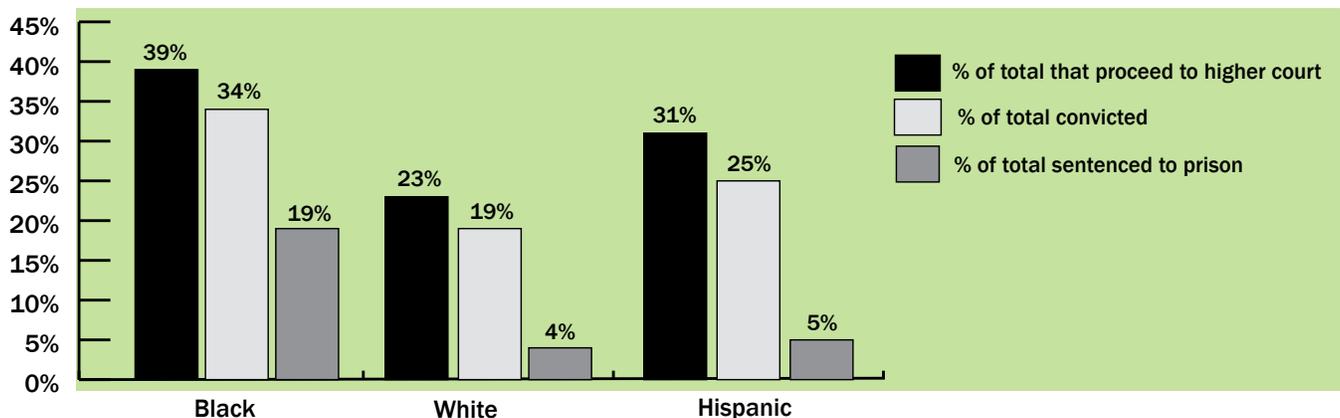


IL Commission: African Americans, Latinos Disproportionately Arrested, Prosecuted, Sentenced for Drug Crime

The Illinois Disproportionate Justice Impact Study Commission¹ recently announced its findings that people of color, particularly African Americans, are disproportionately arrested, prosecuted, and sent to prison for drug crimes, despite relatively equal rates of drug use among racial/ethnic groups.² Non-whites were arrested at higher rates than whites relative to their representation in the general population in 62 of 102 Illinois counties. Most of the disproportionality was related to drug possession charges, which account for nearly three-fourths of felony drug arrests across the state. In Cook County, African Americans with the lowest level felony drug possession charge (i.e., Class 4) were sentenced to prison at a rate almost five times greater than whites: 19% of African-American defendants vs. 4% of white defendants. While Latinos were sentenced to prison at a rate (5%) similar to whites, they remain significantly more likely than whites to have their cases proceed to a higher court (31% of Latino cases vs. 23% of white cases) and be convicted (25% of Latino cases vs. 19% of white cases).

Criminal Justice Involvement Among Class 4 Drug Possession Defendants, Cook County, 2005



Source:

The Illinois Disproportionate Impact Study Commission. (2010). *Illinois Disproportionate Justice Impact Study Commission: Final Report*. Chicago, IL: author.

Notes:

¹ The Commission was formed in October 2008 by state statute to study the harm caused to minority populations as a result of state drug laws or their practical application. It conducted original analysis with data from the Illinois State Police and Office of the Clerk of Cook County.

² The latest national survey conducted by the federal government's Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (2009) found past-year drug use by 9.6% of African Americans, 8.8% of whites, and 7.9% of Latinos.

Prepared by the Center for Health and Justice (CHJ) at TASC. CHJ works to build, enhance, and sustain strong and vibrant communities by promoting policies and practices that stop the cycle of drugs and crime. We conduct research and evaluations, and offer policy analysis, trainings, and technical assistance in the fields of health and justice. For more information, visit us online at www.centerforhealthandjustice.org.

To receive Facts on Justice from CHJ, please send an email to research@tasc-il.org with "Join Facts on Justice" typed in the subject line, and your name, title, organization, and email address in the body of the message.

©2011 CHJ – Chicago, Illinois.