



Fact Sheet: Kentucky

Key Facts:

- There are six detention centers in the state.¹
- Kentucky operates ten youth development centers, ranging in capacity from 30 to 80 and serving youths aged 14 to 18.²
- Between 1992 and 1996, Kentucky was placed on nonparticipating status for the Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention Act (JJDPA) because it had been non-compliant with JJDPA's mandates on removing youths from adult jails and deinstitutionalizing status offenders.³
- In 2005, 57.7% of youths' cases referred to the juvenile justice system were handled with informal adjustment, and 39.0% resulted in detention.⁴
- Several detention options are available in Kentucky, including but not limited to secure detention, home detention, home incarceration, and foster homes.⁵
- In 2005, 452 youths were committed to a Youth Development Center and 1,263 youths were put on probation.⁶
- All Youth Development Centers have six hour school days, and the programs offered include a graduation track, a GED track, and vocational training.⁷
- As of June 2006, Kentucky held no youths in adult prisons.⁸

Major Developments:

- The Department of Juvenile Justice has received a grant in excess of \$1 million to promote services to help youths transition back into the community after their release from confinement.⁹

What Kentucky Law Says:

- Youth who commit a minor offense or have at most three prior diversions for misdemeanor offenses are eligible for diversion.¹⁰
- Diversions programs are not permitted to last longer than 6 months.¹¹
- The juvenile court's jurisdiction ends when a person turns 17 ½ . Under limited circumstances, juvenile jurisdiction can be extended until a person turns 19.
- Youths are not permitted to be held in pre-trial detention in adult jails.¹²
- For certain felonies involving the use of a functional or non-functional firearm, youths are automatically transferred to adult court at age 14. For other felonies, youths may be transferred to adult court at 14.¹³
- Youths may not receive a sentence of life without parole.¹⁴
- Law enforcement agencies can access juvenile records during a criminal investigation. The public can also access information about the juvenile record of a felony offender.¹⁵

"The Kentucky Department of Juvenile Justice's mission is to improve public safety by providing balanced and comprehensive services that hold youth accountable, and to provide the opportunity for youth to develop into productive, responsible citizens."

--Kentucky Department of Juvenile Justice Mission Statement

State Resources:

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Prepared by the Campaign for Youth Justice

¹ Kentucky Department of Juvenile Justice (personal communication, July 2, 2007).

² Kentucky Department of Juvenile Justice. (2005, July 6). *Youth development centers*. Retrieved July 2, 2007 from <http://djj.ky.gov/facilities/ydc.htm>; Kentucky Department of Juvenile Justice (personal communication, July 2, 2007).

³ Puritz, P., & Brooks, K. (2002, September). *Kentucky, Advancing justice: An assessment of access to counsel and quality of representation in delinquency proceedings*. Available at <http://www.childrenslawky.org/publications.html>

⁴ Kentucky Youth Advocates and Urban Studies Institute, University of Louisville. (2006). *Safety. Kentucky Kids Count 2006 County Data Book*. Available from http://www.kyouth.org/Publications/KIDS_COUNT_2006/Safety+v2.pdf

⁵ National Center for Juvenile Justice. (2006, March 30). *NCJJ State Profiles: Kentucky*. Retrieved July 2, 2007 from <http://www.ncjj.org/stateprofiles/profiles/KY06.asp?state=%2Fstateprofiles%2Fprofiles%2FKY06.asp&to pic=Profile>

⁶ See Kentucky Youth Advocates and Urban Studies Institute, University of Louisville, 4.

⁷ See Kentucky Department of Juvenile Justice, 2.

⁸ Sabol, W.J., & Minton, T.D. (2007, June). *Prison and jail inmates at midyear 2006*. Washington DC: US Department of Justice, Bureau of Justice Statistics. Available from <http://www.ojp.usdoj.gov/bjs/abstract/pjim06.htm>

⁹ U.S. Department of Justice, Office of Justice Programs. (n.d.). *Kentucky: Serious and violent offender reentry initiative grantee. Reentry*. Retrieved July 2, 2007 from <http://www.reentry.gov/sar/ky.html>

¹⁰ See National Center for Juvenile Justice, 5.

¹¹ Ibid.

¹² Goemann, M. (2007). *Children Being Tried as Adults: Pre-trial Detention Laws in the U.S.*. Washington, DC: Campaign for Youth Justice.

¹³ National Center for Juvenile Justice. (2006, March 30). *Kentucky Transfer Provisions*. Retrieved July 2, 2007 from <http://www.ncjj.org/stateprofiles/asp/transfer.asp?topic=Transfer&state=%2Fstateprofiles%2Fprofiles%2FKY06.asp>

¹⁴ Amnesty International USA. (2005). *The Rest of Their Lives: Life Without Parole for Child Offenders in the United States*. Available from <http://www.amnestyusa.org/document.php?lang=e&id=ENGUSA2005101205002>

¹⁵ See National Center for Juvenile Justice, 5.