



DENVER
OFFICE OF THE MUNICIPAL
PUBLIC DEFENDER



Our Mission To provide excellent legal representation and holistic support to our clients by upholding their rights, telling their stories, and restoring dignity.

Our Vision Ensuring access to justice and equitable outcomes by advocating for the individuals we serve.



OMPD Clients

- **100%** are living at or below the poverty line
- **80% or more** are living with trauma, mental health, brain injury, or substance misuse conditions
- **Majority** are unhoused or experiencing housing instability
- **Limited access** to behavioral healthcare - especially for black, Hispanic, and people of color



Justice-involved individuals and homelessness

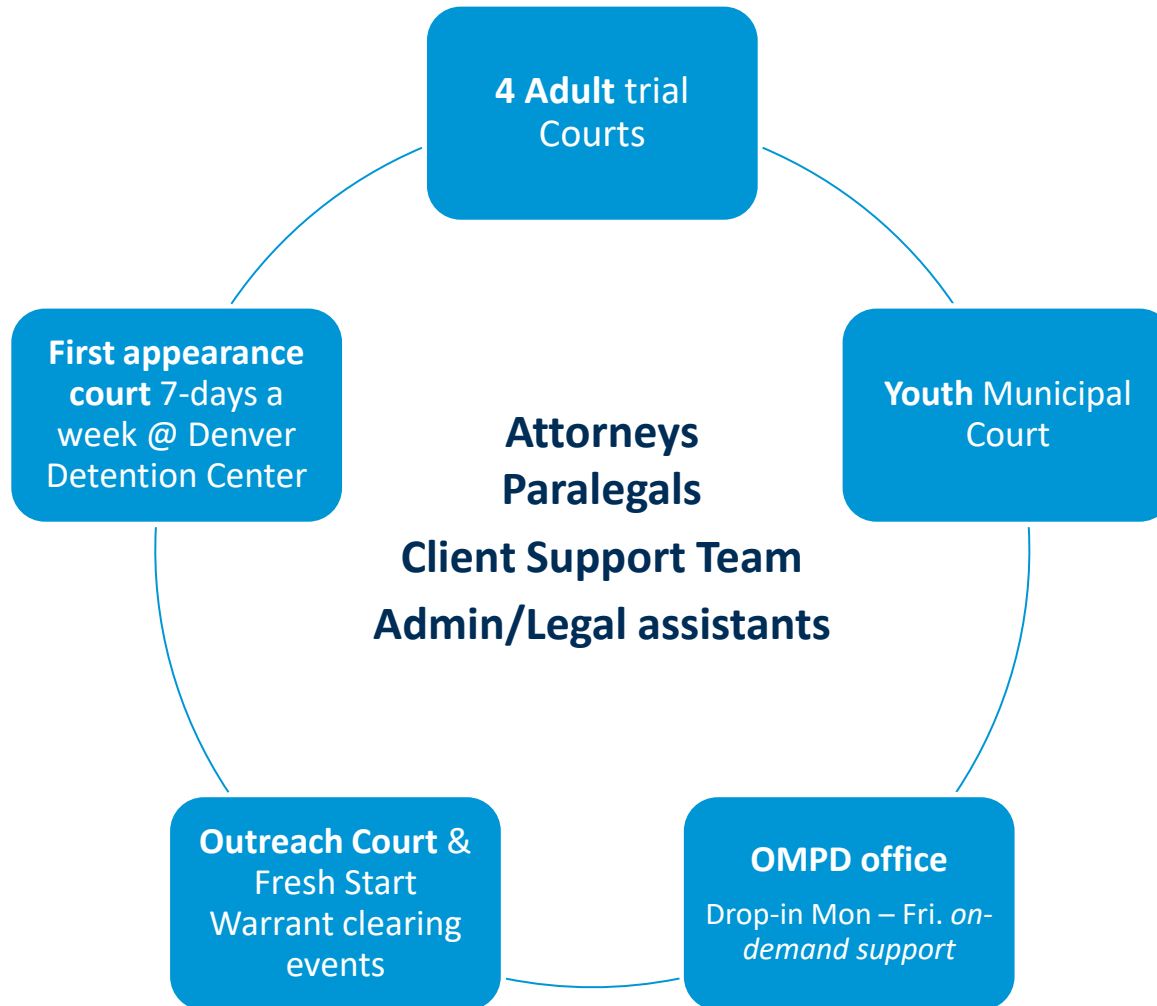
- People experiencing homelessness (PEH) are **11 times more likely to be arrested** than housed individuals ^[1]
- In Denver, **nearly 40% of municipal cases involve PEH**, often for low-level offenses like trespass and open container violations ^[2]



[1] Barr, Karianna. "Housing Not Handcuffs 2019." National Homelessness Law Center, 10 Dec. 2019, homelesslaw.org/housing-not-handcuffs-2019/.

[2] OMPD. (2020). Black Lives Matter: Summary of research on the OMPD and Denver Municipal Court. Retrieved from <https://wp-denverite.s3.amazonaws.com/wp-content/uploads/sites/4/2020/08/OMPD.pdf>

OMPD's Holistic Defense Model



21 Lawyers representing 12,000 clients/year on Denver Municipal Ordinance Violations

- Disturbing the Peace
- Trespass
- Park Violations
- Shoplifting
- Domestic Violence
- Assault
- Dog Cases
- Traffic



OMPD in Court Seven Days a Week



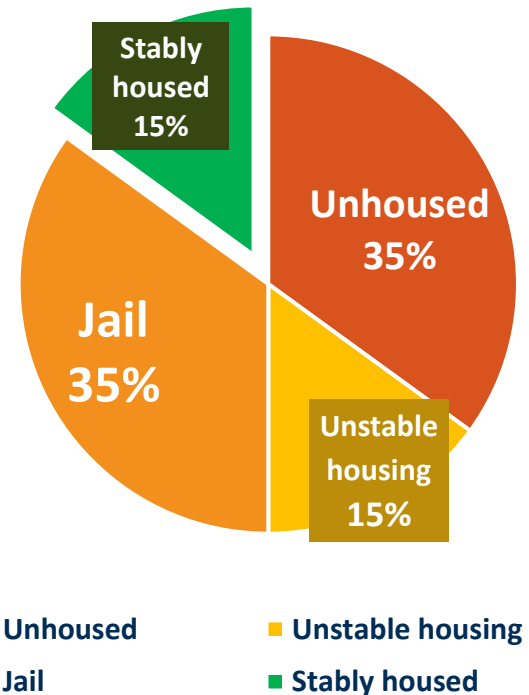
**Holistic
representation
is a client-
centered,
community-
oriented
approach to
criminal
defense**



OMPD's Holistic Defense: Client Support Team

- **Provide** wraparound, on-demand peer support, case management, & behavioral health navigation
- **Connect** clients to community resources, services, and behavioral health treatment
- **Support** adult/youth OMPD clients in 6 courtrooms, Outreach Court, office, & jail and reentry support
- **Collaborate** with City & community partners to coordinate care and link clients directly to services
- **Facilitate** training for staff & clients, *Wellness Recovery Action Plan*

Housing at time of Referral
Jan 1 – Sept. 30, 2025



Top Resource & Service Connections

Jan 1 – Sept. 31, 2025

Jail & Reentry services

- ☐ Denver AID Center*
- ☐ Second Chance Center*
- ☐ Denver Sheriff Department Programs*
- ☐ Denver Health @ downtown jail (MAT)*
- ☐ Tribe Release Assistance on Demand*

Homelessness & basic needs

- ☐ Benefits in Action*
- ☐ Colorado Coalition for the Homeless*
- ☐ Comitis Shelter*
- ☐ Denver Dream Center
- ☐ Denver Housing Authority
- ☐ Denver Human Services*
- ☐ Heartbeat Denver
- ☐ Metro Caring*
- ☐ Salvation Army*
- ☐ Servicios de la Raza
- ☐ Veterans Affairs*

Employment/Vocational

- ☐ Denver Workforce Center*
- ☐ Work Options

Behavioral Health

- ☐ Aurora Mental Health Center
- ☐ Brain Injury Alliance of CO
- ☐ Colorado Crisis Services
- ☐ Denver Health*
- ☐ Salvation Army Harbor Lights
- ☐ Sober Living*
- ✓ Stride Recovery Homes*, Ananeo, Don't Look Back Center, Mountain West Recovery Homes, Empowerment Recovery Homes
- ☐ WellPower*

Case Management

- ☐ LEAD (Law Enforcement Assisted Diversion)*
- ☐ Reciprocity Collective
- ☐ Roads to Recovery

Youth & Emerging Adults

- ☐ Fully Liberated Youth
- ☐ Nxt Chapter
- ☐ Transformative Justice Project*
- ☐ Urban Peak

Price Savings for the Community

- Jail Beds approximately \$164/night
- Low level offenders spending time in jail- recidivate
- Limited MH/Addiction Programming at DDC and our office connects people to services
- Help with housing, transportation, clothing, food
- Cases get resolved more expediently



Denver Municipal Youth Court- Thursday 1PM Courtroom 2B at LFC

MISSION: WHY and HOW?

School To Prison Pipeline & Collateral Consequences

Black young adults are 11 times more likely to be arrested by age 20 if they had an initial encounter with law enforcement in their early teens than Black youth who don't have that first contact.

Who gets the right to have a childhood or make a "child" mistake?

Core Values:

- Supporting youth labeled as "high risk" by sharing their perspectives and connecting them with youth-led orgs
- Combat public defender stigma within justice-involved community
- Disrupting the school to prison pipeline
- Allow youth to identify their hierarchy of needs and provide holistic support

"To provide holistic representation by empowering youth voice so they may achieve the most positive and equitable outcomes in their cases."

"The Usual, Racialized, Suspects: The Consequence of Police Contacts With Black and White Youth on Adult Arrest;" Social Problems, Volume 69,

KEY FINDINGS 2024

320 cases from 2024 July-December

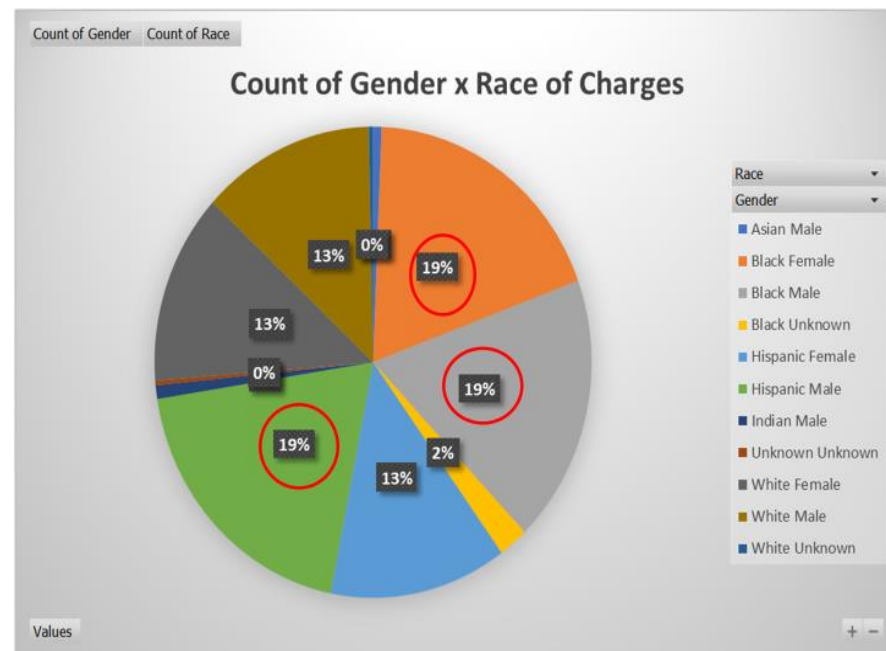
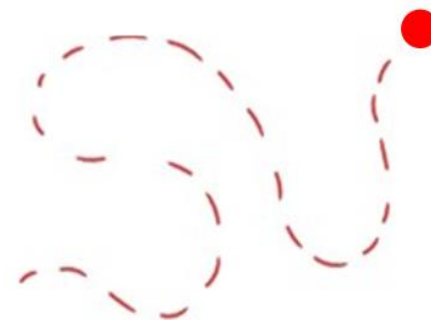
Roughly 40% of cases are brought against Black youth. 20% brought against Black girls and 20% against Black boys.

Roughly 32% of charges are brought against Hispanic Youth.

43% percentage of cases were resolved through Diversion on **arraignment date**.

A large majority of cases are Assaults, with 102 of total charges being assault.

About 30% of all of the new charges brought forward originated in schools



SCHOOL CASES IN 2024 AND PUSH OUT

- 24% of the cases from school are brought against Black girls.
- 23% of the cases from school are brought against Black Boys.
- 31% of the cases from school are brought against Hispanic Youth.
- Denver Public Schools and DPS charter schools ticket their students at a disparate rate.
 - 52% of DPS are Hispanic youth
 - 13.5% of DPS are Black youth.
 - 25% of DPS is white.

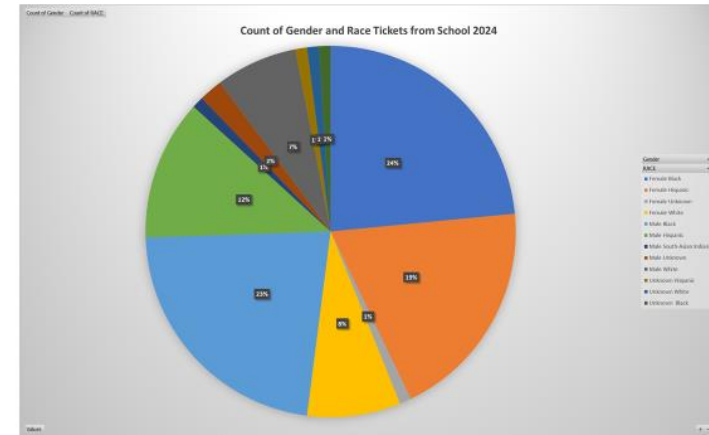
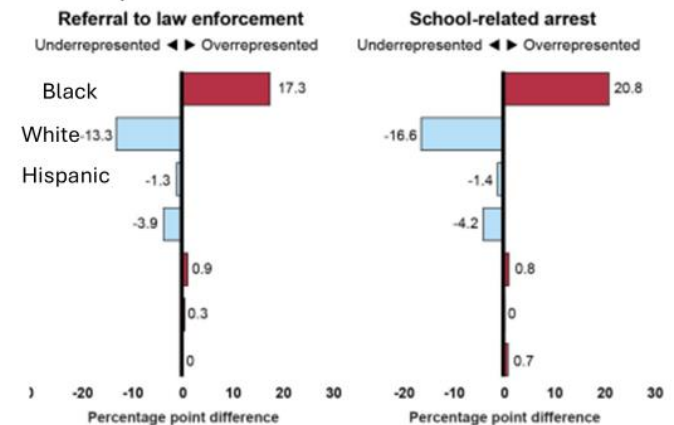


Figure 3 Representation of Girls who Received Discipline compared to Overall Population 2017-2018



ool Year 2017-18. | GAO-24-106787

US GAO September 2024 report on Black girl School discipline
<https://www.gao.gov/assets/880/873434.pdf>

KEY FINDINGS 2025 SO FAR

332 new cases from January 2025-July of 2025

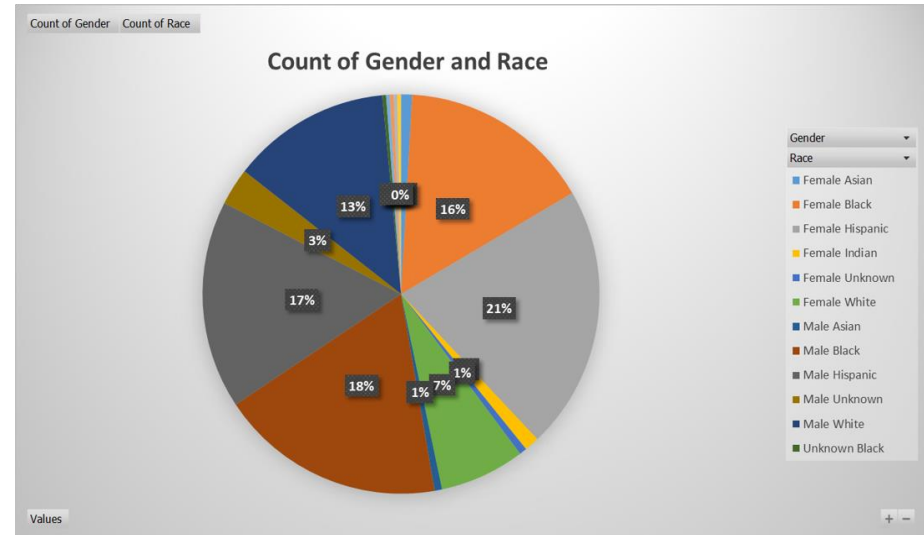
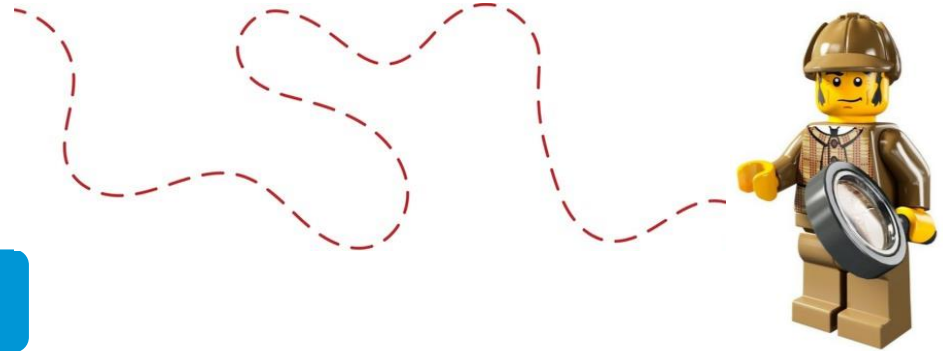
34% of our new cases are of Black Youth. 36% of our new cases are Hispanic Youth.

133 out of those 332 originated from school. That is about 40% of our cases.

We anticipate an increase in this percentage as school begins.

This marks a 10% increase from last year.

22 cases out of 332 came from residential facilities housing youth (either detention or group home placements).



SCHOOL CASES IN 2025 AND PUSH OUT

- 22% of the cases from school are brought against Black girls.
- 20% of the cases from school are brought against Black boys.
- 45% of the cases are from Hispanic youth.
- Denver Public Schools and DPS charter schools ticket their students at a disparate rate.
 - 52% of DPS are Hispanic youth
 - 13.5% of DPS are Black youth.
 - 25% of DPS is white.

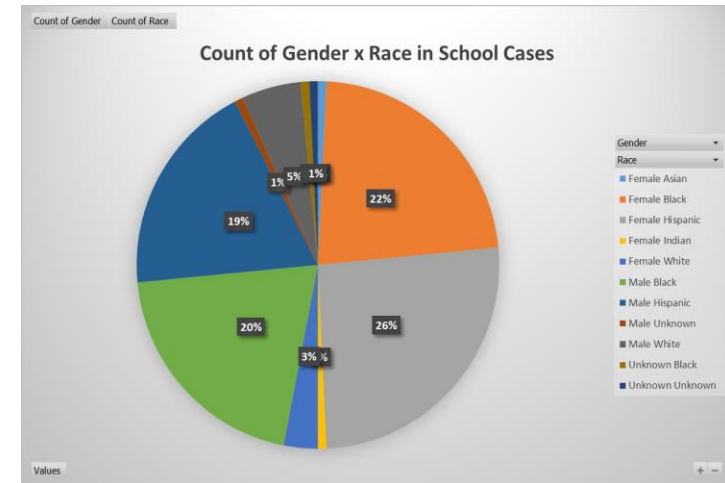
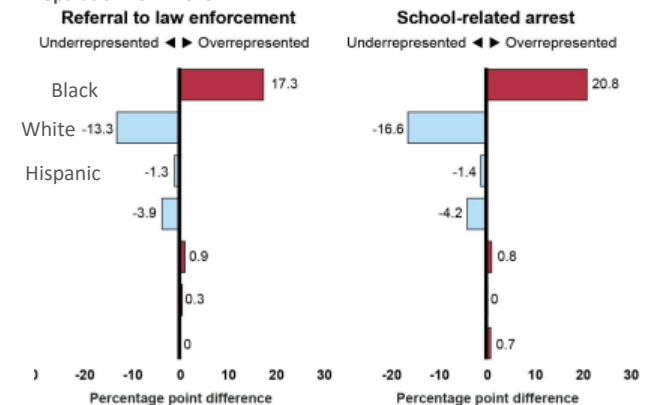


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We've Experienced a Ton of Success!

**Collaboration between court, defense,
prosecution, and diversion**

Identifying procedural issues (warrants, expungements)

Locating youth who are in custody

Working to address areas of need (GALs)

Increase in investigation of cases

Providing mitigation and creative case solutions

**Collaboration between other professionals
working with youth**

Decrease in duplication of services

Increase in Youth exercising their rights!

Community Engagement & Outreach



Future Fest Sat. April 26, 2025



2025 Pride Parade

OUTREACH COURT-Bring Court to the People!

Denver Public Library

Denver Human Services East Campus

Services Offered:

- Substance User treatment providers
- Mental health providers
- Brain Injury Association of Colorado
- Peer support
- Connections to other resources



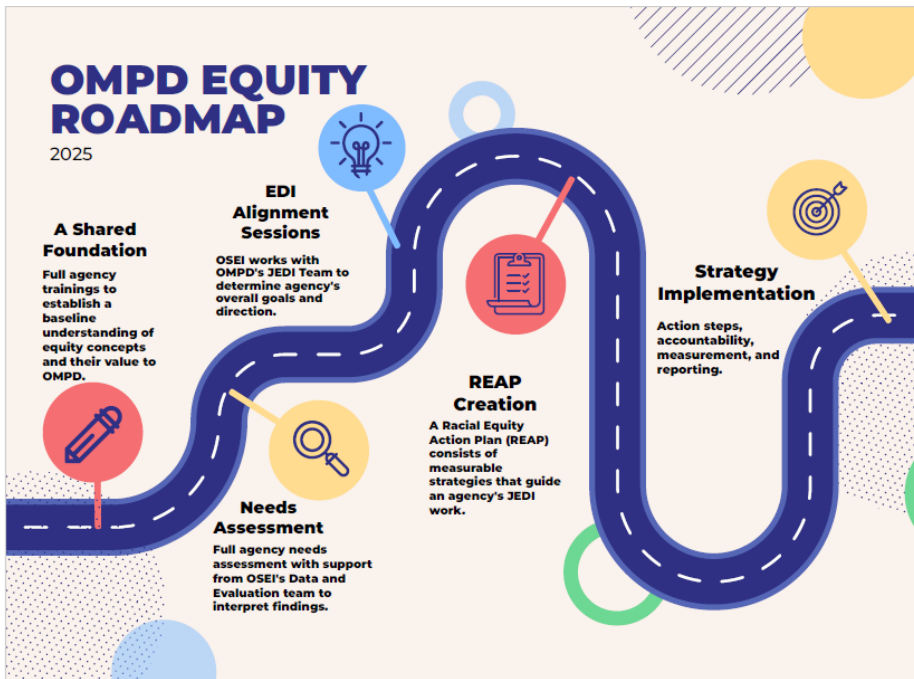


***Fresh Start Warrant Clearing Event at the
Denver AID Center Saturday 5/11/24***

Wellness in the Park: Bringing court to community



Racial Equity Action Plan (REAP) OSEI



OMPD CHALLENGES



300%
increase in
immigration
advisements



AID Center Closure Impact on OMPD Clients





LITIGATING POVERTY



THE MILE HIGH CITY

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We are a public safety organization that strives to serve our community

- Provide premier legal defense representation
- Connect clients with services
- Deliver Client-Centered Justice
- Goal is the least touches with the criminal legal system