

# TRENDS IN MISDEMEANOR ARRESTS IN LOS ANGELES 2001–2017

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**DATA COLLABORATIVE for JUSTICE**  
**STRENGTH IN NUMBERS**

at **JOHN JAY COLLEGE**

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# EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The goal of this report is to examine an understudied occurrence in the criminal justice system with wide-ranging implications: the misdemeanor arrest. While misdemeanor offenses inherently create less harm to life, body and property than their felony counterparts, misdemeanors tend to be far more common and thus occupy much of the time and energy of police and prosecutorial agencies.

With data covering the years 2001 to 2017, generously supplied by Los Angeles Police Department and the City Attorney's Office, we summarize the trends, demographics, and charges of misdemeanor arrests as well as filing decision and disposition outcomes at the prosecution stage. Arrests and prosecution caseloads generally declined substantially during this time period (the misdemeanor arrest rate in 2017 was roughly half the peak year of 2008), but particular trends stood out.

- **Some smaller volume charge types saw increases in arrest frequency.** Arrests for Loitering/Trespass/Disorderly, Prostitution/Sex Crimes, and Weapon charges increased during the time period. Arrests for Vehicle/Driving-Related and Public Drunkenness/Open Container/Other Alcohol saw the biggest declines over this period, and were the most common arrests in most years. Arrests for Vehicle-Related, Alcohol-related, Person, Property, and Drugs charges made up between 63 percent and 70 percent of misdemeanor arrests in any year.
- **Misdemeanor arrest rates fell much more slowly for women.** Although men are still arrested at higher rates for misdemeanors than women, the gap is narrowing. The misdemeanor arrest rate for males declined 39 percent from 2001 to 2017 and 26 percent for women. The 2017 male misdemeanor arrest rate was still 3.15 times the rate for women.
- **Juvenile arrests have fallen dramatically.** At the beginning of the 2000s, 16- to 17-year-olds had the highest misdemeanor arrest rates. By 2017 they were the age group with the lowest arrest rates. Curfew and Truancy arrests have nearly disappeared after being a very common misdemeanor arrest among juveniles.
- **Racial disparities persist in arrests.** The arrest rate for Blacks was nearly 4.5 times higher than the White arrest rate in 2017. The arrest rate for Hispanics was about 22 percent higher.
- **Black female arrest rates increased for some age groups.** The three age groups of Black females between 18 and 35 (the highest volume age groups) all had higher arrest rates in 2017 than in 2001.

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For 18- to 20-year-olds and 21- to 24-year-olds, Prostitution is by far the most frequent charge category. However, it does not make up a larger share of arrests for these groups over time.

- **Many of the arrest trends in Los Angeles are mirrored in other large California counties and statewide.** Using data from the Public Policy Institute of California (PPIC), we are able to compare Los Angeles arrest trends to three major counties and the state as a whole.
- **Reflecting declines in arrests, City Attorney caseloads dropped from 2006 to 2017.** Caseloads in 2017 were approximately 60 percent of their 2006 peak.
- **Charges are relatively consistent over time in the City Attorney’s caseload.** Vehicle/Driving-Related and Person offenses are the most likely charges to reach the City Attorney’s desk. The two offenses cover roughly 30 percent and 25 percent of cases, respectively.
- **Male caseloads are much higher, but declined faster than female cases.** In 2017, the case rate for males was about 3 to 3.5 times of those for females.
- **Black female case rates declined, contrary to LAPD arrest trends.** As a whole, Black female case rates declined 27 percent, similar to the general population (31 percent decline).
- **Misdemeanor complaints are filed in most cases.** We grouped filing decisions into five categories: Misdemeanor Filed, Hearing, Rejection: Pre-Filing Diversion, Rejection: Other Reason, and Other. Misdemeanor petitions are filed roughly 60 percent of the time throughout the data period. Driving offenses are overwhelmingly prosecuted (misdemeanor petition is filed).

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# DATA DESCRIPTION

We use data from four sources for our analyses: the Los Angeles Police Department (LAPD), Office of Los Angeles City Attorney (LACA), the Public Policy Institute of California (PPIC), and the U.S. Census.

1. LAPD: These data include information on all felony and misdemeanor arrests<sup>1</sup> in the City of Los Angeles from 2001 to 2017. The data include demographic information, arrest charges, and time and location of arrests. These data are also geo-coded to demonstrate division-level changes in misdemeanor arrests.

2. LACA: Among other responsibilities, the Los Angeles City Attorney’s Office prosecutes all misdemeanor criminal offenses that occur in the City of Los Angeles. Data analyzed from their office include information on all misdemeanor cases referred for prosecution by LAPD and several other police and regulatory agencies. These data include demographic information, top charge, filing decision, disposition, and sentencing outcomes.

3. PPIC: In 2018, PPIC produced a report<sup>2</sup> on arrests in California. The report uses data obtained from police agencies across the state from 1980 to 2016 and describes arrest trends across the state and in individual counties. We use these data to compare arrest trends in the City of Los Angeles to trends statewide and in three large California counties: Alameda, San Diego and San Francisco.

3. U.S. Census: We received Census and American Community Survey (ACS) data processed and weighted by the Misdemeanor Justice Project (MJP) at the John Jay College of Criminal Justice. Total population counts and counts broken down by age, race/ethnicity, and gender were extracted from the Census in 2000 and 2010. Since yearly data were not available, MJP used these two base years to linearly interpolate yearly estimates between 2000 and 2010. The 2010 population base and compositions were used to estimate different breakdowns from 2011 to 2017. The citywide population base estimates were drawn from the ACS 1-Year Estimates between 2011 and 2017.

The central purpose of the report is to examine population-adjusted trends over time. We present arrest rates, but also discuss changes in total arrests and the percent of total arrests accounted for by particular

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<sup>1</sup> Arrests are classified as felony or misdemeanor in LAPD’s data on the judgement of the arresting officer. Arrests may be charged differently (or not at all) by the relevant prosecuting agency.

<sup>2</sup> Lofstrom, Magnus; Brandon Martin, Justin Goss, Joseph Hayes, and Steven Raphael. 2018. “New Insights into California Arrests: Trends, Disparities, and County Differences.” Oakland: Public Policy Institute of California.

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charge types. When we report arrest rates by particular demographic groups, rates are population-specific. For example, rates for White 18- to 20-year-old males are reported as the number of arrests per 100,000 White 18- to 20-year-old males that live in Los Angeles.

There are several ways to control for the number of people that are able to be arrested in a particular place and time. Using data on residents is the most common option, but still has its limitations. For instance, using resident populations does not control for the number of people who work in or visit Los Angeles. Further, Census estimates — while being the best option for population counts in U.S. cities — have margins of error that reflect the impossibility of accounting for all residents of any geographic area in any one time.

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# LOS ANGELES POLICE DEPARTMENT DATA

## Overall Trends

There were substantial changes in the number and rate of felony and misdemeanor crimes in Los Angeles from 2001 to 2017. Specifically, these numbers and rates rose through the first half of the 2000s, then fell dramatically through 2017.

**Figure 1** illustrates the number of felony and misdemeanor arrests made by LAPD<sup>3</sup> in the City of Los Angeles. Although the focus of this report is on misdemeanor arrests, we provide data on felony arrests for context. In 2001, LAPD made 54,739 felony arrests. This total rose gradually to a peak in 2006 with 67,866 felony arrests, then declined to 35,851 in 2017.

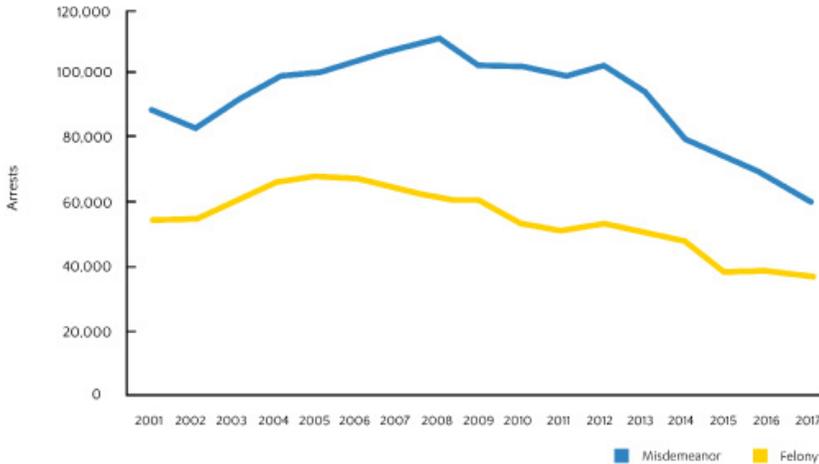


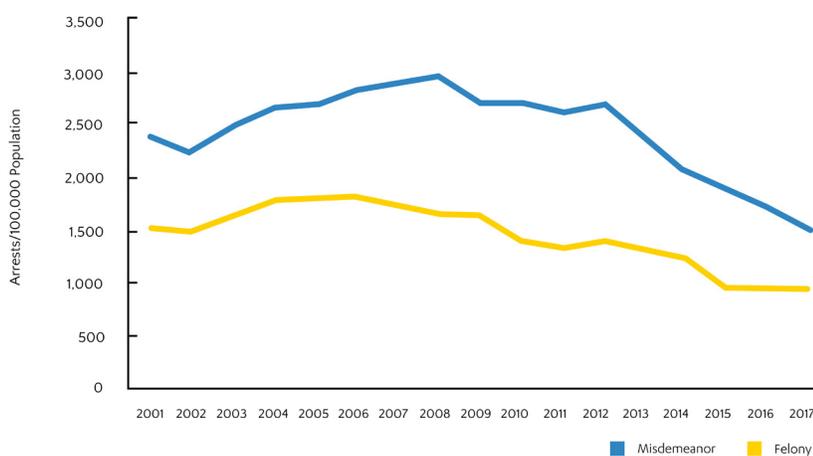
Figure 1. Number of misdemeanor and felony arrests in Los Angeles, 2001–2017

<sup>3</sup> Note that while the vast majority of arrests occurred in the City of Los Angeles, that is not the case for every arrest. Approximately 97 percent of arrests occurred within Los Angeles City boundaries.

The pattern is quite similar for misdemeanor arrests. LAPD misdemeanor arrests increased sharply from 2001 to the peak of 2008. Los Angeles made 88,511 misdemeanor arrests in 2001 and 112,570 arrests in 2008, a 27-percent increase over that time. Misdemeanor arrests then dropped dramatically to 60,063 by 2017, a 47-percent decline from the 2008 high.

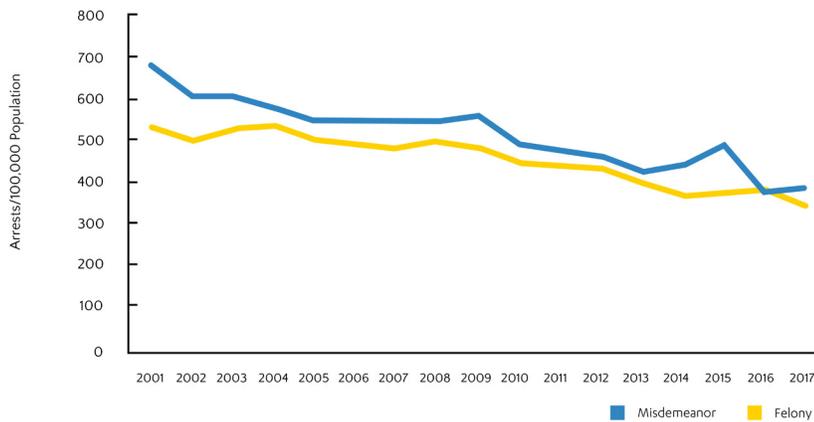
In order to account for population and demographic changes, we also calculated rates of arrests per 100,000 population, displayed in **Figure 2**. Here we describe these rates citywide, and provide division-level rates later in the report. Given the slow but steady population growth throughout the data period (less than 7 percent total over 17 years), trends in arrest rates are quite similar to trends in the absolute numbers. In 2001, Los Angeles had a felony arrest rate of 1,497 arrests per 100,000, which again peaked in 2006 at 1,825 but dropped substantially by 2017 to 919 felonies per 100,000.

The misdemeanor arrest rate peaked at 3,008 arrests per 100,000 in 2008 — rising from 2,421 in 2001. This rate then declined to 1,540 arrests. In 2017, both the misdemeanor and felony arrest rates were essentially half what they were at their peaks in 2008 and 2006, respectively.



**Figure 2.** Rates of felony and misdemeanor arrests per 100,000 population in Los Angeles, 2001-2017

**Figure 3** displays arrest rates for Part I violent and non-violent felonies, using the FBI Uniform Crime Reports classification. Violent arrests include murder, rape, robbery and felony assault and non-violent arrests include burglary, larceny, and motor vehicle theft. There were substantial declines in both types of felony arrest. Violent arrest rates dropped from 681 (violent crimes per 100,000 population) to 383, a 44-percent decline. All violent crime types declined from 2001 to 2017. Non-violent felony arrest rates declined 35 percent, from 541 (per 100,000) in 2001 to 352 (per 100,000) in 2017. All four categories of non-violent crime have dropped from 2001 to 2017, with the highest declines in burglary and larceny crimes.

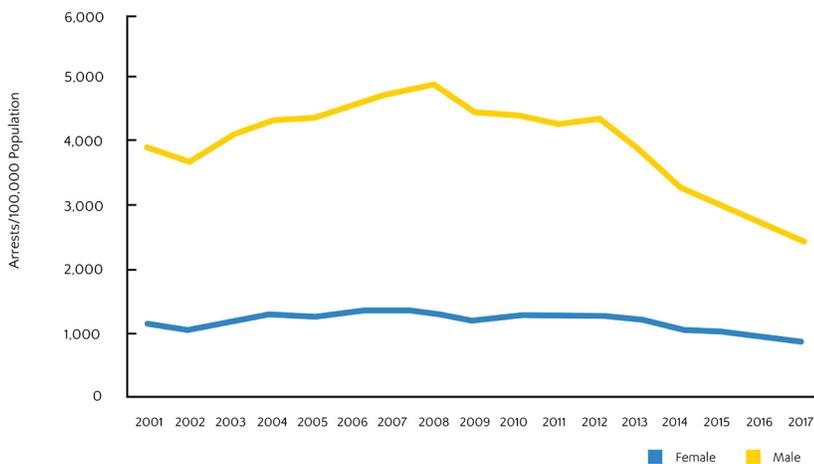


**Figure 3.** Rates of violent and non-violent felony arrests per 100,000 population in Los Angeles, 2001–2017

## Trends by Gender

The remainder of the report focuses specifically on misdemeanor arrests, beginning with breakdowns by gender. Consistent with what we know about gender differences in involvement with the criminal justice system, the rate at which males are arrested for misdemeanors is substantially greater than for females. In Los Angeles, the misdemeanor arrest rate for males was 2,342 in 2017, down substantially from a 2008 peak of 4,832 per 100,000. Over the entire period, the misdemeanor arrests rates for males declined 39 percent from the rate of 3,848 per 100,000 in 2001. (See **Figure 4.**)

The female misdemeanor arrest rate also decreased, but not as dramatically as the rates for males. In fact, while the ratio of the male to female misdemeanor arrest rate was near 4 in 2001 (3.84), that ratio is now much closer to 3 — the male misdemeanor arrest rate is approximately 3.15 times the rate of females. The arrest rate for females decreased from 1,003 in 2001 to 744 in 2017, for a decline of 26 percent. Females experienced a peak in misdemeanor arrest at 1,208 arrests per 100,000 females in 2007.



**Figure 4.** Rates of arrests for misdemeanor by gender per 100,000 population in Los Angeles, 2001–2017

## Overall Trends by Charge Type

In **Figure 5** we display the top arrest charge for misdemeanor arrests for Los Angeles. For background, only the top charge for each arrest was coded. There were 30 unique charge groups reported by LAPD and we further categorized them into 10 groups: 1) Crimes against Persons (Person); 2) Property and Theft-Related; 3) Vehicle and Driving-Related; 4) Weapon Charges; 5) Drugs; 6) Loitering/Trespass/Disorderly; 7) Prostitution and Sex Crimes; 8) Public Drunkenness/Open Container/Other Alcohol; 9) Failure to Appear/Contempt. and 10) Other Charges. Thus, for the following analysis, there are total of 10 categories. See **Appendix A** for a listing of the charges by category.

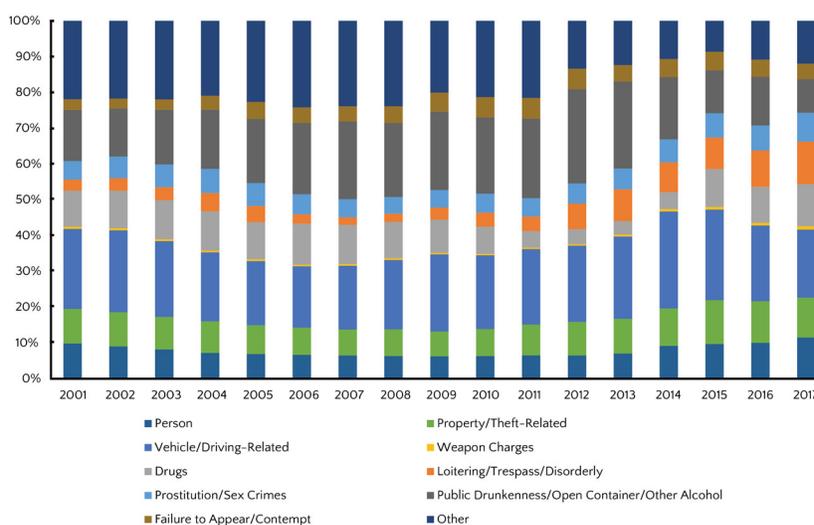
Vehicle and Driving-Related arrest is the most common category, accounting for 17 percent to 27 percent among all charges across years. This is followed by Alcohol-related charges, Property/Theft, Person and Drugs charges in most years. These five charge categories accounted for between 63 percent and 70 percent of misdemeanor arrests in any year.

Arrests for Public Drunkenness, Open Container and Other Alcohol peaked in 2007 and 2012. This type of crime accounted for 10 percent to 26 percent of all arrests over the years.

Crimes against Persons and Property and Theft-Related charges each accounted for between 6 percent to 12 percent of all arrests. Person charges were mostly simple assaults. For Property and Theft-Related charges, they accounted for between 7 percent and 12 percent of the total.

For Drugs charges, there was an increase in the number of arrests from 8,693 in 2001 to 11,940 in 2006. The number dropped to 6,929 in 2015. Drug-related arrests accounted for 4 percent to 12 percent of all arrests.

There was an increase in arrests for Loitering, Trespass and Disorderly since 2006, from 2,643 arrests to 7,038 arrests in 2015. This type of charge accounted for 3 percent to 12 percent of all arrests.

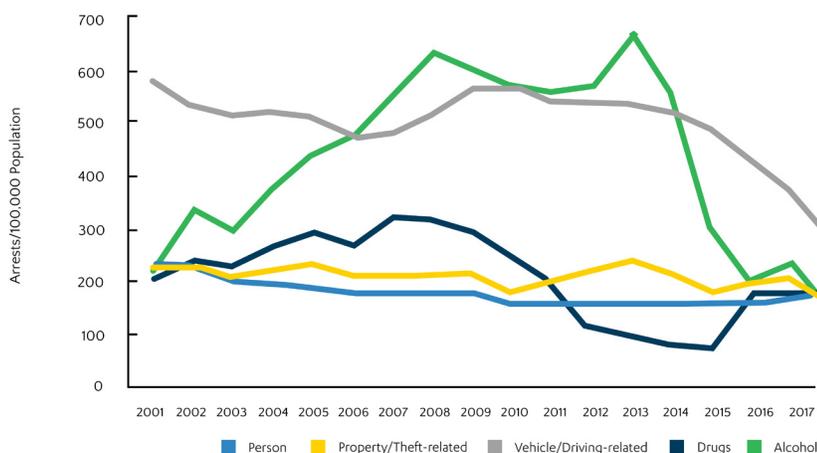


**Figure 5.** Percentages of arrests for misdemeanor by category in Los Angeles, 2001–2017

Arrests for Prostitution and Sex Crimes ranged between 5 percent and 8 percent, Weapon Charges and charges for Failure to Appear/Contempt remained steady between 2001 and 2017. Weapon Charges accounted for 1 percent of all arrests and Failure to Appear/Contempt accounted for 3 percent to 6 percent of all arrests.

Overall, all types of arrests declined between 2001 and 2017, except for Loitering/Trespass/Disorderly, Prostitution/Sex Crimes, and Weapon Charges. Arrests for Vehicle/Driving-Related and Public Drunkenness/Open Container/Other Alcohol saw the biggest declines over this period.

Given five charge types — Person, Property/Theft-Related, Drugs, Public Drunkenness/Open Container/Other Alcohol, and Vehicle/Driving-Related — make up more than 50 percent of the total (over 60 percent in some years), we focused on rates of those charges in **Figure 6**. We see that vehicle charge rates fell substantially, and drugs, person and property charge rates fell, but relatively slowly. Alcohol charges grew rapidly from 2001 to 2013, and then fell dramatically through 2017.

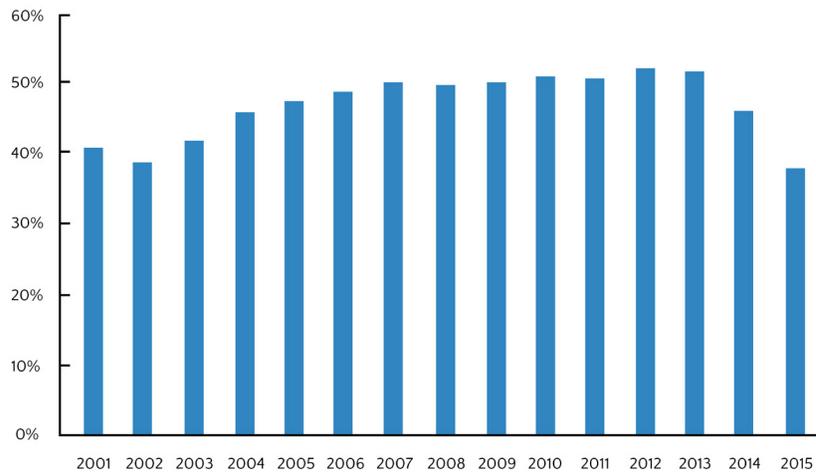


**Figure 6.** Rates of arrests for misdemeanor by selected categories in Los Angeles, 2001-2017

## Trends of Released-From-Custody Ticket Issuance

In Los Angeles, most misdemeanor arrests do not result in the arrestee being held in detention until a court appearance. Many do not even involve a formal booking at a police precinct. In these cases, a citation is provided to the arrestee that allows the defendant to leave police custody on the condition of appearing voluntarily in court for the next scheduled appearance. These arrests are categorized as Released-from-Custody (RFC). The decision to issue a RFC rather than booking the defendant is made subject to California Penal Code 853.6

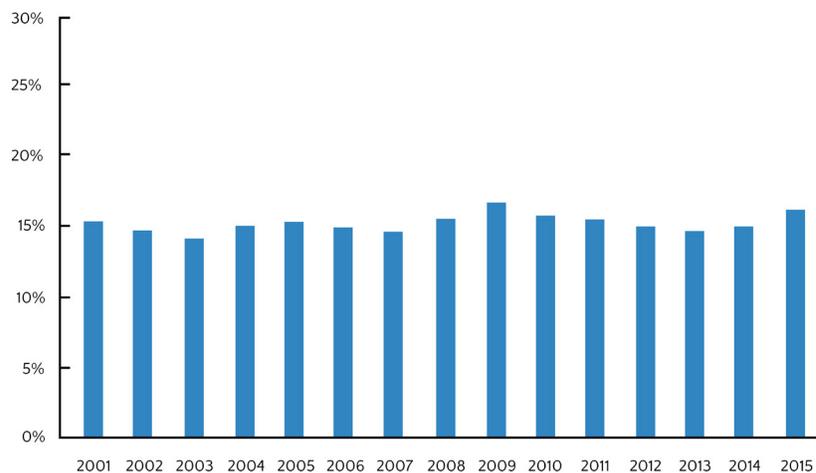
LAPD data on RFCs from 2001 to 2015 indicates that the percent of RFC issuances in all misdemeanor arrests did not vary significantly during this time, ranging from around 40 percent to 50 percent. (See **Figure 7**.)



**Figure 7.** Percent of all misdemeanor arrests that were released-from-custody in Los Angeles, 2001-2015

## Trends of Arrest on a Warrant

Not all arrests made by LAPD are for a new offense or charge. Some such arrests are made in response to an outstanding warrant. Typically, LAPD does not seek to find and arrest individuals with a misdemeanor warrant, but they do often make an arrest on outstanding warrants in the event of a new infraction or offense. In Los Angeles, between 14 percent and 17 percent of misdemeanor arrests were the result of a warrant between 2001 and 2015 (**Figure 8**). The percentages did not change significantly over this period.



**Figure 8.** Percent of all misdemeanor arrests that had a warrant in Los Angeles, 2001-2015

## Trends by Age

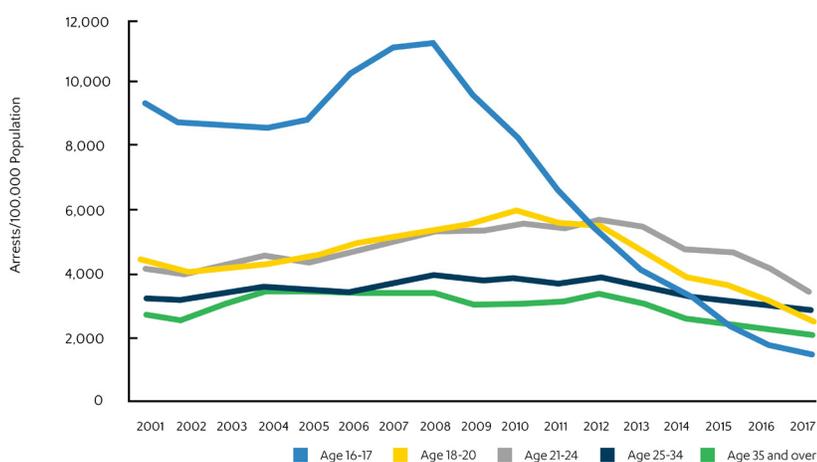
Beginning with **Figure 9**, we report arrest rates for five age groups, 16-17, 18-20, 21-24, 25-34, and 35 and older (35-65). These groupings allow us to isolate the eldest juvenile population, and look at small age increments during what are empirically the prime offending and arrest years (18 to 34).

In Los Angeles, every age group had lower arrest rates in 2017 compared to 2001. It is impossible to overstate the decline in arrest rates for 16- to 17-year-olds during this time period. After rising 19 percent from 2001 to the peak in 2008 (11,421 arrests per 100,000), the arrest rate declined an average of over 1,100 per year from 2009 to 2017. In 2017, the arrest rate for 16- to 17-year-olds was only 1,050, a 91-percent decline from the 2008 peak. At the beginning of the 2000s, 16- to 17-year-olds had the highest misdemeanor arrest rates, and by 2017 they were the age group with the lowest arrest rates.

In Los Angeles, the arrest rates for 18- to 20-year-olds dropped considerably as well, particularly since peaking in 2010. The 18- to 20-year-old misdemeanor arrest rate peaked in 2010 at 5,897 and declined to 2,239 in 2017. While this was still a substantial decline of 62 percent over just seven years, this was not quite the incredible drop observed among the 16- to 17-year-old population. The 18- to 20-year-old misdemeanor arrest rate was roughly half the 16- to 17-year-old arrest rate in 2001, but double the 16- to 17-year-old arrest rate in 2017.

Looking at 21- to 24-year-olds, we see that the misdemeanor arrest rate peaked in 2012 at 5,528 and declined to 3,159 by 2017. The arrest rate for 21- to 24-year-olds was 3,977 in 2001. Notably, 21- to 24-year-olds began the 2000s as the third most arrested group, but by 2017 were the most arrested age group, in terms of rates. This is all despite arrest rates declining modestly for this group over the data period — about 21 percent from 2001 to 2017.

The age groups of 25 to 34 and 35 to 65 shared similar overall arrest rates and trends over time during this period. Misdemeanor arrest rates converged for the two groups in 2005, but otherwise the 25- to 34-year-old group had slightly higher arrest rates throughout, ranging from 12 percent to 42 percent higher for all but the 2004-2007 period. Arrest rates for each group peaked between 2007 and 2008, then gradually

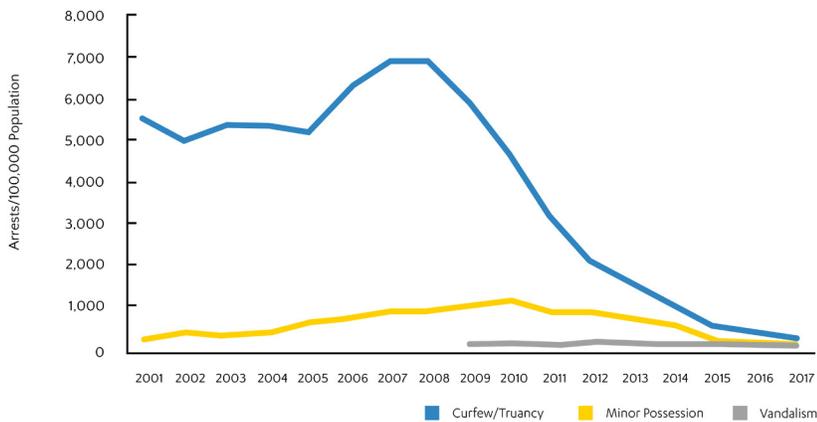


**Figure 9.** Rates of arrests for misdemeanor by age groups per 100,000 population in Los Angeles, 2001–2017

declined through 2012 to 2017. The arrest rate for 25- to 34-year-olds was at 2,584 in 2017. The same rate for the 35- to 65-year-old group was 1,821. Notably, arrest rates for 16- to 17-year-olds dropped below those of both groups by 2015.

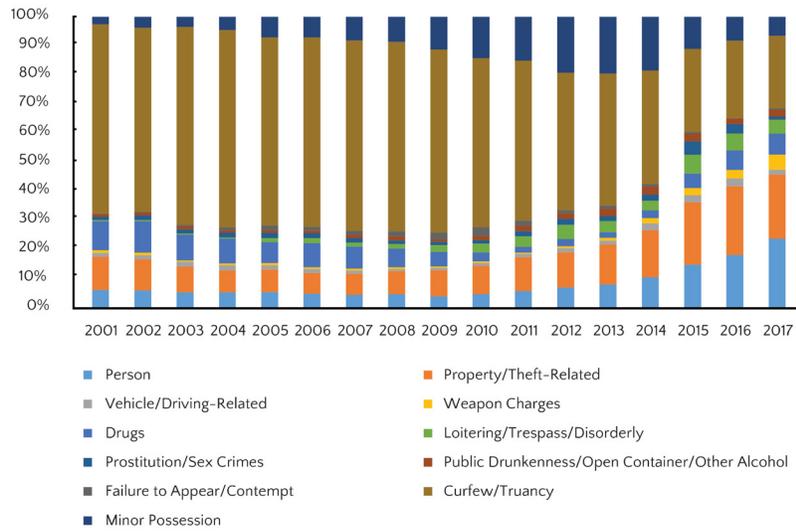
## A Closer Look at the 16- to 17-Year-Old Arrest Drop

The dramatic decline in crime rates for 16- to 17-year-olds necessitates further investigation, so we examined changes in crime categories over time for this population. **Figure 10** displays the number of arrests over time for selected charges that are particularly common or unique to juveniles — Curfew/Truancy, Minor Possession, and Vandalism. The simple story is that Curfew and Truancy went from being a very common misdemeanor arrest among juveniles to something that almost never happens. In 2001, there were 5,496 arrests made for Curfew or Truancy violations, and in 2017 there were 210. We calculate that the decline in Curfew and Truancy arrests is responsible for 66 percent of the decline in overall misdemeanor arrests of 16- to 17-year-olds from 2001 to 2017.

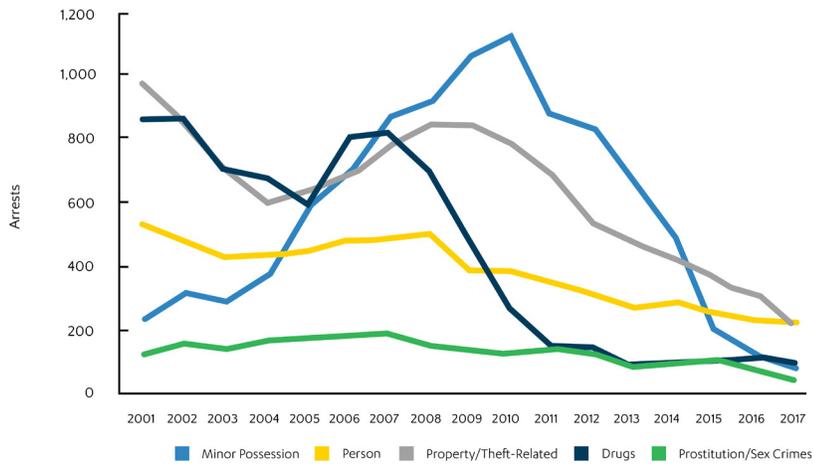


**Figure 10.** Number of arrests for misdemeanor for curfew/truancy, minor possession, and vandalism (Age 16-17), 2001-2017

The role of Curfew and Truancy in the drop in arrests is further made clear by looking at **Figure 11**, which displays the proportion of arrests for each crime type over time. Curfew and Truancy comprised 62 percent of misdemeanor arrests for this group in 2001, but only accounted for 23 percent of arrests by 2017. However, several other crime types were much less likely to show up as a misdemeanor arrest for 16- to 17-year-olds later in the data period. **Figure 12** shows misdemeanor arrest totals for five crime types: Minor Possession, Person, Property/Theft, Drugs, and Prostitution. Arrests for each of these crime types fell dramatically over this time period, ranging from a decline of 61 percent for Person crimes to a drop of 93 percent in Drugs charges. Of all crimes listed in **Figure 12**, only Loitering/Trespass/Disorderly charges increased during this time (by 8 percent) and the smallest decline was 40 percent (Weapons Charges). While Curfew and Truancy charges drove the massive arrest drop among 16- to 17-year-olds in Los Angeles — and declined by 96 percent from 2001 — nearly every crime type contributed to the dramatic decline in juvenile arrests from 2001 to 2017.



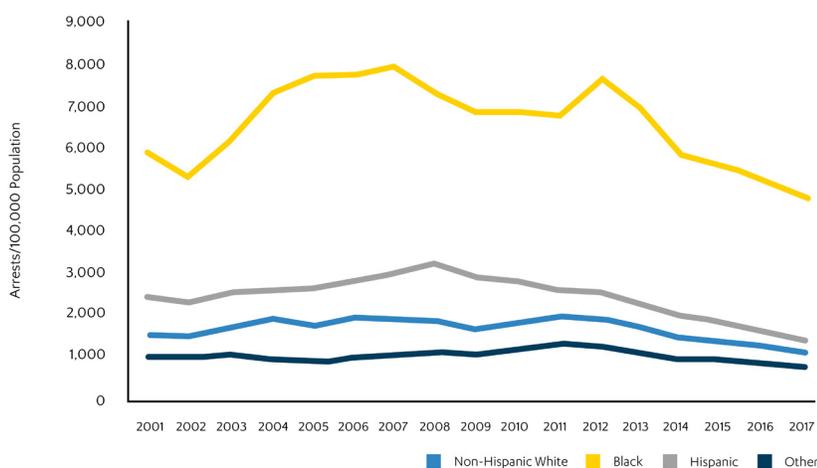
**Figure 11.** Percentages of juvenile (16-17 year old) arrests for misdemeanor by category in Los Angeles, 2001-2017



**Figure 12.** Number of arrests for misdemeanor for minor possession, person, property/theft, drugs, and prostitution (Age 16-17), 2001-2017

## Trends by Race/Ethnicity

As with age and gender, disparities tend to exist across racial categories.<sup>4</sup> **Figure 13** shows misdemeanor arrest rates by race and ethnicity. In Los Angeles, the arrest rate for Whites was 1,129 per 100,000 in 2017, but the arrest rate for Blacks was nearly 4.5 times higher (5,029).<sup>5</sup> The Hispanic arrest rate was about 22 percent higher, at 1,381 arrests per 100,000. Overall trends of misdemeanor arrest rates for all three groups were similar from 2001 to 2017, with more fluctuation for Blacks. White misdemeanor arrest rates declined slightly from 1,587 per 100,000 in 2001 to 1,129 per 100,000 in 2017, peaking in 2011 with 1,982 arrests per 100,000. Black misdemeanor arrest rates rose from a low of 5,530 in 2002 to a peak in 2007 of 8,259 and were again high in 2012 (7,993), then declined to 5,029 by 2017. Hispanics also saw a decrease in misdemeanor arrest rates, from 2,499 in 2001 to 1,381 in 2017. The arrest rate for Hispanics peaked in 2008 reaching 3,296 during the period. All absolute number of arrests declined from 2001 to 2017.



**Figure 13.** Rates of arrests for misdemeanor by race/ethnicity per 100,000 population in Los Angeles, 2001–2017

<sup>4</sup> See: D’Alessio, S. & Stolzenberg, L. (2003). Race and the probability of arrest. *Social Forces*, 81(4), 1381-1397; Parker, K., Stults, B., & Rice, S. (2005). Racial threat, concentrated disadvantage, and social control: Considering the macro-level sources of variation in arrests; and Stevenson, M., and S. Mayson. (2018) “The Scale of Misdemeanor Justice” *Boston University Law Review* 98 (3), 731.

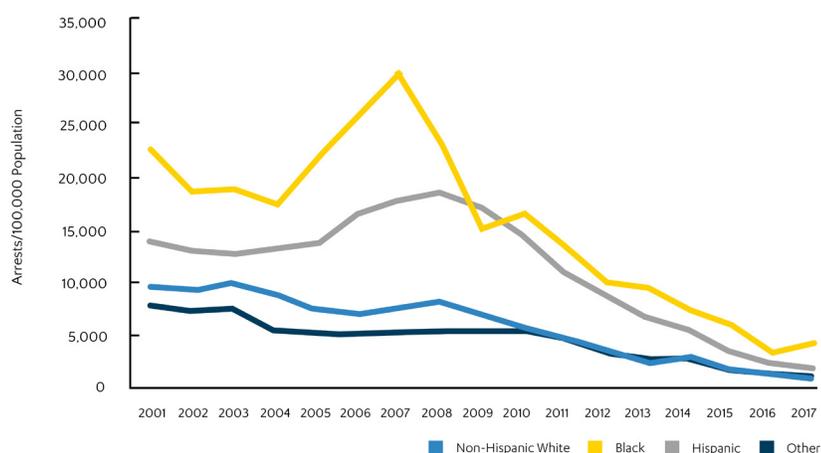
<sup>5</sup> There are important limitations to the race and ethnicity numbers in these data. Race and ethnicity is determined by police officers and how these determinations are made likely varies over time and across officers. At times, this information may be self-reported by the arrestee or based solely on officer discretion. While 19 “Descent” values were recorded by officers over this time period, 99.42 percent fell under just four categories: B (Black), W (White), H (Hispanic or Latino), and O (Other).

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## Gender, Race, and Age

### Males

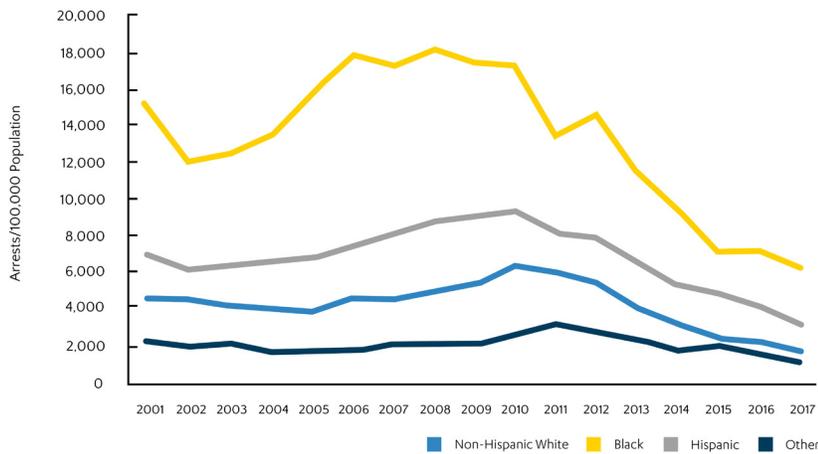
We further investigated trends at the intersection of different demographic characteristics. We begin by looking at trends across race for males aged 16- to 17-years-old, shown in **Figure 14**. After an increase in male 16- to 17-year-old arrest rates from 2004 to 2007, these rates fell dramatically over the next decade. This is particularly important as at the beginning of the data period, 16- to 17-year-olds had the highest volume of arrests of any age group. By the end of the data period, 16- to 17-year-olds males had the lowest arrest rates. These trends were most pronounced for Black males in this age group, but we observe substantial declines in arrest rates for all four racial/ethnic groups through 2016, with a slight uptick in Black male 16- to 17-year-old arrest rates in 2017. Black and Hispanic males were more likely than Whites and Other racial groups to be arrested throughout the data period.



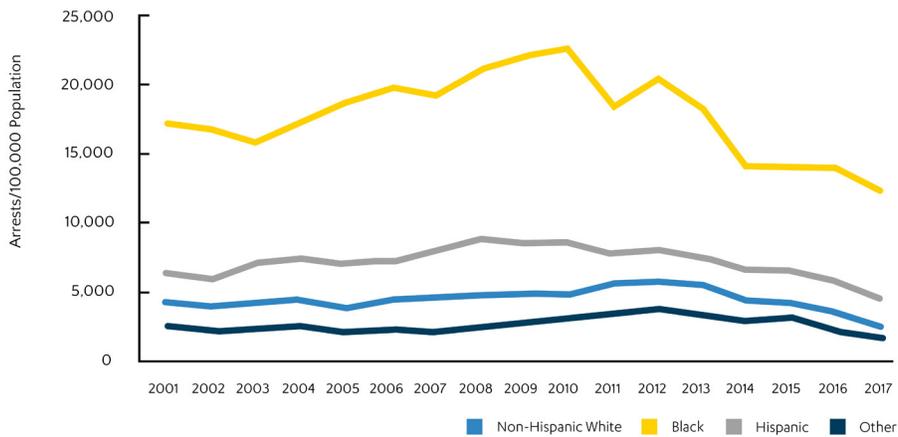
**Figure 14.** Rates of arrests for misdemeanor by 16-17 year old males by race/ethnicity per 100,000 population in Los Angeles, 2001-2017

Next, **Figure 15** shows misdemeanor arrest rates for males aged 18 to 20 by race and ethnicity. We see that arrest rates were relatively high for each group through 2010, and began to fall in 2011. In this age group, Black and White male arrest rates were halved through the data period, and the declines for Hispanic and Other groups were less pronounced, but still large. While Black and Hispanic males were most likely to be arrested throughout the data period, the disparity between Blacks and Whites converged somewhat, from close to a 4-to-1 ratio in the early 2000s to less than 3-to-1 through much of the 2010s.

In **Figure 16** we display the misdemeanor arrest rates for 21- to 24-year-old males by race and ethnicity. We see that arrest rates were much more stable for this group. Arrest rates fell for each group, but the largest drop between 2001 and 2017 was 40 percent for Non-Hispanic Whites. This continues to be a group with a high volume of arrests. In 2001, male misdemeanor arrest rates were virtually identical for 18- to 20-year-olds and 21- to 24-year-olds, for each of the four racial and ethnic groups. However, by 2017, White and Hispanic male arrest rates were 60 percent and 44 percent higher, respectively, for 21- to 24-year-olds than for 18- to 20-year-olds. For Black males, 2017 arrest rates were twice as high for 21- to 24-year-olds as for 18- to 20-year-olds.



**Figure 15.** Rates of arrests for misdemeanor for 18-20 year old males by race/ethnicity per 100,000 population in Los Angeles, 2001-2017

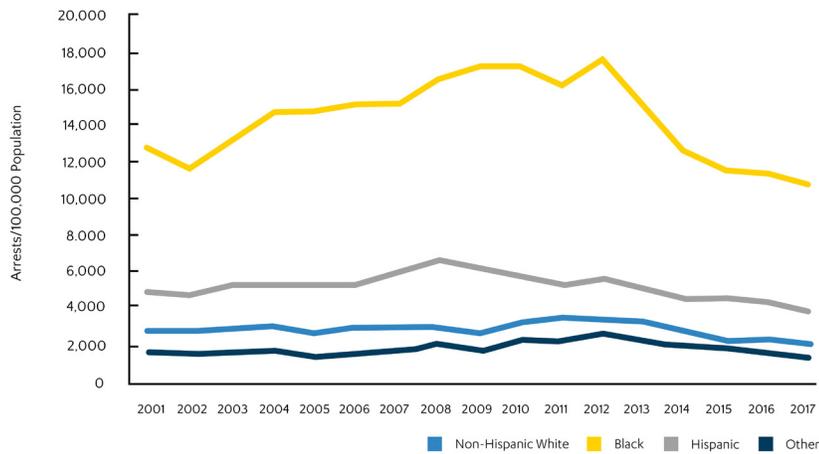


**Figure 16.** Rates of arrests for misdemeanor for 21-24 year old males by race/ethnicity per 100,000 population in Los Angeles, 2001-2017

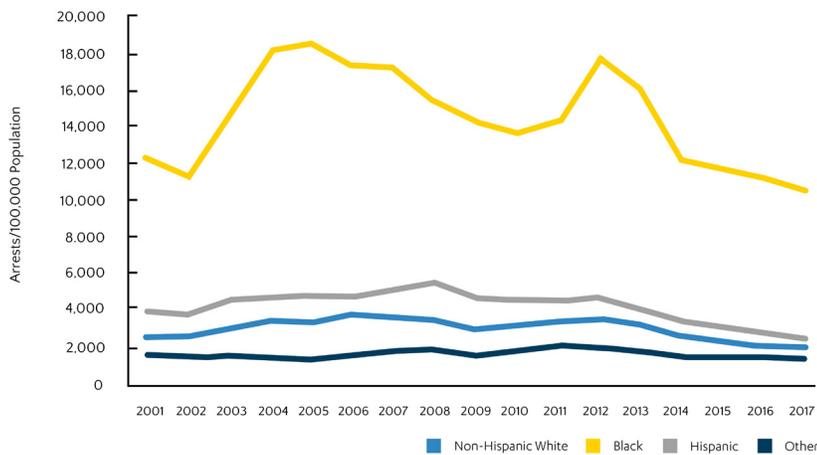
Given these persistent rates, we examined whether the charges were any different in 2001 than 2017 for all male 21- to 24-year-olds. The same four crime types — Vehicle/Driving-Related, Crimes against Persons, Drugs, and Property/Theft-Related — are the four top categories for male 21- to 24-year-olds in 2001 and 2017. In 2017, these crimes comprised 60 percent of the total for this group of males. In 2001, they added up to 67 percent.

**Figure 17** displays the misdemeanor arrest rate trends for 25- to 34-year-old males. We see a similar pattern for this age group as with 21- to 24-year-olds. The declines are not nearly as pronounced as we saw for the youngest age groups. As with 21- to 24-year-olds, they began the 2000s being well behind 18- to 20-year-olds in terms of arrest rate volume, but now all racial and ethnic groups in this age category have higher arrest rates than their 18- to 20-year-old counterparts.

**Figure 18** shows misdemeanor arrest rates for males 35 and older. The trends and volume are virtually identical to those of 25- to 34-year-olds, with a small difference being that Hispanics in this age group have higher arrest rates throughout the data period than in the 25- to 34-year-old age range.



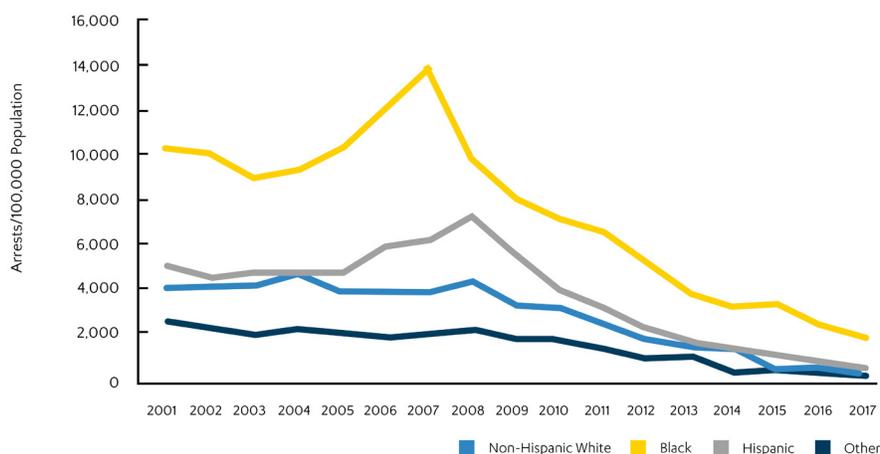
**Figure 17.** Rates of arrests for misdemeanor for 25-34 year old males by race/ethnicity per 100,000 population in Los Angeles, 2001-2017



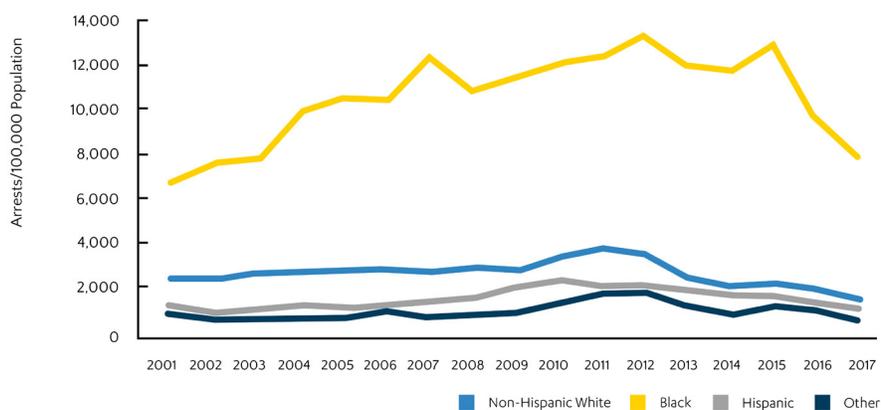
**Figure 18.** Rates of arrests for misdemeanor for 35-65 year old males by race/ethnicity per 100,000 population in Los Angeles, 2001-2017

### Females

Misdemeanor arrest trends for females differed considerably during this time period. While juvenile arrest rates fell dramatically — as we observed for males — arrest rates for older groups held steady or even increased. **Figure 19** shows misdemeanor arrest rate trends for 16- to 17-year-old females by race. It indicates a substantial spike in arrests for Black female juveniles that peaks in 2007. This is echoed by a less extreme spike for Hispanic female juveniles in 2008. Importantly, the rates for Blacks come down dramatically, but the disparity (with Non-Hispanic Whites) is larger by 2017. In 2017, LAPD made only 16 arrests of 16- to 17-year-old White females.



**Figure 19.** Number of arrests for misdemeanor for 16-17 year old females by race/ethnicity per 100,00 population in Los Angeles, 2001-2017

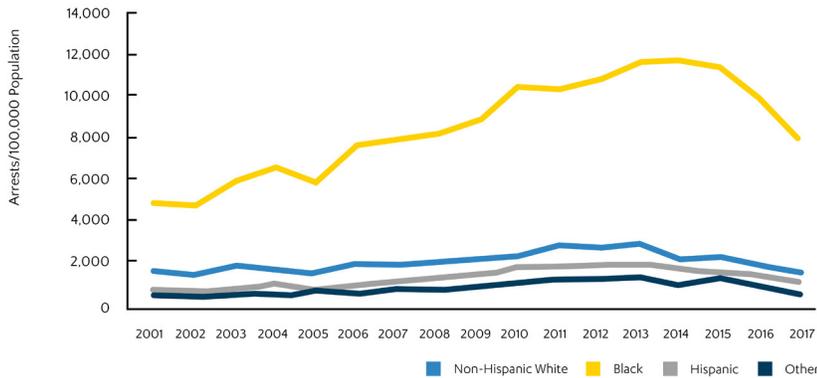


**Figure 20.** Number of arrests for misdemeanor for 18-20 year old females by race/ethnicity per 100,000 population in Los Angeles, 2001-2017

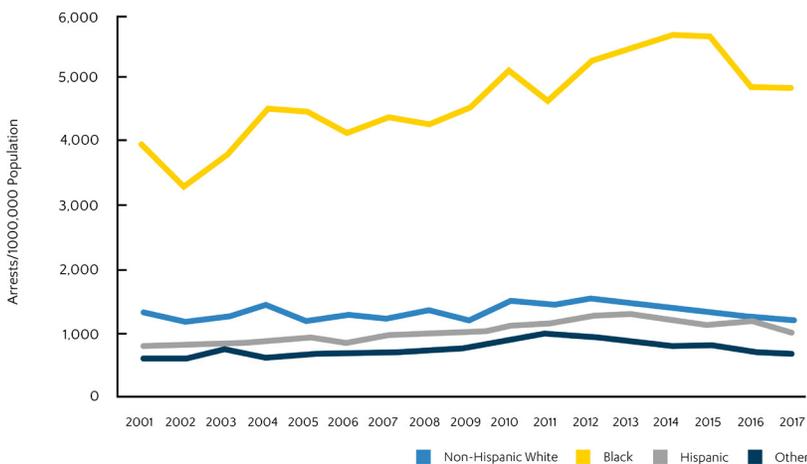
Moving up the age range, **Figure 20** provides trends in female 18- to 20-year-olds by race. Here we find that Black female 18- to 20-year-olds are one of very few demographic groups that were more likely to be arrested for misdemeanors in Los Angeles in 2017 than in 2001. In fact, the misdemeanor arrest rate for Black females in 2015 was nearly twice as high as the arrest rate for the same group in 2001. To put it another way, in 2001 Black females accounted for 8 percent of misdemeanor arrests of all 18- to 20-year-olds, male or female. In 2017 they accounted for 14 percent of misdemeanor arrests among this age group. Black females 18 to 20 years old have higher misdemeanor arrest rates than their male counterparts in this age group (author comparison of underlying data from **Figures 15** and **20**).

**Figure 21** also indicates that female 21- to 24-year-olds are experiencing increasing arrest rates during this time period. As of 2016, all racial groups aged 21 to 24 had considerably higher arrest rates than in 2001. Each group then saw a noticeable drop in arrest rates in 2017. The Black female arrest rate in 2016 was nearly twice what it was in 2001. These trends are very different than those for virtually all other groups, including Black males of this age. We take a deeper dive into these trends by looking at changes in charges among Black female arrestees later in the report. There, we find that substantial increases in Prostitution and to a lesser extent Property and Theft-Related crimes are responsible for these trends.

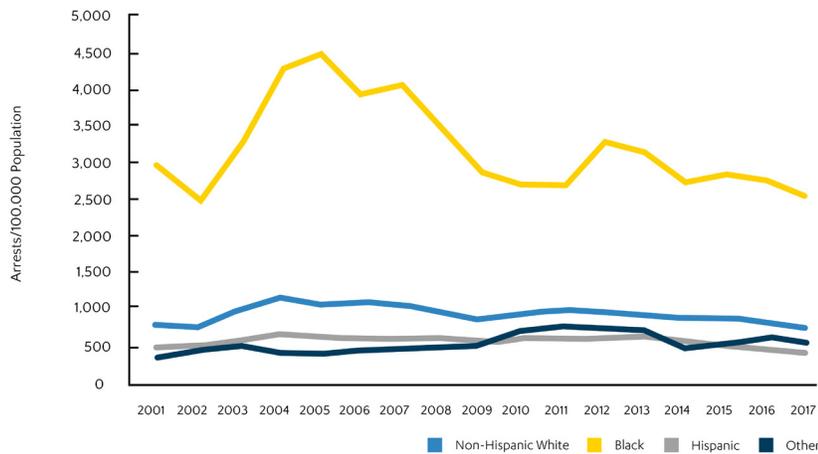
Arrest rates for 25- to 34-year-old females (**Figure 22**) continue to reflect a trend of increasing arrest rates among females. While arrest rates for this age group are lower across the board than for the younger age groups, these arrest rates are higher in 2017 than they were in 2001 — particularly for Black and Hispanic females in this age group. **Figure 23** displays trends for females 35 and older, demonstrating that misdemeanor arrest rates peaked between 2004 and 2007 and then declined back near 2001 numbers by 2017.



**Figure 21.** Number of arrests for misdemeanor for 21-24 year old females by race/ethnicity per 100,000 population in Los Angeles, 2001-2017



**Figure 22.** Number of arrests for misdemeanor for 25-34 year old females by race/ethnicity per 100,000 population in Los Angeles, 2001-2017

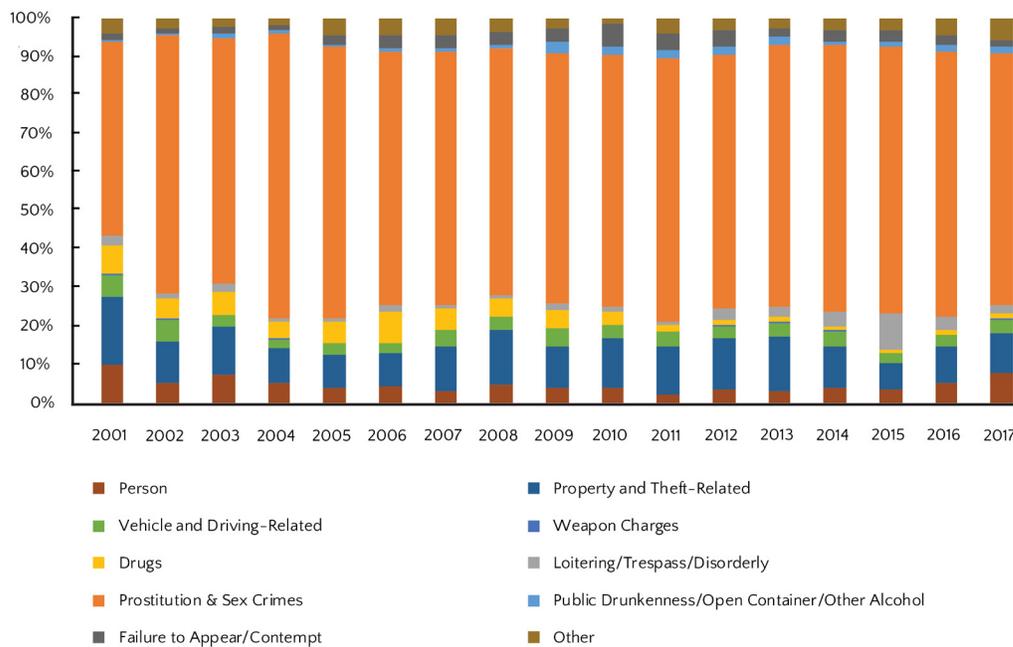


**Figure 23.** Rates of arrests for misdemeanor for 35-65 year old females by race/ethnicity per 100,000 population in Los Angeles, 2001-2017

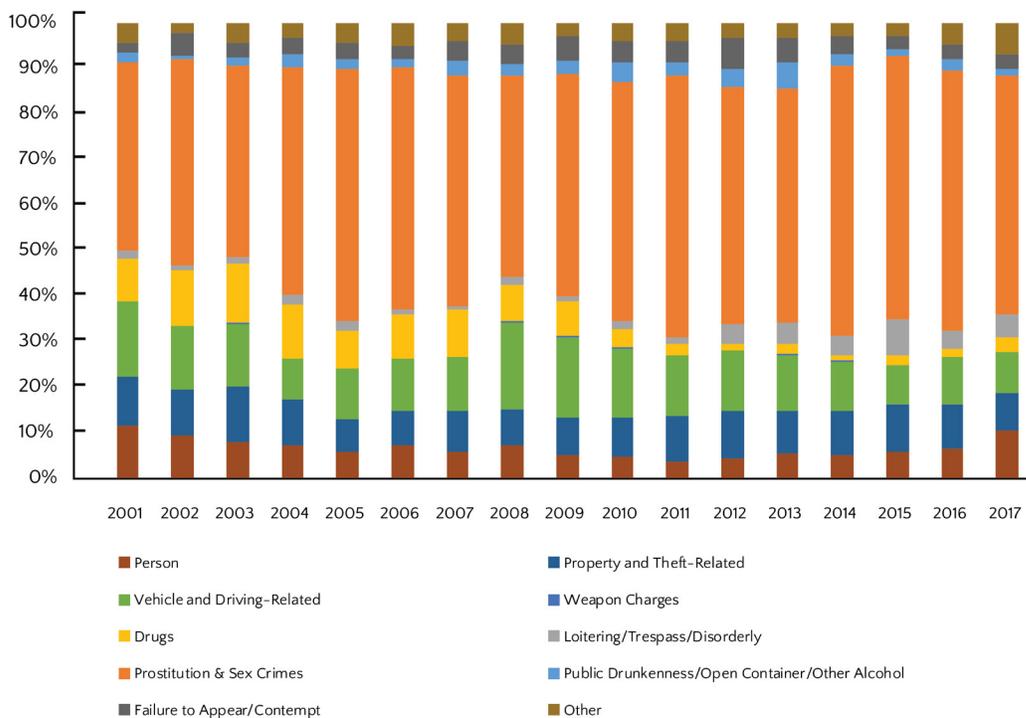
## A Closer Look at Rising Black Female Arrest Rates

Given the substantial increases in Black female arrest rates that run counter to those for all other groups over the analysis period, we examined the particular charges that drove the increase in arrest rates for younger, Black females. The trends for females 18 to 20 years old in particular are notable given the opposite trends for males. Among males the arrest rates in 2017 were lower than in 2001 for every racial group within every age group. This is not the case for each of the three age groups of females between 18 and 35 in particular, and the increases for black females in these age groups are considerably larger.

**Figure 24** examines 18- to 20-year-old Black females specifically, displaying the charge percentages by year from 2001 to 2017. It indicates that Prostitution is by far the most common charge for misdemeanor arrests among this group. Further, Prostitution arrests were made much more frequently over time — there were 279 arrests in 2002 and 632 in 2015. However, the proportion of arrests in each year that were made for Prostitution did not vary much over time. From 2002 to 2017, the percent of misdemeanor arrests for this group that were made for Prostitution was between 64 percent and 70 percent. Thus, while increases in Prostitution arrests drove most of the increase, it did not become a more common arrest compared to other arrest types. Person charges remained steady in total number over time, meaning they declined in the proportion of arrests accounted for by those charges. Property and Theft-Related charges rose substantially in the 2002-2012 time period, but in recent years have been below 2001 levels. Drugs charges fell to almost nothing (a total of 8 in 2017), having declined precipitously since the high-water mark of 2006. Loitering/Trespass/Disorderly charges have varied a lot in recent years (84 in 2015, 11 in 2017), but are generally higher than they were in the first half of the data period. This is similar for Failure to Appear/Contempt charges.



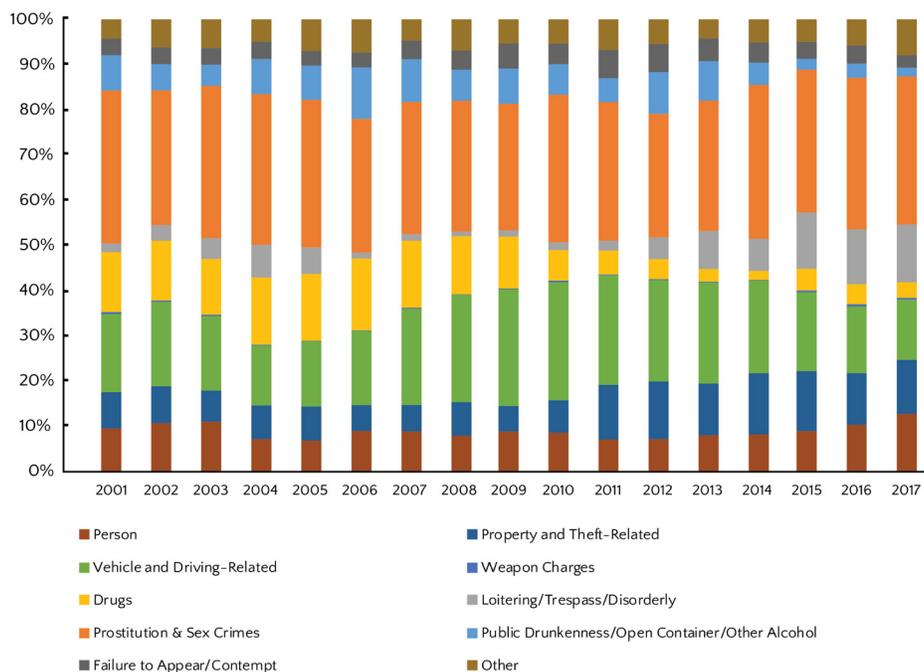
**Figure 24.** Percentages of arrests for misdemeanor by category in Los Angeles (African American females 18–20 years old), 2001–2017



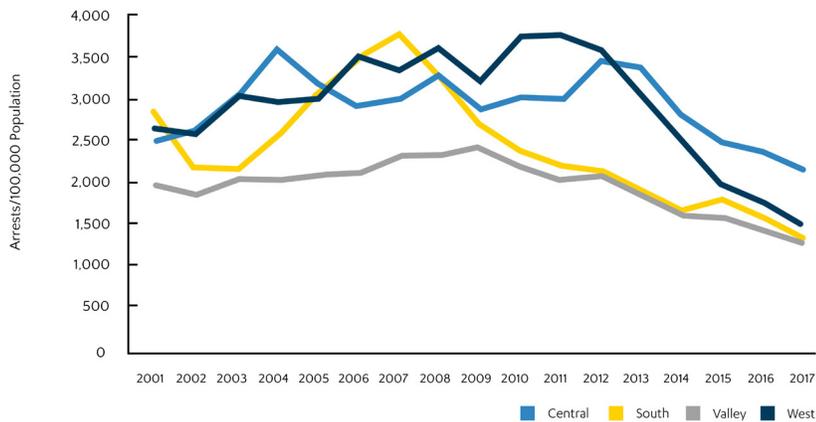
**Figure 25.** Percentages of arrests for misdemeanor by category in Los Angeles (African American females 21–24 years old), 2001–2017

**Figure 25** focuses on the next age group of Black females: those aged 21 to 24. It shows that although Prostitution charges represent a smaller share of arrests for this age group, the growth in that share was more pronounced over time. There were well more than two times as many Prostitution charges for this age group in 2016 than in 2001, and more than 1.5 times as many in 2017. In 2001, 41 percent of charges for this group were Prostitution charges, but in 2017, 52 percent of charges were for Prostitution. As with 18- to 20-year-olds, Property and Theft-Related charges rose during the data period, but did not comprise a larger percent of the charge total. Vehicle and Driving-Related charges are much more prevalent among this age group, and increased quite a lot in number over the time period. Drugs charges increased during the early 2000s, but then declined to very low numbers by 2017. Loitering/Trespass/Disorderly and Failure to Appear/Contempt charges have increased in number, but still comprise a relatively low percentage of the overall total.

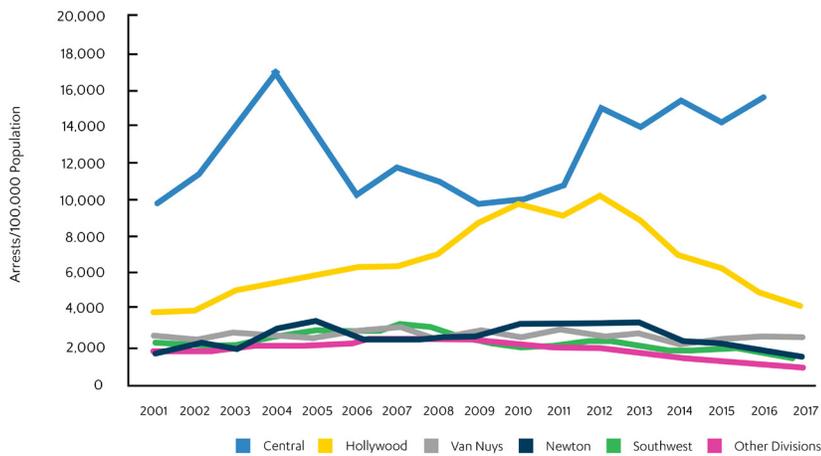
For the 25 to 34 age group, the arrest rates are considerably lower and the increase over time was not as dramatic (**Figure 26**). For this population, Prostitution charges are less prevalent, but still comprise 33 percent of the total in 2017. Vehicle and Driving-Related charges are again more prevalent among this age group than that for the younger groups, and rose considerably in number over the time period. Drugs charges comprised over 10 percent of the total during every year until 2010, then declined down to 3 percent by 2017. Loitering/Trespass/Disorderly charges have increased dramatically in number, and now make up 13 percent of all charges for this demographic group.



**Figure 26.** Percentages of arrests for misdemeanor by category in Los Angeles (African American females 25-34 years old), 2001-2017



**Figure 27.** Rates of arrests for misdemeanor by bureau per 100,000 population in Los Angeles, 2001-2017



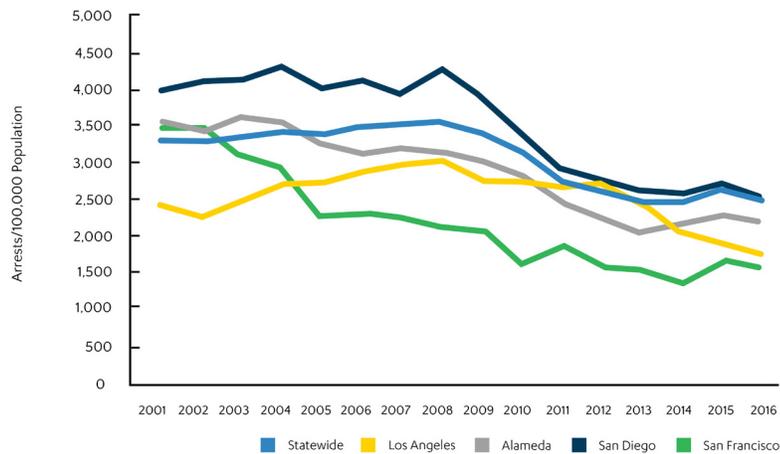
**Figure 28.** Rates of arrests for misdemeanor by division per 100,000 population in Los Angeles, 2001-2017

## Trends by Geographic Location (LAPD Bureaus & Divisions)

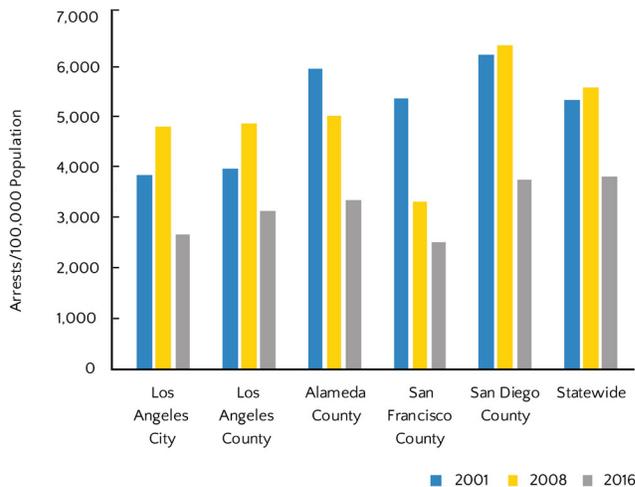
LAPD is separated into four bureaus and 21 divisions. Central and West bureaus have consistently higher arrest rates than the Valley and South, averaging about 2,900 misdemeanor arrests per 100,000 between 2001 and 2017. South bureau saw an increase in arrest rates from 2001 to 2007, then declined afterwards. Valley had the lowest arrest rate among all bureaus between 2001 and 2017. **Figure 27** provides these trends by bureau.

**Figure 28** provides trends for the top five divisions in arrest rates in 2017 and all other divisions combined (“Other”). Out of 21 divisions within LAPD, Central and Hollywood divisions had the highest arrest rates

<sup>6</sup> LAPD bureau and division boundaries changed in 2005 and 2011.



**Figure 29.** Misdemeanor arrest rates per 100,000 population in Los Angeles, statewide, and selected counties, 2001–2016



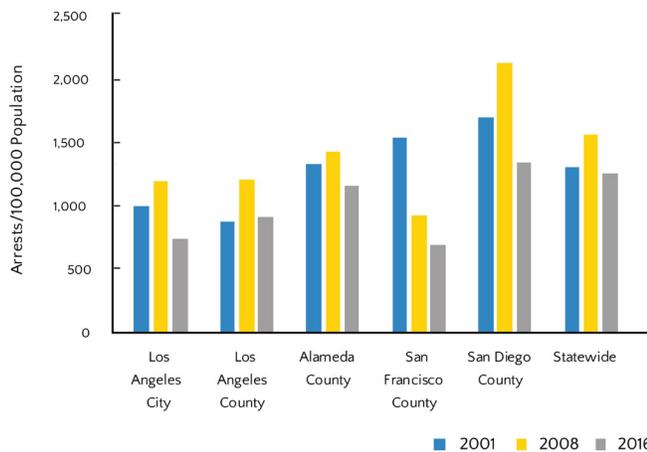
**Figure 30.** Rates of male arrests for misdemeanor per 100,000 population in Los Angeles, statewide and selected counties, 2001, 2008, and 2016

between 2001 and 2017.<sup>6</sup> Central division saw a decrease in arrest rate in 2009 to 9,930 from 17,161 in 2004. The rate then climbed to 15,770 in 2017. Hollywood division saw a gradual increase in arrest rate from 3,968 in 2001 to 10,262 in 2012. The rate then declined to 4,215 in 2017. Pacific division had an arrest rate around 4,500 between 2001 and 2015 with a dip in 2009 to 3,128 and a peak in 2011 at 5,413. All other divisions had arrest rates around 1,500 to 3,000 with slight declines since 2011.

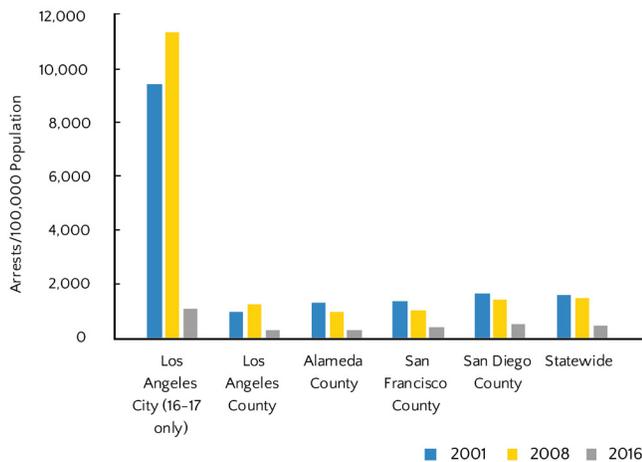
## Comparisons to State and Large County Trends

PPIC recently conducted comprehensive analyses of arrests in California and all of its counties. They generously shared selected analyses to allow for comparisons between the City of Los Angeles, the state, and selected counties (Alameda, San Diego and San Francisco).

For both felony and misdemeanor arrests, Los Angeles trends mirror those at the state level. In both Los An-



**Figure 31.** Rates of female arrests for misdemeanor per 100,000 population in Los Angeles, statewide and selected counties, 2001, 2008, and 2016

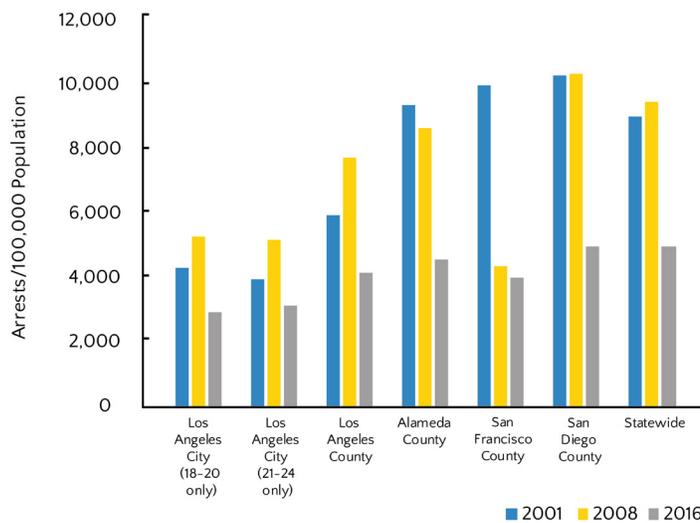


**Figure 32.** Rates of misdemeanor arrests for 16 to 17-year-olds per 100,000 population in Los Angeles, statewide and selected counties, 2001, 2008, and 2016

geles and statewide, there were slight increases in arrest rates between 2001 and 2008 that then decreased through 2016. As shown in **Figure 29**, City of Los Angeles had a lower misdemeanor arrest rate than the state in 2016. These trends and comparisons are virtually identical for felony rates. In 2016, Los Angeles had a slightly higher felony arrest rate than the state.

When we look at male and female trends separately for California and the three comparison counties (shown in **Figures 30** and **31**), we see some small differences. For male misdemeanor rates, the state and each comparison county either had a smaller increase from 2001 to 2008 or, as in the case of Alameda and San Francisco, male misdemeanor rates actually decreased at each point in time. **Figure 30** and subsequent figures also include Los Angeles County, which includes the City of Los Angeles and 87 other municipalities.

For females (**Figure 31**), arrest rates fell most dramatically in San Francisco County, whereas the state and other comparison counties experienced similar trends to Los Angeles — a notable rise from 2001 to 2008



**Figure 33.** Rates of misdemeanor arrests for 18- to 24-year-olds per 100,000 population in Los Angeles, statewide and selected counties, 2001, 2008, and 2016

and a decline, typically below the original 2001 level.

PPIC reports misdemeanor arrest rates for youth 0 to 17 years old, but we can use those data to compare trends for 16- to 17-year-olds in Los Angeles. As shown in **Figure 32**, misdemeanor arrest rates decline from 2001 to 2008 in Alameda, San Francisco, or San Diego counties, as well as statewide. In Los Angeles City and County, those rates increase from 2001 to 2008, but then the declines throughout the time period (2001 to 2016) are actually more pronounced in Los Angeles — 89 percent compared to ranging from 71 percent to 79 percent in the comparison counties. These differences could be due to differences in the age range.

Shown in **Figure 33**, we compare statewide misdemeanor arrest rates for 18- to 24-year-olds reported by PPIC with misdemeanor arrest rates for 18- to 20-year-olds and for 21- to 24-year-olds in Los Angeles. Los Angeles had lower arrest rates for this age group than all counties and in comparison to the state as a whole. The misdemeanor arrest rates declined significantly from 2001 to 2016 statewide and in all counties. Los Angeles saw an increase in arrest rates between 2001 and 2008 for 16- to 17-year-olds and between 2001 and 2010 for 21- to 24-year-olds. However, Alameda and San Francisco saw decreases during the same period with rates in San Francisco dropping 56 percent between 2001 and 2008. Overall, Los Angeles had the smallest declines between 2001 and 2016 — 32 percent for 18- to 20-year-olds and 21 percent for 21- to 24-year-olds.

As shown in **Figure 34**, Los Angeles experienced similar trends to the state and comparison counties in terms of misdemeanor arrest rates by race and ethnicity between 2001 and 2016. As discussed above, all racial and ethnic groups saw declines in misdemeanor arrest rates during this period, but disparities existed across groups. Los Angeles had relatively lower arrest rates across racial and ethnic groups than the state as a whole. There were slight increases in arrest rates between 2001 and 2008 both in Los Angeles and the state as a whole for all racial groups. The misdemeanor arrest rates across racial and ethnic groups then declined after 2008. In Alameda and San Francisco counties, arrest rates declined at each point for all groups other

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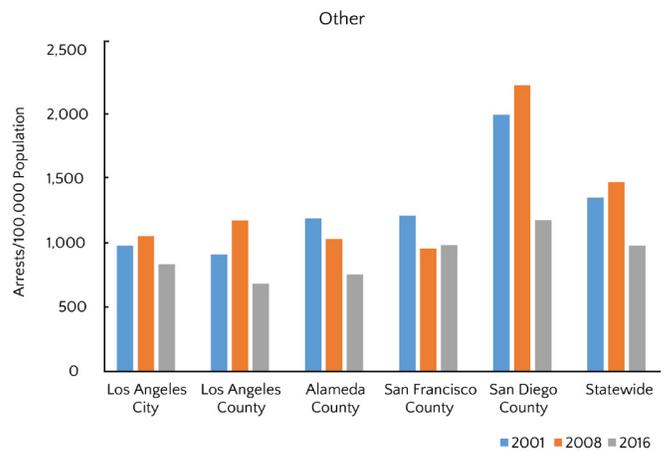
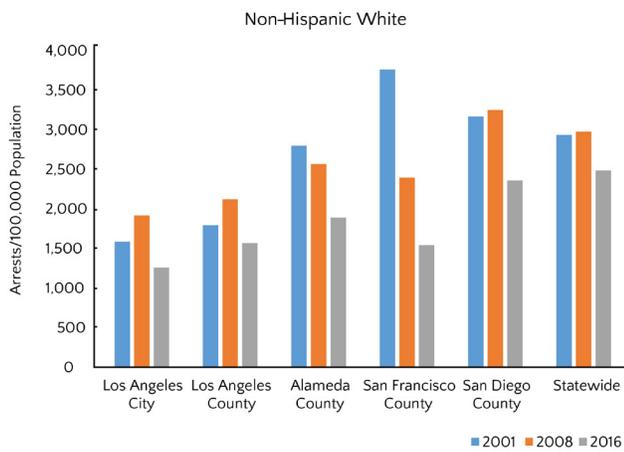
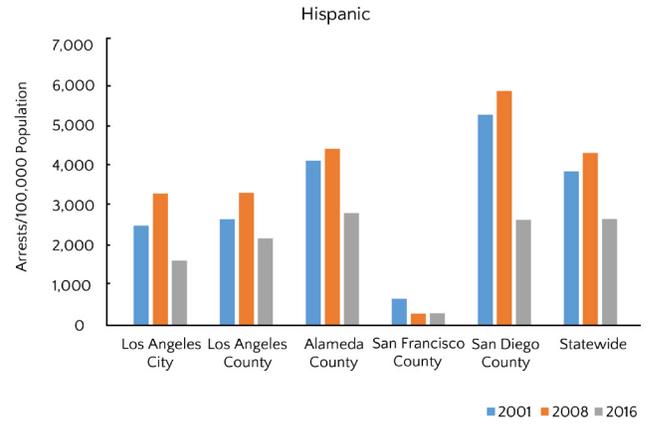
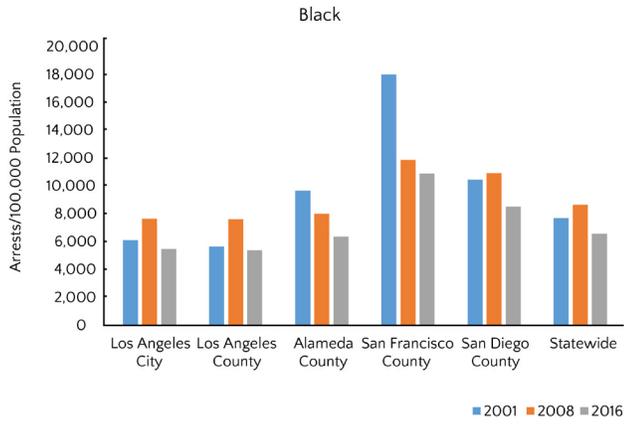
than Hispanics in Alameda County, which were arrested at a higher rate in 2008.

As in Los Angeles, Blacks had the highest arrest rates across the state and selected counties. The arrest rates for Black residents declined 10 percent in Los Angeles and 15 percent statewide between 2001 and 2016. San Francisco and Alameda counties saw more rapid declines in Black arrest rates between 2001 and 2016. San Francisco started off with the highest arrest rate for African Americans in 2001 among all counties at 17,964 per 100,000 residents. The arrest rate eventually declined to 10,867 in 2016.

Hispanic arrest rates saw the biggest declines between 2001 and 2016. In Los Angeles, the arrest rate for Hispanics dropped 35 percent while the statewide arrest rate dropped 31 percent during this period. San Diego County saw a similar trend in Hispanic misdemeanor arrest rates as Los Angeles and the state as a whole, but with a larger decline of 50 percent between 2001 and 2016. San Francisco had the lowest arrest rates for Hispanics between 2001 and 2016 compared to other counties. The Hispanic arrest rates in San Francisco declined dramatically from 669 to 312 between 2001 and 2016. Alameda experienced a similar trend as San Francisco, but with a smaller decline in Hispanic misdemeanor arrest rates of 32 percent over this period.

Whites had relatively lower misdemeanor arrest rates across the state. Sizeable declines in misdemeanor arrest rates across the state were observed between 2001 and 2016. The arrest rates for Whites declined 59 percent and 33 percent in San Francisco and Alameda respectively between 2001 and 2016. In Southern California, the declines in White misdemeanor arrest rates were lower. Los Angeles City saw a drop of 21 percent in White misdemeanor arrest rates and San Diego saw a drop of 26 percent between 2001 and 2016.

Overall, Los Angeles City had similar trends in misdemeanor arrests compared to other counties in California and the state as a whole. Los Angeles generally had lower misdemeanor arrest rates than these selected counties and the state as a whole.



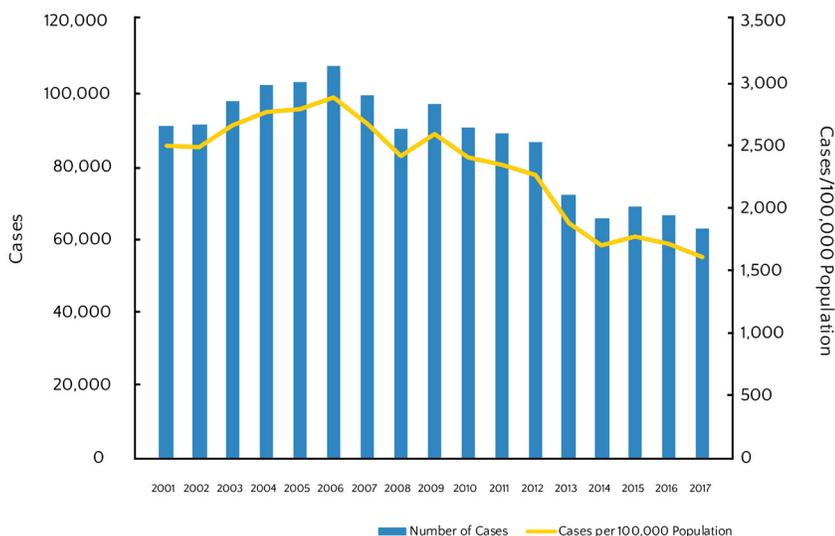
**Figure 34.** Rates of arrest misdemeanor by race/ethnicity per 100,000 population in Los Angeles, statewide, and selected counties, 2001, 2008, and 2016

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# CITY ATTORNEY DATA

## Overall Trends

The number of cases in the City Attorney’s Criminal Case Management System (CCMS) rose slightly between 2001 and 2006, then declined through 2017. **Figure 35** illustrates the number of cases in CCMS. In 2001, the City Attorney’s Office had 91,384 cases or 2,500 per 100,000 residents. It rose gradually to a peak in 2006 with 107,642 cases, or 2,895 per 100,000 residents, then declined to 63,025, or 1,616 per 100,000 residents, in 2017.



**Figure 35.** Numbers of cases in CCMS in Los Angeles, 2001–2017

Cases by source are displayed in **Figure 36**. It indicates that between 60 percent to 70 percent of cases are misdemeanors referred by LAPD. Another substantial number of referrals comes in the form of felonies referred by either the District Attorney or police agencies, commonly LAPD. The small remainder comes from the California Highway Patrol, regulatory agencies and other police agencies.

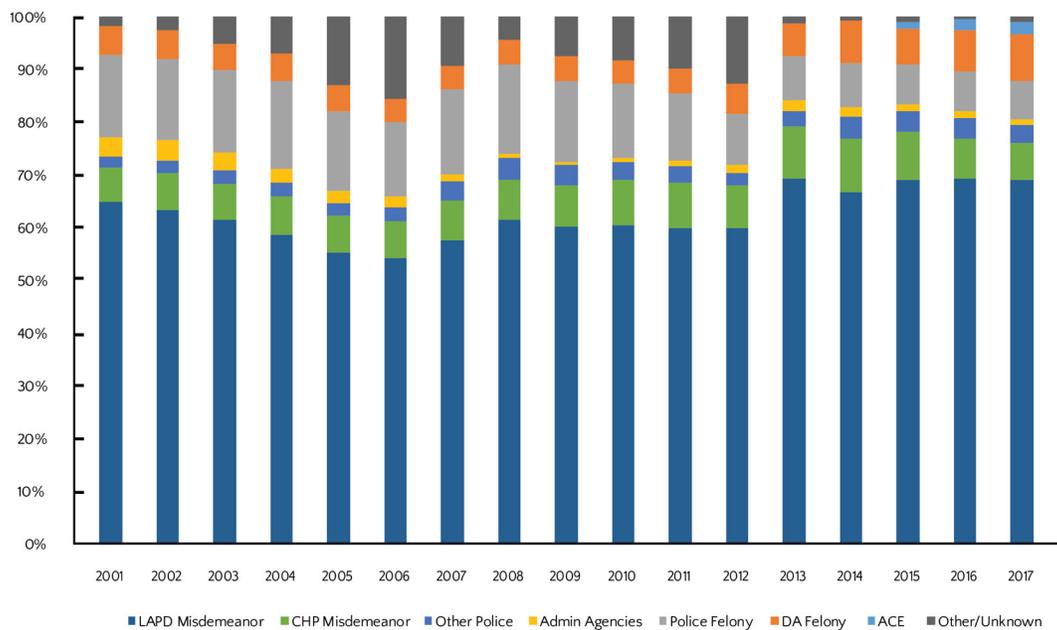


Figure 36. Percentages of cases by source in Los Angeles, 2001-2017

Figure 37 displays case filing decisions. We grouped filing decisions into five categories: Misdemeanor Filed, Hearing, Rejection: Pre-Filing Diversion, Rejection: Other Reason, and Other. Appendix B displays how these filing decisions were categorized. In Figure 37 we see that a misdemeanor complaint was filed in approximately 60 percent of all cases through the data period, ranging from about 55 percent to 65 percent. The ups and downs in proportions of cases where misdemeanors were filed belie steady declines in the total numbers: from 2001 to 2017, misdemeanor complaints dropped 28 percent. Hearings accounted for an additional 16 percent of cases in 2001 but that was down to 7 percent in 2017. Cases with hearings still have an open investigation, but cases are left open for the duration of statutory time.

Cases that we categorized as Pre-Filing Diversions peaked at 19 percent in 2001 and declined to 7 percent by 2017. However, these data on diversions are incomplete. Many cases that are diverted from misdemeanor prosecution entirely are not accounted for in these data. Rather than being prosecuted for misdemeanor offenses, some individuals are issued infraction citations or non-criminal administrative citations, and these offenses are not entered into CCMS.<sup>7</sup>

Cases were rejected for other reasons (see Appendix B). “Other Rejections” accounted for 6 percent to 24 percent over the same period., and those proportions increased over time.

<sup>7</sup> The City Attorney’s Office notes that the office has implemented a number of pre- and post-filing diversion programs in recent years. Per City Attorney internal analysis, a total of 25,488 pre-filing Administrative Citation Enforcement (ACE) program citations were issued between 2015 and 2017. The City Attorney’s Office reports that the Neighborhood Justice Program (NJP) has had a total of 4,466 individuals eligible for the program, of which 2,628 have participated. Other programs include the Prostitution Diversion Program (PDP), LA Diversion Outreach and Opportunities for Recovery (LADOOR), the Truancy Prevention Program (TPP), Community Uniting for Resolution and Empowerment (CURE), Prop 47 Drug Navigator Project, Operation Clean Slate, and the Homeless Engagement and Response Team (HEART).

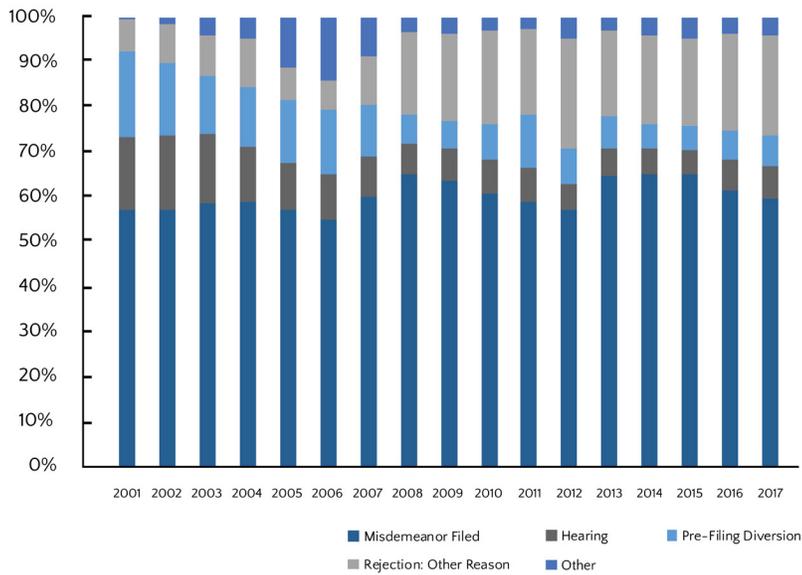


Figure 37. Percentages of cases by filing decision in Los Angeles, 2001-2017

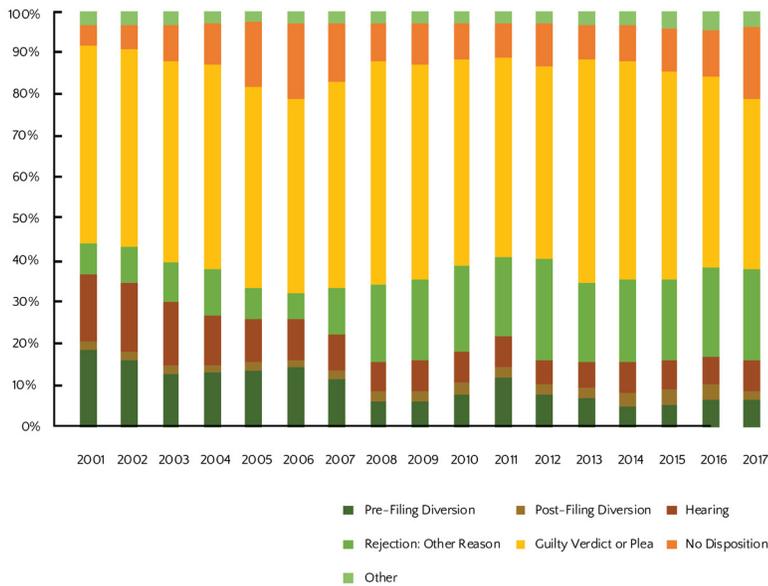


Figure 38. Percentages of cases by disposition in Los Angeles, 2001-2017

Appendix C shows how we categorized seven dispositions: Pre-Filing Diversion, Post-Filing Diversion, Hearing, Rejection: Other Reason, Guilty Verdict or Plea, No Disposition, and Other. Figure 38 summarizes these disposition trends. As noted before, approximately 6 percent to 19 percent of cases were diverted before filing. Then, an additional 50 percent of cases had a guilty verdict or plea. Post-filing diversions accounted for 2 percent to 4 percent of dispositions between 2001 and 2017.

## Trends in Case Charge Category

As shown in **Figure 39**, Vehicle and Driving-Related and Person cases were the most common categories in the city attorney’s caseload. Vehicle and Driving-Related cases accounted for 30 percent of all cases. Person cases accounted for 25 percent of all cases. The next two common categories were Property and Theft-Related and Drugs cases. About 12 percent of all cases were Property and Theft-Related. Drugs cases increased from 5 percent to 11 percent between 2001 and 2016.

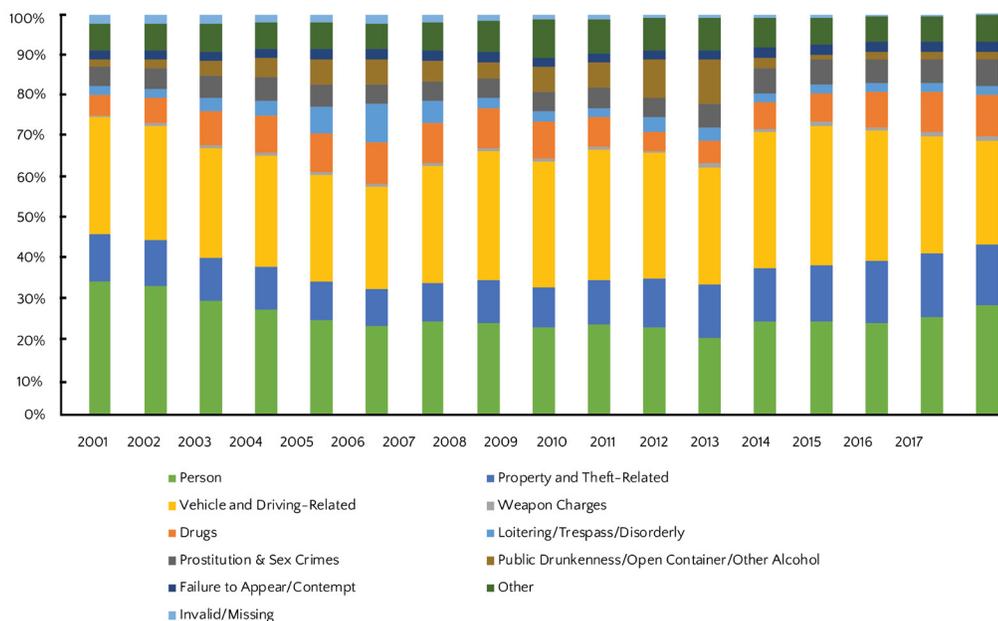
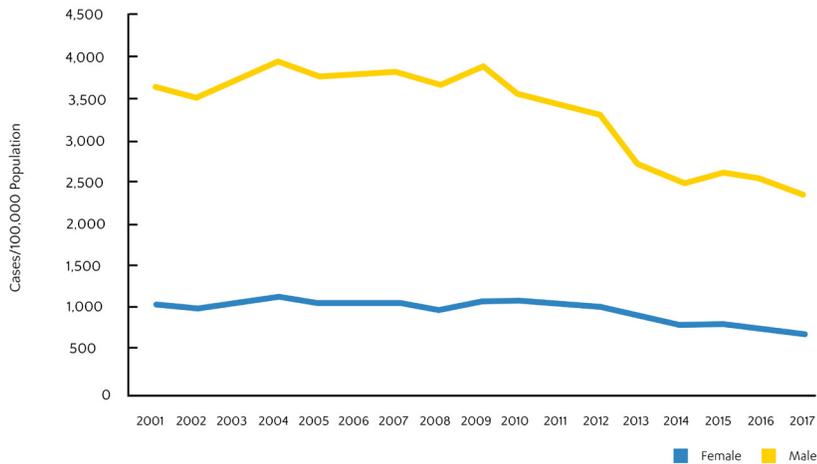


Figure 39. Percentages of cases by category in Los Angeles, 2001-2017

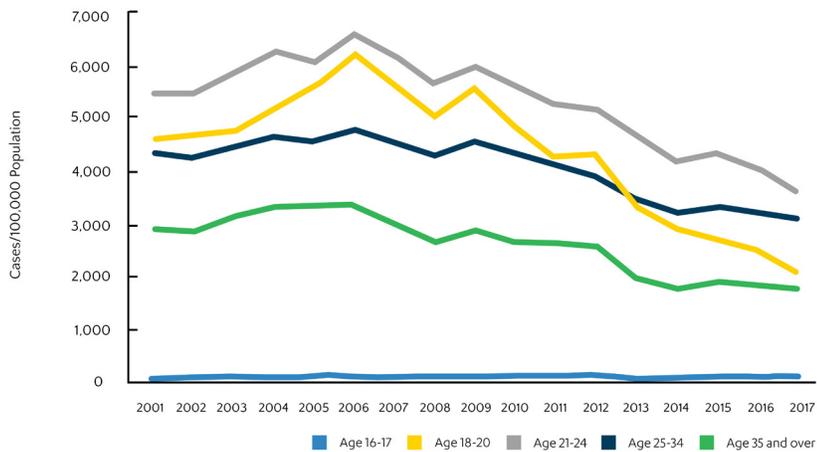
## Trends by Gender

Corresponding to the demographics observed in LAPD arrest data, there were substantially more males than females in the city attorney’s caseload. **Figure 40** shows the trends of case rates by gender in Los Angeles between 2001 and 2017. The case rate for males was 2,423 in 2017, down from a 2004 peak of 3,971. Over the entire period, the case rates for males declined 34 percent from the rate of 3,662 per 100,000 in 2001.

The female case rate also decreased, but more modestly. The rate declined from 1,090 in 2001 to 775 in 2017. The case rate for males was about 3 to 3.5 times of those for females.



**Figure 40.** Rates of cases for misdemeanor by gender per 100,000 population in Los Angeles, 2001–2017



**Figure 41.** Rates of cases for misdemeanor by age groups per 100,000 population in Los Angeles, 2001–2017

## Trends by Age

**Figure 41** displays the case rates for five age groups: 16 to 17, 18 to 20, 21 to 24, 25 to 34, and 35 and older (35 to 65). In Los Angeles, every age group had lower case rates in 2017 compared to 2001.

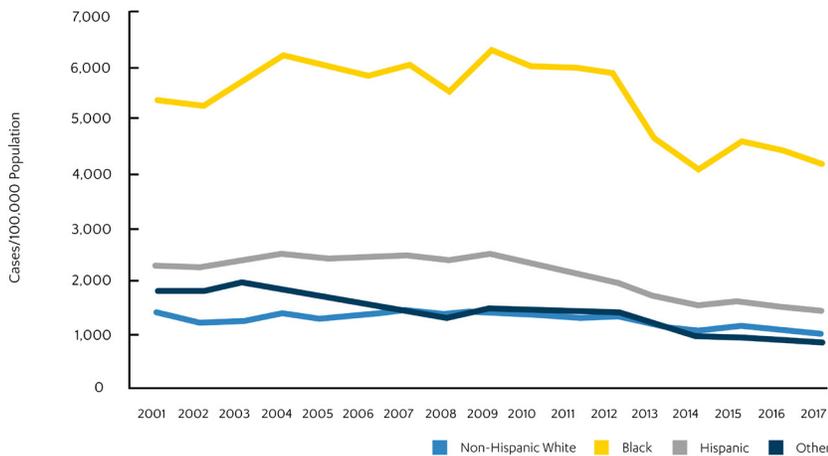
The case rates were near zero for 16- to 17-year-olds. Case rates for 18- to 20-year-olds dropped significantly between 2001 and 2017. The case rate was 4,549 in 2001, peaked at 6,201 in 2006, and declined to 2,065 in 2017. Over the entire period, the case rate dropped more than 50 percent. We saw a similar trend in arrest rates for this age group.

The case rate was highest among 21- to 24-year-olds; but after peaking in 2006 at 6,631, they dropped to 3,627 in 2017.

The age groups of 25- to 34-year-olds and 35 and older shared similar overall trends in case rates over the period. For 25- to 34-year-olds, the case rates started off at 4,313 in 2001, peaked at 4,755 in 2006, then dropped to 3,111 in 2017. The case rate dropped 28 percent over the entire period. The 35 and older group had the lowest case rate other than 16- to 17-year-olds. The case rate was 2,834 in 2001. The rate peaked at 3,298 in 2005 and then declined to 1,755 in 2017. The case rate dropped 38 percent over the entire period.

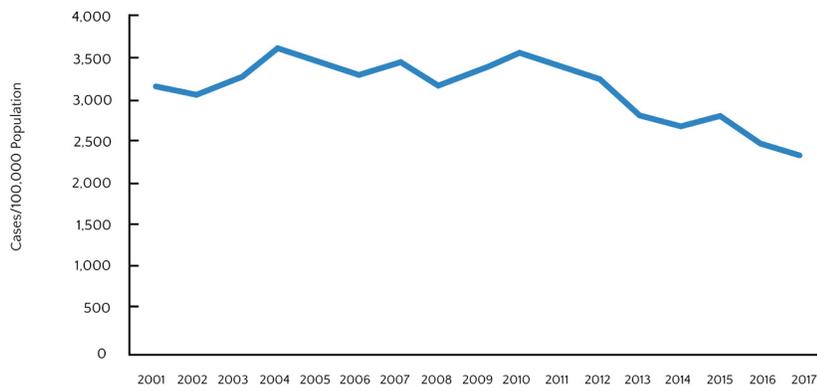
## Trends by Race/Ethnicity

As shown in **Figure 42**, Blacks had significantly higher case rates than the other race and ethnicity<sup>8</sup> groups in Los Angeles. The case rate for Non-Hispanic Whites was 1,454 per 100,000 in 2017, but the case rate for Blacks was nearly four times higher (4,258). The Hispanic case rate was about 36 percent higher, at 1,549 cases per 100,000. Overall, case rates fell for all race and ethnicity groups. Case rates for the Other group had the largest decline (nearly 52 percent) from 2001 to 2017. Hispanic and Black case rates declined 22 percent (Hispanics from 2,360 per 100,000 in 2001 to 1,549 in 2017 and Blacks from 5,427 in 2001 to 4,258 in 2017). Case rates for Blacks showed more fluctuations over time.

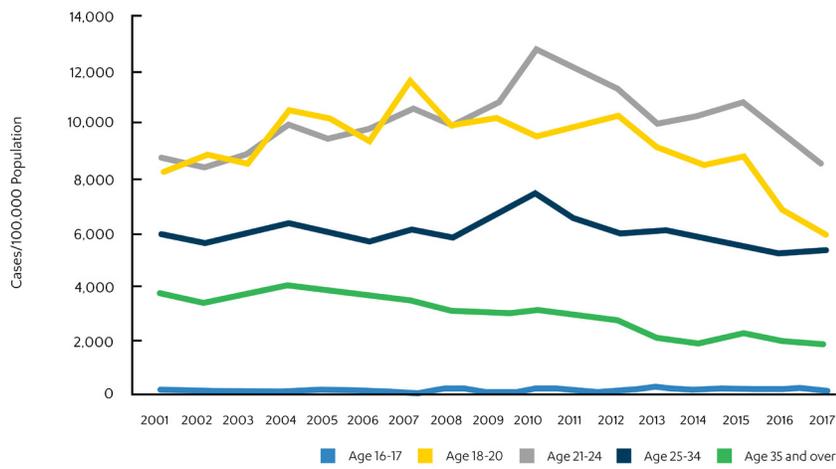


**Figure 42.** Rates of cases for misdemeanor by race/ethnicity per 100,000 population in Los Angeles, 2001-2017

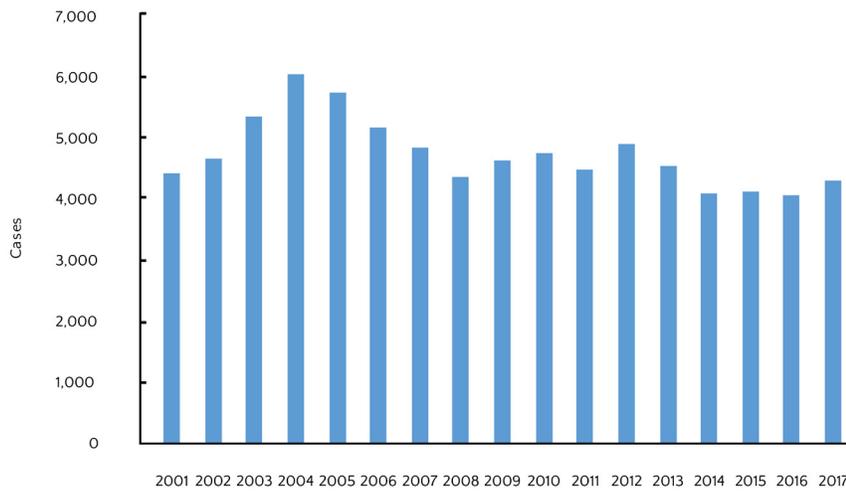
<sup>8</sup> City Attorney data pull race information from the booking sheet of the arresting agency. Thus, the same letter codes for race are used as in the LAPD data, with B (Black), W (White), H (Hispanic), and O (Other) covering nearly all of the individuals.



**Figure 43.** Rates of cases for black females per 100,000 population in Los Angeles, 2001-2017



**Figure 44.** Rates of cases for black females by age group per 100,000 population in Los Angeles, 2001-2017



**Figure 45.** Number of prostitution cases in Los Angeles, 2001-2017

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## A Closer Look at Black Female Case Rates

In the analysis of LAPD data, Black females were the only demographic group more likely to be arrested in 2017 than in 2001. Therefore, we looked at the city attorney’s office caseloads among this group.

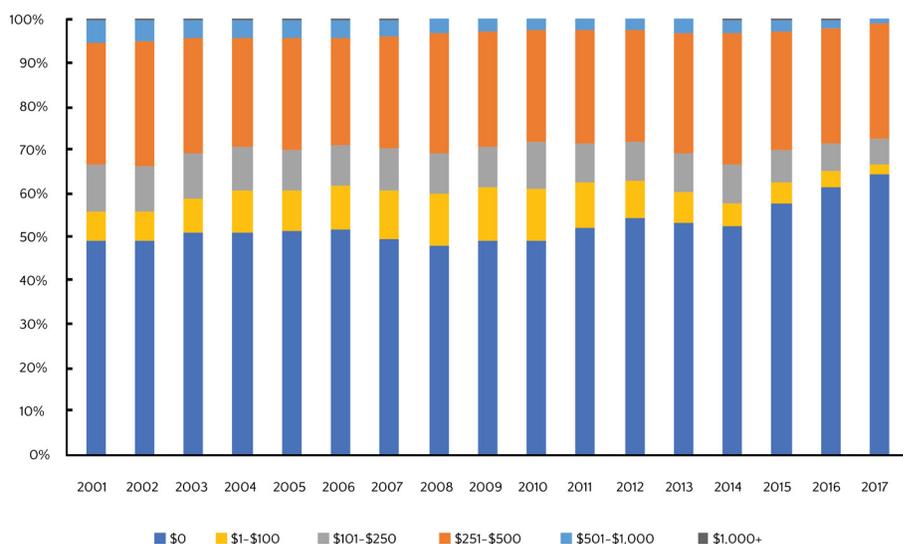
**Figure 43** indicates that Black female case rates declined similarly to other demographic groups over time. From 2001 to 2017, these case rates declined 27 percent, five-percentage points higher than for Blacks and Hispanics overall. In the LAPD analysis, Black females aged 18 to 35 drove the increase in Black female arrest rates. **Figure 44** thus separates this demographic group by age.

The figure indicates that case rates for the 21 to 24 and 25 to 34 age groups declined overall at a much slower pace (2 percent and 9 percent, respectively). Additionally, each of these age cohorts saw meaningful spikes in case rates around 2010.

Given Prostitution arrests were clearly driving the increase in Black female arrests during this time period, **Figure 45** displays trends in those cases over time. The data in the figure demonstrates that Prostitution cases grew steadily between 2001 and 2006, but then declined back to approximate the 2001 levels where they remained through 2017. These trends are similar to the Prostitution arrest trends and the volume is about the same — the city attorney’s office Prostitution cases are about 90 percent as large as LAPD Prostitution arrests.

## Trends in Imposed Fine/Jail Days/Probation Months

**Figure 46** displays trends in cases wherein a fine was imposed. It indicates that more than half of the cases were imposed with no fines. However, there was an increasing percentage of cases with no imposed fine. Sixty-four percent of cases were imposed with no fines in 2016, an increase from 49 percent in 2001. More-



**Figure 46.** Percentage of cases by imposed fine in Los Angeles, 2001–2017

over, of the 25 percent of cases where a fine was imposed, it ranged between \$250 and \$500. All other fine categories saw declines over the same period.

On average, about 55 percent of the cases were imposed with no jail days (**Figure 47**). About 30 percent of cases were imposed with less than 30 days of jail time. There was an increasing percentage of cases with no imposed jail days until 2010. Fifty-four percent of cases were imposed with no jail time in 2001. The percentage increased to 65 percent in 2010 and then declined to 51 percent in 2017. It is important to note that we are unable to look at actual time served, only sentencing.

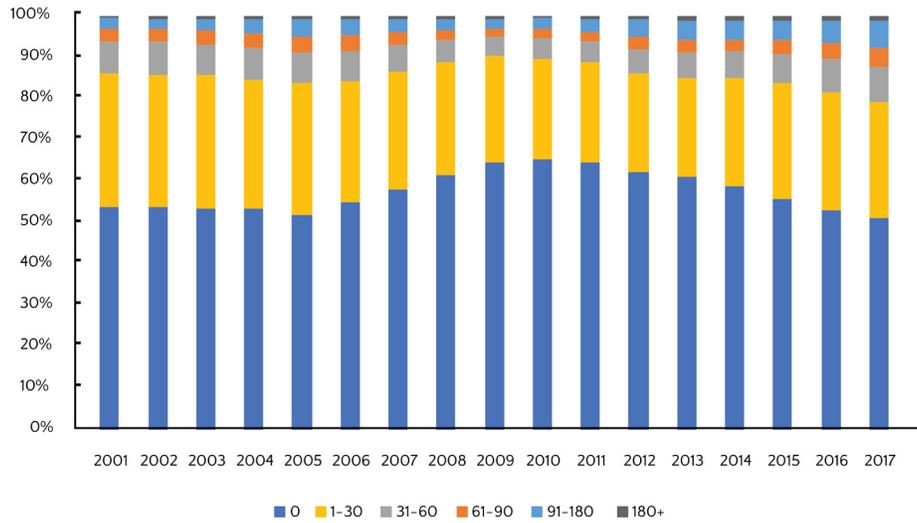


Figure 47. Percentage of cases by imposed jail days in Los Angeles, 2001-2017

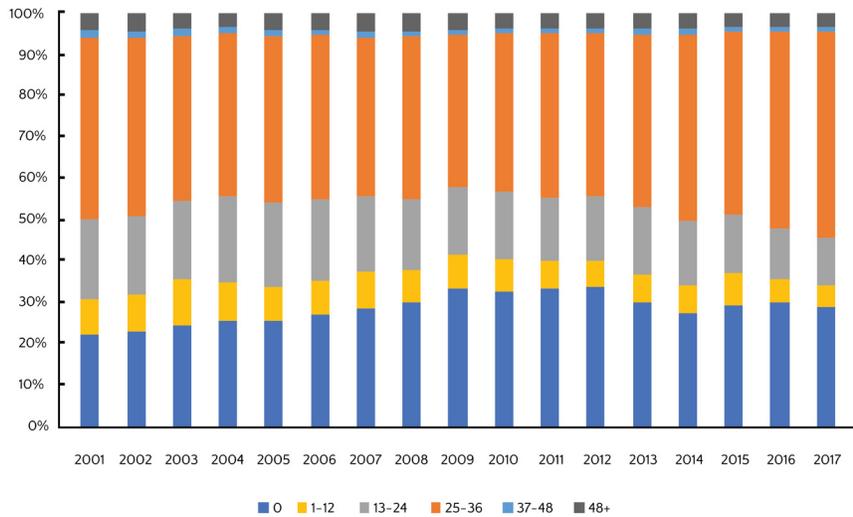


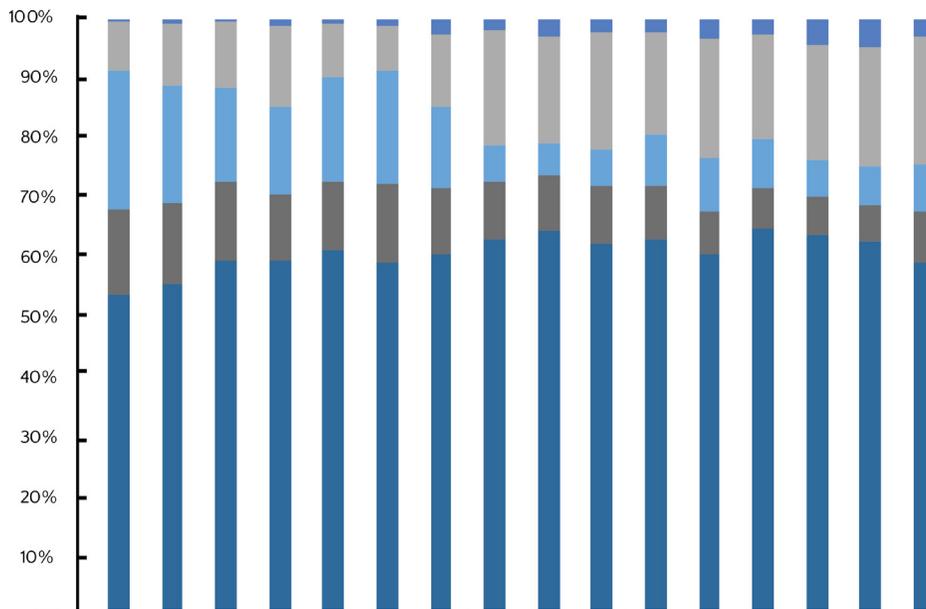
Figure 48. Percentage of cases by imposed probation months in Los Angeles, 2001-2017

About 40 percent of cases were imposed with 25 to 36 months of probation (**Figure 48**). The percentages increased from 44 percent in 2001 to 50 percent in 2017. About 30 percent of the cases were imposed with no probation. The percentages increased slightly from 22 percent in 2001 to 29 percent in 2016. Cases with one to 12 months and 13 to 24 months of probation made up about 8 percent and 17 percent of all cases, respectively. Both categories had declined from 2001 to 2017.

## A Closer Look at Filing Decision

This section looks at five filing decisions — Misdemeanor Filed, Hearing, Rejection: Pre-Filing Diversion, Rejection: Other Reason, and Other — within demographic groups. **Figures 49** and **50** display the percentages for each filing decisions for females and males, respectively. For both groups, misdemeanor complaints fluctuated during the data period but remained near 60 percent. In every year, males have a slightly higher proportion of cases where a misdemeanor is filed than women.

In **Figures 51** through **54**, we provide similar breakdowns of the filing decisions for the four racial and ethnic groups. There are similar levels and trends for each group in terms of filing decisions. Misdemeanor complaints are filed roughly 55 percent to 65 percent of the time for each group. Misdemeanor complaints are filed most frequently for Hispanics, who are the only group to have a misdemeanor file rate that is higher than 60 percent in each year and was as high as 70 percent in any given year (2008 and 2009).



**Figure 49.** Percentages of cases by filing decision for females in Los Angeles, 2001-2017

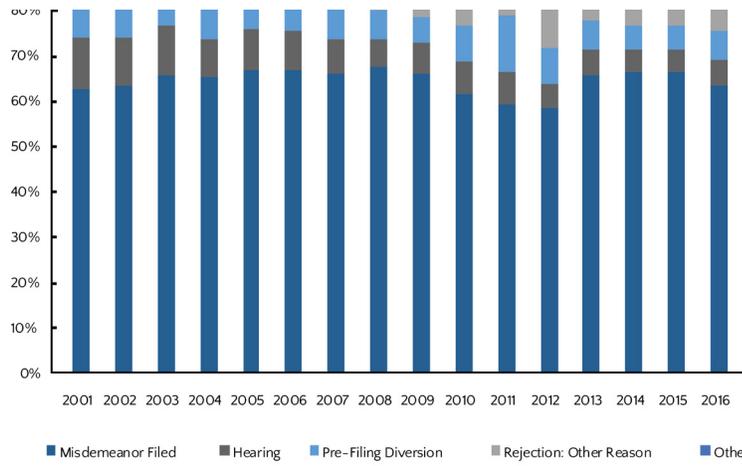


Figure 50. Percentages of cases by filing decision for males in Los Angeles, 2001-2017

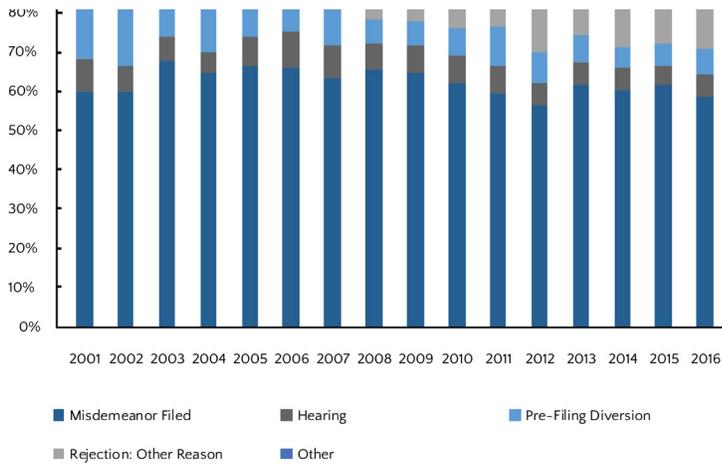


Figure 51. Percentages of cases by filing decision for non-Hispanic whites in Los Angeles, 2001-2017

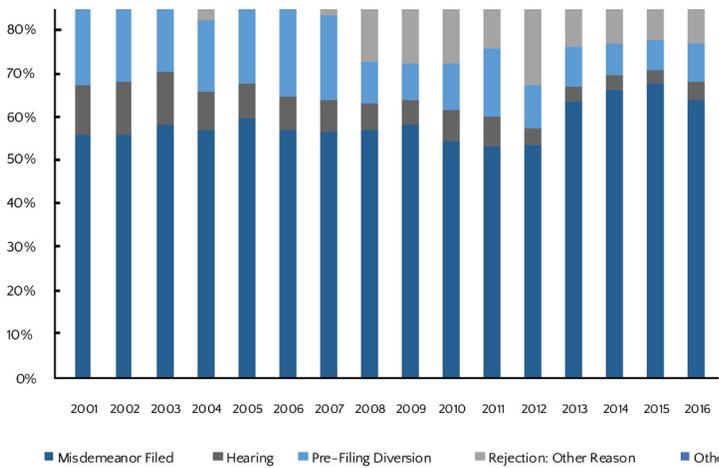


Figure 52. Percentages of cases by filing decision for blacks in Los Angeles, 2001-2017

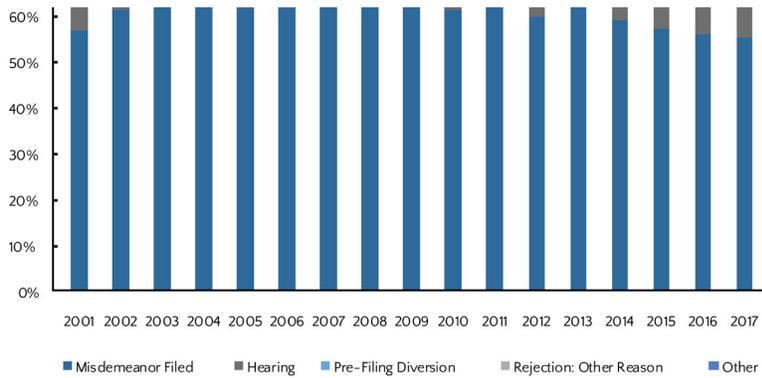
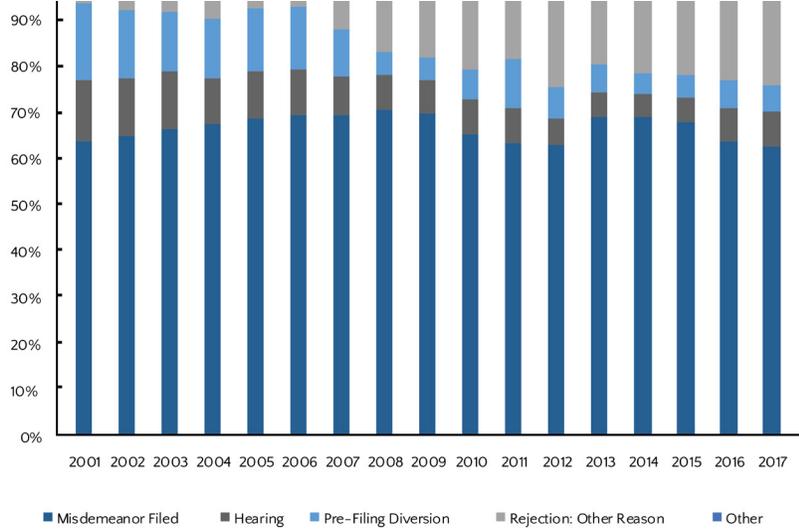


Figure 54. Percentages of cases by filing decision for other race in Los Angeles, 2001-2017

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**Figure 55** displays the same filing decision breakdowns for the most common charges: Crimes against Persons, Property and Theft-Related, Vehicle and Driving-Related, Public Drunkenness/Open Container/Other Alcohol, and Prostitution. These charges account for 72 percent to 86 percent of all cases, depending on the year, between 2001 and 2017. We see that filing decisions differ substantially across charge types. Hearing is a much more common filing decision for Crimes against Persons than for the other charges. Cases are also rejected more frequently for Crimes against Persons. Misdemeanors are virtually always filed for Vehicle and Driving-Related charges. Misdemeanors are filed approximately 80 percent of the time in Prostitution cases. The most variation over time is seen in the Public Drunkenness/Open Container/Other Alcohol charge group. The proportion that had a misdemeanor filed declined substantially throughout the 2000s, as more and more cases were being rejected. After a reversal in 2008, the trend continued through 2012, a year in which less than 10 percent of such charges had a complaint filed. Filings continue to be relatively rare for alcohol-related charges.

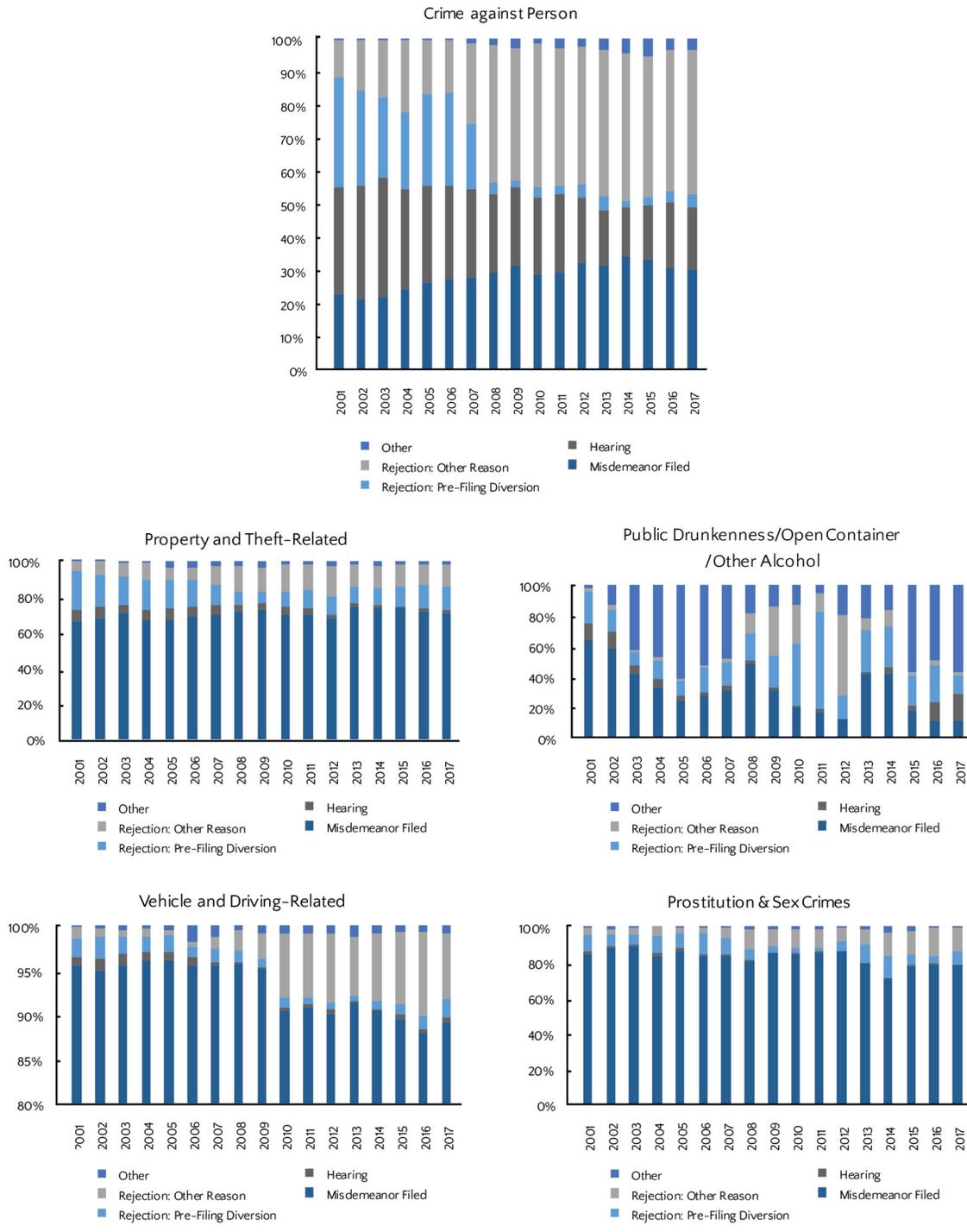
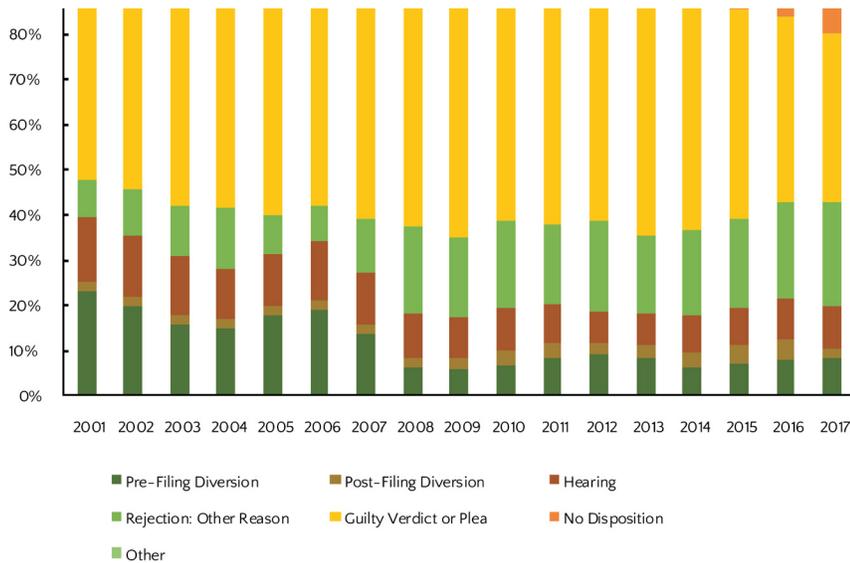


Figure 55. Percentages of cases by charge category by filing decision

## A Closer Look at Disposition

This section looks at seven disposition outcomes — Pre-Filing Diversion, Post-Filing Diversion, Hearing, Rejection: Other Reason, Guilty Verdict or Plea, No Disposition, and Other — within demographic groups.

**Figures 56** and **57** display the percentages for each filing decisions for females and males, respectively. For both groups, Pre-Filing Diversion and Guilty Verdict or Plea outcomes have declined, but Other Rejection has increased between 2001 and 2017. Males are more likely to have a Guilty Verdict or Plea outcome as compared to females in 2017 (43 percent to 37 percent). Females saw slightly higher rate in Hearing than males in 2017 (10 percent to 6 percent). A small difference shows in diverted cases between males and females, both pre- and post-filing. For females, 8 percent of cases were Pre-Filing Diversion and 2 percent were Post-Filing Diversion. For males, 7 percent of cases were Pre-Filing Diversion while 2 percent were Post-Filing Diversion in 2017. Again, we note that this is a significant undercount of diversion activity by the city attorney’s office.



**Figure 56.** Percentages of cases by disposition for females in Los Angeles, 2001–2017

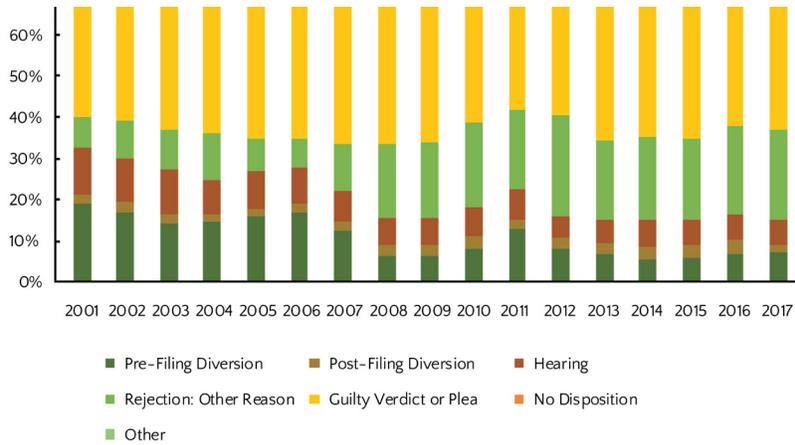


Figure 57. Percentages of cases by disposition for males in Los Angeles, 2001-2017

In **Figures 58** through **61**, we provide similar breakdowns of the disposition outcomes for the four racial and ethnic groups. There are similar levels and trends for each group in terms of disposition outcomes. The disposition of Guilty Verdict or Plea has declined for all groups. Hispanics had the highest percent of cases disposed with a Guilty Verdict or Plea in most years, followed by Whites then Blacks. The average for Hispanics during the data period was 55 percent of cases ending in Guilty Verdict or Plea, followed by 51 percent for Whites and 45 percent for Blacks. Hearing cases have declined slightly over time across all groups. Pre-Filing Diversion cases have decreased over time while Rejection cases have increased across all groups. Twenty percent to 26 percent of the cases within each group are rejected (for reasons other than pre- and post-filing diversions) in 2017.

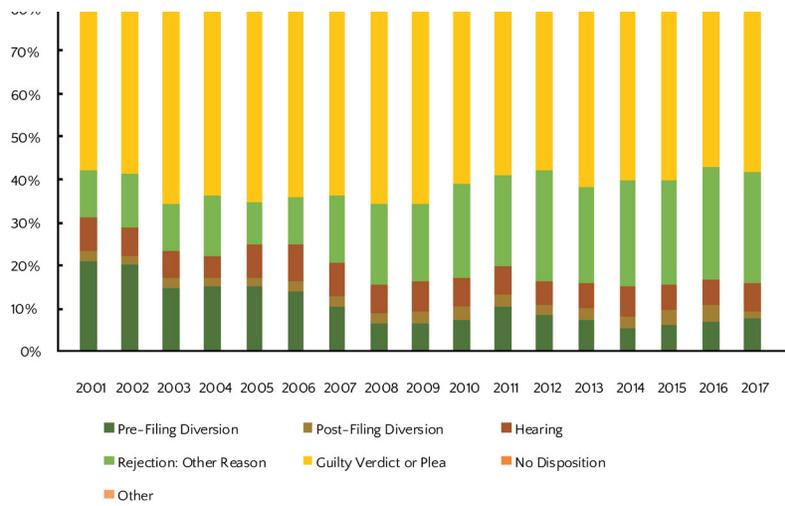


Figure 58. Percentages of cases by disposition for non-Hispanic whites in Los Angeles, 2001-2017

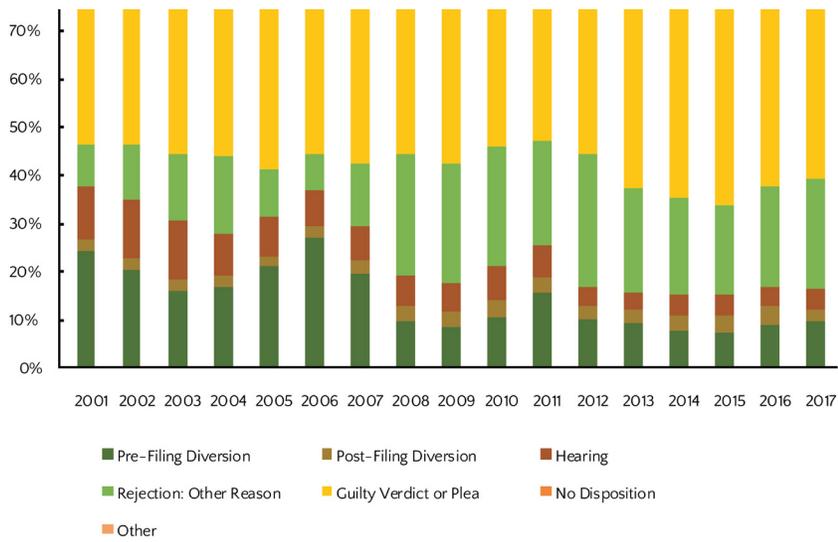


Figure 59. Percentages of cases by filing decision for blacks in Los Angeles, 2001-2017

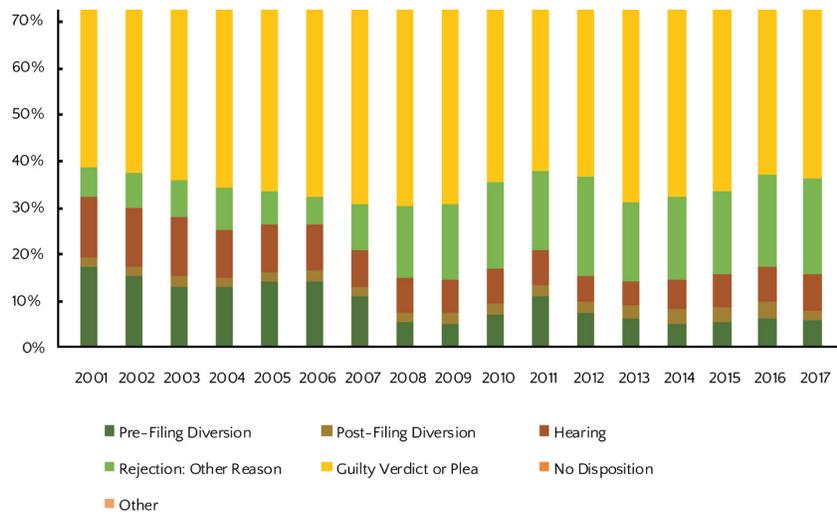


Figure 60. Percentages of cases by disposition for Hispanics in Los Angeles, 2001-2017

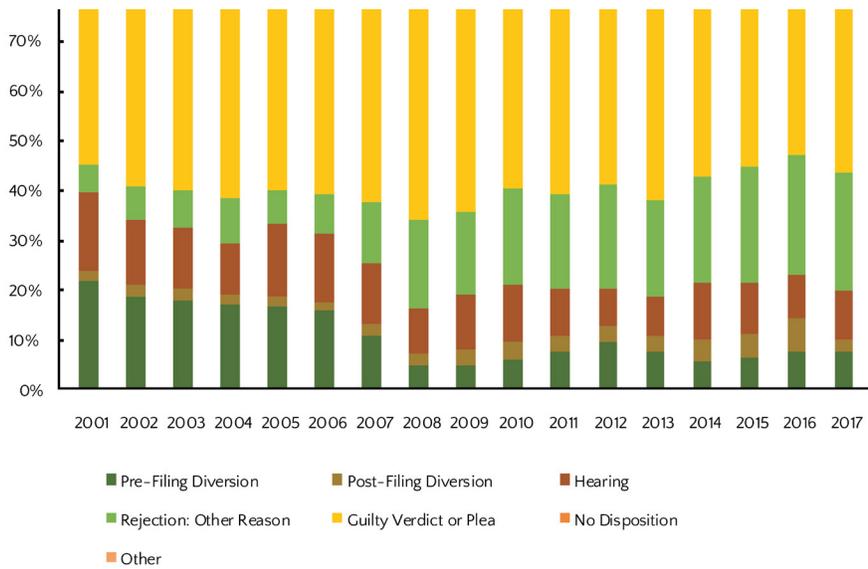


Figure 61. Percentages of cases by disposition for other race in Los Angeles, 2001-2017

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**Figure 62** shows the disposition outcome breakdowns for the most common charges: Crimes against Persons, Property and Theft-Related, Vehicle and Driving-Related, Public Drunkenness/Open Container/Other Alcohol, and Prostitution. These charges account for 57 percent of all cases in 2017. We see that disposition outcomes differ substantially across charge types. Rejection is a much more common disposition outcome for Crimes against Persons than for the other charges since 2008 (between 40 percent to 44 percent). Around 25 percent of cases involving Crimes against Persons are diverted before filing from 2001 to 2007. Hearing cases for Crimes against Persons have decreased from 32 percent to 20 percent from 2001 to 2017. Virtually all Vehicle and Driving-Related charges culminate in a Guilty Verdict or Plea. About 80 percent of Property and Theft-Related cases conclude with Guilty Verdict or Plea. The most variation over time is seen in the Public Drunkenness/Open Container/Other Alcohol charge group. Cases are rejected more frequently for Public Drunkenness/Open Container/Other Alcohol crimes before 2012. For Prostitution, there is a steady decrease in the proportion of cases that resulted in a Guilty Verdict or Plea over time. Guilty dispositions peaked at 78 percent of Prostitution cases in 2005, but then declined to 50 percent by 2017.



**Figure 62.** Percentages of cases by charge category by disposition

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# CONCLUSION

This report, Trends in Misdemeanor Arrests in Los Angeles, is one of several produced by the seven participating sites in the Research Network on Misdemeanor Justice, including the authors and stakeholders in Los Angeles. These sites, in addition to the founding members at the John Jay College of Criminal Justice in New York, are working across the county to bring together law enforcement agencies, courts, corrections, and other criminal justice agencies with university-based research institutions to examine trends in the enforcement and disposition of low-level offenses. Led by faculty at John Jay College and funded by the Laura and John Arnold Foundation, the network also aims to help sites build data analytic infrastructure and capacity to examine trends and outcomes of misdemeanor arrests.

The report on misdemeanor arrests in Los Angeles over the 2001–2017 period presents several important findings. First, arrests and prosecution caseloads generally declined substantially during this time period (the misdemeanor arrest rate in 2017 was roughly half the peak year of 2008). Moreover, with few caveats, this trend in declining misdemeanor arrests follows generally that for Los Angeles County, other counties in California such as San Francisco, as well as that for the state as a whole.

Despite these declines in misdemeanor arrests, certain smaller volume charges such as arrests for loitering, trespassing, disorderly conduct and prostitution increased over this period. Nevertheless, the most common type of misdemeanor arrest — i.e., Vehicle/Driving-Related and Public Drunkenness/Open Container/Other Alcohol infractions — saw the biggest declines over this period.

Misdemeanor arrest rates changed by key demographic characteristics over this period. They fell much more slowly for women than men, though men are still arrested at much higher rates than women. Juvenile arrest rates have fallen dramatically over this period mostly as a consequence of the near disappearance of arrests for curfew and truancy infractions. This trend reduces and in many instances eliminates racial disparities in arrests for juveniles by the end of the period. However, for all age groups combined, racial disparities in arrest rates remain throughout the period of analysis, though they begin to narrow slightly at the end of the period. Unlike other demographic groups whose arrests rates largely declined over this period, Black female arrest rates increased for some age groups, and Prostitution arrests are the most frequent type for younger Black females.

In large part, the city attorney's office caseloads reflect these declines in misdemeanor arrests and by demographic characteristics of the arrestee. Although city attorney misdemeanor arrest caseloads declined over the period of analysis, the charges processed are relatively consistent. Vehicle/Driving-Related and Persons

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offenses are the most likely charges to reach the city attorney’s desk. Finally, misdemeanor complaints are filed in most cases. Misdemeanor petitions are filed roughly 60 percent of the time throughout the data period. Driving offenses are overwhelmingly prosecuted (misdemeanor petition is filed).

The network will next engage in cross-site analyses, to systematically assess similarities and differences across jurisdictions, and to utilize the collective experiences and conclusions to build knowledge about misdemeanor arrest and case processing. Further, the network is engaged in analyses of particular policies, such as changes to the legality and criminality of drug use and possession over time. Locally, the analyses and findings in this report are being used to spark and inform discussions about police and prosecutorial practice.

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# APPENDIX A:

## ARREST CHARGE CATEGORIZATION

Charge Category	Charge
Crimes against Persons (Person)	Against Family/Child Aggravated Assault Homicide Other Assaults
Property/Theft-Related	Burglary Larceny Receive Stolen Prop
Vehicle/Driving-Related	Driving Under Influence Moving Traffic Viol Vehicle Theft
Weapon Charges	Weapon (Carry/Possess)
Drugs	Narcotic Drug Laws
Prostitution/Sex Crimes	Prostitution/Allied
Public Drunkenness/Open Container/ Other Alcohol	Crimes related to public drunkenness, open containers of alcohol, and other.
Failure to Appear/Contempt	Crimes related to failure to appear and contempt.
Loitering/Trespass/Disorderly	Crimes related to loitering, trespassing, and disorderly behaviors.

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Charge Category	Charge
Other	Disorderly Conduct Disturb The Peace Drunkenness Embezzlement/Fraud Forgery/Counterfeit Gambling Liquor Laws Misc. Other Viols Non-Criminal Detention Other Other Municipalities Pre-Delinquency (601WIC) Sex (Excluding Rape/Prostitution) United States Codes

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# APPENDIX B:

## FILING DECISION CATEGORIZATION

Filing Decision Category	Filing Decision
Hearing	Hearing
Misdemeanor Filed	Misd Filed-Bail Misd Filed-Custody Misd Filed-OR Misd Filed-VA Misd Filed-Warrant Misd Filed-Writ
Reject: Pre-Filing Diversion	Misd Rej-Interest of Justice Misd Rej-Other-Ind Reason in MEMO Misd Rej-Pros Prefiling Deferral NJP APPS
Reject: Other Reason	Misd Rej-Any Dismiss Othr Than A-L Misd Rej-Combined w Other Cases Misd Rej-Defer Parole Revocation Misd Rej-Further Investigation Misd Rej-Inadmissible S & S Misd Rej-Lack of Corpus Misd Rej-Lack of Suff Evidence Misd Rej-Refer Non-Cal Jurisd Misd Rej-Victim Unavailable Misd Rej-Witness Unavailable
Other	Case Filing Under Investigation Inf Filed Inf Rej Other PV in Lieu

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# APPENDIX C:

## DISPOSITION OUTCOME CATEGORIZATION

Disposition Category	Disposition
Pre-Filing Diversion	Filing Decision: Reject - Pre-Filing Diversion
Post-Filing Diversion	36 Prop 36 Diversion 37 - Dism - 1385/IOJ 45 - Dism PC 1000 48 Dism-Other Reason
Hearing	Hearing
Rejection: Other Reason	Filing Decision: Reject - Other Reason
Guilty Verdict or Plea	33 Plea-CT 1/Equiv 34 Plea-Lesser Charge 35 Plea-Direct Cite 51C Guilty Verdict 51J Guilty Verdict
Other	49A Consolidated 49B Cert as Juvenile 49C Cert to Dept. 95 49F Refiled as Felony 53C 1118 53J 1118.1 56C Other Wkld-Plea 56J Other Wkld-Plea ACE/Citation Dismissed ACE/Citation Upheld APPS/Complete APPS/Declined-Fil Req APPS/Failed-File Req APPS/Fta-File Req

Disposition Category	Disposition
Other (cont.)	APPS/Not Elig-Fil Req CAPS/Fta-File Req CAPS/Incomplete-File CAPS/Not Elig-File Req  37A Dism-1385 Mental 38 Dism-1385/Insuff.Evid 38A Dism-Direct Cite 39 Dism-1385/Evid. Supp. 40 Dism-1382/WitsUnavall 41 Dism-Serna Granted 42 Dism-825/Speedy Arr. 43 Dism-PV Other Case 44 Dism-Civil Compromise 46 Dism-Plea Other Case 46A Dism-1381/IOJ 47 Dism-PC 991 57C Other Wkld-Dism. 57J Other Wkld-Dism.  54C Mistrial-Dism 54J Mistrial-Dism 55C Mistrial-Reset 55J Mistrial-Reset  52C NG Verdict 52J NG Verdict
No disposition	No disposition





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