

# Hennepin County Community Corrections & Rehabilitation Carjacking Offenses Summary

## Executive Summary

Increased carjacking offenses by youth ages 10 to 17 years old have led to greater attention and concern among community, media, and public safety stakeholders over the past year. To develop a strategy to reduce the growing problem, the Department of Community Corrections and Rehabilitation (DOCCR) looked at 80 cases filed in 2021.

The full report can be found in DOCCR's online research report library.

## Findings and Implications

After reviewing the 80 carjacking cases, the DOCCR found that 55 youth were involved in 80 incidents. Exploring all contacts with the justice system, it is estimated that 28% of those 55 youth involved in the carjackings had no known contact for similar offenses, such as auto theft, prior to the 2021 carjacking. However, due to the complexity of the cases and the availability of evidence, these cases do not always result in convictions or rehabilitative services. For example:

- 42% were not known to the Juvenile Detention Center (JDC) at the time of their carjacking incident.
- 53% had not been previously adjudicated (convicted).
- 56% were not open to investigation or supervision services in juvenile probation at the time of the current offense.

The report also found increased incidents of new offenses the longer it took a youth's case to go through the criminal justice system (investigation, court hearings, etc.). For instance:

- Thirty-one percent (17) of the 55 clients were involved in multiple carjacking cases in 2021.
- Eleven of the 17 individuals involved in a carjacking committed an additional carjacking offense within 30 days.

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## **Education and Peer Influence**

Peer influence and school concerns are prevalent among those involved in carjacking cases. Data suggests that many of the clients involved in these cases had peer groups that were supportive of or participated in similar behaviors. Clients also had histories of school disruptions and educational or behavioral needs. While these are characteristics often present before a youth reaches the justice system and are not unique to clients involved in carjacking cases, they are still relevant and important for preventative strategies and case planning once on probation.

## **Individuals on Supervision**

While approximately half (56%) of clients involved in a carjacking case were not receiving investigation or supervision services in juvenile probation at the time of their current offense, fifteen (27%) of the 55 clients involved in carjacking cases in 2021 were on probation at the time of the current offense. Eleven of the fifteen clients had prior Out-of-Home Placement (OHP) with a difficulty in transitioning back to the community and maintaining contact with probation during re-entry.

## **Out-of-Home Placement**

Evidence suggests that the carjacking offenses occurred relatively quickly after a youth was released from a residential facility for the 11 youth that exited in 2021. The data shows six with previous experiences in OHPs committed an offense within three months of release.

## **Competency**

Thirteen of the 80 cases reviewed (16%) had orders for competency evaluations (Rule 20), six of which involved clients who were found incompetent (8% of all 80 cases), three who were found competent, and four who were pending evaluation.

## Recommendations

- Identifying concerning behaviors for youth before they enter the criminal justice system may improve outcomes.
- Establishing and improving collaborations among systems and stakeholders that engage with children at earlier points may lead to improved outcomes.
- Expedited case processing of carjacking cases was put in place to prevent repeat behaviors but finding additional ways to minimize the time cases spend on pre-disposition status would allow services to be delivered more expeditiously and may help curtail repeated behaviors by the youth.
- Patterns of communication issues and knowledge of a client's whereabouts leading up to the current offense indicate a need for more persistent action from probation staff when contact concerns arise.
- Enhanced transition or aftercare services coupled with increased contact with probation once youth are returned to the community could reduce recidivism.
- Expediting participation in interventions that reinforce independent decision making and mitigate negative peer influences may lead to increased success while cases are pending.