

Contra Costa Racial Justice Oversight Body

# 2026 JUSTICE SYSTEM TREND ANALYSIS



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## 2015-2024 Misdemeanor Arrest Rates: Contra Costa County

This data for Contra Costa County’s Misdemeanor Arrest Rates was accessed through the Department of Justice’s Open Justice tool. The data is reported on an annual basis by each law enforcement agency within Contra Costa County. Arrests are defined by the Department of Justice as follows:

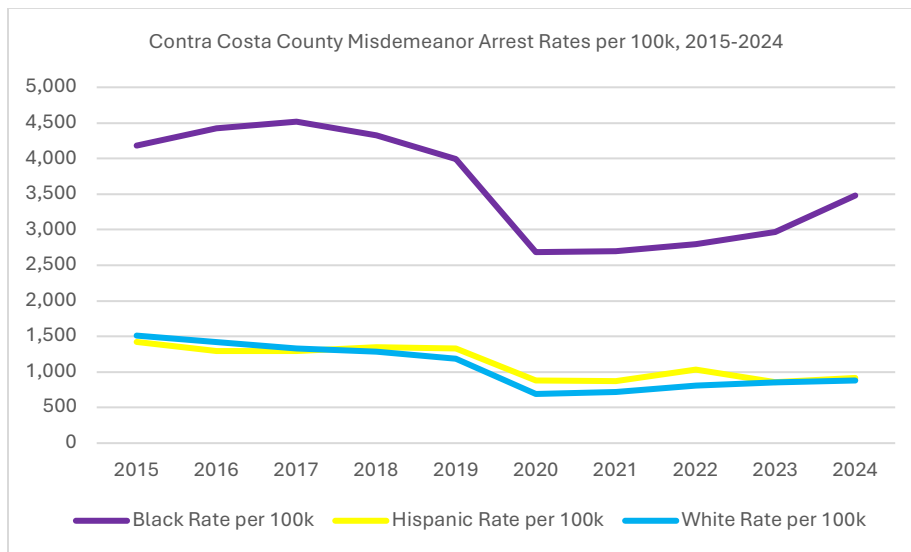
*“An arrest occurs when a person is taken into custody because a peace officer has reason to believe the person violated the law. Not all arrests result in persons being jailed. Arrestees may be released by the arresting agency, post bail, or be released on their own recognizance to appear in court at a later date. Some are issued citations, much like traffic tickets, which direct them to appear in court at a later date.”*

In order to analyze arrest trends more accurately over time, arrest counts were standardized using per capita rates. Per capita rates were calculated using the following formula:

$$\frac{\text{Number of Misdemeanor Arrests}}{\text{Population}} \times 100,000 = \text{Arrest Rate per 100,000 Residents}$$

Population estimates were obtained from the United States Census Bureau’s American Community Survey (ACS) 1-year estimates. The population estimates are included in Appendix A. These rates were then used to create a line chart illustrating changes in arrest rates and racial disparities over time:

*Figure 1: Misdemeanor per capita arrest rates across all Contra Costa County law enforcement agencies, by race, from 2015-2024.*



The initial analysis shows that misdemeanor arrest rates for White and Hispanic residents remained stable over the study period. In contrast, misdemeanor arrest rates for Black residents were substantially higher than those of White residents across all years analyzed. While arrest

rates declined sharply during the COVID-19 pandemic, rates for all groups began increasing again in recent years. This suggests a gradual return toward pre-pandemic levels. Further analysis was conducted to compare how misdemeanor arrest rates for Black and Hispanic residents changed relative to White residents over time.

To examine these differences, Risk Ratios were calculated. Risk Ratios measure the relative likelihood of one group experiencing an outcome (in this case, arrests) compared to a reference group. In this analysis, White residents were used as the reference group, meaning a Risk Ratio greater than 1 indicates that a group experienced higher arrest rates than White residents, while a value below 1 indicates lower arrest rates.

The following formula was used to calculate the Risk Ratios:

$$\text{Risk Ratio} = \frac{\text{Arrest Rate of Racial Group}}{\text{White Arrest Rate}}$$

For example:

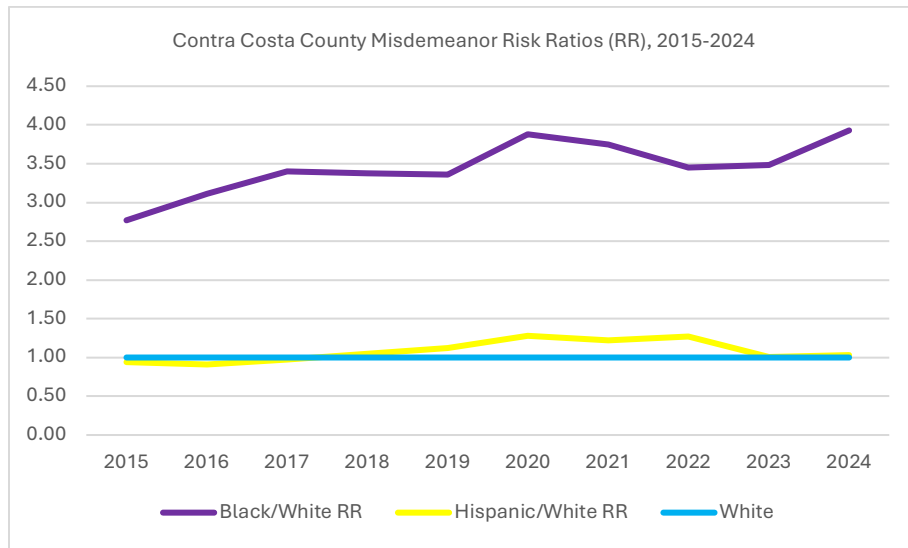
$$\frac{\text{Black Arrest Rate per 100,000}}{\text{White Arrest Rate per 100,000}}$$

and

$$\frac{\text{Hispanic Arrest Rate per 100,000}}{\text{White Arrest Rate per 100,000}}$$

The outcomes of the misdemeanor arrest Risk Ratio analysis are available in Appendix B. Below, a line chart is included in Figure 2 to analyze how Risk Ratios for Black and Hispanic residents changed over time. The chart illustrates that the disparity between Black and White misdemeanor arrest rates remained consistently high throughout the study period and generally increased over time. In contrast, the disparity between Hispanic and White misdemeanor arrest rates remained more stable.

Figure 2: Misdemeanor arrest rate Risk Ratios across all Contra Costa County law enforcement agencies, by race, from 2015-2024.

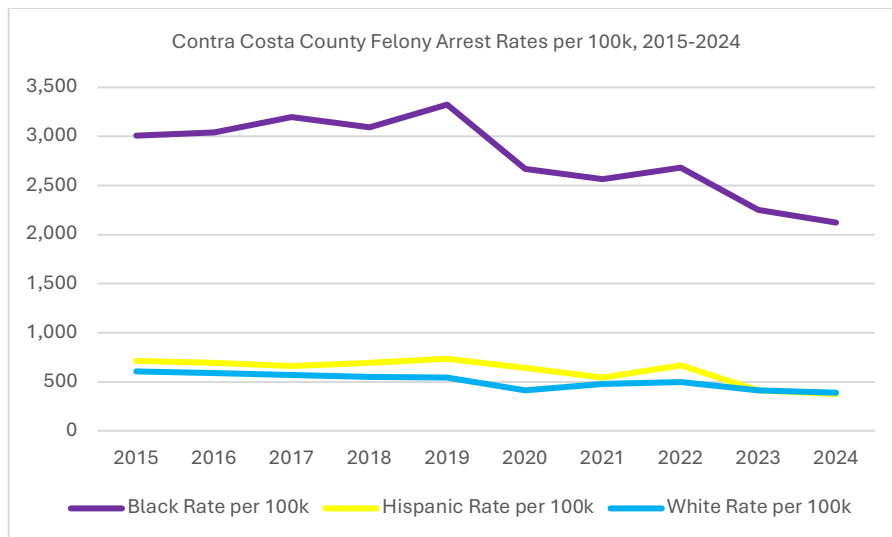


The Black-White misdemeanor arrest gap is increasing over time. This widening gap may be due to the overall arrest rates for Whites declining. The Racial Justice Oversight Body expects that arrests should decline for all races. We recommend further analysis to better understand the factors contributing to this trend, as the widening disparity is concerning.

### 2015-2024 Felony Arrest Rates: Contra Costa County

The same methodology used for misdemeanor arrest rates was also applied to felony arrest rates, including the calculation of per capita arrest rates and racial Risk Ratios using DOJ arrest data and ACS population estimates. The following chart illustrates changes in per capita felony arrest rates over time:

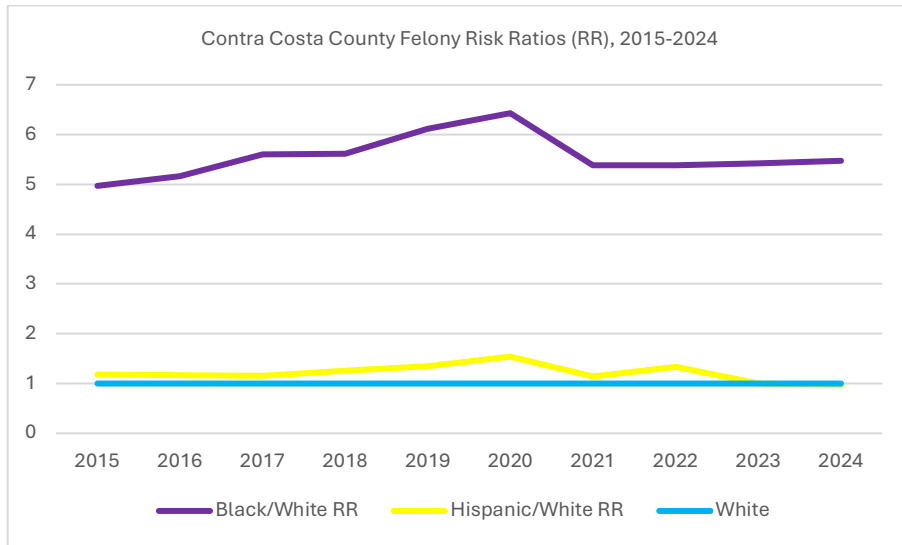
Figure 3: Felony per capita arrest rates across all Contra Costa County law enforcement agencies, by race, from 2015-2024.



Felony arrest rates declined across all racial groups between 2015 and 2024, though Black residents consistently experienced substantially higher rates than other groups. Further research is recommended to better understand why felony arrests are decreasing while misdemeanor arrests are increasing over the same period.

The following chart illustrates the Risk Ratios Black and Hispanic residents and how it changed over time.

Figure 4: Felony arrest rate Risk Ratios across all Contra Costa County law enforcement agencies, by race, from 2015-2024.



The Black-White felony arrest disparity remained consistently high throughout the study period and widened between 2015 and 2020 before stabilizing in later years. Hispanic-White risk ratios remained comparatively low and relatively stable over time. Similar to the trends for misdemeanors, we recommend further research on the widening felony arrest disparity gap and the factors contributing to these patterns.

## References

California. Department of Justice. "Arrests." *OpenJustice*, State of California, 2026, [openjustice.doj.ca.gov/exploration/crime-statistics/arrests](https://openjustice.doj.ca.gov/exploration/crime-statistics/arrests).

U.S. Census Bureau. "Race and Hispanic or Latino Origin." *2015-2024 American Community Survey 1-Year Estimates*, U.S. Census Bureau, 2026, [data.census.gov/table/ACSĐT1Y2024.B03002?q=B03002](https://data.census.gov/table/ACSĐT1Y2024.B03002?q=B03002)].

## Appendix A: United States Census Bureau American Community Survey 1-Year Population Estimates

Race	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024
White	505074	502828	500221	494370	489677	489135	462252	444489	432652	425412
Black	97762	93005	89378	98242	99615	94463	97612	96166	89726	87183
Latino	285026	288713	294584	297255	300420	295791	310805	311808	321243	331100

## Appendix B: Contra Costa County Misdemeanor Arrest Statistics, 2015-2024

Year	Black Rate per 100k	Hispanic Rate per 100k	White Rate per 100k	Black/White RR	Hispanic/White RR
2015	4,179	1,422	1,511	2.77	0.94
2016	4,426	1,295	1,422	3.11	0.91
2017	4,517	1,295	1,330	3.4	0.97
2018	4,329	1,345	1,282	3.38	1.05
2019	3,988	1,331	1,187	3.36	1.12
2020	2,684	884	691	3.88	1.28
2021	2,696	876	719	3.75	1.22
2022	2,795	1,031	809	3.45	1.27
2023	2,968	857	852	3.48	1.01
2024	3,482	913	885	3.93	1.03

## Appendix C: Contra Costa County Felony Arrest Statistics, 2015-2024

Year	Black Rate per 100k	Hispanic Rate per 100k	White Rate per 100k	Black/White RR	Hispanic/White RR
2015	3,006	714	605	4.97	1.18
2016	3,043	691	589	5.16	1.17
2017	3,195	660	570	5.6	1.16
2018	3,094	692	551	5.61	1.26
2019	3,324	734	543	6.12	1.35
2020	2,670	640	415	6.43	1.54
2021	2,563	541	477	5.38	1.14
2022	2,682	664	498	5.38	1.33
2023	2,253	414	415	5.42	1
2024	2,122	375	388	5.47	0.97