

| Appendix H: Data Collection and Challenges

At the local level, every county has one superior court clerk^{xlvii} who maintains the criminal and civil court filings and serves as the official custodian of county property records. In most Georgia counties, the superior court clerk also serves as the juvenile court clerk, although some juvenile courts in larger counties have their own clerk. O.C.G.A. § 15-11-64 requires juvenile court clerks to collect and report specific data about delinquency, CHINS, and dependency cases.^{xlviii}

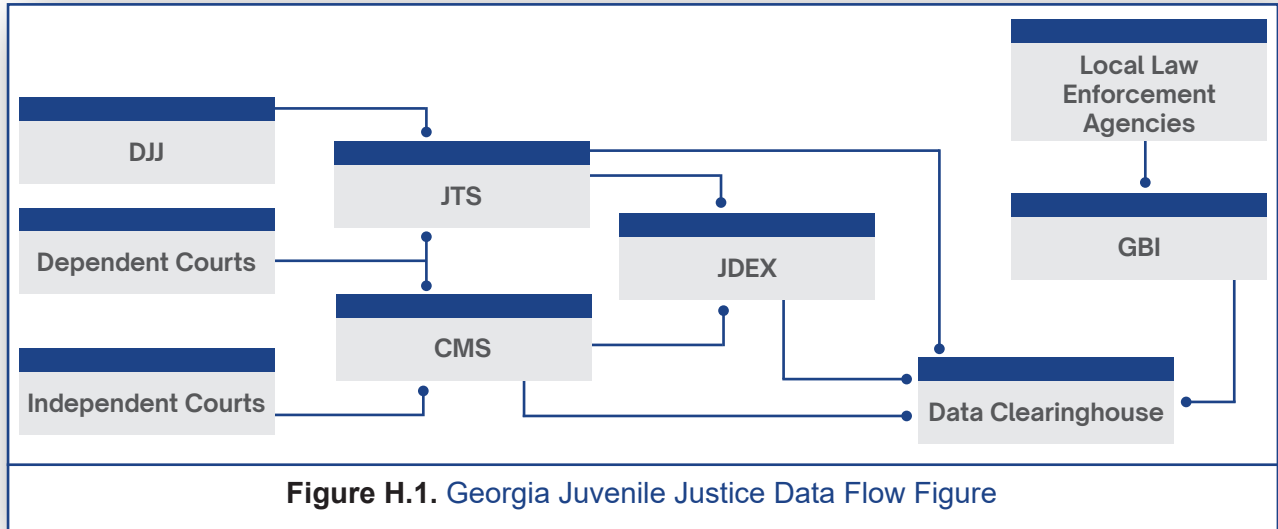


Figure H.1. Georgia Juvenile Justice Data Flow Figure

As illustrated above in **Figure H.1.**, individual court data comes from information entered into **JTS** (dependent courts) or independent court **CMSs**. Most juvenile courts use an electronic CMS to manage cases and record court data, most commonly JCATS.^{xlix} JCATS is free of charge to any Georgia juvenile court and offers a cloud-based and web-based system and various platforms that can be customized, depending on the size of the court and its needs. JCATS counties represent over 80% of the annual reported juvenile court cases, which allows CJCJ to maintain a data repository of all case data from those counties.⁵¹⁸ As of the time of this report, there are plans to expand JCATS into additional counties in response to new policies regarding data collection.⁵¹⁹ See **Figure H.2.** below.

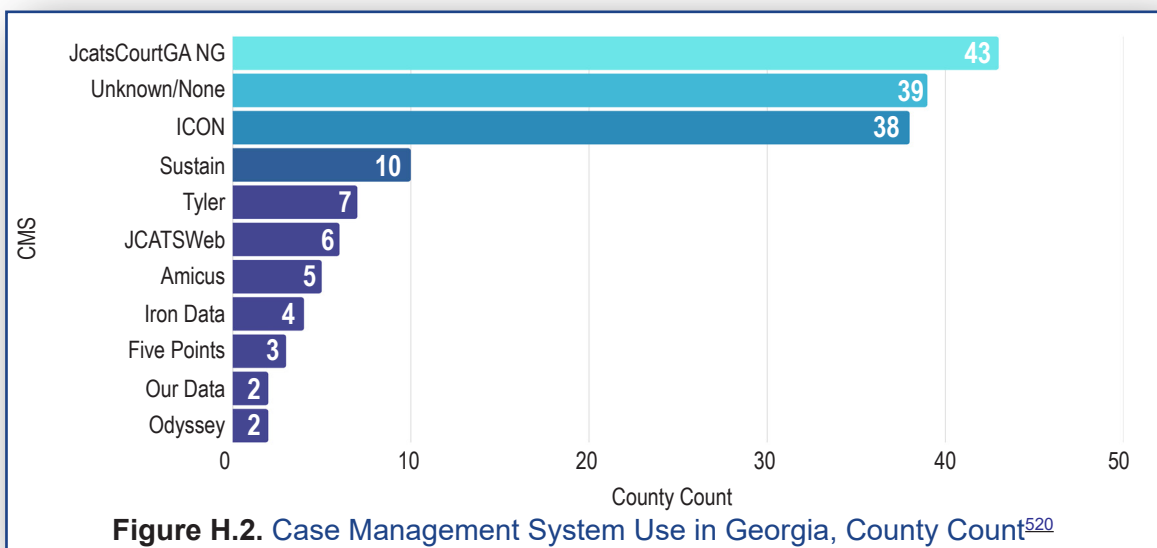


Figure H.2. Case Management System Use in Georgia, County Count⁵²⁰

^{xlvii} Like superior court judges, the superior court clerk is an elected position, and clerks serve 4-year terms.

^{xlviii} Dependency case data must be reported to the Administrative Office of the Courts on an annual basis beginning April 15, 2025, pursuant to [Senate Bill 401](#), passed April 2023.

^{xlix} JCATS was developed by Canyon Solutions, with whom CJCJ maintains a contractual partnership. While CJCJ maintains a contract with Canyon Solutions, it does not mandate the use of JCATS in any juvenile court.

DJJ internal data collection occurs daily as records are accessed and updated within JTS. This web-based data tracking system maintains case records for DJJ, including intake and other information entered by DJJ officers for dependent courts. While data is maintained in JTS, DJJ disseminates select data via its annual reports, which are published on the DJJ website.

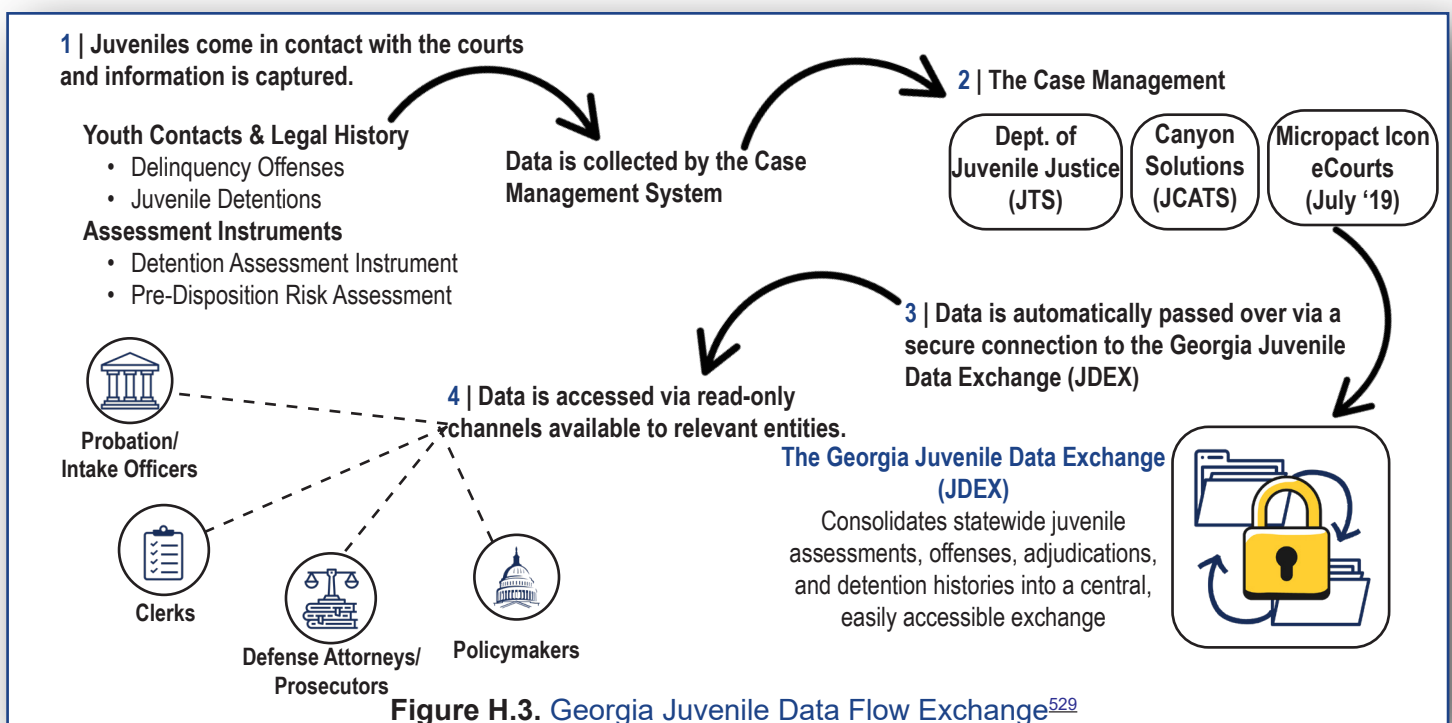
The CJCC receives its authority from O.C.G.A. § 35-6A-7, which establishes the need for a coordinating body and the council's vested functions. Concerning data, CJCC:

- Ensures accurate juvenile crime data is collected and reported to the USDOJ according to federal reporting requirements.
- Collects and analyzes data with help from state agencies.
- Collects and reports two sets of data to USDOJ: Juvenile Crime Data, and Disproportionate Minority Contact Data
- Contracts with the CVIG and the AOC for assistance in formalizing a data collection system and development of data-sharing agreements.⁵²¹

CJCC also houses the Statistical Analysis Center, which supports strategy planning and development, assists with federal grant administration, and works with other state agencies to conduct and disseminate research on criminal justice issues.⁵²²

CJCC's most visible data outlet is the Clearinghouse, an interactive online database used "to determine equitable distribution of resources, and to inform program and policy analysis."⁵²³ Data for the Clearinghouse comes from the GBI, JTS, and individual court CMSs.⁵²⁴ In addition to the Clearinghouse, CJCC publishes annual reports, which are available on its website.⁵²⁵

Additionally, as part of its duties to provide information technology to the courts under O.C.G.A. §§ 15-5-22 through 15-5-25, AOC (in partnership with the Governor's Office, CJCJ, CJCC, and DJJ) created JDEX, a statewide data repository of juvenile justice data.⁵²⁶ JDEX contains statewide juvenile legal history and detention history reported by individual CMSs and JTS and can be accessed by court staff, defense attorneys, and policymakers.⁵²⁷ AOC disseminates the data collected through the Juvenile Court Caseload Dashboard and data analysis reports upon request from a circuit or individual court.⁵²⁸ See **Figure H.3.** below.



¹The Clearinghouse is a product of the Juvenile Data Exchange Committee which includes the State of Georgia, DJJ, GBI and JDEX. For additional information, see [Georgia Juvenile Justice Data Clearinghouse – Georgia Juvenile Justice Data Clearinghouse \(georgiacourts.gov\)](http://georgiacourts.gov).

GCIC was created as a division of GBI to develop and maintain a computerized criminal justice information system. With regard to juvenile data, O.C.G.A. § 35-3-33(a)(1)(E) states that GCIC “shall obtain and file fingerprints, descriptions, photographs, and any other pertinent identifying information on persons who are children who are charged with an offense that if committed by an adult would be a felony or are children whose cases are transferred from a juvenile court to another court for prosecution.” Inspection of active juvenile records is limited to court staff, attorneys, law enforcement officers, and state agencies to whom a child is committed (i.e., DFCS, DJJ), and only when used for “official duties in connection with the administration of criminal justice.”⁵³⁰

GCIC data is collected from law enforcement agencies, which must submit Uniform Crime Reporting (UCR) data and family violence reports. The data is disseminated through databases and reports and is available to the public by request unless reported through a public source (i.e., Clearinghouse).

In addition to the organizations and agencies listed above, the Council of Accountability Court Judges, the CVIG, and the National Center for Juvenile Justice also collect and disseminate juvenile justice data on a state level.

See **Table H.1.** below for additional information.

Table H.1. Georgia Juvenile Justice Data Collection and Dissemination

Agency	Statutory Authority	Sources of Data	Data Maintenance and Dissemination	Public Availability
Department of Juvenile Justice	O.C.G.A. §49-4A-8(n)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Internal data collection (DJJ's own records) Individual juvenile court clerks 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> DJJ Annual Report (Fiscal Year) JTS 	Data collected by DJJ and individual courts, including JTS data, is only available to the public by request and requests are subject to agency/court approval
Individual Juvenile Courts/ Clerks	O.C.G.A. §15-11-64	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Data entered into JTS CMSs 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> CMSs JTS Individual court publications (e.g., annual reports) and their accessibility vary by court 	Data collected by individual courts is only available to the public upon request and requests are subject to court approval
Criminal Justice Coordinating Council	O.C.G.A. §35-6A-7	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> JTS Sources GBI Individual court CMSs 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Georgia Juvenile Justice Data Clearinghouse Dashboards and Reports: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Data Through the Juvenile Justice System Decision Point Demographic Data Juvenile Justice Incentive Grant Data Annual Report 	The dashboard and the Annual Report are both available to the public via the CJCC website

Table H.1. continued, Georgia Juvenile Justice Data Collection and Dissemination

Agency	Statutory Authority	Sources of Data	Data Maintenance and Dissemination	Public Availability
Administrative Office of the Courts (JDEX Project)	O.C.G.A. §§15-5-22 through 15-5-25	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • JTS • GBI • Individual CMSs 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • JDEX • Juvenile Court Case Data Dashboard • Circuit/Individual Court Analysis reports (upon request from circuit or court) 	<p>AOC will provide data to the public upon request and requests are subject to approval.</p> <p>JDEX data is not available to the public beyond what is available through the Juvenile Court Case Data Dashboard.</p>
Council Accountability Court Judges	O.C.G.A §15-1-18	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Individual Juvenile Courts • Individual Family Treatment Courts 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Annual Statewide Report • Economic Impact Report (in partnership with CVIG) • Processes and Outcomes Report (in partnership with CVIG) 	CACJ may fulfill data requests for research subject to judicial approval.
Georgia Bureau of Investigation (Georgia Crime Information Center)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • O.C.G.A. §§35-3-30 – 35-3-40 • Rules and Regulations 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Law enforcement agencies (via UCR data and family violence reports) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Georgia CCH Database • OBTS • UCR Reports • Reports to the Council of Superior Court Clerks of Georgia and each superior court clerk detailing: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The number of open criminal charges • Time expired restricted charges • Closed criminal charges for each county. <p>Such reports shall also be provided to any judge or prosecuting attorney of this state, upon request.</p>	GCIC information is only available to the public via request and subject to approval.

Table H.1. continued, Georgia Juvenile Justice Data Collection and Dissemination

Agency	Statutory Authority	Sources of Data	Data Maintenance and Dissemination	Public Availability
Carl Vinson Institute of Government	Contracted with DJJ to serve as the evaluator for JJIG and CSG.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Monthly data submissions from grantee courts via the CVIG portal • Admissions and enrollment data from JTS • GCIC UCR data 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • For JJIG and CSG: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Quarterly and ad-hoc reports • Annual summary reports • Five-Year Evaluation report (2013-2018) • “Crimes Reported” data (CVIG website - come from UCR data that includes juvenile crime data) • Other reports including Georgia Criminal Justice Data Landscape Reports 	<p>Annual summaries and Five-Year Evaluation Report are available on the CJCC website.</p> <p>“Crimes Reported” data and other reports are available on the CJCC website.</p>
National Center for Juvenile Justice ⁱⁱ /United States Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention/EZACO	Since 1975, the NCJJ has administered the NJCDA with grant funding from USOJJDP. The National Institute of Justice now manages the data archive.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • EZAPOP: Census Bureau and National Center for Health Statistics • EZASHR: FBI UCR • EZAUCR: FBI UCR • EZACO: State and county agencies (annual state reports and CMSs) • JRFC Databook: Census Bureau collection from public, private, and tribal residential juvenile facilities. <p>Some state and regional agencies provide JRFC data for more than one facility under their jurisdiction.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Juvenile Court Statistics (Data is also in SBB) • USOJJDP SBB • Various Additional Publications 	All listed publications can be accessed via the NCJJ website .

ⁱⁱ The National Center for Juvenile Justice (NCJJ) is a private, non-profit organization that serves as the research division of the National Council of Juvenile and Family Court Judges and is responsible for maintaining the NJCDA, with funding from USOJJDP. The NJCDA collects data from juvenile court and juvenile justice agency information systems and cleans, documents, archives, analyzes, and disseminates it.

Acronyms for Table H.1.:

AOC: Administrative Office of the Courts	FBI: Federal Bureau of Investigation
CACJ: Council of Accountability Court Judges	GBI: Georgia Bureau of Investigation
CCH: Computerized Criminal History	GCIC: Georgia Crime Information Center
CJCC: Criminal Justice Coordinating Council	JCATS: Juvenile Case Activity Tracking System
CMS: Case Management System	JJIG: Juvenile Justice Incentive Grant
CSG: Community Services Grant	JRFC: Juvenile Residential Facility Census
CVIG: Carl Vinson Institute of Government	JTS: Juvenile Tracking System
DJJ: Department of Juvenile Justice	NCJDA: National Juvenile Court Data Archive
EZACO: Easy Access to State and County Juvenile Court Case Counts	NCJJ: National Center for Juvenile Justice
EZAPOP: Easy Access to Juvenile Populations	OBTS: Offender Based Tracking System
EZASHR: Easy Access to the FBI's Supplementary Homicide Reports	USOJJDP: United States Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention
EZAUCR: Easy Access to FBI Arrest Statistics	SBB: Statistical Briefing Book
	UCR: Uniform Crime Reporting

Gaps in Data Collection Dissemination

While significant improvements in data collection and dissemination have been made with the advent of databases and dashboards like **JDEX** and the Clearinghouse, there are still gaps in data collection. The primary barrier to data collection and analysis is the bifurcation and overall division of the juvenile court system in Georgia. For example, recidivism data is collected by DJJ based on a cohort system and only for dependent and shared courts. Considering that independent courts have jurisdiction over half of the state's juvenile population, DJJ's recidivism reporting only tells half of the story. To report recidivism statewide, each independent court would have to agree to track and report on recidivism according to DJJ's definition and reporting standards. Likewise, because CHINS programs are highly varied from court to court, it is virtually impossible to derive meaningful conclusions from CHINS data. Until there is some agreement or policy on the standardization of data collection and reporting across the entire juvenile court system, much of the data currently collected is unreliable, at best.

Another issue arising from bifurcation is the completeness of information contained within respective databases. Assessment instruments, including the **DAI** and **PDRA**, are dependent upon a youth's court history for proper scoring. By relying solely on **JTS** or a court CMS, court staff may not have access to complete statewide information, and thus risk making uninformed decisions that can have a serious impact on youth outcomes. Improvements to JDEX will hopefully encourage more widespread use of the database and lead to more accurate assessments.

In addition to data issues resulting from bifurcated systems, there are significant gaps in data that could show the relationship between juvenile justice and social and environmental factors, including the conditions in the environment where people live, learn, work, and play that affect health, functioning, and quality of life.⁵³² As illustrated throughout this report, economic stability, education, healthcare, neighborhoods, and communities play a role in a youth's risk for court involvement. Although data is collected and disseminated at a county level, location by county doesn't tell the whole story — mainly what factors may have played a part in the child becoming court-involved. There are ways to obtain more accurate information about the circumstances of the children and families who encounter the juvenile justice system. For one, the state could collect address and zip code data for offenses and a child's residence. An address and zip code gives much more detailed information about socioeconomic status, education, healthcare, and the built environment in which people live. Second, benefits data

from DFCS and the DCH could be matched with juvenile justice data to provide insight into a family's socioeconomic status and ability to obtain services. Once analyzed, this aggregated data could be used to reveal trends related to social and environmental factors, target resources, and inform policy.

Another way to improve youth outcomes is to collect data on interventions. Most youth who come into the court system on delinquency or CHINS designations receive some form of services and supports. While many courts may be collecting this information in their respective CMSs, it is not being reported at the state level. If courts were required to track and report this data, it could be evaluated to show which types of services were more successful in addressing the needs of youth who are at-risk of being or are already system-involved.