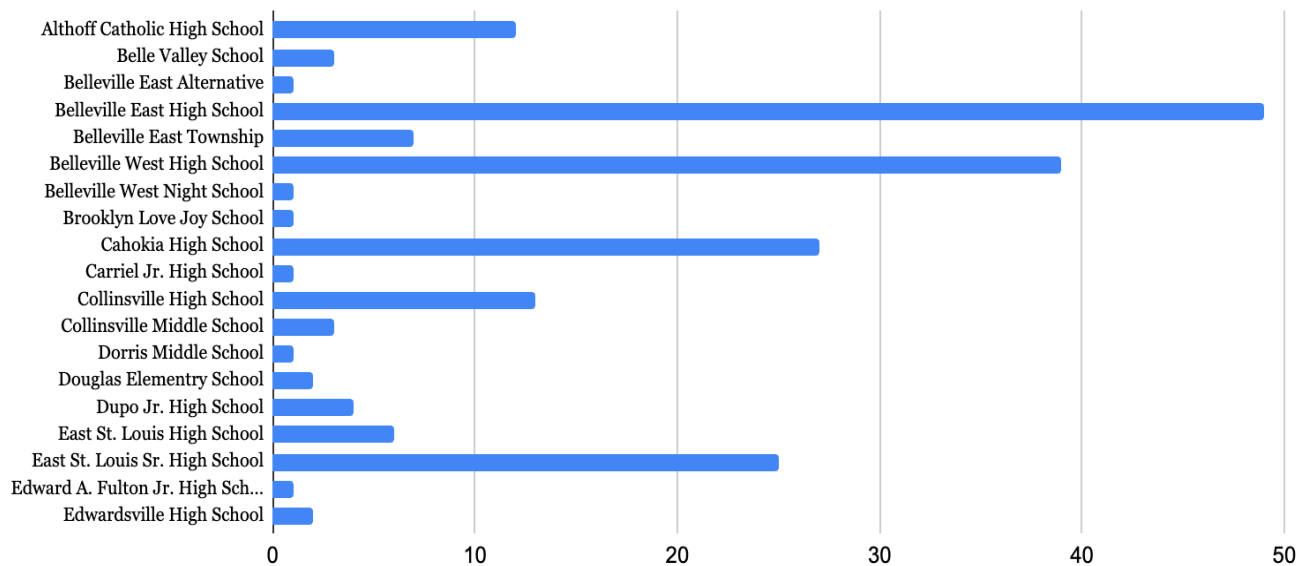
The respondents who participated attended the following schools:

Althoff Catholic High School	Granite City High School
Belle Valley School	Grant Middle School
Belleville East Alternative	Hillsboro High School
Belleville East High School	Homeschooled
Belleville East Township	JCT Academy
Belleville West High School	Jefferson Grade School
Belleville West Night School	Lebanon High School
Brooklyn Love Joy School	Lebanon Middle School
Cahokia High School	Lincoln Junior High School
Carriel Jr. High School	Lincoln Middle School
Collinsville High School	Marrisa High School
Collinsville Middle School	Mascoutah Community High School
Dorris Middle School	Mascoutah High School
Douglas Elementary School	Mason-Clark Middle School
Dupo Jr. High School	Mater Dei Catholic High School
East St. Louis High School	Menta Academy Belleville
East St. Louis Sr. High School	Milburn Junior High School
Edward A. Fulton Jr. High School	Milburn School
Edwardsville High School	Millstadt Grade School
Freeburg High School	New Athens High School
Freeburg Middle School	New Athens Jr. High School

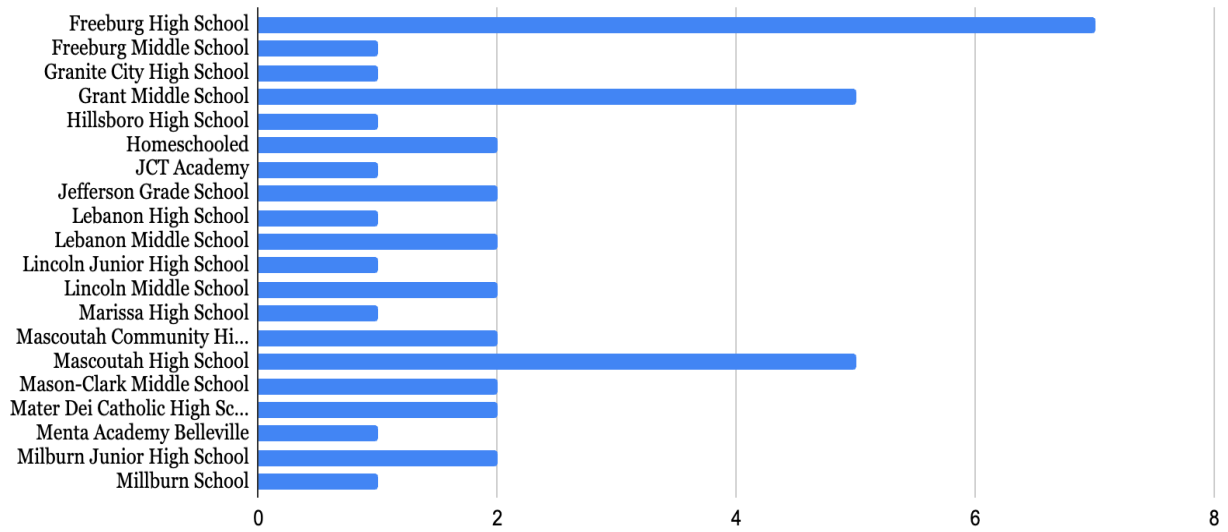
Not Attending School	St. Mary's Alternative School
Not Enrolled	SWIC
O'Fallon High School	SWIC GED Program
O'Fallon Township High School	SWIC Yes Program
Pathways High School	Triad High School
Perandoe Special Education District - Red Bud	Unity Lutheran School
School of Choice	Unknown
SIUE Charter High School SIUE East STL Charter School	Whiteside Middle School
St. Clair County Regional Office Safe School	Wolf Branch Middle School
	Worth Middle School
	Wyvetter Young Alternative Center

Figures 11 - 13. Respondents by Schools

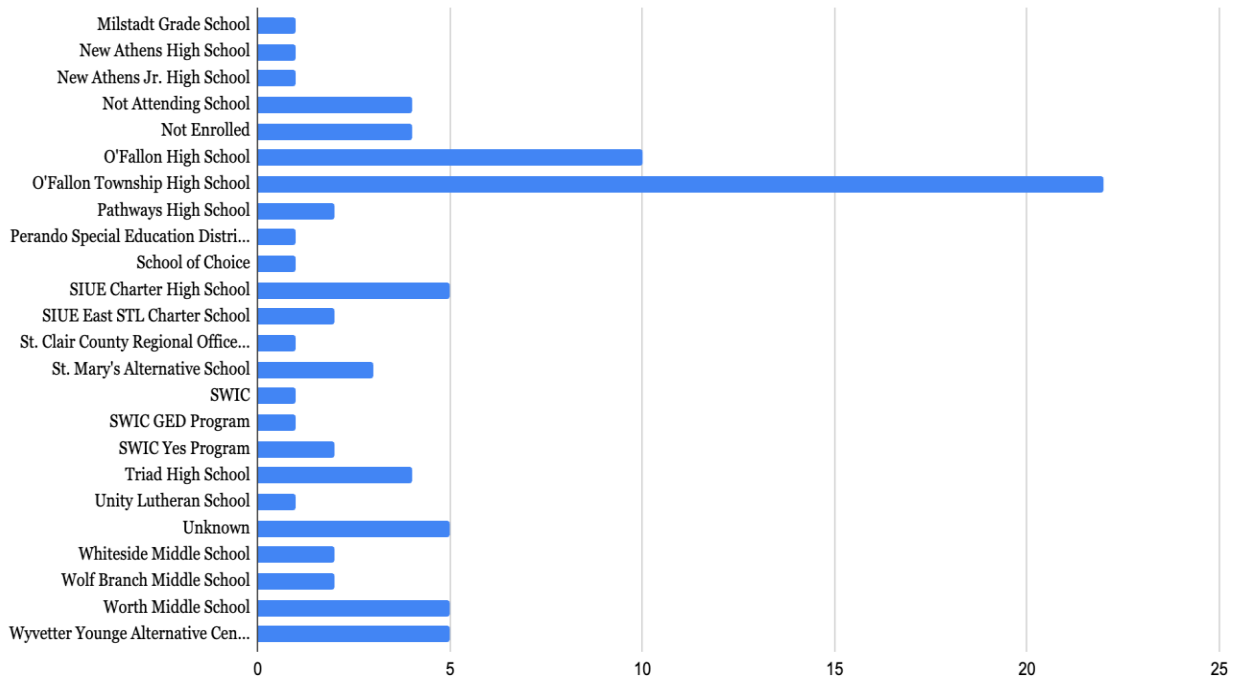
Schools Attended by Participants



Schools Attended by Participants



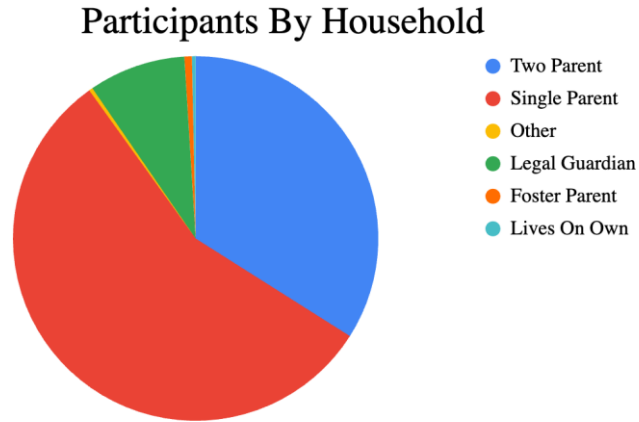
Schools Attended by Participants



Household Status

The chart below provides a breakdown of each respondent's family status appearing before Teen Court during the December 2014 – June 2024 program year.

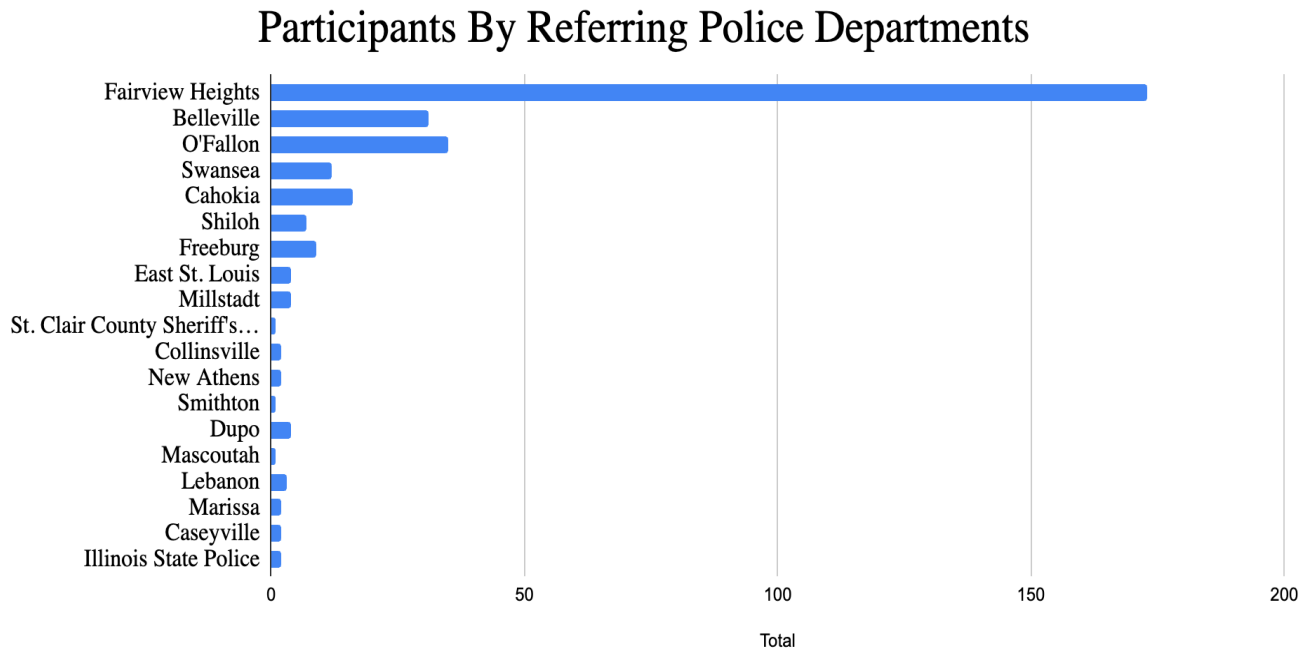
Figure 14. *Respondents by Household*



Referring Police Departments

The chart below provides a breakdown of each police department referring cases to Teen Court during December 2014– June 2024 program year.

Figure 15. *Referring Police Departments*



Offenses Committed

The chart below provides a breakdown of all offenses committed by respondents, listed by general case types, appearing before Teen Court during the December 2023 – June 2024 program year. Some youth committed more than one offense, and that is reflected in this table, as there are slightly more overall offenses reported than total youth referred to teen court. *Figure 16.*

Arson

Battery

Criminal Damage or Defacement of Property

Criminal Trespass to Property (all property types)

Curfew Violation

Disorderly Conduct

Fleeing and Eluding a Peace Officer

Forgery / Fraud

Mob Action

Obstructing Identification

Motor Vehicle Code - License Violation

Possession of a Controlled Substance

Possession/Consumption of Alcohol by a Minor

Possession of Drug Paraphernalia

Resisting or Obstructing Peace Officer

Theft or Retail Theft

Unlawful Possession of Cannabis

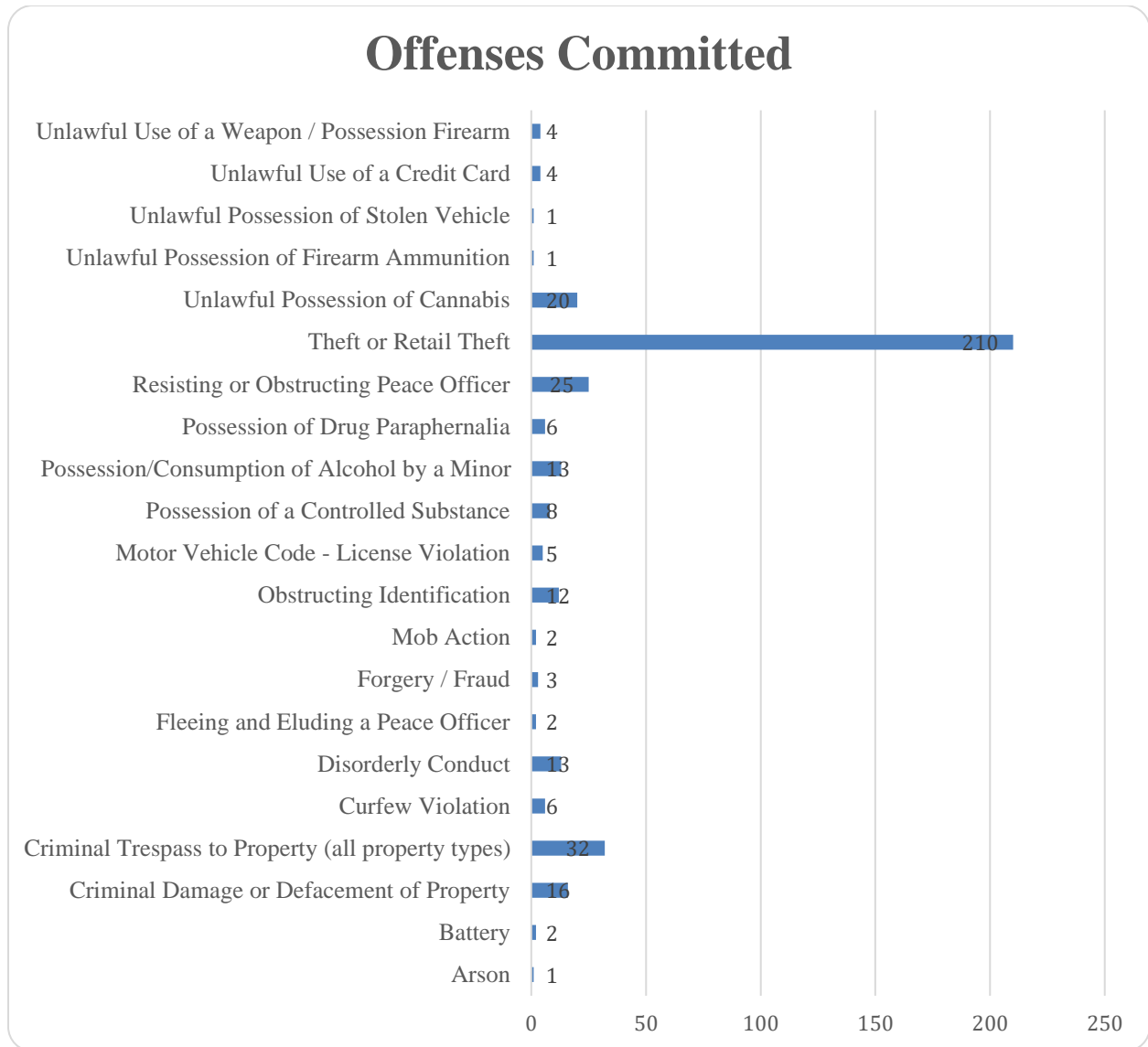
Unlawful Possession of Firearm Ammunition

Unlawful Possession of Stolen Vehicle

Unlawful Use of a Credit Card

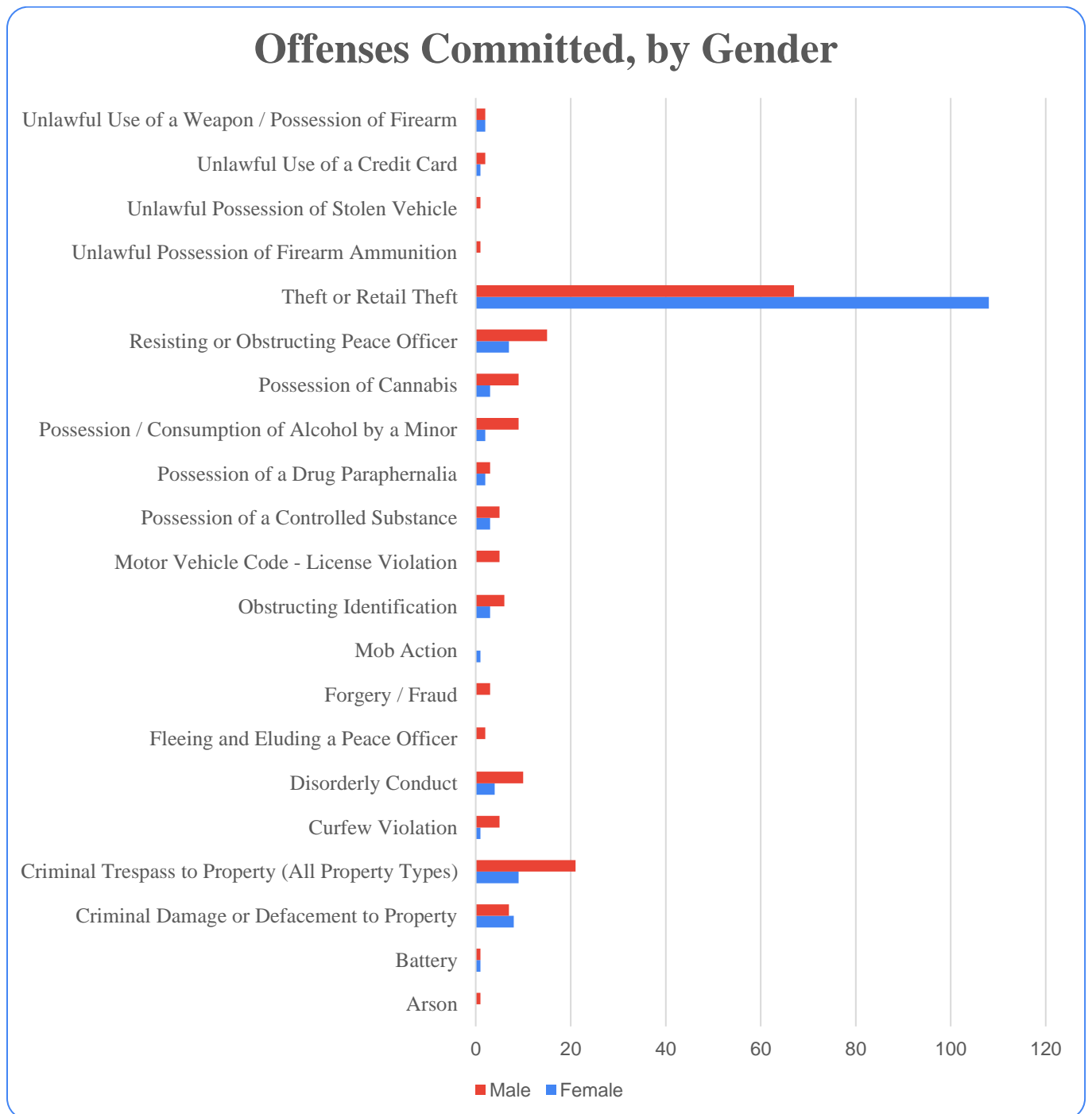
Unlawful Use of a Weapon / Possession Firearm

Figure 16



Offenses by Gender

The chart below provides a breakdown of all offenses committed by respondents appearing before Teen Court during the December 2014 – June 2024 program year. Some respondents committed more than one offense. **Figure 17. Offense Chart by Gender**



Teen Court Restorative Justice Remedies

Community Service Hours

During this program year, Teen Court partnered with Belleville Shelter Shop, R3 Construction, and St. Vincent DePaul to connect our respondents with community service opportunities. This includes stocking shelves, rehabbing houses, yard work, and so much more. Teen Court also has partnered with First United Presbyterian Church in Belleville for possible community service projects. We had one respondent complete a project at the church in spring of 2023, and Teen Court received incredibly positive feedback from the church members.

Attendance at Approved Alcohol Anonymous (AA) or Narcotics Anonymous (NA)

Meetings

Teen Court respondents who disclose or may be at risk of substance use may be ordered to attend a teen-friendly AA or NA meeting in St. Clair County. The Teen Court administrator coordinates the meeting dates and times with the respondent and parents to ensure that an adult connected to the young person will be present to sit with the respondent for support. During this program year, we referred respondents to the following agencies:

- o Chestnut Health Systems
- o St. John's United Church of Christ – Fairview Heights

Essays

Teen Court respondents are assigned to write an essay as part of the remedies. The Peer Jury determines the topic to support respondents along their healing journey. Respondents typically write about the importance of navigating peer pressure, making healthy decisions, leadership development, managing conflict, and repairing relationships. They also read books provided by Teen Court and write an essay about what they learned.

Extra-Curricular Activities

Teen Court respondents are encouraged to participate in extracurricular activities to enhance their academic, recreational, and pro-social connections within schools and communities.

Illinois State Police Youth Camp

Teen Court once again partnered with the Illinois State Police to send respondents to the ISP's Youth Camp, which takes place in the middle of July at Principia College. This has been a very successful venture for Teen Court and our respondents. Our youth go through a rigorous exercise program while also learning real-life skills such as balancing a checkbook. At the completion of the camp, participants take part in a graduation ceremony. Overall, this has been a wildly successful remedy, and we're very thankful for the partnership with the ISP.

Individual & Family Counseling Referrals

Teen Court connects youth with school and community-based counseling services to improve our respondent's mental and social-emotional needs. Services are also coordinated to address family counseling needs with area providers to address trauma, grief, mental health, housing instability, suicidal ideation, and other counseling needs. This year, Teen Court made referrals to the following agencies:

- o Big Brothers Big Sisters

- o Chestnut Health Systems, Mental Health Juvenile Justice (MHJJ)
- o Heartlinks Grief Counseling
- o School-Based Counseling Programs (area high schools)

Interviews

Most years, Teen Court respondents conduct interviews with local professionals and mentors to learn about certification and education requirements to achieve their career goals. Through this remedy, respondents have interviewed military personnel, entrepreneurs, healthcare professionals, and truck drivers. This remedy also includes residents housed at the St. Clair County Sheriff's Department to speak with respondents for diversion purposes. The residents also share lived experiences about their struggles with substance abuse, family issues, peer pressure, and making wise decisions. The residents from the county jail try to encourage our respondents to get on the right path and avoid incarceration and further contact with the legal system. For the period of July 2023 through June 2024, however, no respondents were assigned this remedy.

Letter of Apology

The letter of apology provides our respondents with an opportunity to work toward correcting the harm imposed by their actions and offenses. The remedy also helps our respondents work towards repairing broken relationships. Letters of apology are usually written to our respondent's parents, siblings, teachers, business owners, and peers.

Serving on the Teen Court Peer Jury

Youth respondents may be recommended and requested to serve as a peer juror during an upcoming Teen Court session. The respondents serving on the peer jury have a role in determining the appropriate remedies for other respondents appearing before the Teen Court on the date required for juror services.

Social Media Mentoring

Youth respondents worked with O'Fallon Police Department Detective Nick Luttrell on how to traverse the pitfalls of social media use. Officer Luttrell spends time with respondents on an individual basis offering guidance and tips for how to contend with the trials and tribulations of the social media era.

Teen Strong

During the 2022-23 program year, our Teen Strong program was reinstated following the COVID-19 pandemic and enjoyed more success in 2023-24. We partner with the Gateway YMCA-East Belleville and Scott Air Force Base 375th Security Forces to connect with our respondents and peer jurors. Teen Strong provides respondents with an opportunity to receive mentoring, coaching, and recreational activities to promote wellness.

Verbal Apology

The peer jury may request Teen Court respondents to openly apologize to another person during a court proceeding. The verbal apology, like the letter of apology, allows the respondent to take responsibility for their actions. This is another way to mitigate harm and move parties involved toward healing.

Vision Board

A vision board is a visual art project completed by Teen Court respondents. Through this remedy, respondents use visual images of pictures, quotes, and words of encouragement, and goal setting. The creation of vision boards gives respondents an opportunity to create poetry, art, music, and other creative ideas. A past respondent used the vision board remedy to create a business plan for starting a coffee shop.

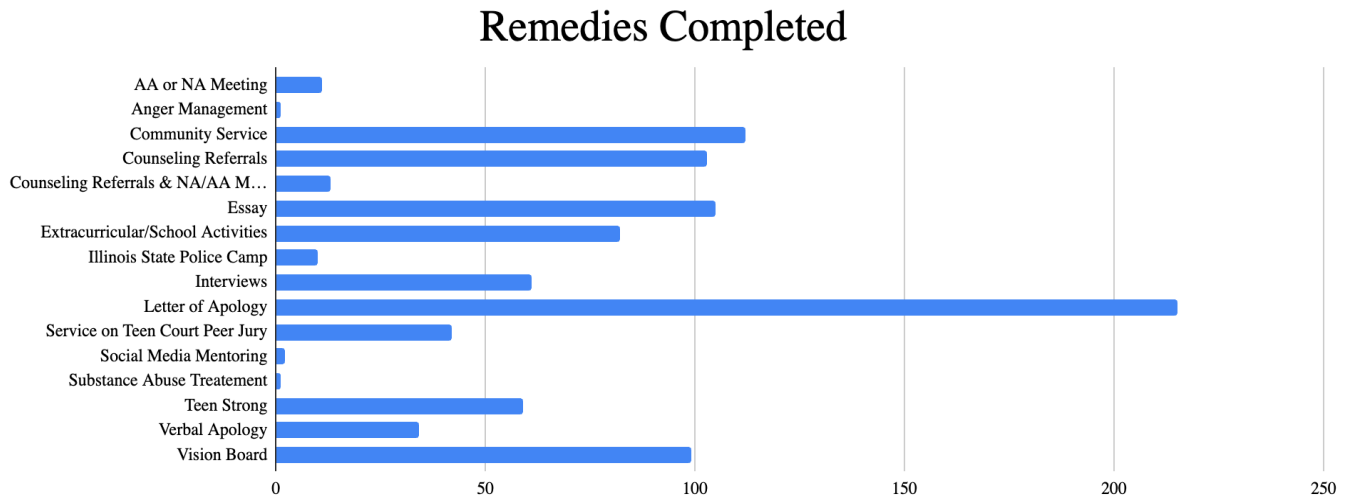
Teen Court Remedies Assigned during the December 2014 – June 2024 Program Years

AA or NA Meeting	Interviews
Anger Management	Letter of Apology
Community Service	Service on Teen Court Peer Jury
Counseling Referrals	Social Media Mentoring
Counseling Referrals and NA/AA Meetings	Substance Abuse Treatment
Essay	Teen Strong
Extracurricular Activities	Verbal Apology
Illinois State Police Camp	Vision Board
<u>Counseling Includes</u>	
Counseling Referrals	Private Family Therapist/Personal Mentor
Counseling: Heartlinks or Big Brothers/Big Sisters	Visit School Social Worker/Counselor

Interviews Include

Inmate Interview	Interview St. Clair County Deputy Sheriff
Interview Army, Navy, Air Force Recruiter	Interview Veteran
Interview for Career Development	

Figure 18. Remedies



**Teen Court Recidivism Discussion
Program Year December 2014 – June 2024**

Total Number of Graduates Re-Offending

Overall, out of 252* graduates through program inception to June 30, 2024, 28 youth have committed one or more new offenses at any point after graduation, for an overall rate of 11%. This is slightly higher than our desired maximum goal of 10%.

This rate includes cases where graduates were charged with an offense, (whether in criminal court, an ordinance violation, or a new juvenile delinquency allegation), and there was a finding of guilty. Pending allegations are not included in the final recidivism rate, in order to avoid cases where youth may be found not guilty or there is sufficient evidence to proceed with a charge.

There are limitations on the ability to check for recidivism rates, as there is limited access to juvenile arrest records state and nationwide. This is a barrier to completing a full, comprehensive criminal records check on graduates; however, all locally available records are included in this data. Beginning in 2025, Teen court will follow-up with respondents to encourage them at various intervals post-graduation, in efforts to create a continuum of support and reduce recidivism.

*we acknowledge detection of a 2-3% margin of error in statistics between graduates tracked in the recidivism section compared to overall graduates reported on page 6 of 259.

To ensure our Teen Court program is effective and improving life outcomes for youth, we will continue to do the following:

*For continuous improvement, we will examine reports, remedies, stakeholder engagement, and program operations to maintain trust and ongoing support.

*Recruit Peer Jurors and volunteers of various backgrounds and lived experiences to promote fairness and equity throughout the program.

*Racial and Ethnic Disparity (R/ED) data will be reviewed and communicated with the St. Clair County Juvenile Justice Council, law enforcement, and other partners to build solutions and make recommendations.

*Maintain partnership with our local police chiefs to increase the number of Teen Court referrals to reduce the number of ordinance violations, citations, and unnecessary youth arrests.

*Build the community's capacity by providing training focusing on Restorative Justice implementation within schools and programs (i.e., School Resource Office and detention center personnel).

*We will continue connecting youth and families to community resources to address counseling, trauma, youth experiencing homelessness, suicide prevention, etc.

Teen Court Feedback Program Year December 2014 – June 2024

“The St. Clair County Teen Court continues to illustrate just how powerful teens are and the great impact they have on their peers and surrounding communities. Restorative justice means more than holding teens accountable—it is a second chance. I could not be more proud of the work done by administrators, teens, volunteers, and all who support what this program aims to accomplish.” - Teen Court Peer Juror

“My entire life, I have dreamed of saving lives as a doctor. However I discovered Teen Court and I became a volunteer. Volunteering at Teen Court for five years gave me more motivation to save lives; because seeing the teen and their parental figures smile after graduation makes me happy. Everyday leaving Teen Court, I was happy because I knew I helped save someone’s life and gave them a second shot at life.” - Teen Court Peer Juror

“Since teen court our son has been focused more on the things that are going to improve his overall outcome of being productive as he grows into a young man. His grades have improved and his attitude about succeeding in life has moved to the top of his priority list. He plans to attend the cave program and has been invited to the upcoming career expo on Nov. 14th. This is a great opportunity for him and I am sure he will take advantage of what they have to offer as he did with teen court. I would like to thank each and every last one of you who played a role in how he looks at life and how his behavior will and can be the deciding factor on how far he can make it in the world.” - Teen Court Parent

“After spending time in the R3 Construction program rehabbing houses, I am interested in owning a construction and real estate business.” - Teen Court Graduate

“This program helped me realize I am interested in getting a CDL and owning a trucking company.” - Teen Court Graduate

Ellen McDowell was a volunteer and is an intern currently.