

# ANNUAL REPORT 2020

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Juvenile Assessment Center of Lee County



*Assisting youth and their families to seek  
the treatment and programs they need  
to lead productive, crime-free lives.*

Published February 2020



Lee County Sheriff's Office  
Juvenile Assessment Center of Lee County  
2107 Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Boulevard  
Fort Myers, FL 33901

# JAC Overview

The Juvenile Assessment Center of Lee County, also called the “JAC,” is located in downtown Fort Myers, Florida. The JAC was founded in 2003 through a collaborative community planning process. The JAC co-locates various agencies which serves to streamline the local juvenile justice system, to promote timely case processing, and to reduce the duplication of services. The JAC assists both “at risk” youth and arrested youth and their families. The JAC is operated by the Lee County Sheriff’s Office in partnership with the Lee County Board of County Commissioners and the Florida Department of Juvenile Justice. The physical facility and the JAC’s management is funded by the Lee County Board of County Commissioners. The JAC receives no state funding, although it indirectly benefits from state resources through its co-located partners.

The JAC is located in downtown Fort Myers, Florida and is part of the Lee County Justice Center Complex.

## BOOKING AND RECEIVING FACILITY

When a youth is arrested in Lee County, the arresting officer transports the youth to the Juvenile Booking Facility which is attached to both the JAC and to the Lee County Jail. The design of the facility allows for the sharing of the Lee County Sheriff’s Office’s booking staff between the juvenile booking area and the adult jail to maximize staffing resources. Arrested youth are kept separate from detained adults at all times. When an arrested youth is brought to the Juvenile Booking Facility he or she has his or her fingerprints, palm prints, and a booking photograph taken. Arrested youth who are charged with a felony offense also have a DNA sample taken.

Over 44% of the arrested youth in Lee County assessed as being at high risk for reoffending have a history of mental health problems.\*

## SCREENING AND ASSESSMENT

When arrested youth arrive at the Juvenile Booking Facility/JAC they are screened by Florida Department of Juvenile Justice (DJJ) intake staff to determine if they are eligible for secure detention. DJJ’s detention risk assessment considers a youth’s arrest history, the seriousness of the charges, and whether the youth is a flight risk. Based on the youth’s detention risk assessment score, he or she may be taken to secure detention, placed on home detention, or directly released to his or her parent or guardian. DJJ staff also screen each arrested youth for their risk to offend again and for any substance abuse and/or mental health issues. Based on this screening, DJJ staff may recommend that the youth receive a more in-depth assessment from one of the JAC’s community partners.

33% of arrested youth in Lee County report that they are currently using drugs. 13% say their current drug use is causing life problems.\*

\*Source: DJJ PACT Profile 2017-18

# JAC Overview (cont.)

## PROMOTING PUBLIC SAFETY

Before the JAC opened in 2003, law enforcement officers were responsible for supervising arrested youth who were not detained until the youth could be released to the custody of his or her parents. Law enforcement officers are now able to deliver all arrested youth to the JAC and return within a few minutes to road patrol or to help safeguard the community's schools.

Department of Juvenile Justice staff at the JAC track all arrested youth who are placed on home detention and disseminate this information to local law enforcement agencies. This allows law enforcement officers to provide increased monitoring and supervision of youth who are placed on home detention.

During the 2018-19 school year, 388 youth were arrested at school.

## LINKING YOUTH AND FAMILIES TO SERVICES

The JAC's main phone number at (239) 258-3450 serves as an information and referral line for parents seeking help for their youth and for others requesting information about services available for local youth and families. The JAC maintains a Community Resource Guide of youth related services that can be accessed from the JAC's website at [www.swfljac.org](http://www.swfljac.org).

## COMMUNITY ASSESSMENT

The JAC tracks trends in juvenile crime and risk factors for delinquency within the community. JAC staff work collaboratively with community partners to identify emerging trends, gaps in services, and resources for the prevention and intervention of youth crime.

## INFORMATION AND EDUCATION

The JAC serves as a hub for information about the local juvenile justice system. The JAC's website, [www.swfljac.org](http://www.swfljac.org), provides information about the local juvenile justice system for parents, law enforcement officers, and community partners. The JAC has developed brochures to assist in answering some of the most frequently asked questions from parents and community partners. These are available in the JAC's lobby and also on the JAC's website. Some are available in Spanish. The JAC broadcasts prevention oriented Public Service Announcements (PSA's) in its lobby. Some of the PSA's were donated by community partners. The JAC provides tours of the JAC and presentations about the juvenile justice system to a variety of school and community groups.

The JAC provided tours and presentations about the local juvenile justice system to 52 school and community groups in 2019.

# JAC Overview (cont.)

## PREVENTION

### PREVENTION COUNSELING

Lutheran Services of Florida co-locates one counselor at the JAC who provides individual and family counseling with non-arrested youth and their families.

### SNAP (STOP NOW AND PLAN)

Lutheran Services of Florida provides two counselors at the JAC for the SNAP program. It is an evidence-based, cognitive-behavioral, and gender-based program for troubled children ages 6 to 11. It is designed for children who are engaging in aggressive, negative behavior and/or have come into disciplinary contact with authority figures at school or in the community. It helps children and their parents learn how to effectively manage their emotions and “keep problems small”.

### CINS/FINS

Lutheran Services provides a case manager at the JAC for the Child in Need of Services/Families in Need of Services program. This program works with youth who show troubling behavior including running away from home, truancy, and ungovernable behavior.

### TRUANCY INTERVENTION PROGRAM (TIP)

The TIP program is coordinated by the JAC in partnership with the School District of Lee County. TIP works with families whose elementary or middle school aged youth are at risk of becoming habitually truant. TIP works with the families to improve school attendance or to proceed toward judicial action.

### TRUANCY UNGOVERNABLE RUNAWAY NETWORK (TURN)

TURN works with families of youth that are habitually truant, ungovernable, or runaways. TURN works with the families to improve the youth’s behavior or to proceed toward judicial action. TURN is coordinated by Lutheran Services of Florida in partnership with multiple community agencies.

197 youth participated in the TIP and TURN programs at the JAC in 2019.

109 youth committed crimes while they were truant from school during 2019.

The JAC provides free drug test kits to parents to use as a drug prevention tool. In 2019, approximately 600 drug test kits were distributed.

# JAC Overview (cont.)

## EARLY INTERVENTION

### CIVIL CITATION

The JAC operates a civil citation program which provides an alternative to an arrest for youth who commit minor crimes. Law enforcement officers have the discretion to issue a youth a civil citation rather than make an arrest if a youth commits a misdemeanor crime that meets the criteria. Youth must meet with the Civil Citation Coordinator within one week of being issued a civil citation. Youth are typically assigned community service hours and/or a service learning project as a consequence for their offense. Depending on the case, youth may be referred to the CHAMPS Program at the JAC or to other programs and services in the community to assist youth in remaining crime free.

260 youth were issued a Civil Citation in Lee County in 2019, an 18% increase from 2018.

### CHAMPS (CHOOSING HEALTHY ATTITUDES & MOTIVATING PERSONAL SUCCESS)

The CHAMPS Program at the JAC works with youth in the Civil Citation Program with substance abuse issues. The program provides screening, youth counseling, peer support groups, random drug testing, monitoring of school progress and attendance, short term case management, and referrals to other programs and services in the community for continued services.

### SUBSTANCE ABUSE INTERVENTION

The Hanley Center facilitates an early intervention program at the JAC for adolescents with a substance abuse issue.

319 youth received case management services and 327 youth participated in peer support groups through the CHAMPS program in 2019.

## INTERVENTION

### MORAL RECONATION THERAPY (MRT)

Through a partnership with the Lee County Department of Human and Veterans Services, MRT is provided at the JAC. The MRT program works primarily with first time juvenile offenders who have committed a violent crime such as a misdemeanor battery or an aggravated battery. Youth are approved for the program by the Office of the State Attorney. MRT is an evidence based, 12-step cognitive behavioral intervention that seeks to reduce recidivism by increasing moral reasoning. This program also provides anger management groups and parent support groups.

In 2019, 153 youth were arrested for domestic violence.

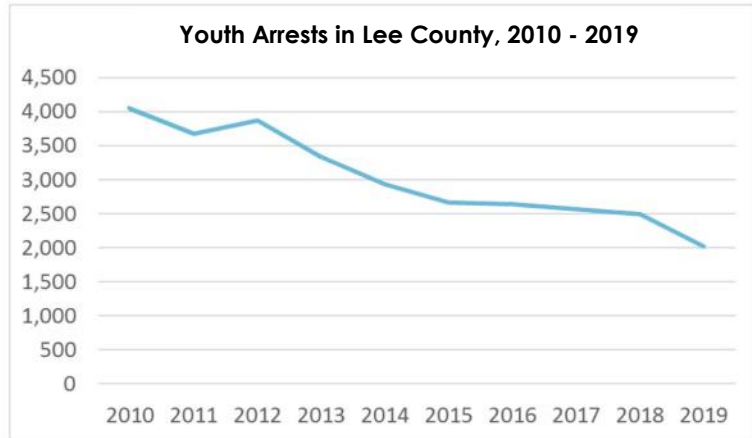
# Data Trends

## TOTAL ARRESTS

In 2019 the JAC received 2,014 arrested youth. This number includes youth who were arrested more than one time during the year. It also includes youth who were screened as eligible for secure detention from Charlotte, Hendry, and Glades Counties. Youth from these counties are transported to the Juvenile Assessment Center of Lee County prior to being transported to the Southwest Florida Regional Detention Center in Fort Myers. This does not include youth over the age of 18 arrested on juvenile sanctions.

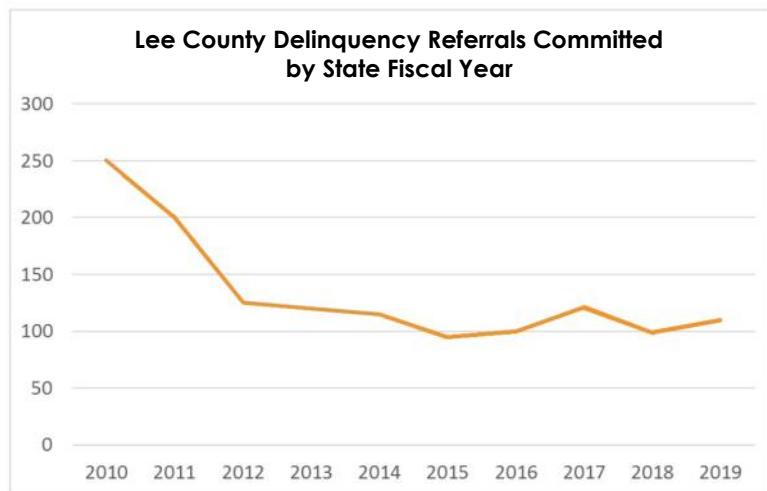
In 2019, the JAC received the fewest number of youth arrests since the JAC began tracking arrests in 2004.

23 Lee County youth were transferred to the adult court system in 2019.



## Top Youth Arrest Charges in Lee County, 2015—2019

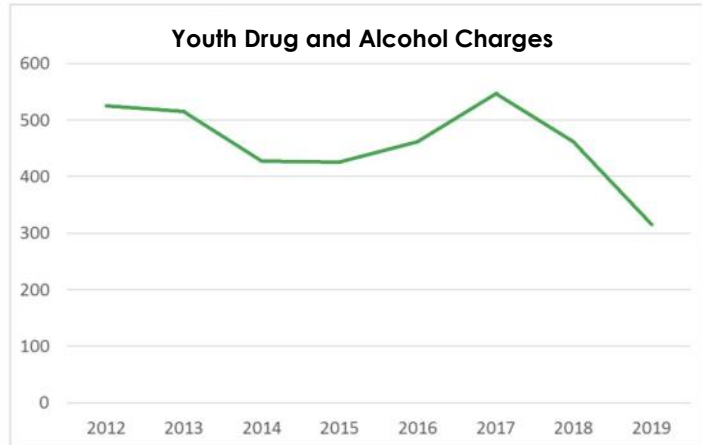
|                            | 2015 | 2016 | 2017 | 2018 | 2019 |
|----------------------------|------|------|------|------|------|
| Burglary                   | 377  | 403  | 339  | 400  | 242  |
| Battery/Simple Assault     | 228  | 221  | 236  | 215  | 193  |
| Larceny Petit Theft        | 276  | 224  | 150  | 188  | 151  |
| Resist Arrest w/o Violence | 175  | 186  | 182  | 197  | 138  |
| Marijuana Concentrate      | -    | 6    | 17   | 98   | 120  |
| Larceny                    | 201  | 258  | 223  | 191  | 111  |



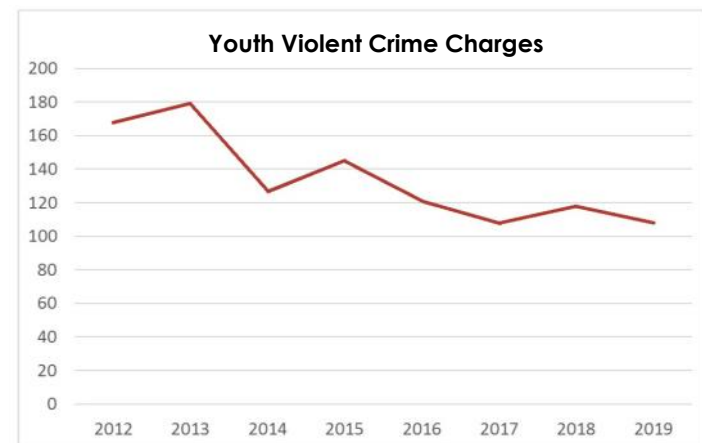
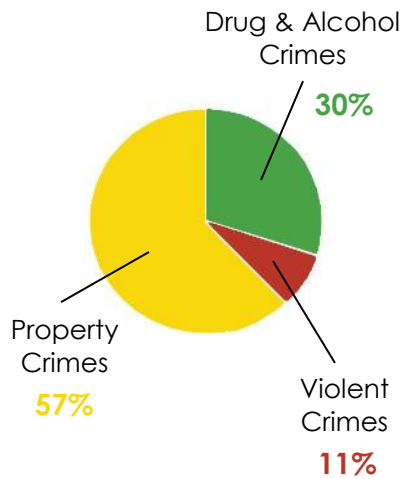
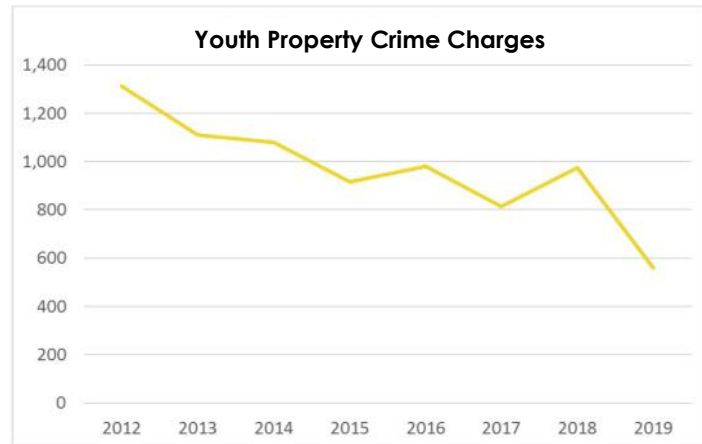
State Fiscal Years 2009-10 through 2018-19  
 Source: Florida Department of Juvenile Justice Delinquency Profile

# Data Trends (cont.)

The most prevalent youth drug charge in Lee County in 2019 was for marijuana. There were 226 marijuana charges among arrested youth.

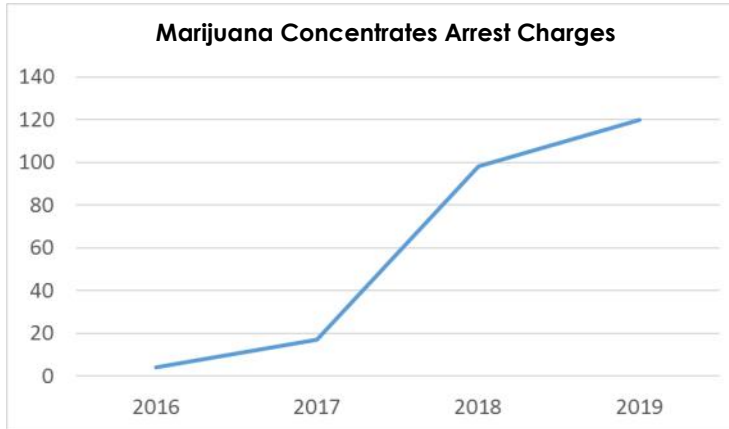


Youth violent crime is relatively low in proportion to drug crime and property crime.

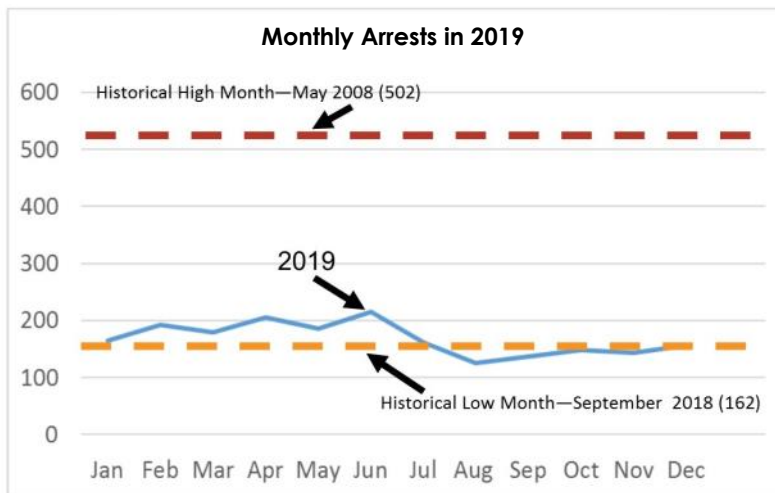




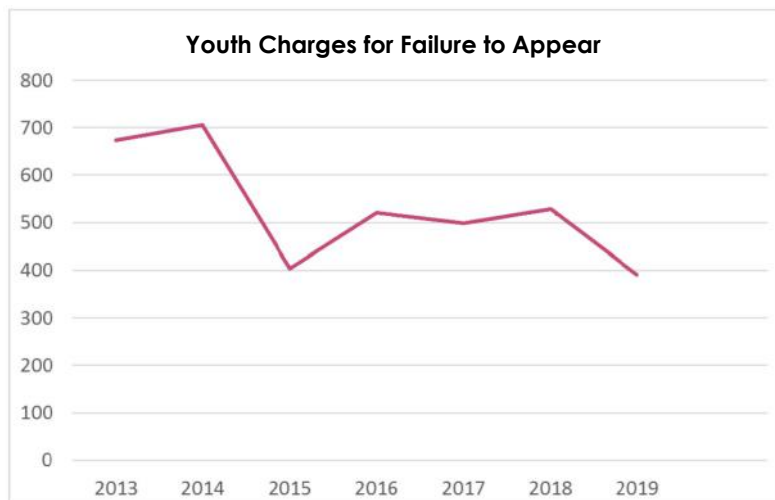
## Data Trends (cont.)



Youth arrests for possession of marijuana concentrates have been increasing. A marijuana concentrate is considered a controlled substance. Possession of it in any amount is a felony offense in Florida.



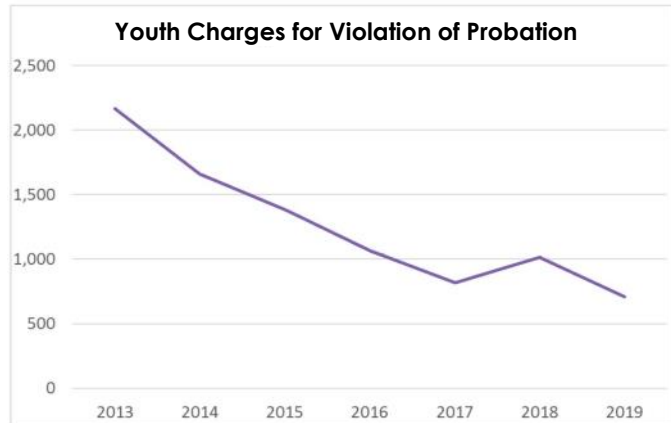
In 2019, the highest number of youth arrests occurred in the month of June (215). The lowest number of youth arrests were in the month of August (125), a new historical low. During 2019, six months, from July through December, each saw a fewer number of arrests than the historical low month of September 2018.



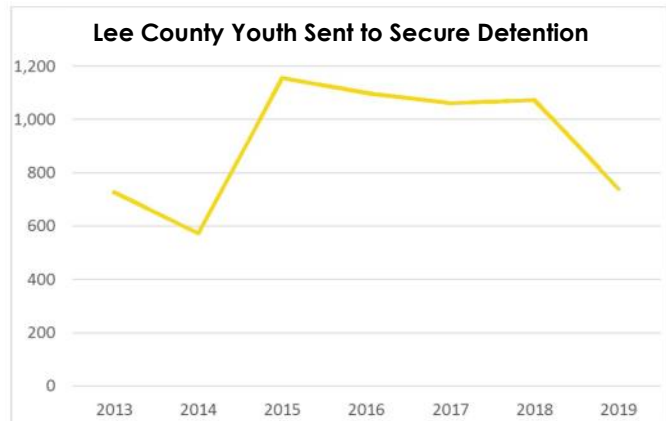
There were 391 youth charges for Failure to Appear to Court in 2019.

# Data Trends (cont.)

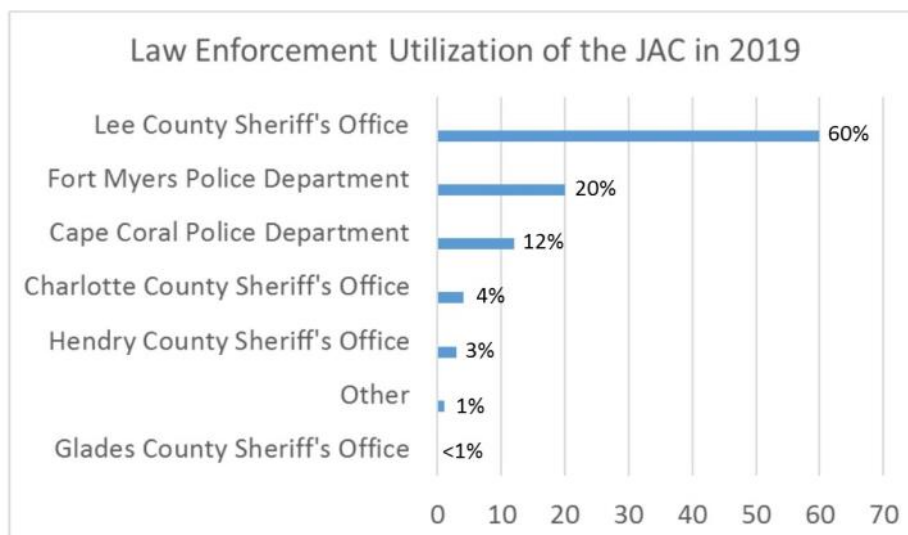
Youth charges for Violations of Probation were 67% lower in 2019 than in 2013.



In 2019, there were 739 Lee County youth who were sent to secure detention.



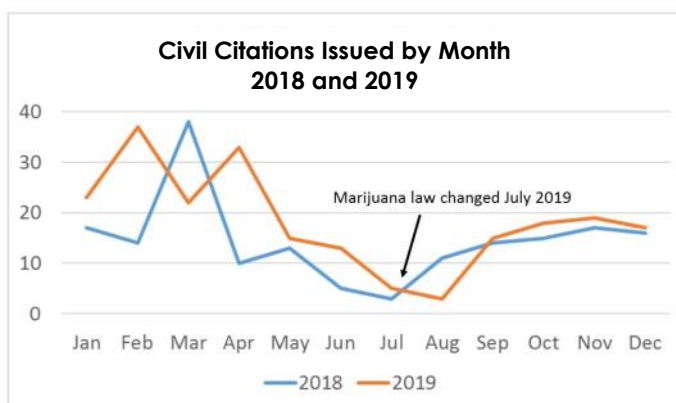
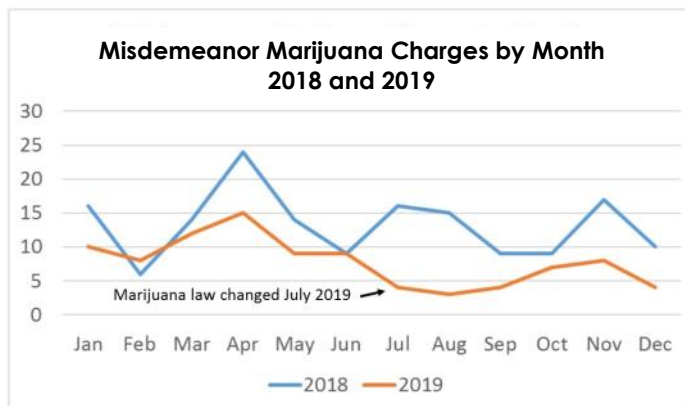
562 Lee County youth were placed on home detention in 2019.



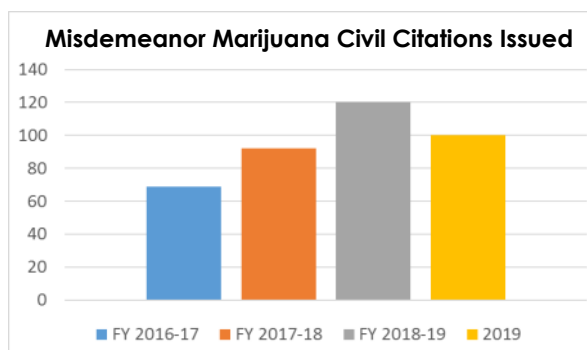
# Other Issues to Watch

## MARIJUANA POSSESSION LAW CHANGES

In July of 2019, a new Florida law legalized the possession of hemp. Hemp and cannabis come from the same plant. They look and smell the same. The only difference is in their THC content. Field tests utilized by local law enforcement officers at the time of the law change were not able to determine the percentage of THC to distinguish between legal hemp and cannabis. It was possible to send a sample of the suspected substance for testing to an out of state lab, but this was an expensive and time consuming option. Spurred by this new law, various State Attorney's in Florida announced that they would no longer prosecute minor marijuana cases. Our local Office of the State Attorney, 20th Judicial Circuit, along with some other SAO's in the state, instructed local law enforcement that the new law would change the probable-cause standard for police who previously used the sight and smell of marijuana to search potential suspects. Under a new "odor-plus" standard, additional observations could be utilized to establish probable cause. While it is still too early to tell how the law change has or will affect local youth arrests for marijuana, preliminary trends are highlighted here.



Source: Department of Juvenile Justice Civil Citation Dashboard. Note that civil citations for misdemeanor marijuana are not tracked by month.



Source: Department of Juvenile Justice Civil Citation Dashboard. The State fiscal year is from July through June. 2019 reflects the calendar year. Numbers reflect "Misdemeanor Violations of Drug Laws" but are essentially marijuana charges.

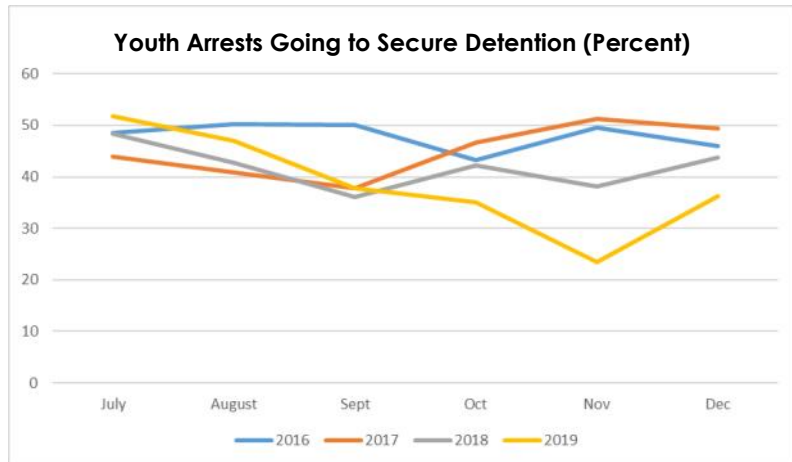
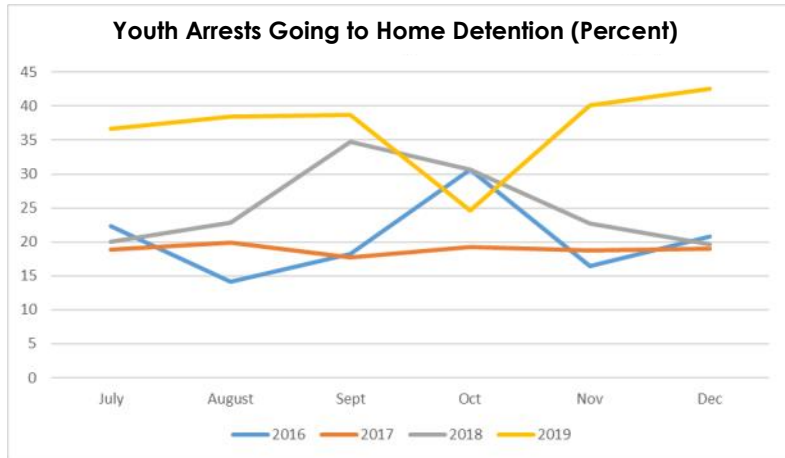
57% of civil citations issued in Lee County during FY 2018-19 were for misdemeanor marijuana charges.

# Other Issues to Watch (cont.)

## CHANGES IN HOME DETENTION

In July of 2019, the Florida Department of Juvenile Justice implemented a revised supervised release program which includes a continuum of more restrictive options for youth placed on Home Detention (as an alternative to Secure Detention). Depending on an arrested youth's score on a Detention Risk Assessment Instrument (DRAI), a youth may be released to a parent, guardian, or responsible adult and placed on Home Detention, Intensive Home Detention, or Intensive Home Detention with electronic monitoring. All levels of Home Detention include supervision guidelines and restrictions on the youth's whereabouts. Intensive Home Detention includes increased levels of supervision.

Preliminary data suggest that the implementation of a continuum of intensive Home Detention options has increased the utilization of Home Detention services and decreased the use of Secure Detention in Lee County.

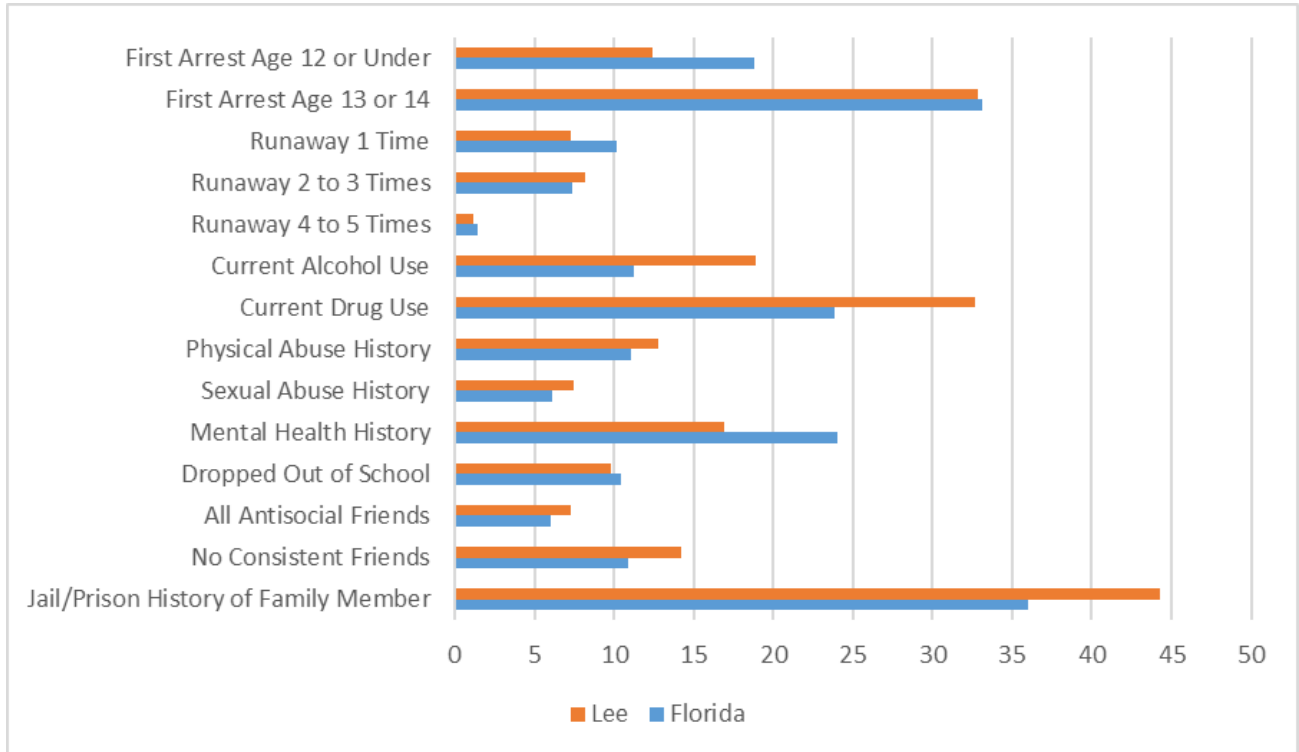


All non-fiscally constrained counties in Florida are responsible for reimbursing the state for their share for the use of Secure Detention. For FY 2019-20, Lee County's bill was for 13,988 detention days at a daily cost of \$158.25 and an annual bill of \$2,213,580.

# Risk Factors for Lee County Youth



**Risk Factors of Arrested Youth, Lee County and Florida (Percent)**



Source: Florida Department of Juvenile Justice, PACT Profile FY 2017-18

At the time of arrest, 32.7% of Lee County youth reported that they were currently using drugs compared to 23.8% of Florida youth.

18.9% of arrested youth in Lee County and 11.2% of arrested youth in Florida reported that they currently used alcohol.

# Community Partnerships

## Lee County Board of County Commissioners

Provides the physical facility that houses the JAC service array.

## Florida Department of Juvenile Justice

Screens arrested youth for detention and mental health and/or substance abuse issues, and makes recommendations to the court. Southwest Florida Regional Detention staff transport youth between the JAC and the detention center.

## Lee County Sheriff's Office

Provides management for the operation and coordination among the JAC partners. Coordinates the Civil Citation program and the Truancy Intervention Program (TIP). Partner in the TURN Program.

## Lutheran Services of Florida

Provides screening and assessments for non-arrested youth, case management, and individual and family counseling. Coordinates the TURN program. Provides the SNAP prevention program .

## Lee County Department of Human and Veterans Services

Provides Moral Reconciliation Therapy (MRT), anger management groups, and parent support groups.

## Hanley Center

Provides adolescent early intervention groups to address substance abuse issues.

In addition to the above agencies that provide services which are physically located at the JAC, the JAC has enjoyed the partnerships and participation of many other agencies and organizations including:

Cape Coral Police Department  
Charlotte County Sheriff's Office  
Children's Advocacy Center  
Department of Children and Families  
Elite DNA  
Fort Myers Police Department  
Florida Gulf Coast University Campus Police  
Florida Highway Patrol  
Florida Southwestern College Campus Police  
Glades County Sheriff's Office  
Guardian Ad Litem  
Hendry County Sheriff's Office  
Lee County Clerk of Courts  
Lee County Coalition for a Drug Free SW Florida  
Lee County Port Authority  
Office of the State Attorney  
PACE Center for Girls  
Public Defender's Office  
Punta Gorda Police Department  
Sanibel Police Department  
SalusCare  
School District of Lee County  
20th Circuit Judicial Court

# For More Information

## Juvenile Assessment Center of Lee County

2107 Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Blvd.  
Fort Myers, FL 33901

Phone: (239) 258-3450

Fax: (239) 258-3474

Website: [www.swfljac.org](http://www.swfljac.org)

## Lee County Sheriff's Office Staff at the JAC

William C. Naylor  
*Director*

Kacie Robinson  
*Civil Citation Coordinator*

Amanda Cruz  
*Youth Program Coordinator*

Carol Helton  
*Community Program Coordinator*

## Resources Available from the JAC Website

at [www.swfljac.org/publications](http://www.swfljac.org/publications)

Community Resource Guide

Know the Law: A Guide for Adolescents  
and Their Parents

Know the Law: Consequences to a  
Juvenile Arrest or Conviction

Know the Law: Emancipation

Know the Law: Marijuana Concentrates

Know the Law: Truancy

Juvenile Criminal Records

How a Case Moves Through the Court

What to Wear and What Not to Wear in Court

Writing a Letter of Apology

### *Available in Spanish:*

Absentismo Escolar

Consecuencias del Arresto o Condena Juvenil

Emancipación