

YOUTH IN DETENTION SURVEY 2023

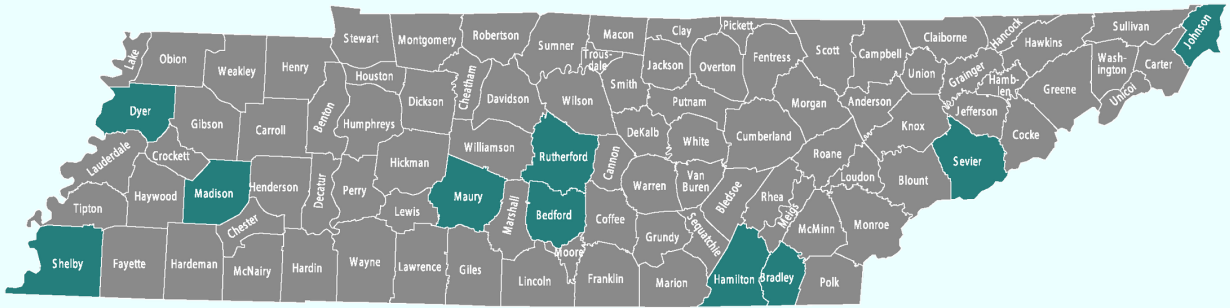


**A survey of youth in Juvenile
Detention Centers in
Tennessee by the Tennessee
Commission on Children and
Youth**

Their experiences | Their thoughts | What they need

Tennessee Commission on Children and Youth Youth Justice Survey

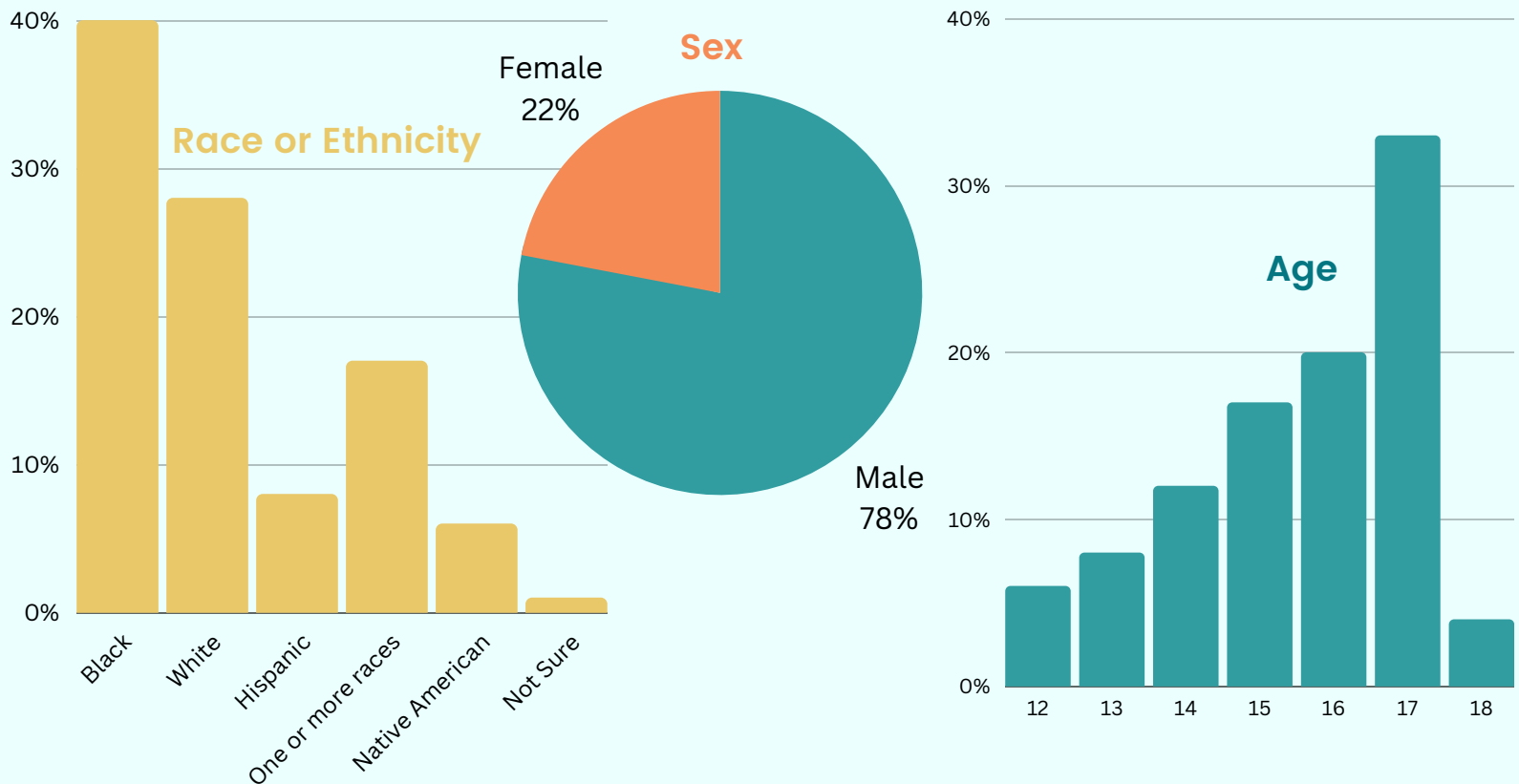
In spring of 2023, Tennessee Commission on Children and Youth surveyed youth in Juvenile Detention Centers across the state about their life experiences and what they want legislators and those who work with teens to know. Youth were also asked about what they need more help with.



Juvenile Detention Centers with survey responses included:

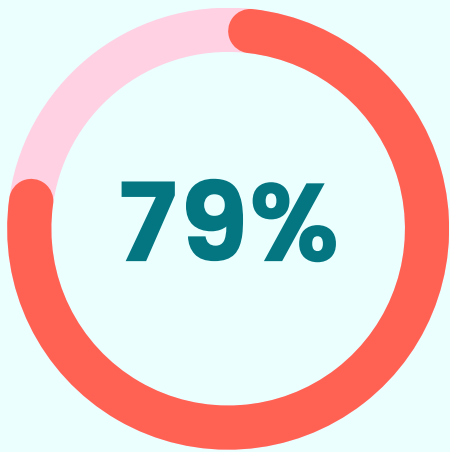
- Bradley County Juvenile Detention Center
- Bedford County Juvenile Detention Center
- Hamilton County Juvenile Detention Center
- Upper East Regional Juvenile Detention Center
- Madison County Juvenile Detention Center
- McDowell Juvenile Detention Center
- Middle Tennessee Juvenile Detention Center
- Rutherford County Juvenile Detention Center
- Sevier County Juvenile Facility
- Shelby County Juvenile Detention*
- Upper East Regional Juvenile Detention Center

Race, ethnicity, sex and age of survey respondents among those who indicated a race. Approximately 40 percent of respondents did not complete demographic indicators.



*The majority of Shelby County's survey responses do not include responses about how to improve the system, what got them into detention or demographics

Youth Justice Survey



Of youth indicated that someone who lived with them had (or maybe had) been arrested, in jail or detention.

43 percent of youth stated that they or someone they have lived with needed or maybe needed help with mental health or drugs/alcohol.



However, when asked about specific challenges, 45% of those who had previously said no indicated yes on at least one indicating the real percent might be closer to 68 percent.



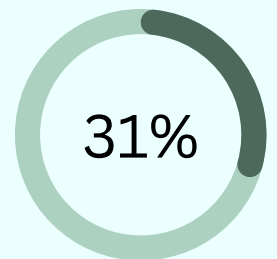
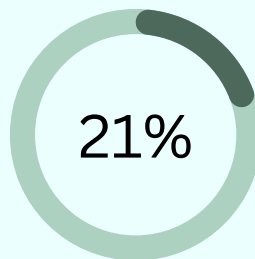
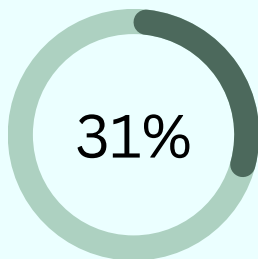
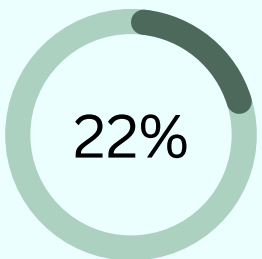
Have you or anybody who lived with you need help with the following

Drugs

Vaping/Smoking

Alcohol

Depression

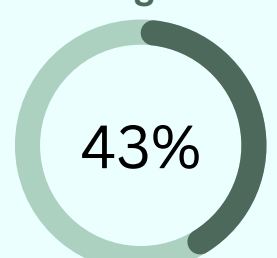
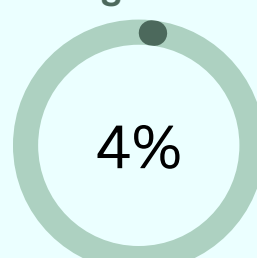
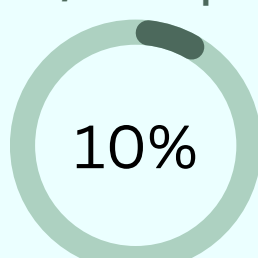
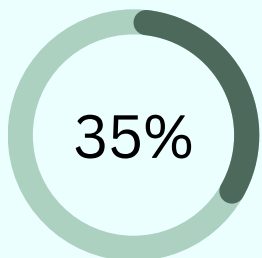


ADD/ADHD

Thoughts/Attempt Suicide

Eating Disorder

Anger



22%

31%

21%

31%

35%

10%

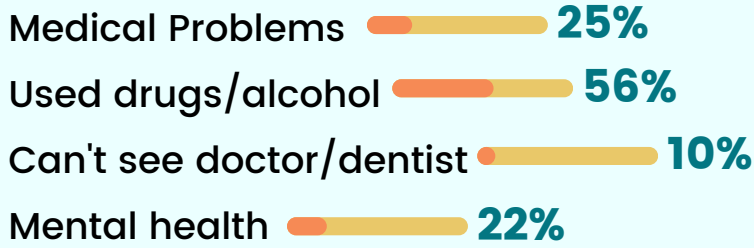
4%

43%

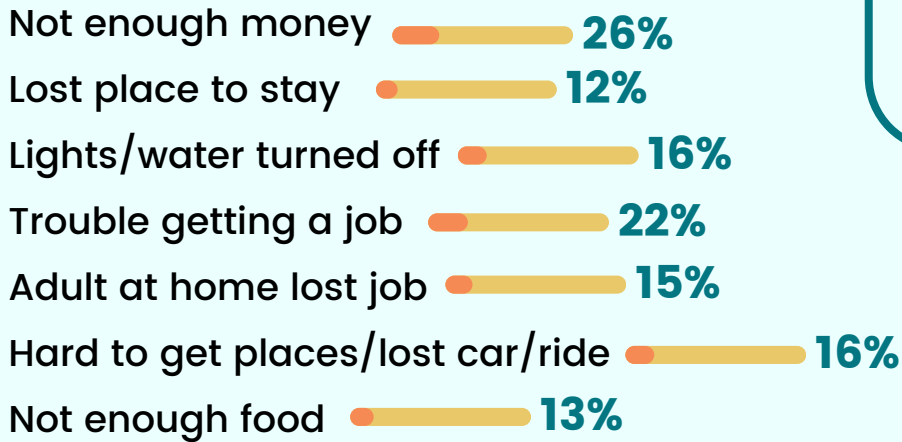
2023 Youth Justice Survey

Have any of the following happened in your life?

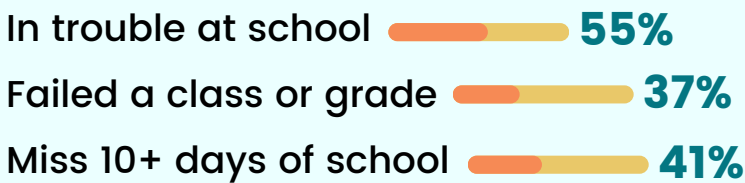
Health



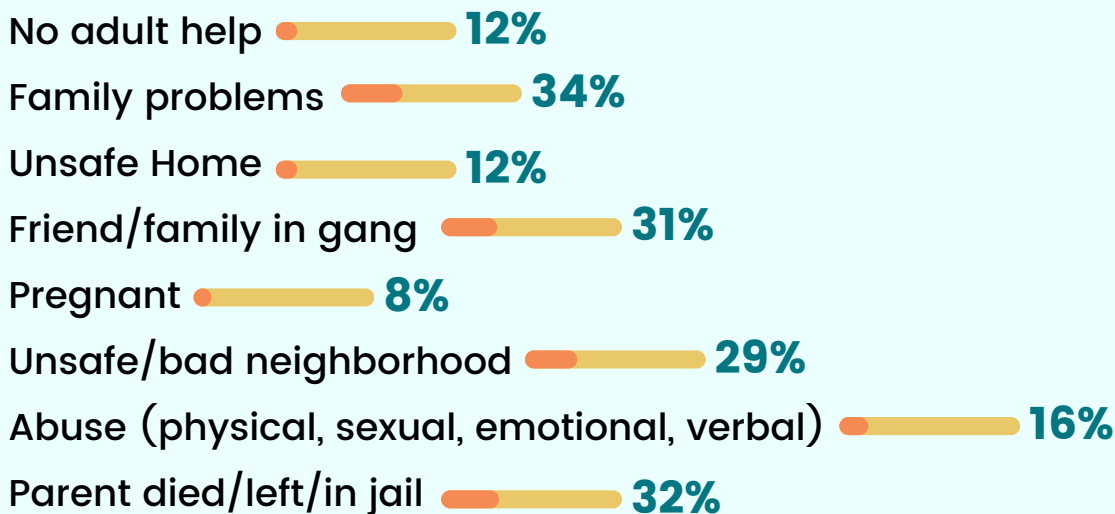
Economics



Education



Adversity



Other

"Physical Abuse Homeless Addiction Short of Funds Suicidal" "loss of family members"
"Been shot before and deal with depression" "Dad went to prison wen i was about 7" "I was adopted"

Most common experiences among surveyed youth

- Used drugs/alcohol
- In trouble at school
- Missed 10+ days of school
- Failed a class or gang
- Family problems
- Parent died/left/in jail
- Friend/family in gang

Among youth who indicated they had faced at least one of these challenges

the average number of challenging experiences was 6.5

65 percent of youth had experienced a health challenge

69 percent of youth had experienced an education challenge

63 percent of youth had experienced an adversity challenge

43 percent of youth had experienced an economic challenge

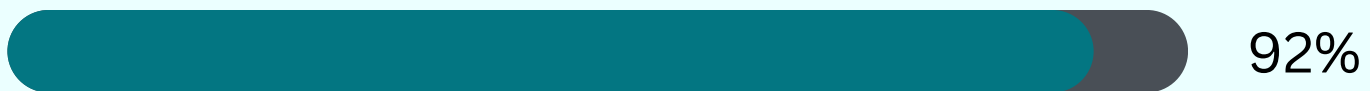
What do you need more help with?

1. School - 45 percent
2. Job - 31 percent
3. GED/Hi-Set - 20 percent
4. Phone - 17 percent
5. Adult I can trust - 16 percent
6. Rides - 13 percent
7. Mental Health - 13 percent
8. Legal - 13 percent
9. Place to live - 7 percent
10. Medicine/doctor - 7 percent

**More than half
of youth reported
needing more
help with school
or their GED/
Hi-Set**

True or False -

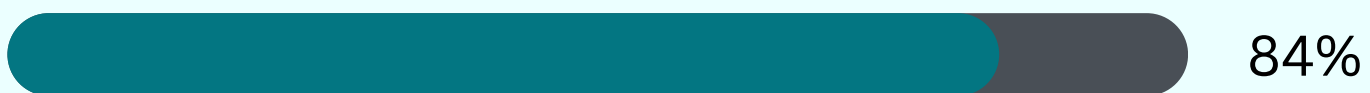
I have at least one adult I can trust



If my behavior changes, I can stay out of trouble



If my environment changes, I can stay out of trouble



What would you change about school, court, detention, or probation to make it better or more helpful?

Direct quotes from youth were transcribed as written on the surveys

"To make detention better allow more contact with other detainees and instead of keeping us locked in a cell for 18 hours on a week day and 22 hours on weekends give us more rec time"

"Let them understand that detention doesnt help troubled kids, it makes them worse. Courts need better programs for serious trouble kids like me. We need more help than just being thrown in a cell."

"I would change school to a place near my and my family I am talcking with my friend I live near about making a school on our road."

"To have help understanding my math class"

"If I could change this detention center I would better the food for the juveniles and give more contact and communication with parents."

"less holding time before treatment"

"more meeting with probation officer"

"I would change 1 thing in court and that is the Judge and DA hear your part and what you have to say."

"I would put more windows in. And I would also let parents come every once and awhile."

"Getting better food and put money on phone or get more free phone calls."

"I wouldn't change nothing."

"if the court/the judge would listen to people more instead of just his officers."

"More things to do while in detention. Give help for the one's that need."

"School. I would change it if I could be by myself so I can concentrate"

"Really give us a second chance"

"Communicate more with kids instead of gaurdian, kids need to be heard more"

"That they would help more not make it feel like punishment"

"More help for kids in poverty"

"nothing, everything is just the way needed"

"Less bad teachers no bee judged on the gang more food"



TENNESSEE COMMISSION ON
CHILDREN & YOUTH

Our mission: We lead systems improvement for all children and families through data-driven advocacy, education, and collaboration.

TN.GOV/TCCY