

# Low Birthweight Infants

Each year almost thirty-six hundred Oklahoma babies (3,589 annual average) are born too small (weighing less than 5 1/2 pounds). Very, very tiny infants (weighing less than 3 pounds, 5 ounces) continue to be born in steadily increasing numbers (629 annual average).

During the most recent three-year period (1998 - 2000) the proportion of Oklahoma babies born too small slowly and steadily continued to worsen (increasing from 7.2% to 7.3% of all births) when compared to the three year period just two years earlier (1996 - 1998). Comparable rates also recently worsened in 41 of Oklahoma's 77 counties.

This trend has continued for years. A higher proportion of Oklahoma babies (7.3% of all births) are born too small today as compared to the population born in the mid-1980's (6.4% of all births), with such rates also

worsening in the majority (52 of 77) of Oklahoma's counties during the same period. Currently, the highest and worst low birthweight rate (9.9% of all county births) is found in Woods County; the lowest and best (2.7% of all county births) is in Harmon County.

The low birthweight rate for African American infants (12.5% of all African American births) more than doubles the rate for White infants (6.1% of all White births). By race, the best low birthweight rate is recorded for American Indian infants (6.2% of all American Indian births). Hispanic mothers, who may be of any race, have an even lower rate of babies born too small (6.1% of all Hispanic births).

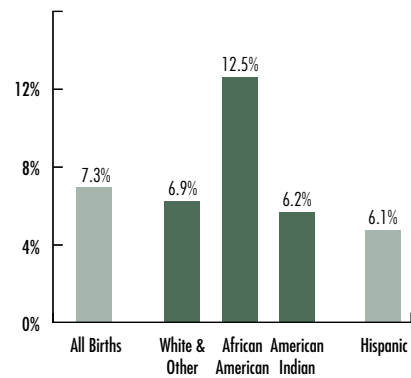
While early prenatal care is known to improve these rates, over one-third (35.3%) of Oklahoma's babies were born to mothers who failed to receive the recommended

level of prenatal care during the most recent three-year period reported.

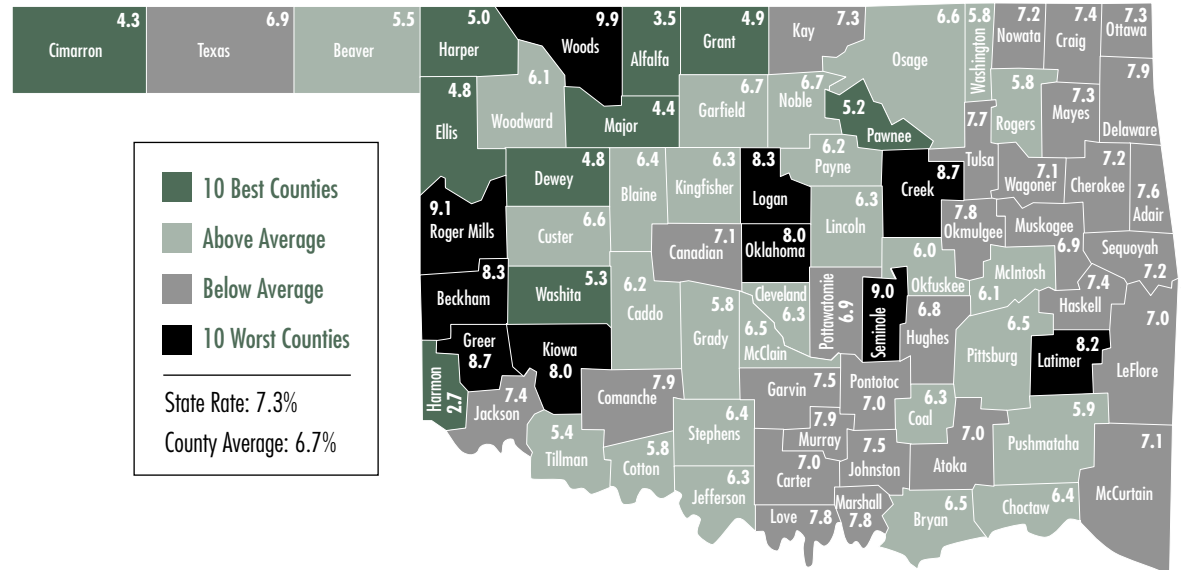
Ranking near the middle of all the states, Oklahoma's rate of low birthweight infants is average relative to other parts of the country. Oklahoma's rank among the fifty states improved from 21<sup>st</sup> to 20<sup>th</sup> during the most recent year (1998) measured.

*Over forty-three percent (1,578 per year or 43.6%) of the infants weighing less than five and one-half pounds at birth were born to mothers who live in one of the state's two large metropolitan counties (Oklahoma or Tulsa County) which together account for just under forty-one percent (40.8%) of Oklahoma's births.*

## Babies Weighing Under 5 1/2 Pounds Oklahoma, 1998-2000, By Race and Ethnicity



Three-Year Percent of Infants Born Weighing Less than 5 1/2 Pounds (1998 - 2000)



## Infant Mortality

Each year more than four hundred babies born in Oklahoma (415 annual average) do not live to see their first birthday.

The rate of Oklahoma infants who die in their first year of life worsened slightly during the most recent three years (1998 - 2000) when compared to the three-year period just two years earlier (1996 - 1998). Oklahoma infant death rates worsened from 8.1 to 8.4 deaths per 1,000 live births, with comparable rates also worsening in the majority (43 of 77) of Oklahoma's counties.

Despite the recent slight increase, infant death rates have declined substantially over the past fifteen years. Today, proportionately fewer Oklahoma babies (8.4 per

1,000 live births) die in their first year of life than did in the mid-1980's (10.5 per 1,000 live births), with such rates also improving in the large majority (55 of 77) of Oklahoma counties during the same period. Currently, the highest and worst infant death rate (20.1 per 1,000 live births) is found in Kiowa County; the lowest and best (0.0 per 1,000 live births) is found in five Oklahoma counties (Alfalfa, Greer, Harmon, Harper and Roger Mills).

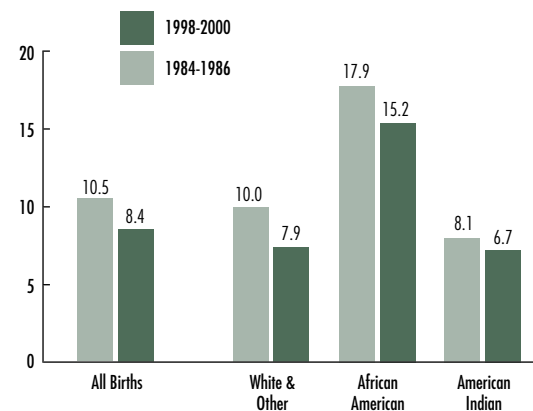
Infant death rates have improved for all races since the mid-1980's. However, the most recent death rate for African American infants (15.2 per 1,000 African American births) remains almost twice as high as the comparable rate for White infants (7.9 per 1,000 White births). The lowest death rate is recorded for American Indian infants (6.7 per 1,000 American Indian births).

Ranking in the bottom half of all the states, Oklahoma's rate of infant death is only fair relative to other parts of the country. Oklahoma's rank among the fifty states at 39<sup>th</sup> was unchanged during the most recent year (1998) in which states were compared.

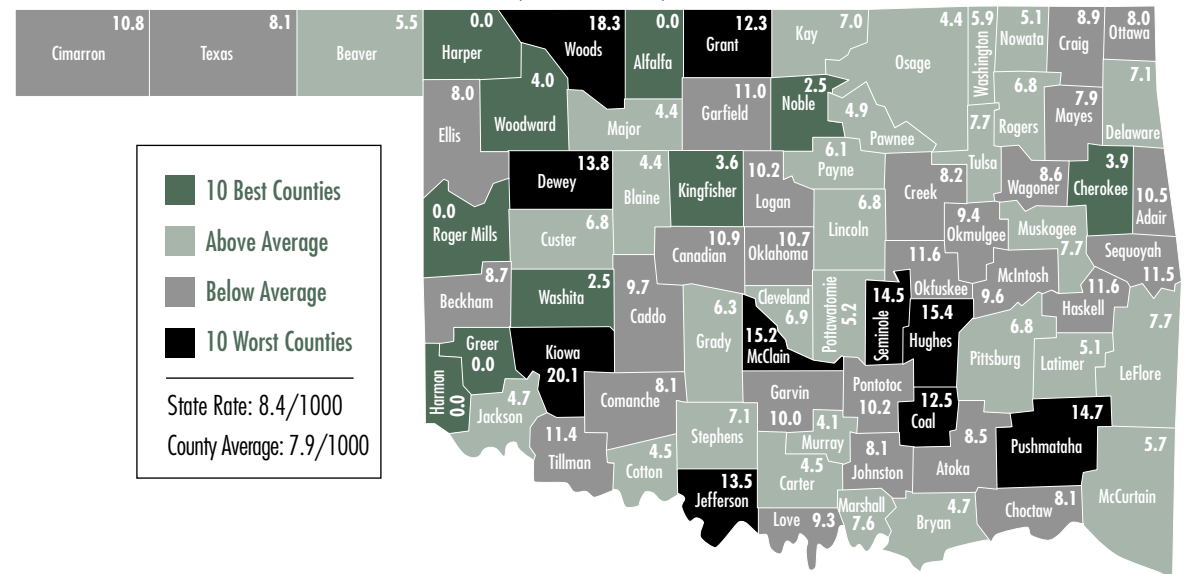
*Forty-five percent (187 per year or 45.0%) of the infant deaths occurred in one of the state's two large metropolitan counties (Oklahoma or Tulsa County) which together account for just over forty percent (40.8%) of Oklahoma's births and are populated with just less than forty percent (38.6%) of Oklahoma's infants.*

### Infant Deaths

Three-year Rate per 1000 Births, By Race Oklahoma, 1984-1986 & 1998-2000



Three-Year Rate of Deaths Per 1,000 Live Births (1998 - 2000)



# Births to Young Teens

For the most recent three year period (1998-2000), an average of nearly eight thousand (7,881) babies a year were born to Oklahoma women under the age of twenty. Each year the majority, more than five thousand (5,187), of those babies were born to teen mothers ages 18 and 19. One third (34.2%) or almost twenty-seven hundred (2,694) of the babies born to mothers under age twenty were born to school-age girls (age 17 and under). One hundred twenty-four of those school age girls were between ten and fourteen years of age.

The rate of births to Oklahoma young teens continued its modest decline (from 35.9 to 33.0 births per 1,000 girls ages 15 through 17) during the most recent three years (1998-2000) when compared to the three-year period two years earlier (1996-1998). Birth rates for that age group showed some improvement in a large majority of Oklahoma counties (58 of 77) during the same period.

The progress made in decreasing the high Oklahoma birth rate to young teens of the mid-1980's (from 43.9 to 33.0 births per 1,000 girls ages 15 through 17) has been evident at the county level where such rates also improved in nearly every (71 of 77) Oklahoma county during the same period of time. Currently, the highest and worst rate (57.1 births per 1,000 girls ages 15 through 17) is found in Blaine County; the lowest and best (7.9 births per 1,000 girls ages 15 through 17) is in Harper County.

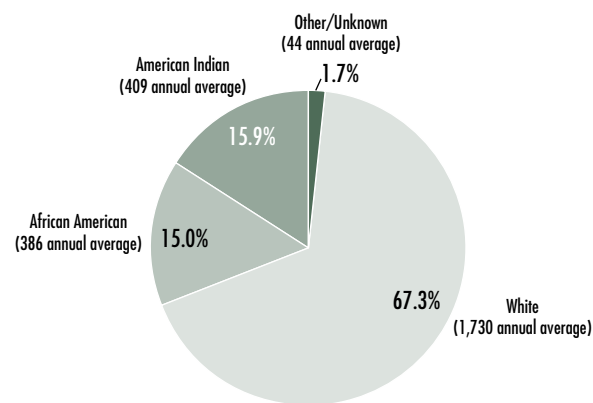
The large majority (67.3%) of Oklahoma's young teen mothers are White. However, while African American and American Indian teenage girls comprise only about one-fifth (20.1%) of the teenage girl population, they account for almost one-third (30.9%) of the teenage girls giving birth in Oklahoma.

Oklahoma's teen childbearing rate was substantially above other states in 1980, but by the late 1990's, the gap had narrowed. Even so, Oklahoma's young teen childbearing ranking relative to other states is poor, with more than two-thirds (37 states) having a teen (age 15 through 17) birth rate lower than Oklahoma during the most recent year (1998) compared.

Nearly thirty percent (962 per year or 29.6%) of the births to mothers age 15 through 17 occurred to mothers living in one of the state's two large metropolitan counties (Oklahoma or Tulsa County) which together are populated with about one-third (33.0%) of the girls age 15 through 17.

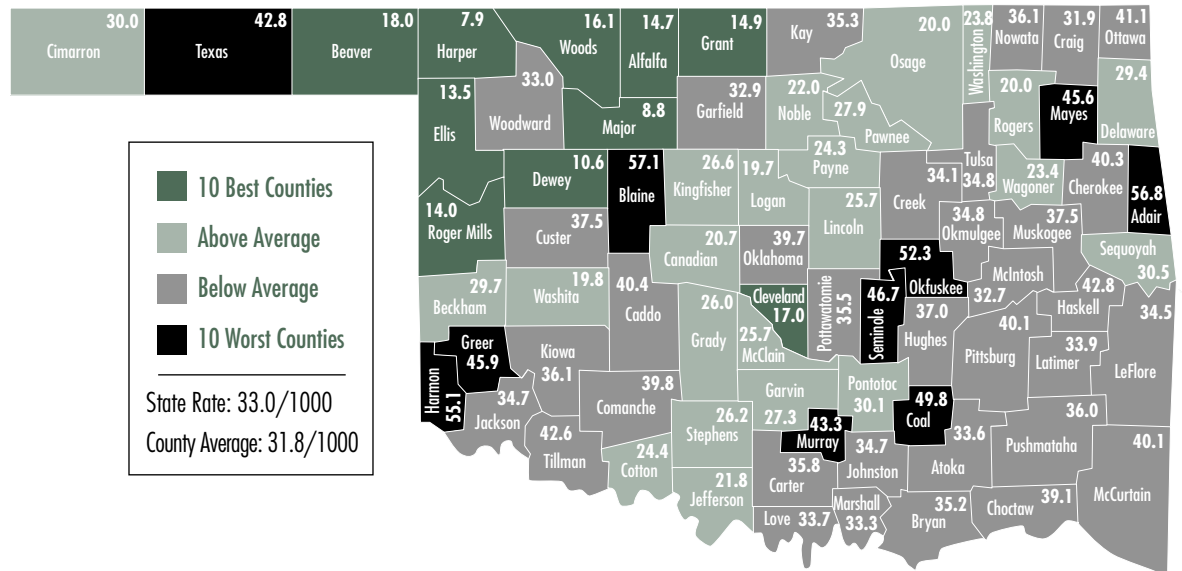
## Births to Teens ages 15-17

### Oklahoma, By Race, 1998-2000



Hispanic teen mothers may be of any race and with an average of 309 births annually comprise 12.0% of all 1998-2000 Oklahoma births to mothers ages 15-17.

Three-Year Rate of Births Per 1,000 Female Teens Age 15-17 (1998 - 2000)



# Child Abuse & Neglect

For the most recent three-year period (Fiscal Years 1998-2000) an annual average of more than sixty thousand (60,253) situations were investigated by the Oklahoma Department of Human Services (DHS) as possible abuse and/or neglect of one or more children.

During this period DHS confirmed a near record-high number of those allegations. On average, nearly sixteen thousand (15,733) of the incidents investigated each year were found to be actual abuse and/or neglect.

During the most recent three-year period (Fiscal Years 1998 - 2000), the rate of confirmed child abuse and/or neglect in Oklahoma continued to rise when compared to the three-year period just one year earlier (Fiscal Years 1997 - 1999). Oklahoma abuse and neglect rates moved from 17.7 to 17.8 confirmations per 1,000 children in the community, with comparable rates also worsening in the majority (43 of 77) of Oklahoma's counties.

Child abuse and neglect is maintaining its record high rates. Today, Oklahoma's rate of confirmed child abuse and/or neglect (17.8 confirmations per 1,000 children) is virtually double what it was in the mid-1980's (9.0 confirmations per 1,000 children). Such rates also worsened in almost every (70 of 77) Oklahoma county during the same period. Currently, the highest and worst proportion of children confirmed to be victims of child abuse and/or neglect (38.6 per 1,000) is found in Pushmataha County; the lowest and best (2.7 per 1,000) is in Beaver County.

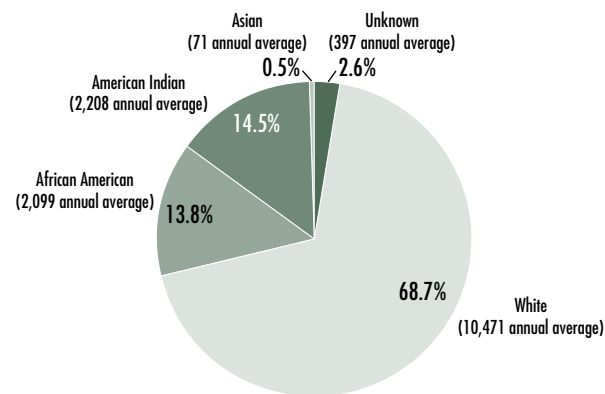
A record high of forty-eight Oklahoma children died from child abuse and/or neglect during FY 2000. Among the dead were thirty girls and eighteen boys of all races. Twenty-four were less than one year of age; twelve were toddlers (ages one through three). The dead also included school age children ranging from kindergartners to children old enough to be in high

school. The oldest known to have died at the hands of their caretakers this year were two fifteen year old boys. Both were victims of neglect.

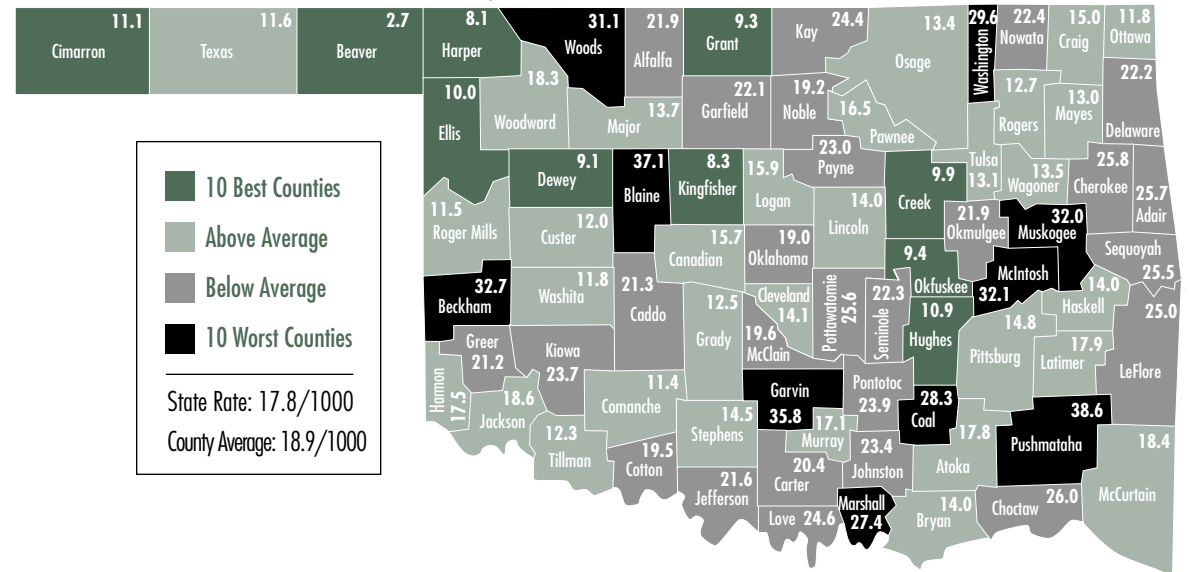
More than two-thirds (68.7%) of confirmations of abuse and/or neglect in Oklahoma involve children who are White. However, while non-White children comprise only about one-fifth (21.8%) of the child population, they account for a greater proportion (28.8%, excluding those whose race is not known) of the confirmed child abuse and/or neglect incidents.

*One-third (5,046 per year or 32.1%) of the confirmed incidents of child abuse and/or neglect occurred in one of the state's two large metropolitan counties (Oklahoma or Tulsa County) which together are populated with just over one-third (35.1%) of Oklahoma's children.*

## Child Abuse & Neglect Confirmations By Race of Child Oklahoma, FY 1999-2000



Three-Year Rate of Confirmations After Investigation Per 1,000 Children (FY1998 - 2000)





# High School Dropouts

During the most recent three-year period (School Years 1997/1998 - 1999/2000) an annual average of more than eleven thousand (11,014) young Oklahomans quit school without graduating. Over nine thousand (9,406) of those dropping out were ages 18 or younger.

More than one of every five students in Oklahoma who starts high school as a freshman does not earn a high school diploma. Compared to any other grade, the largest numbers continue to leave school during the ninth grade.

There was not much change in Oklahoma high school dropout rates during the most recent three-year period when compared to the three-year period just one year earlier. The standstill high school dropout rate of 5.5% resulted in roughly the same average number of Oklahoma children (under age 19) leaving high school (grades 9 through 12) without graduating each year. During the same period there was little variance in

county high school dropout rates. Rates improved in 35 counties and worsened in 42.

Oklahoma's high school dropout rate (5.4%) during the most recent three-year period is slightly better, but still remains close, to that of the comparison three-year period (5.5% for School Years 1994/1995 - 1996/1997). Such rates also improved in a small majority (43 of 77) of Oklahoma's counties during the same period. Currently, the highest and worst rate of children leaving school without graduating (8.4%) is found in Texas County; the lowest and best (0.2%) is in Dewey County.

During School Year 1999/2000 the proportion of high school dropouts who were girls (45.5%) and the proportion who were boys (54.5%) changed little from the prior year.

During the most recent three-year period (School Years 1997/1998 - 1999/2000) the large majority (6,776 per year or 61.5%) of children failing to finish high school are White. However, while non-White children comprise only about one-fifth (21.8%) of the child population, they account for a much higher proportion (38.5%) of the high school dropouts.

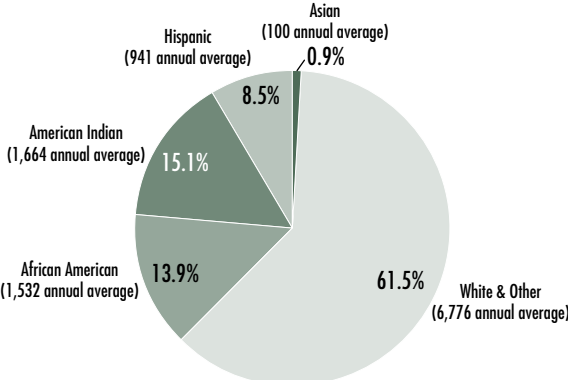
During the most recent year for which comparison data is available (1997), Oklahoma remained at about the middle of all states (23<sup>rd</sup>) in the percent of teens who are high school dropouts (9.0% of those ages 16 through 19).

*Almost forty percent (3,747 per year or 39.6%) of the youth under age 19 who quit high school without graduating live in one of the state's two large metropolitan counties (Oklahoma or Tulsa County) which together are populated with just under one-third (31.7%) of Oklahoma's high school attendees.*

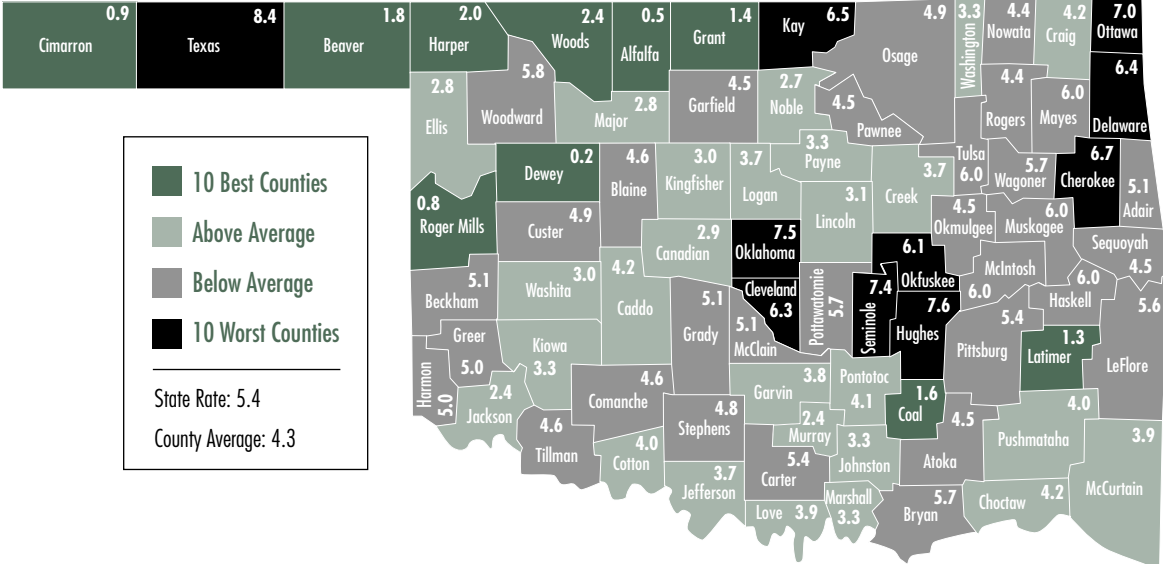
## Students Quitting School Without Graduating

All Ages, By Race

Oklahoma, School Years 1997/1999 through 1999/2000



Three-Year Rate of Youth Under Age 19 Dropping Out of High School (SY 97/98 - 99/00)



# Juvenile Violent Crime Arrests

In 2000, juveniles accounted for just under 15.6% of all persons arrested for all Oklahoma crimes.

During the most recent three-year period (1998 - 2000) more than a thousand (1,035) Oklahoma youths from the ages of 10 through 17 were arrested each year for committing violent crimes. Each year, an average of twenty-five were arrested for murder, three for manslaughter, 63 for forcible rape, 224 for robbery and 719 for aggravated assault.

During these three years the overwhelming majority of youth arrested for violent crimes in Oklahoma were male (83.2%).

During the most recent three-year period (1998 - 2000), the proportion of Oklahoma youths from the ages of 10 through 17 arrested for violent crimes continued to decrease when compared to the three-year period just one year earlier (1997 - 1999). Oklahoma violent

crime arrest rates for this age group moved from 271.4 to 251.4 per 100,000 youth, with comparable rates staying the same or improving in most (46 of 77) of Oklahoma's counties.

The current proportion of Oklahoma youths from the ages of 10 through 17 arrested for violent crimes continues to improve from the record highs recorded during the 1990's. The rate of arrest for these youth (251.4 arrests per 100,000 youth) during the most recent three-year period (1998 - 2000) is substantially improved over that of the comparison three-year period (334.1 arrests per 100,000 youth for 1990 - 1992). Comparable rates also improved or remained the same during the same period in half (38 of 77) of Oklahoma's counties.

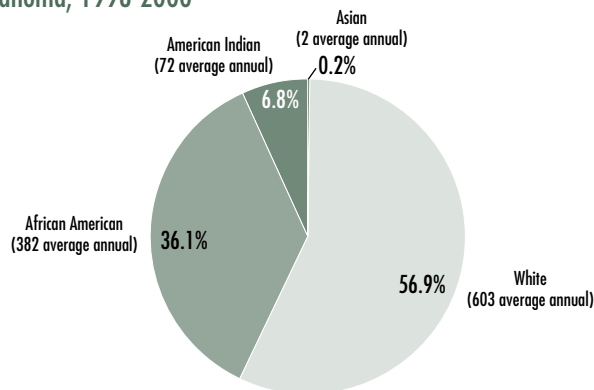
Currently, the highest and worst rate of youths from the ages of 10 through 17 (522.3 arrests per 100,000 youth) arrested for violent crimes is found in Tulsa County. The lowest and best rates (0.0 arrests per 100,000 youth) are in eight Oklahoma counties (Ellis, Roger Mills,

Beaver, Grant, Cimarron, Harper, Love, Alfalfa). While non-White children comprise only about one-fifth (21.8%) of the child population, they accounted for twice as many (43.1%) of the violent crime arrests of children under age 18 during the most recent three-year period.

Based on the latest figures available, Oklahoma's 1998 rate (278 per 100,000 youths ages 10 through 17) of arresting young people for violent crimes continued to remain well below the corresponding national violent crime arrest rate (394 per 100,000 youths ages 10 through 17).

*Well over half (585 youth or 56.5%) of the violent crime arrests of youths from the age of 10 through 17 were in one of the state's two large metropolitan counties (Oklahoma or Tulsa County) which together are populated with one-third (33.2%) of all youths age 10 through 17.*

## Juvenile Violent Crime Arrests Under Age 18, By Race Oklahoma, 1998-2000



Hispanic youth may be of any race and with an annual average of 65 violent crime arrests comprise 6.2% of all 1998-2000 Oklahoma juvenile violent crime arrests.

Three-Year Rate of Violent Crime Arrests Per 100,000 Youth Age 10 - 17 (1998 - 2000)

