

GUN VIOLENCE

AMONG PRINCE
GEORGE'S COUNTY,
MARYLAND YOUTH



NICJR ★
National Institute for
Criminal Justice Reform

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Introduction

The National Institute for Criminal Justice Reform (NICJR) partnered with the Maryland Department of Juvenile Services (DJS) to analyze gun violence incidents involving youth in Prince George's County, Maryland. Specifically, this report provides an overview of the youth involved in gun violence in Prince George's County from January 2019 to June 2023, as well as a deeper look at youth with DJS involvement. This includes a comparative analysis with youth involved in DJS and living in Prince George's County who were not involved in a shooting, as well as an analysis of youth who were under active DJS supervision at the time of the shooting. These analyses review the demographics, delinquency histories, placement and supervision histories, and risk assessment scores of young people in order to identify risk factors for gun violence involvement. Ultimately, this report is intended to support identification of youth at high risk for gun violence so that DJS may intervene with immediate and intensive services.



Key Findings

All Youth Involved in Shootings While Living in Prince George's County

- Fewer than 40% of the youth who were shooting victims or shooting suspects had a DJS complaint prior to their first shooting.
- Youth living in Prince George's County were more likely to be a victim of a shooting than a suspect, although this ratio differs from statewide trends, where youth were even more likely to be a victim than a suspect.
- Of the five youth involved in multiple shootings, four were a victim in each incident while the fifth was a victim in one incident and a suspect in a subsequent incident. Only three of these youth had prior DJS contact, and each of those was a shooting victim.
- The majority of shooting suspects and victims were Black boys.

Comparing Youth Involved in a Shooting in Prince George's County to Other DJS-Involved Youth in Prince George's County

- In 2019, 984 youth living in Prince George's County had a delinquency petition filed. Of those, only 32 (3.25%) went on to be involved in a shooting as a victim (17, 1.73%) or suspect (15, 1.52%) by June 2023.

- Youth who were shooting victims or shooting suspects were more likely to be Black males and were younger at the time of their 2019 complaint than youth who were not involved in a shooting.
- Youth involved in a shooting had more alleged and sustained complaints than youth not involved in a shooting.
- Youth involved in a shooting were about twice as likely to have an alleged crime of violence at both 2019 and the end of the study period.
- Youth involved in a shooting were more likely to have been placed in detention or other residential programming both in 2019 and at the end of the study period, and they were more likely to have been placed on electronic monitoring by the end of the study period.
- Youth involved in a shooting were more likely to have been placed on probation prior to being involved in a shooting.
- Youth involved in a shooting in Prince George's County had fewer complaints but the same number of adjudications, on average, as youth involved in a shooting across the state.¹

Youth Under Supervision at the Time of Their First Shooting

- Only 20 (28.99%) of the 69 youth involved in a shooting while living in Prince George's County and with previous DJS contact were under active DJS supervision at the time. Eight of these youth (11.59%) were suspects, and 12 (17.39%) were victims.
- All youth involved in a shooting while under supervision were male, and the majority were Black.
- Prince George's County youth under supervision at the time of their first shooting involvement had, on average, 2.15 fewer alleged complaints than youth involved in a shooting while under DJS supervision statewide, but the same number of adjudications.
- Three-quarters of youth had at least one petition for an alleged crime of violence, and more than one-quarter had at least one adjudication for a crime of violence prior to being involved in a shooting.

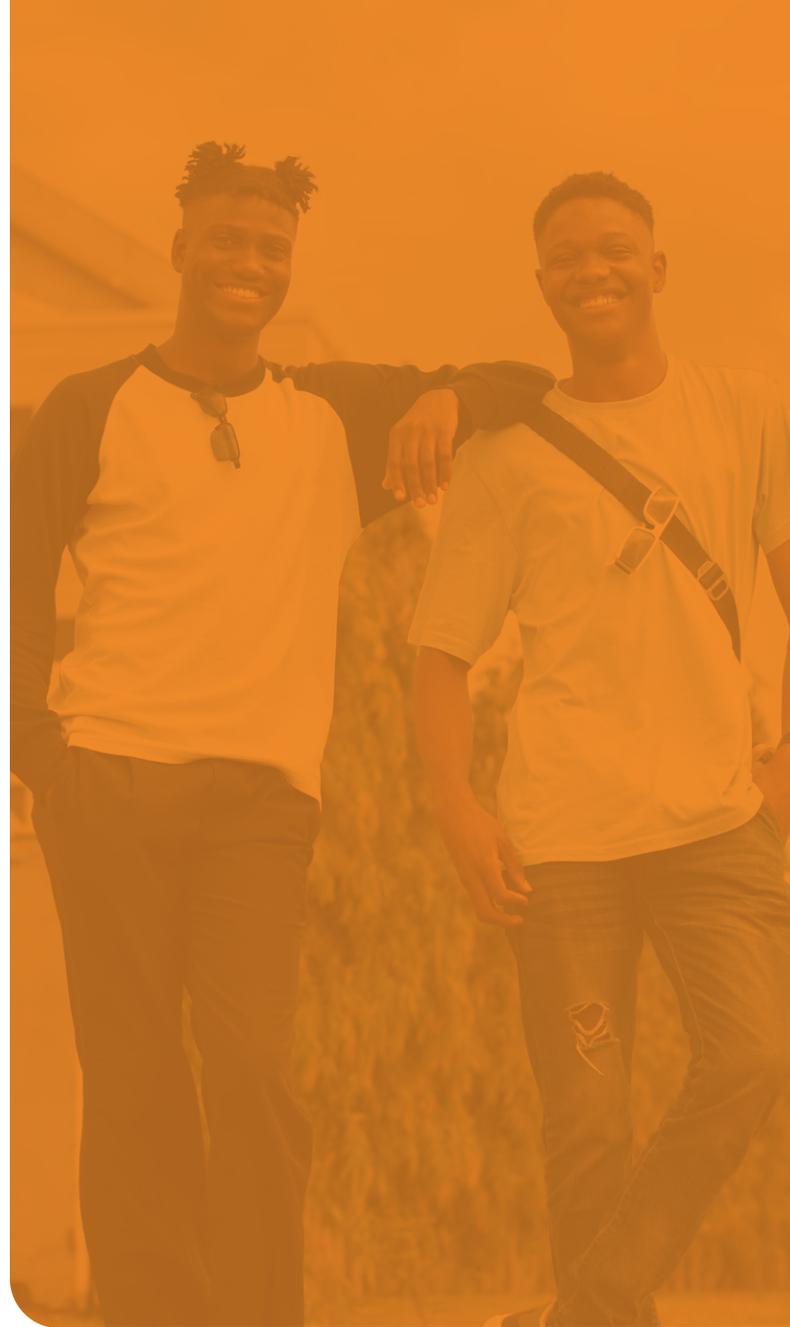
¹ Maryland DJS Memo

Methods

The Maryland State Police provided DJS with data for all shooting incidents involving a minor suspect or victim in the State of Maryland from January 2019 to June 2023. The few young people who were involved in more than one shooting were matched to ensure they were only included one time in data analyses. DJS located information in their ASSIST database for all youth involved in a shooting and with a history of DJS involvement in their lifetime by matching shooting-involved youth from the MSP dataset by name and date of birth. Data gathered from the ASSIST database were filtered to include youth histories from their first involvement with DJS until the time of the shooting incident. Youth data were de-identified prior to being provided to NICJR.

Two cases involving youth with DJS involvement were removed as duplicates. Six shootings related to youth with no DJS involvement were also removed prior to analysis. Four of these cases were removed because the involved youth could not be accurately identified by DJS, one was removed because the youth was confirmed to be an infant, and one was removed because it was a duplicate in the data. Youth were identified individually using a random number and in relation to the shooting using an incident number. For young people with more than one shooting incident, only data known at the time of the first shooting incident were used for analysis.

The youth involved in shootings from January 2019 to June 2023 while living in Prince George's County (n = 179) were separated into further categories. First, they were divided into youth with a delinquency history with DJS at any point in their life (known to DJS; n = 93) and youth with no involvement with DJS (unknown to DJS; n = 86). Youth unknown to DJS were removed from all analyses unless otherwise noted. There were 24 youth currently known to DJS but who did not have a delinquency history prior to their shooting incident. They were not removed from analyses; however, all analyses for youth involved in shootings used DJS history data prior to and including the first known shooting. Consequently, youth with no history prior to their first shootings did not have available data for these analyses.



Further analyses were completed for youth who were known to DJS, living in Prince George's County, and actively under DJS supervision at the time of their first shooting involvement (n = 20). Active supervision refers to active status on probation, aftercare, pre-court supervision, community detention / electronic monitoring (CD/EM), active writ, evening reporting, or interstate compact.

DJS also provided lifetime histories from the ASSIST database for all youth who had a complaint filed with DJS from January 2018 to July 2023. These data were used to create a cohort of youth known to DJS with no shooting involvement, to be compared to youth involved in a shooting. To create

the cohort, NICJR evaluated the histories of all youth with at least one complaint filed in 2019 and who lived in Prince George's County in 2019 (n = 984). This year was selected because it had the greatest number of youth with a filed complaint, and it coincided with the first year of shooting data provided by MSP. This 2019 cohort was divided into a group of youth who were not involved in a shooting from January 2019 to June 2023 (n = 952) and a group of youth who were involved in at least one shooting in this timeframe (n = 32).

NICJR used cities and zip codes of home addresses at the time of DJS involvement to determine the county where each youth resided in 2019 and when they were involved in a shooting. Only youth determined to be living in Prince George's County at the time of a complaint filed in 2019 or first shooting involvement were included in these analyses.

For youth who were involved in a shooting as a victim or suspect, NICJR completed comparative analyses using R to identify differences in their delinquency system contact at the time of their 2019 complaint(s) and at the time of their first shooting involvement. For youth without shooting involvement, comparative analyses evaluated differences between the time of their 2019 complaint(s) and the end of the analytic timeframe, or June 2023. This is similar to survival analysis techniques used in public health research. This approach follows the cohort from a relative start point (2019 contact with DJS) until the youth experiences a shooting incident or the time period ends. This also allows for examination of differences between youth at the same time prior to a shooting (2019), as well as examination of differences using information known about the young people at the time of their first shooting or in 2023, respectively. This provides insight into what was known then as well as what is now known about youth involved in shootings, showing what information could have been used to determine risk of shooting involvement at a common time of arrest, and what would only be known in hindsight.

Descriptive analyses of youth involved in a shooting while on active DJS supervision were also completed in R. These analyses describe the common characteristics of youth involved in a shooting while on active supervision. Only data prior to youth's first shootings were used for these analyses.

Data Limitations

Only individuals who were minors at the time of their shooting (with the shooting occurring during the study period, from January 2019 to June 2023) were included in the shooting-involved group. It is possible that some youth who were 17 at the time of their 2019 complaint went on to be involved in a shooting but were not captured in the dataset, as they were over 18 at the time of the shooting. It is also possible that youth of any age who were not involved in a shooting during the study period were involved in a shooting before or after the study period. Additionally, it is possible that some young people were involved in a shooting but never identified by law enforcement.

In addition, incorrect and unavailable residential information limited the accuracy and comprehensiveness of the geographic analysis: the accuracy of determining youth's county of residence at specific time points is limited by old or incorrect addresses on file. Further, 29 youth with DJS involvement in 2019 and one youth involved in a shooting did not have residence data available.

All Youth Involved in a Shooting While Living in Prince George's County



50.3% of youth involved in a shooting had a prior DJS petition

From 2019 to 2023, there were 179 youth involved in 185 shootings while living in Prince George's County, including 53 (29.61%) who were suspects and 126 (70.39%) who were victims. Of those youth, 69 (38.55%) had DJS contact before being involved in a shooting; 27 (15%) were suspects and 42 (23%) were victims. This is a smaller proportion of youth than in statewide figures, where 50.3% of youth involved in a shooting had a prior DJS petition. It should be noted, however, that statewide trends are driven in large part by the trends of Baltimore City, due to the disproportionate representation of Baltimore City youth in shooting incidents. Trend differences are likely largely influenced by differences in policing and prosecution practices, but available data do not allow for conclusions about why differences may exist. Additionally, residence data was less reliable and less complete for youth without DJS involvement, meaning more youth without DJS involvement may have lived in Prince George's County at the time of their first shooting.

Five youth (2.79%) were involved in more than one shooting. Of these, four were involved in two shootings, and the fifth was involved in three; four of these youth were a victim each time, and one was a victim in the first shooting and a suspect in the second. Notably, this rate of youth involved in multiple shootings is lower than statewide trends.

The ratio of shooting suspects to victims among the cohort studied in Prince George's County is also substantially different from the statewide ratio, where victims make up 77% of youth involved in a shooting. It should be noted, however, that this does not necessarily mean that Prince George's County youth are more violent; this difference may also be explained in part or in whole by differences in shooting clearance rates between counties.

Demographics

Youth involved in shootings while living in Prince George’s County were most often Black males , followed by Latino males (Table 1).

Table 1. The majority of youth involved in shootings were Black males

| Race | Suspects | | | | Victims | | | | All | | | |
|--------|----------|--------|--------|-------|---------|--------|--------|-------|------|--------|--------|-------|
| | Male | | Female | | Male | | Female | | Male | | Female | |
| | N | % | N | % | N | % | N | % | N | % | N | % |
| Asian | - | - | - | - | 1 | 0.79% | - | - | 1 | 0.56% | - | - |
| Black | 29 | 54.72% | 5 | 9.43% | 92 | 73.02% | 10 | 7.94% | 121 | 67.60% | 15 | 8.38% |
| Latino | 16 | 30.19% | 2 | 3.77% | 16 | 12.70% | 5 | 3.97% | 32 | 17.88% | 7 | 3.91% |
| White | 1 | 1.89% | - | - | 2 | 1.59% | - | - | 3 | 1.68% | - | - |

Of all youth involved in a shooting in Prince George’s County, the average age was 14.93 years old at the time of their first shooting. However, the mean age is skewed downward by the 16 youth under 10 years old who were victims of gun violence (Table 2); the median age was 16 years old. Victims were also, on average, younger than suspects; however, this difference is also due to several victims being under 10 years of age.

Youth were most likely to be 17 years old at the time of their first gun violence incident, regardless of whether they were a suspect or victim.

Table 2. Youth were most often 17 years old at the time of their first shooting

| Age | Suspects | | Victims | | All | |
|-------|----------|--------|---------|--------|-------|--------|
| | N | % | N | % | N | % |
| <10 | - | - | 16 | 12.70% | 16 | 8.94% |
| 11 | 1 | 1.89% | - | - | 1 | 0.56% |
| 12 | - | - | 5 | 3.97% | 5 | 2.79% |
| 13 | - | - | 7 | 5.56% | 7 | 3.91% |
| 14 | 1 | 1.89% | 6 | 4.76% | 7 | 3.91% |
| 15 | 11 | 20.75% | 20 | 15.87% | 31 | 17.32% |
| 16 | 11 | 20.75% | 26 | 20.63% | 37 | 20.67% |
| 17 | 23 | 43.40% | 38 | 30.16% | 61 | 34.08% |
| 18 | 4 | 7.55% | 6 | 4.76% | 10 | 5.59% |
| 19-21 | 2 | 3.77% | 2 | 1.59% | 4 | 2.23% |
| Mean | 16.4 | - | 14.31 | - | 14.93 | - |

Geography

The analysis below looks at where the youth lived when they were involved in a shooting and where those shootings occurred. Almost all Prince George's County youth had their first shooting within their county of residence (Table 3).

Table 3. Most youth were involved in shootings in their county of residence

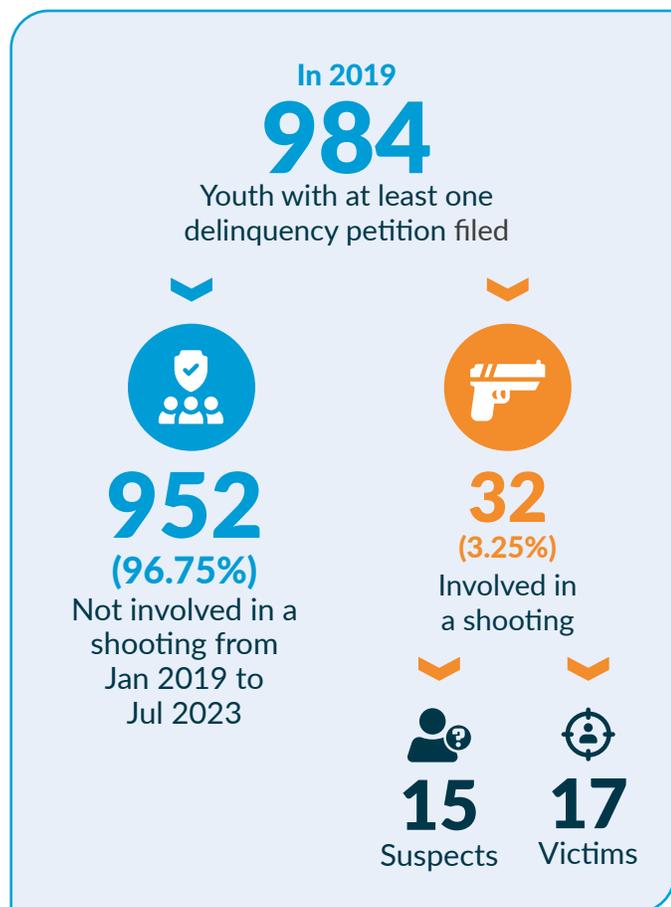
| County of Incident | Suspects | | Victims | | All | |
|--------------------|----------|--------|---------|--------|-----|--------|
| | N | % | N | % | N | % |
| Anne Arundel | 1 | 1.89% | - | - | 1 | 0.56% |
| Charles | 1 | 1.89% | 1 | 0.79% | 2 | 1.12% |
| Howard | - | - | 1 | 0.79% | 1 | 0.56% |
| Montgomery | - | - | 2 | 1.59% | 2 | 1.12% |
| Prince George's | 43 | 81.13% | 116 | 92.06% | 159 | 88.83% |
| No data | 8 | 15.09% | 6 | 4.76% | 14 | 7.82% |
| Total | 53 | 100% | 126 | 100% | 179 | 100% |

Similarly, the majority of youth shootings that occurred in Prince George's County involved young people who reside there. The next most common place of residence was Washington, DC (Table 4).

Table 4. Most Prince George's County incidents involved youth living in Prince George's County

| County of Residence | Suspects | | Victims | | All | |
|---------------------|----------|--------|---------|--------|-----|--------|
| | N | % | N | % | N | % |
| Anne Arundel | 1 | 1.61% | - | - | 1 | 0.47% |
| Charles | 1 | 1.61% | 1 | 0.67% | 2 | 0.95% |
| Frederick | 1 | 1.61% | - | - | 1 | 0.47% |
| Montgomery | 1 | 1.61% | 4 | 2.68% | 5 | 2.37% |
| Prince George's | 43 | 69.35% | 116 | 77.85% | 159 | 75.36% |
| St. Mary's | - | - | 1 | 0.67% | 1 | 0.47% |
| Washington DC | 10 | 16.13% | 16 | 10.74% | 26 | 12.32% |
| Out of state | 2 | 3.23% | 2 | 1.34% | 4 | 1.90% |
| No data | 3 | 4.84% | 9 | 6.04% | 12 | 5.69% |
| Total | 62 | 100% | 149 | 100% | 211 | 100% |

All Youth Involved in a Shooting While Living in Prince George's County



In 2019, 984 youth living in Prince George's County had at least one delinquency petition filed. Of those youth, 952 (96.75%) did not go on to be involved in a shooting between January 2019 and July 2023. Thirty-two youth (3.25%) went on to be involved in a shooting, with 17 (53.13%) as a victim and 15 (46.88%) as a suspect. This is notably higher than statewide trends, which saw only 2% of youth with DJS petitions in 2019 go on to be involved in shootings in the subsequent four and a half years. Notably, almost two-thirds (65%) of those youth were shooting victims.

The analyses below examine young people who had a DJS petition filed in 2019 while living in Prince George's County. These analyses compare youth who went on to be involved in a shooting as a suspect or victim from January 2019 to July 2023 and young people who did not go on to be involved in a shooting during this time. Analyses were completed looking at 2019 and July 2023 for each group only using data prior to an individual's earliest shooting. For youth involved in shootings, the analysis period ends at that shooting; for youth who were not, the analysis period goes through July 2023. See Methods for more details.

Demographics

Black and Latino youth were more likely to go on to be involved in a shooting.

The majority of youth in Prince George's County who had a DJS petition in 2019 were Black males (Table 5), but there were noticeable race and gender differences between youth who went on to be involved in a shooting and those who did not. Females of all races involved in DJS rarely went on to be involved in a shooting, and Black and Latino youth were more likely to go on to be involved in a shooting. Youth who went on to be involved in a shooting were also generally younger at the time of their 2019 complaint than other youth (14.88 years compared to 15.56 years; Table 6), which was consistent with statewide trends. Additionally, most youth who went on to be involved in a shooting incident were 15 at the time of their 2019 complaint, while youth who did not go on to experience shooting involvement were most often 17 years old at the time of their 2019 complaint.



Table 5. Youth involved in a shooting incident were almost all male

| | Not shooting-involved | | | | Shooting-involved | | | |
|----------------------------------|-----------------------|--------|--------|-----|-------------------|--------|--------|---|
| | Male | | Female | | Male | | Female | |
| Race | N | % | % | N | N | % | % | N |
| American Indian or Alaska Native | 2 | 0.21% | - | - | - | - | - | - |
| Asian | 1 | 0.11% | - | - | - | - | - | - |
| Black | 527 | 55.36% | 23.84% | 227 | 22 | 68.75% | 3.12% | 1 |
| Latino | 100 | 10.50% | 3.36% | 32 | 7 | 21.88% | - | - |
| White | 37 | 3.89% | 1.58% | 15 | 1 | 3.12% | - | - |
| Unknown | 4 | 0.42% | 0.74% | 7 | 1 | 3.12% | - | - |

Table 6. Youth involved in a shooting were younger at their 2019 complaint than youth who were not involved in a shooting

| Age | Not shooting-involved (age in 2019) | | Shooting-involved (age in 2019) | | Shooting-involved (age at time of shooting) | |
|--------------------|-------------------------------------|--------|---------------------------------|--------|---|--------|
| | N | % | N | % | N | % |
| <10 | 8 | 0.84% | - | - | - | - |
| 10 | 7 | 0.74% | - | - | - | - |
| 11 | 12 | 1.26% | 2 | 6.25% | 1 | 3.12% |
| 12 | 29 | 3.05% | 1 | 3.12% | - | - |
| 13 | 58 | 6.09% | 4 | 12.50% | - | - |
| 14 | 109 | 11.45% | 2 | 6.25% | 3 | 9.38% |
| 15 | 185 | 19.43% | 11 | 34.38% | 3 | 9.38% |
| 16 | 199 | 20.90% | 8 | 25.00% | 7 | 21.88% |
| 17 | 266 | 27.94% | 3 | 9.38% | 12 | 37.50% |
| 18 | 74 | 7.77% | 1 | 3.12% | 5 | 15.62% |
| 19-21 ² | 5 | 0.53% | - | - | 1 | 3.12% |
| Mean | 15.56 | | 14.88 | | 16.34 | |

² DJS has some youth over 18 on their caseloads if the young people were adjudicated before their 18th birthdays or adjudicated as adults for incidents that occurred before they turned 18. Consequently, even though 18–21-year-olds are involved in significantly more shootings than juveniles, it is not apparent in this analysis because the analysis only includes the very small percentage of 18–21-year-olds under DJS supervision (or known to DJS).

Delinquency System Contact

Petitions and Adjudications

By 2019, youth who went on to be involved in a shooting had more petitions (3.09) and adjudications (2.13) than youth who did not (1.72 and 1.85, respectively; Table 7).

Additionally, by 2019, a larger proportion of youth who went on to be involved in a shooting had at least one previous adjudication (50%) than youth who did not become involved in a shooting (19.33%).

After 2019, young people who went on to be involved in a shooting had more new delinquency cases than other youth .

The proportion of youth with a delinquency adjudication in 2023 compared to 2019 increased minimally regardless of shooting involvement (Table 8). However, youth who were involved in a shooting saw a larger increase in the average number of petitions and adjudications from 2019 to the end of the study period, meaning after 2019, young people who went on to be involved in a shooting had more new delinquency cases than other youth .

Table 7. A larger proportion of youth who went on to be involved in a shooting had a sustained complaint by 2019

| | Not shooting-involved | Shooting-involved |
|---------------------------------------|-----------------------|-------------------|
| Youth w/ alleged complaints | 952 | 32 |
| Alleged complaints | 1642 | 99 |
| Average # of alleged complaints | 1.72 | 3.09 |
| % of youth w/ 1+ sustained complaints | 19.33% | 50% |
| Youth w/ 1+ sustained complaints | 184 | 16 |
| Sustained complaints | 340 | 34 |
| Average # of sustained complaints | 1.85 ³ | 2.13 |

Table 8. The gap between the average number of alleged and sustained complaints per youth widened from 2019 to 2023

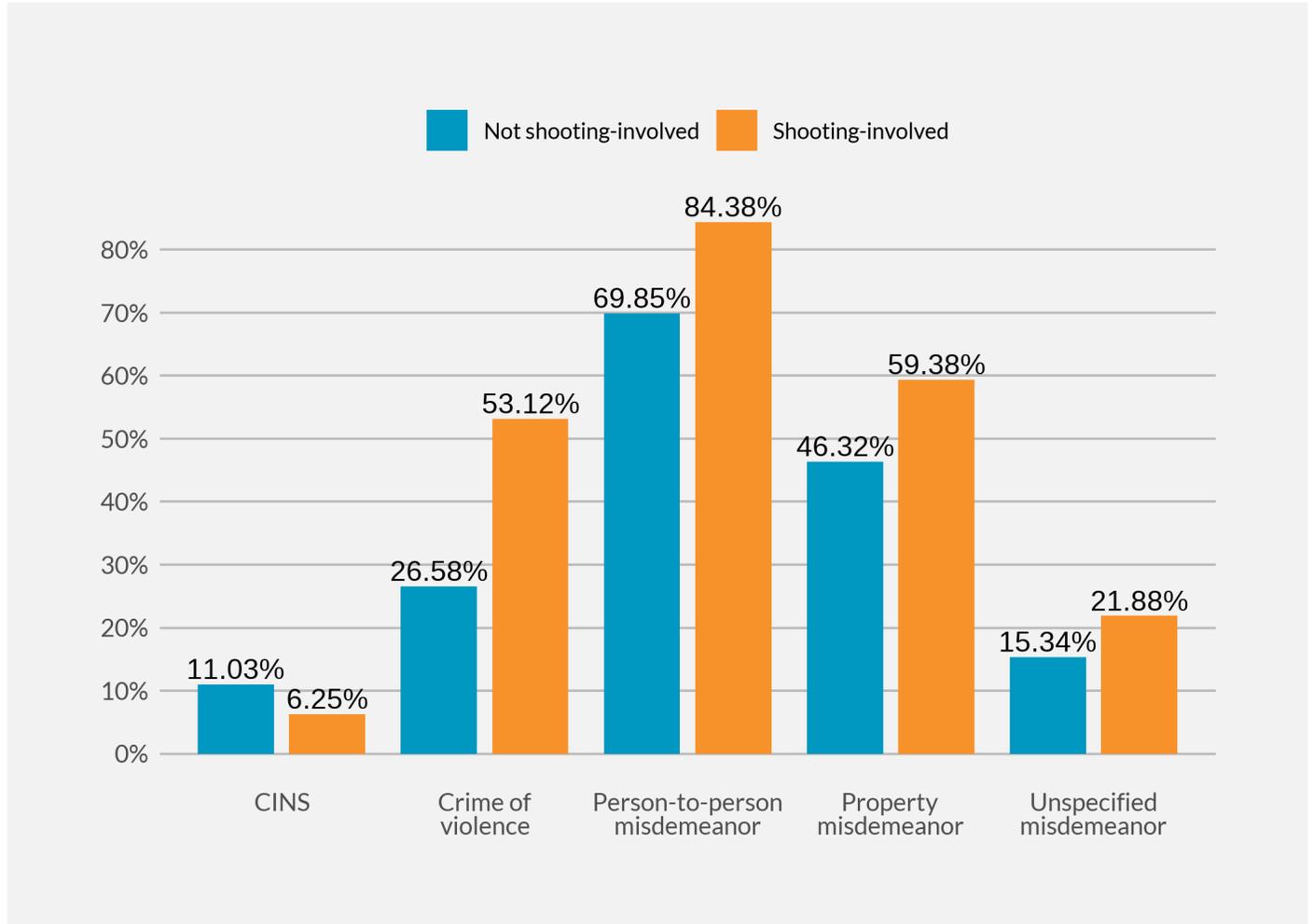
| | Not shooting-involved | Shooting-involved |
|---------------------------------------|-----------------------|-------------------|
| Youth w/ alleged complaints | 952 | 32 |
| Alleged complaints | 1934 | 132 |
| Average # of alleged complaints | 2.03 | 4.13 |
| % of youth w/ 1+ sustained complaints | 23.21% | 53% |
| Youth w/ 1+ sustained complaints | 221 | 18 |
| Sustained complaints | 430 | 39 |
| Average # of sustained complaints | 2.01 | 2.68 |

³ This is higher than the number of complaints because of the small proportion of youth with an adjudication. Youth with an adjudication have an above-average number of complaints as well.

Despite being younger on average, youth who went on to be involved in a shooting were twice as likely to have a petition for a crime of violence (Figure 1) by 2019 .

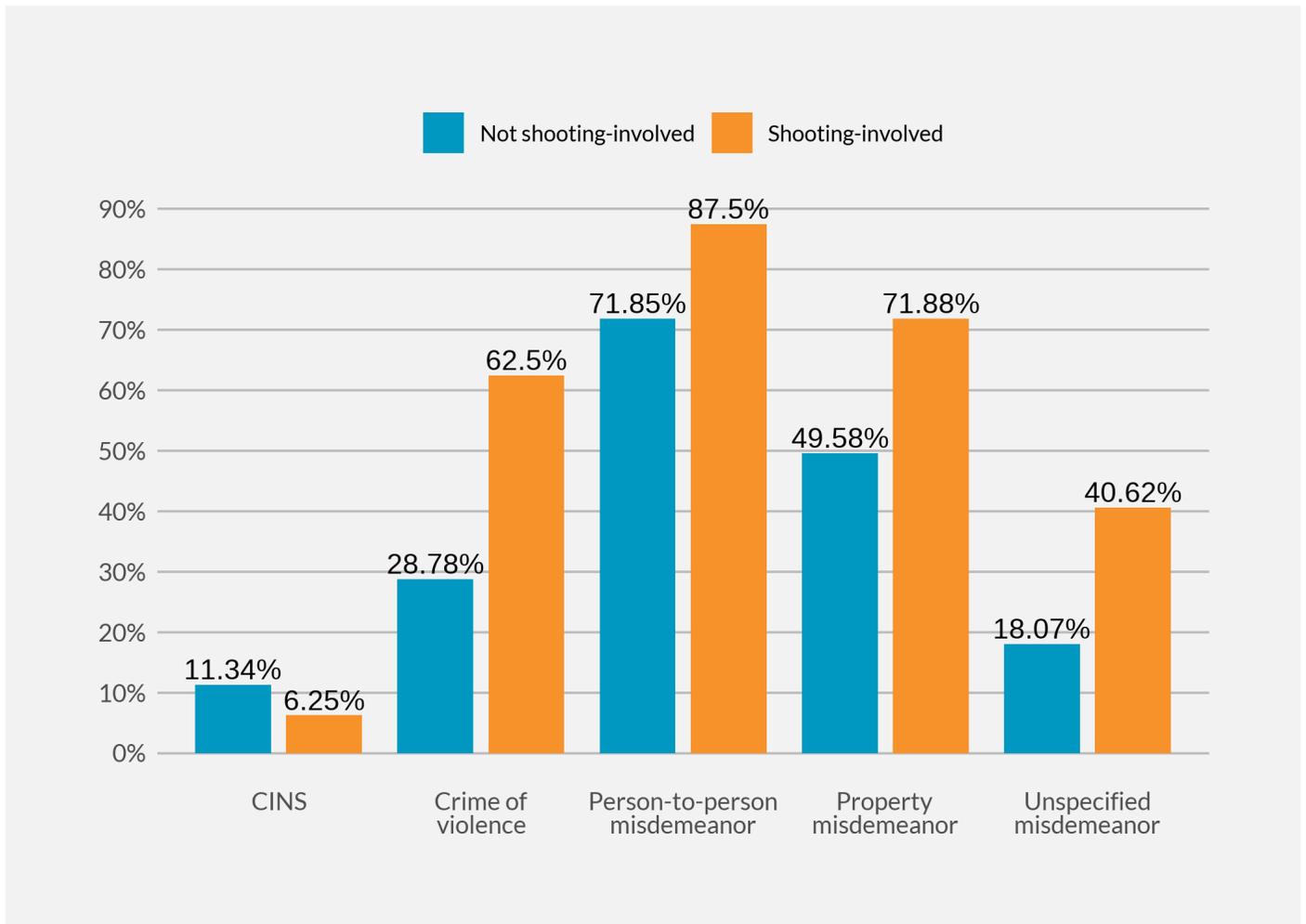
By 2023 or the time of first shooting, this likelihood increased even more for youth involved in a shooting than youth who were not (Figure 2). The differences between youth who went on to be involved in shootings and youth who did not grew from 2019 to 2023 for each of the five most common offense types except for Children in Need of Supervision (CINS).⁴

Figure 1. By 2019, youth who went on to be involved in a shooting were more likely to have an alleged crime of violence



⁴ CINS is a complaint type used for youth who are habitually truant or disobedient, a danger to themselves or others, or have committed a status offense; [Child in Need of Supervision Complaint Process](#).

Figure 2. Youth who became involved in a shooting were more than twice as likely to have an alleged crime of violence by 2023 or first shooting



As noted above, only slightly more than half of the young people who were involved in a shooting had been adjudicated delinquent by the time this shooting happened (53%, Table 8). By the end of the study period, it remained the case that very few youth were adjudicated for violent offenses. (Figure 3 and Figure 4). This pattern is particularly interesting in so far as it differs from patterns among youth involved in shootings in other jurisdictions. By 2023 or their first shooting incident, Prince George’s County youth were charged with crimes of violence at a similar rate to the rest of the state; however, these youth were far less likely to be adjudicated for a felony crime of violence compared to the rest of the state, regardless of shooting involvement. This indicates a possible difference in prosecutorial practices or time to case disposition in Prince George’s County.

Among youth statewide who became shooting-involved, 32.54% had been adjudicated for a crime of violence by the time they were involved in a shooting, but among young people living in Prince George’s County, **this was only true for 18.85% of those involved in shootings.**

Figure 3. By 2019, youth who went on to be involved in a shooting were more likely to have been adjudicated delinquent for most offense types than were other DJS-involved youth

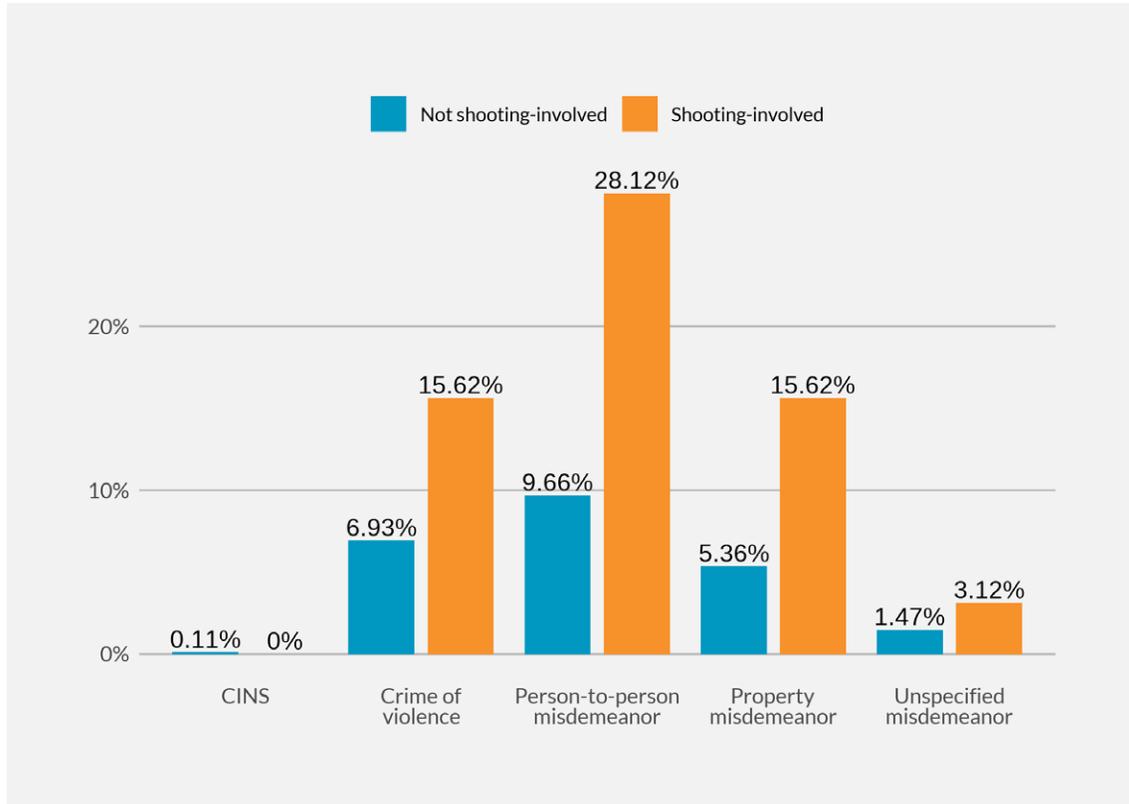
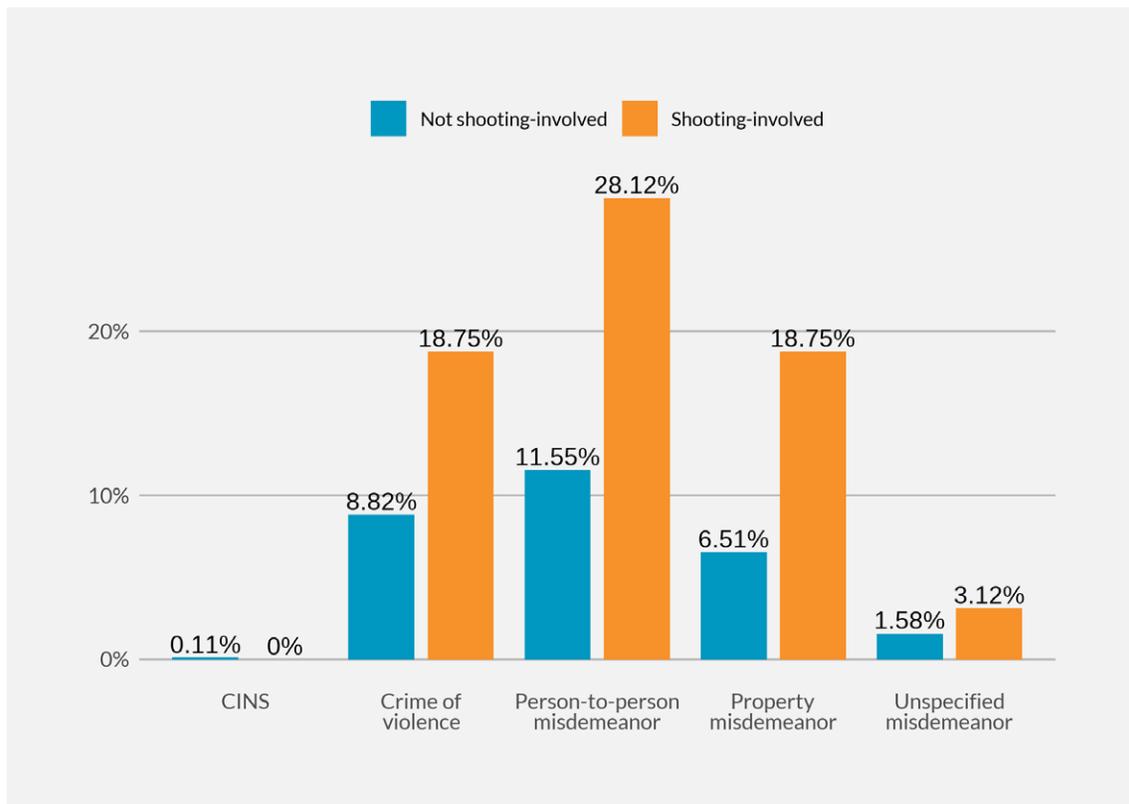


Figure 4. By the end of the study period, there was minimal change in adjudication rates for youth, regardless of their involvement in shootings



Placement and Supervision History

By 2019, almost half of youth who went on to be involved in a shooting had been in a residential placement, **almost three times as many as other DJS-involved youth** (Figure 5).

These numbers did not change notably by the end of the study period, although both groups did experience an increase in non-residential placements (Figure 6).

Generally speaking, these patterns are consistent with those described above, which show that **youth who went onto be involved in shootings did have more justice system contact than youth who did not, but that there was not any major escalation in their system contact over time, which is in contrast to statewide trends**, which showed young people who were involved in shootings having increasingly frequent and serious system contact over time. Without more information, it is not possible to determine how much of this difference is due to variations in youth conduct versus variations in the responses of law enforcement, prosecutors, or others.

Figure 5. By 2019, almost half of youth who went on to be involved in shootings had been in a residential placement, compared to fewer than one-fifth of other DJS-involved youth

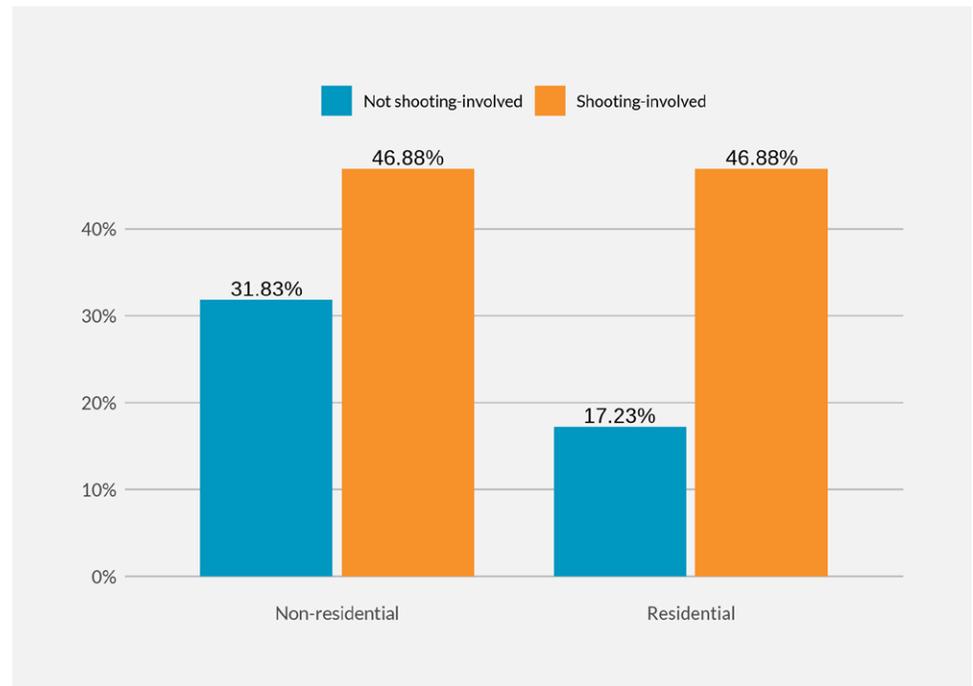
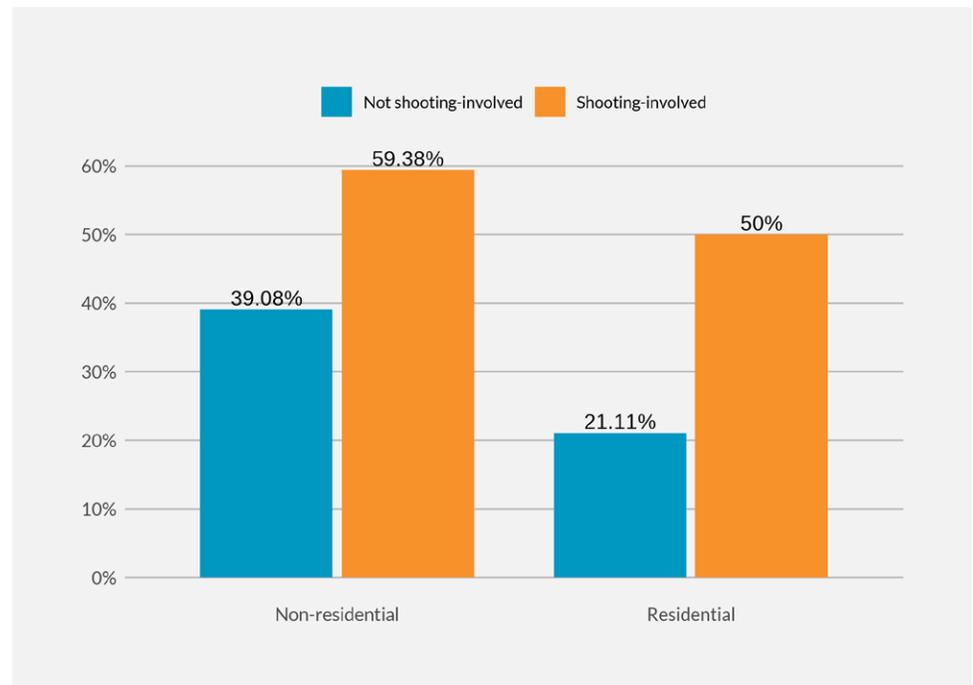


Figure 6. By 2023, there were more youth in both groups who had non-residential placements



In both 2019 and 2023, youth who went on to be involved in a shooting were twice as likely to have been on probation at some point in their life.

Looking at youth supervision patterns shows a similar trend, with sizable differences between youth who went on to be involved in shootings compared to those who did not, but with minimal escalation over time. By the time they had a DJS petition in 2019, 35% of youth who went on to be involved in shootings had been on probation and by the time they were involved in a shooting up to four years later, this number had increased to 37.5%. **At both points in time, this was close to double the frequency of other DJS-involved youth (Figure 7 and Figure 8).** The one type of supervision that did see a noticeable change was Community Detention, which is a detention alternative for youth who have had a petition filed but not resolved. By the time they were involved in shootings, 40% of youth had been on Community Detention, compared to only 13.13% of other youth (Figure 8). This is also consistent with the increase in petitions but relatively flat adjudications between 2019 and the end of the study period.

Figure 7. By 2019, youth who went on to be involved in a shooting were more likely than other youth to have been on any type of supervision

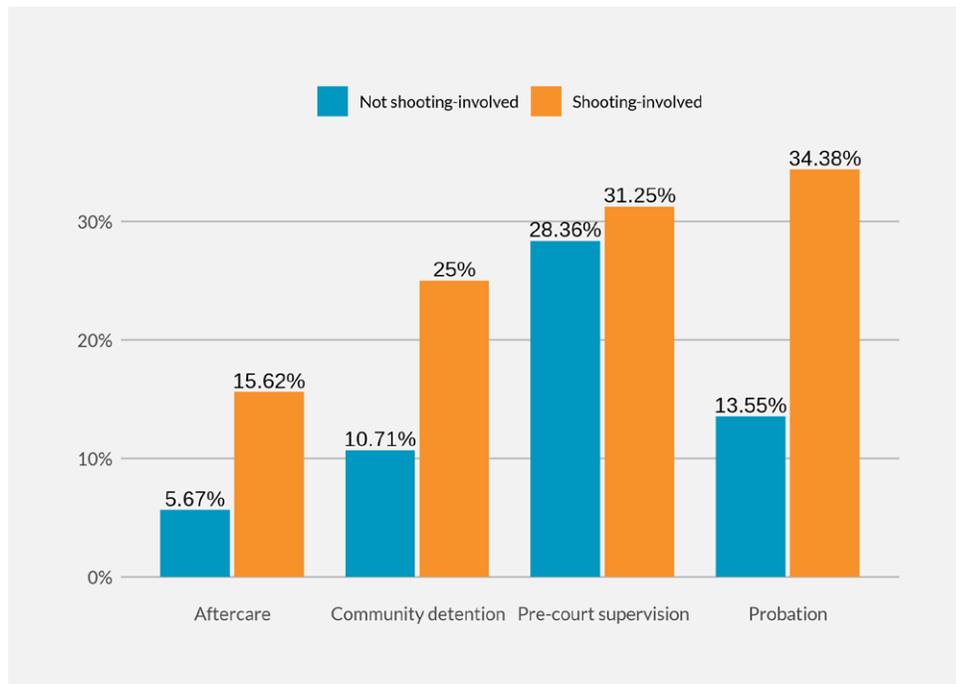
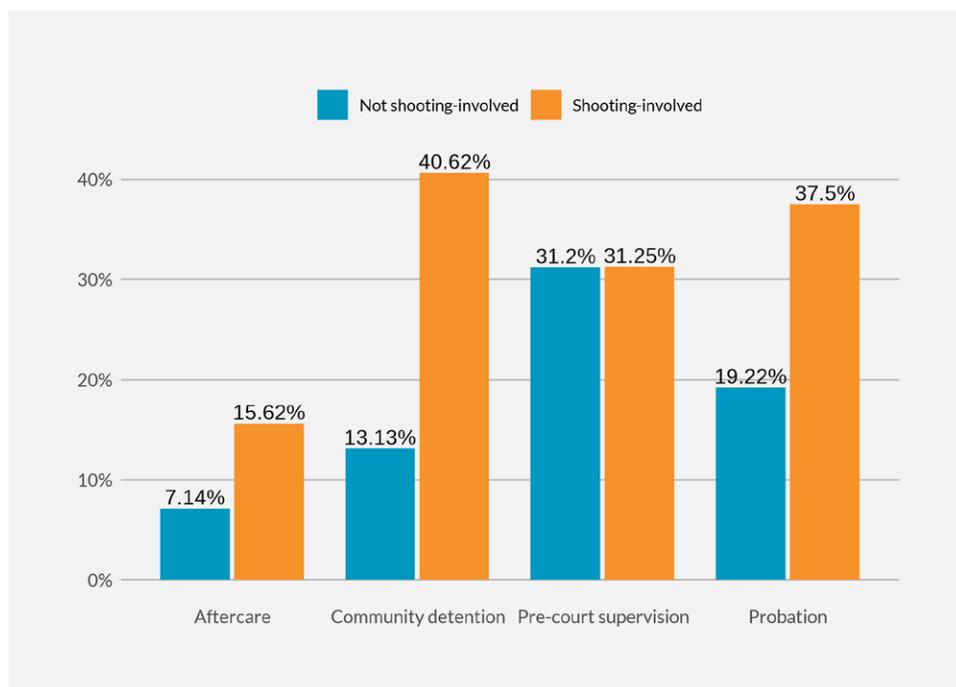
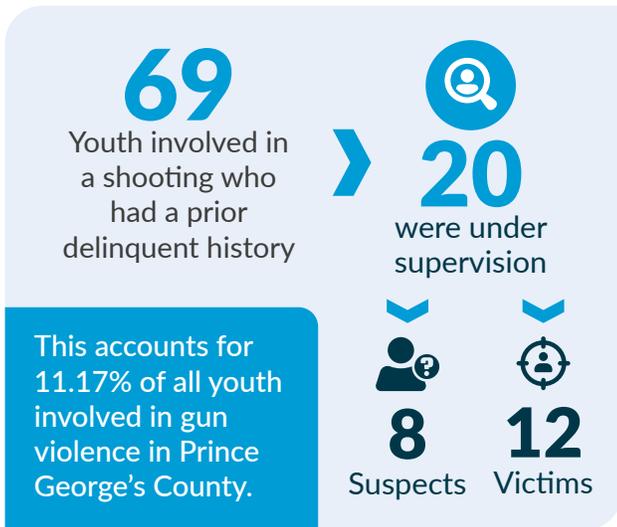


Figure 8. By the end of the study period, there was little change in supervision, except for an increase in the frequency of Community Detention, for youth who were involved in shootings



Youth Under Supervision at the Time of a Shooting



Of the 69 youth involved in a shooting who had a prior delinquent history, 20 (29%) were under supervision at the time of the incident, including eight suspects and 12 victims. This accounts for 11.17% of all youth involved in gun violence in Prince George's County. **This is smaller than the statewide proportion of youth under supervision at the time of first shooting involvement (33.54% of youth with prior DJS contact; 16.87% of all youth).** Given the small number of young people in this group, conclusions drawn from this data should be approached cautiously.

Demographics

Youth under supervision at the time of their first shooting were most often Black (85%; Table 9) and were all male. These youth had an average age of 16.75 but were most frequently 17–18 years old (Table 10).

Table 9. Most youth in Prince George's County who were involved in a shooting while under DJS supervision were Black

| Race | Suspects | | Victims | | All | |
|--------|----------|-------|---------|------|-----|------|
| | N | % | N | % | N | % |
| Black | 5 | 62.5% | 12 | 100% | 17 | 85% |
| Latino | 3 | 37.5% | - | - | 3 | 15% |
| Total | 8 | 100% | 12 | 100% | 20 | 100% |

Table 10. Youth who were involved in a shooting while under DJS supervision were most often 17 or 18 years old

| Age | N | % |
|------|-------|-----|
| 14 | 1 | 5% |
| 15 | 4 | 20% |
| 16 | 3 | 15% |
| 17 | 5 | 25% |
| 18 | 5 | 25% |
| 19 | 2 | 10% |
| Mean | 16.75 | |

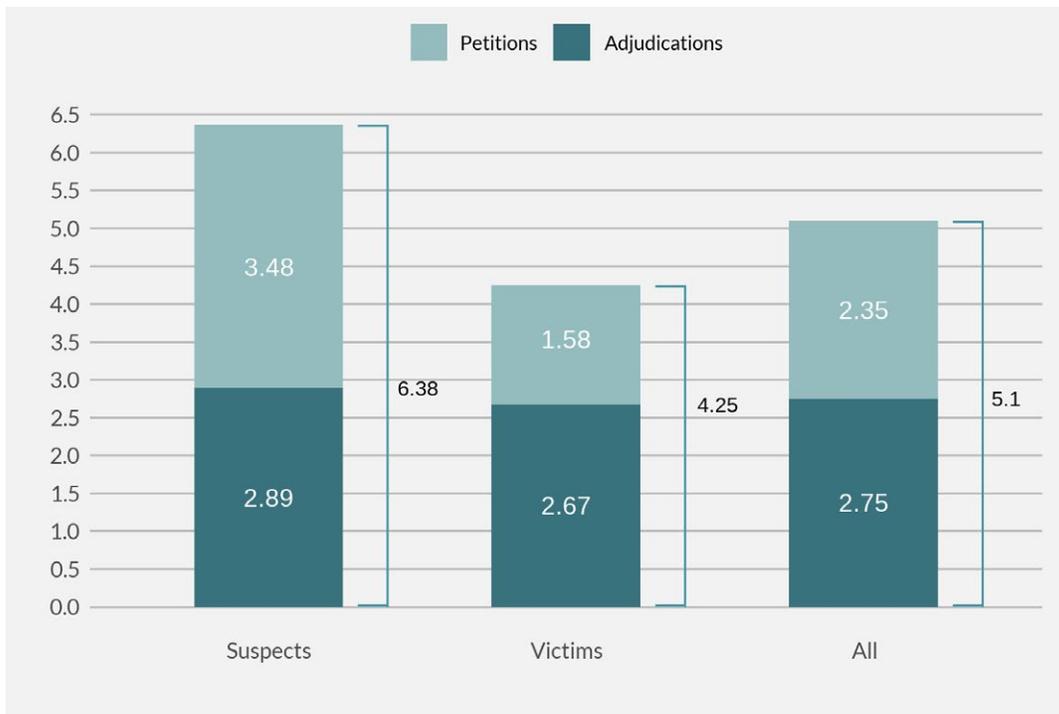
Delinquency System Contact

Petitions and Adjudications

Youth under supervision at the time of first shooting had an average of 5.1 petitions, of which 2.75 resulted in an adjudication (Figure 9) by the time of the shooting. **Of these youth, suspects had more petitions than victims, but the difference in the average number of adjudications was small.**

Statewide, youth under supervision at the time of first shooting involvement had, on average, 7.25 petitions, of which 2.75 were sustained, meaning Prince George's youth tended to have fewer petitions but approximately the same number of adjudications by the time they first experienced a shooting.

Figure 9. Youth on supervision who were shooting suspects had more petitions but approximately the same number of adjudications, on average, as youth on supervision who were shooting victims



Three-quarters of youth who were involved in a shooting while under DJS supervision had a petition for a felony crime of violence by the time they were involved in a shooting, in addition to most having petitions for property and person-to-person misdemeanors (Figure 10). Young people who were suspects in shootings while on DJS supervision had petitions for felony crimes of violence and felony property offense more often than youth who were shooting victims, but their petition histories were otherwise similar.

Young people who were suspects in shootings while on DJS supervision had petitions for felony crimes of violence and felony property offense more often than youth who were shooting victims.

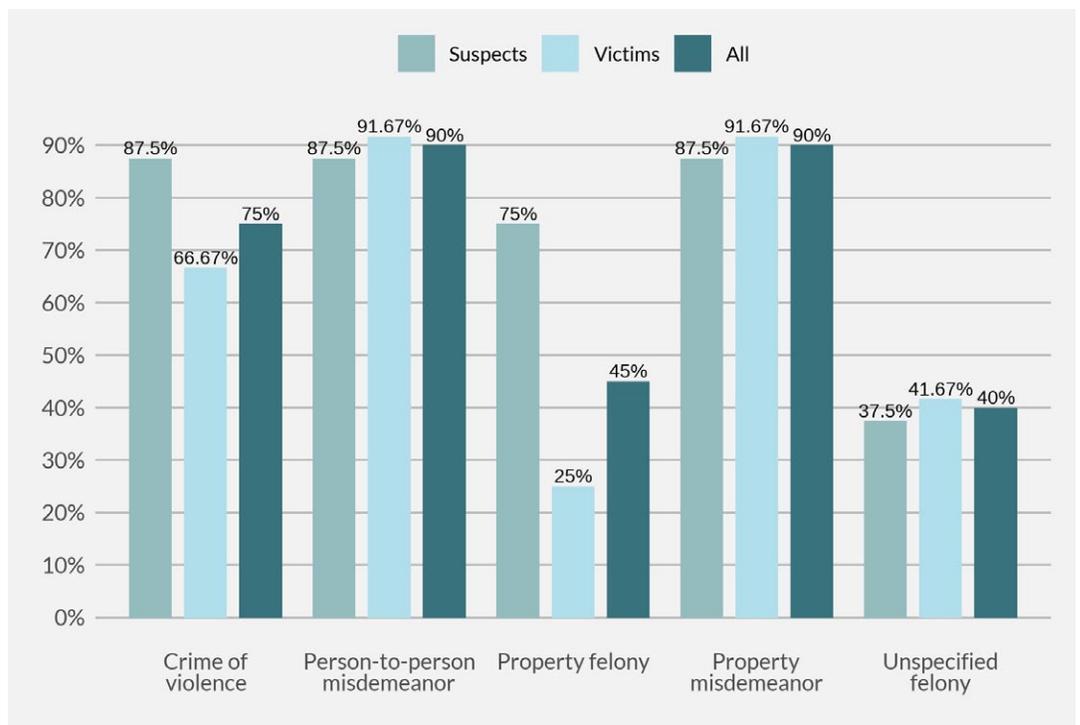
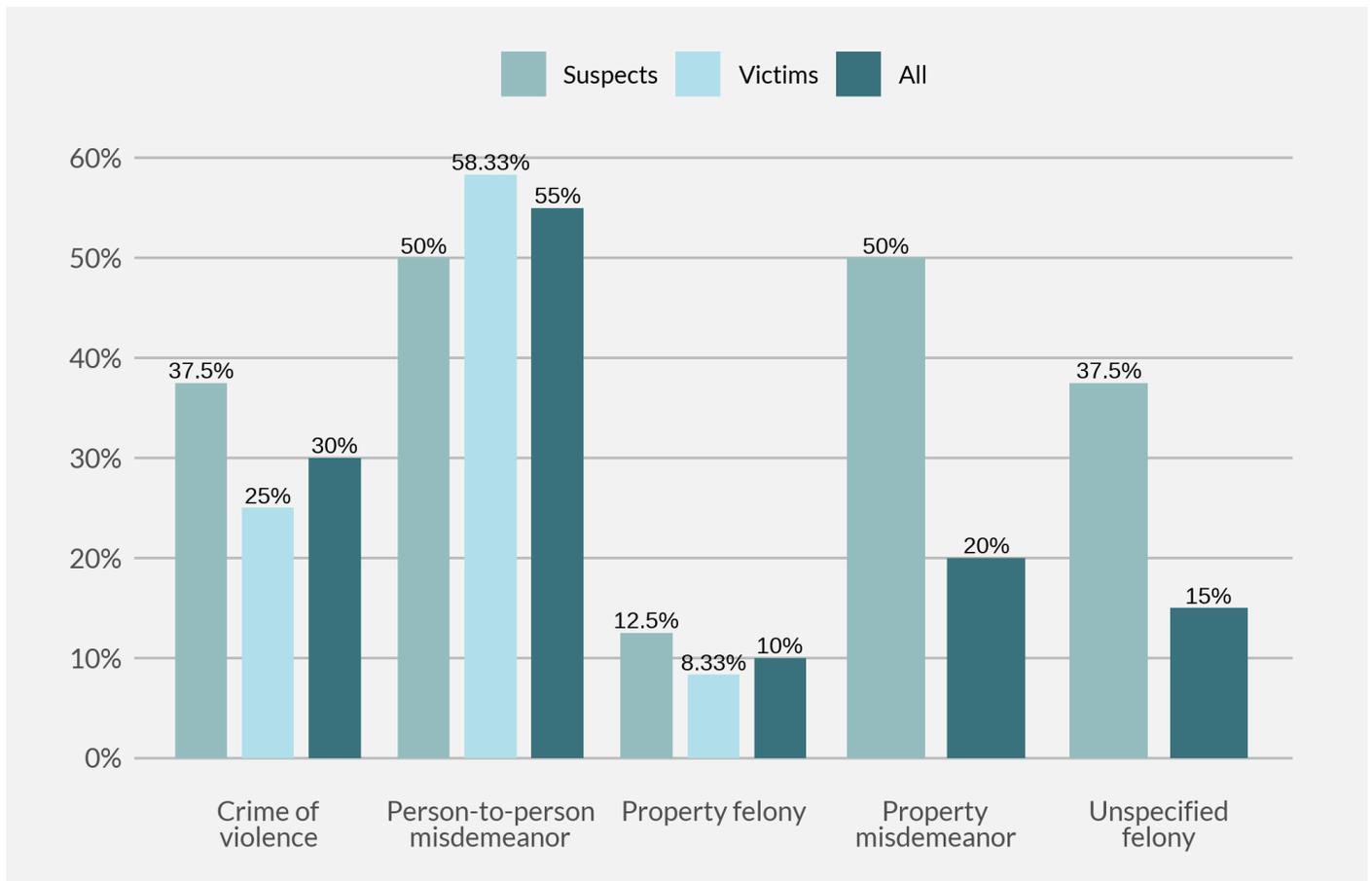


Figure 10. Suspect and victim delinquency histories were generally similar, but more shooting suspects had alleged crimes of violence

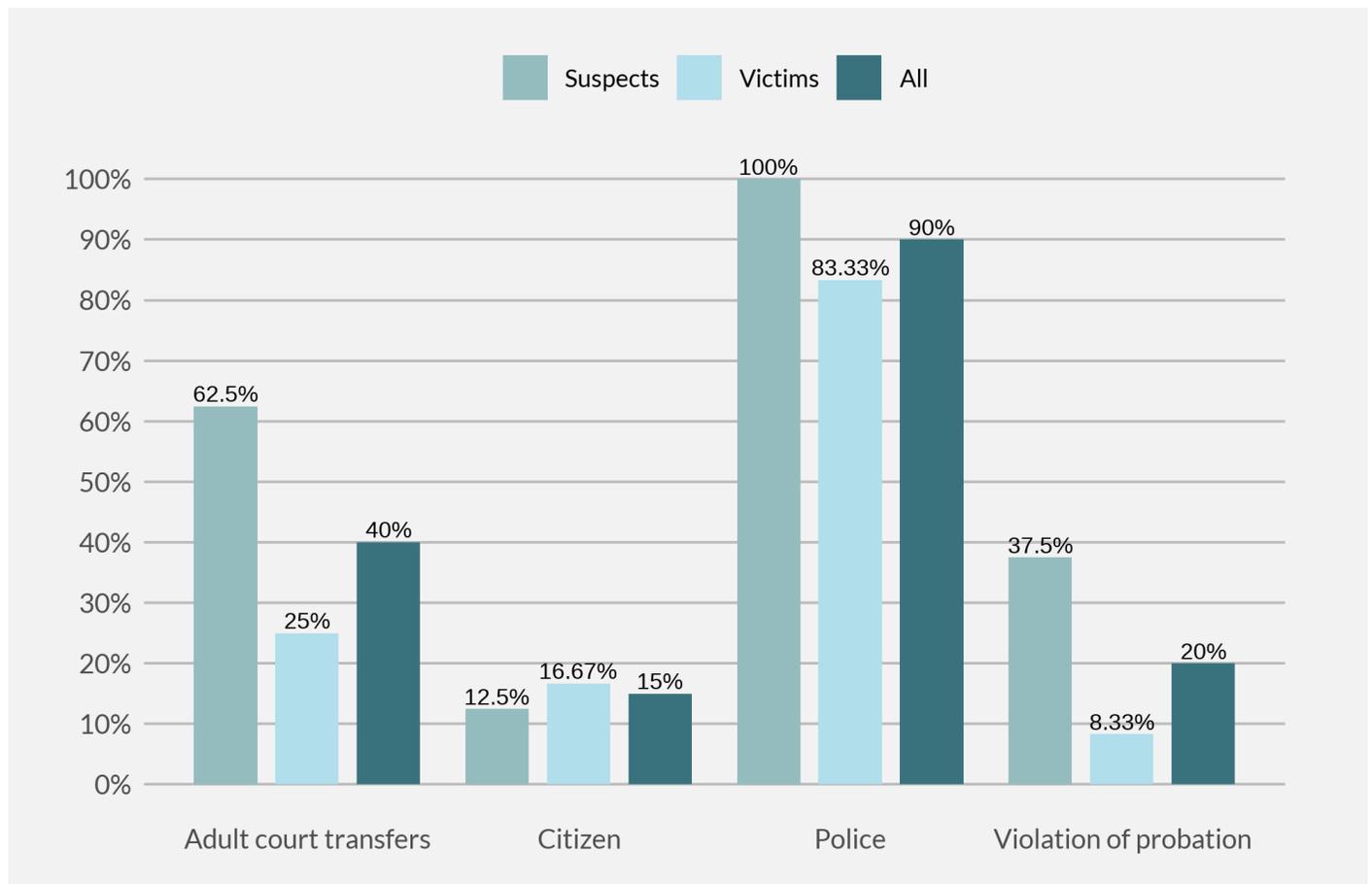
Youth on DJS supervision who were shooting suspects were also more likely to have been adjudicated than shooting victims for a number of offenses, including misdemeanor property offenses, felony crimes of violence, and “unspecified” felony offenses. Thirty percent of youth who were involved in a shooting while on DJS supervision had been adjudicated for a crime of violence by the time they were involved in a shooting (Figure 11). This is similar to youth under supervision statewide, of whom 76.63% had a petition for a crime of violence, and 35.42% had an adjudication for a crime of violence by the time they were involved in a shooting.

Figure 11. Youth who were shooting suspects while on DJS supervision were far more likely to have been adjudicated delinquent for multiple offenses than were youth who were shooting victims



One notable pattern among youth in Prince George’s County who were shooting suspects while on DJS supervision is that 62.5% of these young people had at least one case transferred from adult court (Figure 12). This pattern, which was not seen among any other group of youth included in this or the statewide study, is particularly noteworthy in light of the fact that youth involved in shootings in Prince George’s County had fewer petitions filed prior to being involved in a shooting than did youth in other parts of Maryland. This likely reflects differences in prosecution practices in Prince George’s County compared to the other jurisdictions that experienced high numbers of shootings (i.e., Baltimore City, Anne Arundal County, and Baltimore County). The large gap between the frequency with which shooting victims and suspects had had cases transferred from adult court (25% vs 62.5%) is also unique, although it is not possible to explain the reason for this pattern with the data available.

Figure 12. Almost all youth had at least one complaint from police



Placement History

Almost all the youth in Prince George's County who were involved in a shooting while under DJS supervision had been in both residential and non-residential placements prior to that shooting (Figure 13). Seventy percent had also been in detention, with suspects being more likely than victims to have been in detention (Table 11).

Figure 13. Most youth who were involved in a shooting while under DJS supervision had multiple prior placements

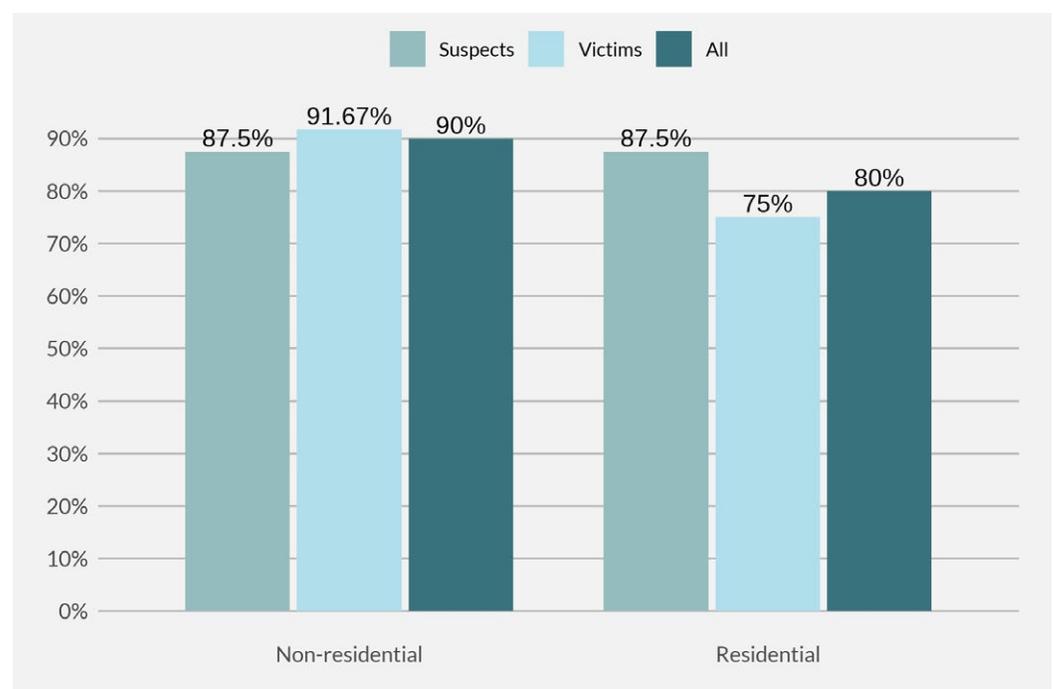


Table 11. Most youth who were involved in a shooting while on DJS supervision had been in detention

| Placement type | Suspects | | Victim | | All | |
|---|----------|-------|--------|--------|-----|-----|
| | N | % | N | % | N | % |
| Non-residential | | | | | | |
| Community / nonresidential | 7 | 87.5% | 11 | 91.67% | 18 | 90% |
| Residential | | | | | | |
| Committed - state facility/youth center | 1 | 12.5% | 1 | 8.33% | 2 | 10% |
| Community detention | - | - | 1 | 8.33% | 1 | 5% |
| Detention | 7 | 87.5% | 7 | 58.33% | 14 | 70% |
| EM (electronic monitoring) | 6 | 75.0% | 5 | 41.67% | 11 | 55% |
| Intermediate academy | - | - | 1 | 8.33% | 1 | 5% |
| Statewide residential pending placement | 1 | 12.5% | 1 | 8.33% | 2 | 10% |
| Structured shelter care (group setting) | 1 | 12.5% | - | - | 1 | 5% |
| Substance abuse programs | - | - | 1 | 8.33% | 1 | 5% |
| Therapeutic group home | 1 | 12.5% | - | - | 1 | 5% |

Case File Reviews

In addition to an analysis of data collected by DJS, NICJR reviewed the case files of the seven youth under DJS supervision in Prince George’s County who were involved in a shooting in 2023. Of these youth, two were suspects in shootings, four were victims in shootings, and one was a victim in an attempted shooting. This case file review revealed the many challenges youth experienced prior to the shooting incident, including contact with DJS, difficulties in school, trauma, and trouble connecting with services.

It should be noted that case notes only included life events during or related to the youth’s supervision. Case notes do not include complete trauma, medical, or educational histories. It is likely youth experienced additional critical events not documented in case histories.

All the youth included in the case file review were 14–19 years old at the time of the shooting, with an average age of 16.57 years. All except two of the youth were 16–18 years old. Four of the youth were Black, two were Latino, and one was Asian. All the youth were male. The young people were all 13–15 years old at the time of their first contact with DJS.

The case review revealed that these youth often had multiple contacts with DJS.

The case review revealed that these youth often had multiple contacts with DJS. They frequently had charges for drug possession, assault, carjacking or motor vehicle theft, or robbery. Almost three quarters of the Five of the seven youth had a charge involving a gun prior to the shooting incident . Despite this, it is important to note that the vast majority of youth charged with gun possession never went on to be involved in a shooting. One youth had previous attempted murder charges in adult court that were dropped prior to his being the suspect in a nonfatal shooting.

Half of the youth were enrolled in or graduated from non-traditional schooling such as alternative school or a GED program .

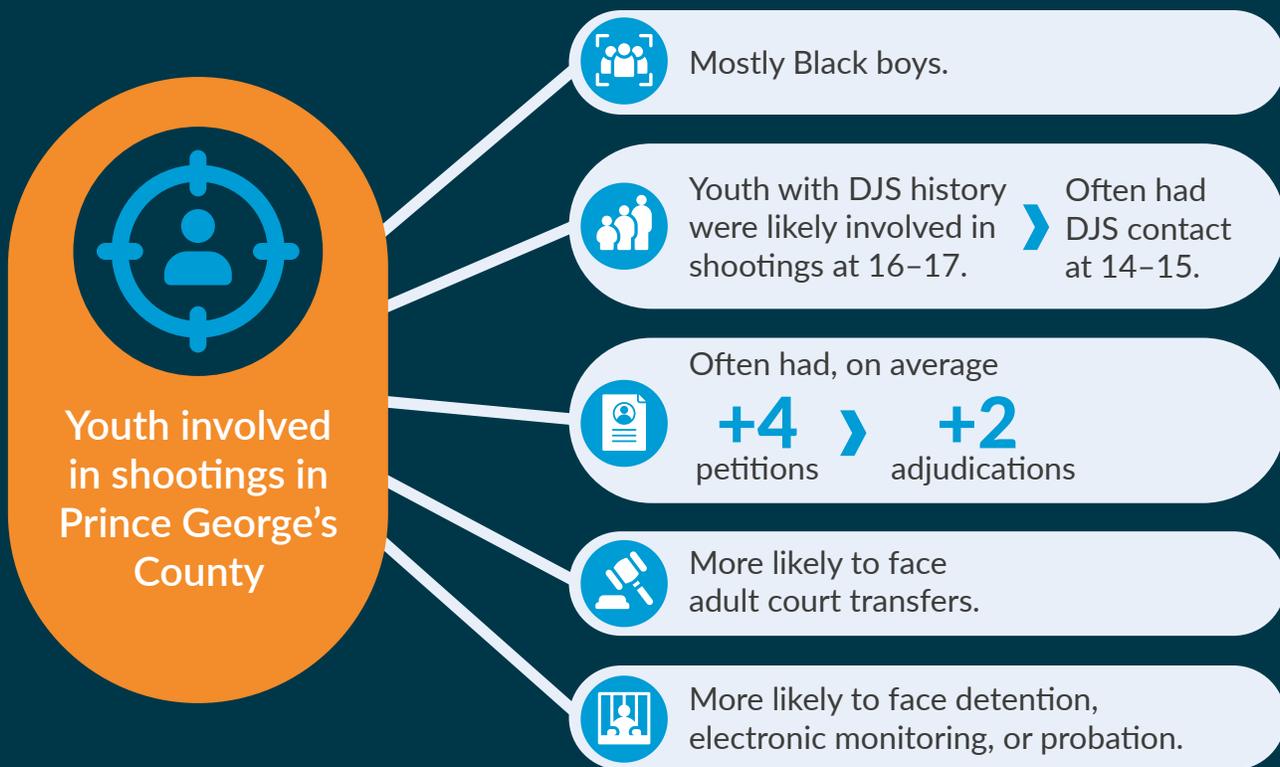
Many of the youth also experienced difficulties in school. Half of the youth were enrolled in or graduated from non-traditional schooling such as alternative school or a GED program . Two had been expelled or suspended from school. Several of the youth also had difficulties with truancy, poor academic performance, or behavioral issues in school. Two had been diagnosed with learning disabilities, but only one had an approved individual education plan (IEP) or 504 plan. Although one youth had an approved IEP and 504 plan in public school, when he moved to an in-person alternative school his IEP was never recertified, despite multiple meetings and a reassessment during the more than six months he was enrolled prior to taking the GED assessment.

Several of the youth experienced traumatic incidents during their time on supervision, many of which were active and ongoing. One youth was shot at and grazed by a bullet prior to becoming a suspect in a shooting. Other youth experienced unstable housing, significant health issues of their own or of an immediate family member, domestic violence and substance abuse in the home, and running away from home. One youth had been placed in kinship care through the child welfare system.

Several of the youth were court ordered or offered services through DJS supervision, but they either faced delays in accessing programming/services, were unable to connect to programming/services, or had difficulty participating in the program to which they were referred. One youth experienced delays in receiving court-ordered substance abuse assessments and treatment because of insurance issues. Another was unsuccessfully discharged from programming on multiple occasions. Three youth had safety plans offered before or after their shooting incident, but in each case, parents were reported as not cooperating with safety planning, rejecting a safety plan, or missing the planning meeting.

Youth who went on to be involved in a shooting while under DJS supervision frequently had multiple petitions filed with DJS and adult court. However, many youth also experienced difficulties not captured by ASSIST data. Stressors in the home and at school, trauma, and mental health diagnoses were common, but support was often absent or delayed. These other important life events do not show up in summary data but are just as valuable for predicting which youth may be at risk of being involved in gun violence.

Conclusion



Only a small portion of youth involved in DJS go on to be involved in a shooting. Youth involved in shootings in Prince George's County from January 2019 to June 2023 made up only 3.25% of youth with a delinquency petition filed by DJS in 2019. Additionally, only about half of youth involved in a shooting had prior DJS contact. Youth involved in a shooting were overwhelmingly Black boys. Of those with prior DJS contact, youth were more likely to be involved in shootings at 16-17 years old, but frequently had DJS contact at 14-15 years old. These youth often had, on average, more than four petitions and more than two adjudications and were more likely to have charges transferred from adult court. They were also more likely to have been placed in detention or on electronic monitoring and to have been on probation at some time in their life. Despite a small sample, case file reviews also showed youth frequently experienced difficulty in school or attended non-traditional schools, experienced various forms of trauma, and had multiple contacts with DJS prior to becoming involved in a shooting.

Structured data collected by DJS is useful in identifying youth in need of higher intensity intervention; however, a review of data should be partnered with a review of case files. Each youth involved in DJS has a complex story, and delinquency histories and risk assessments only tell a part of that story. DJS should use a combination of the risk factors identified above and case reviews to identify the youth most in need of immediate and intensive intervention.

Notably, following the statewide analysis of youth and gun violence referenced previously, DJS established The Thrive Academy, a data-informed youth development and violence intervention program that provides intensive community-based services to youth under DJS supervision who are at very high risk of being involved in gun violence. The Thrive Academy is operating in four Maryland jurisdictions: Baltimore City, Baltimore County, Anne Arundel County, and Prince George's County.

After being identified through the screening process, DJS staff refer youth to the community-based organization (CBO) leading Thrive intervention services in the jurisdiction where the youth lives. The local CBO provides intensive life coaching to the youth as well as support for the family. The Life Coaches employed by the CBOs are people from the same community as the youth, who have similar lived experience as the youth, which gives them credibility and much more likelihood of acceptance. The Life Coach builds a positive and trusting relationship with the youth through intensive engagement that consists of daily communication with the youth and two to four times per week in-person engagement with the youth and family.

Eventually, the Life Coach will work with each youth and their family to develop a Life Plan that identifies needed wraparound services, and they will connect the youth and family to those services. Groups of Thrive Academy youth also participate in “transformative travel” experiences, where youth and Life Coaches go on educational excursions to take the youth out of their everyday environments and broaden their horizon. The Thrive Academy is currently undergoing a rigorous evaluation; however, preliminary data indicate positive results, with few youth having been rearrested and far fewer having subsequent involvement with firearms.



GUN VIOLENCE
AMONG PRINCE GEORGE'S
COUNTY, MARYLAND YOUTH

