



*It is our belief that all young people should have the opportunity to be safe, healthy, successful, and prepared for the future.*

## All youth are **SOCIALLY COMPETENT**

This report is the third in a series of data briefs covering the youth development framework indicators developed by The Iowa Collaboration for Youth Development (ICYD)<sup>1</sup>. The framework has been broken down into four broad result areas as a guide for youth policy, planning activities, and monitoring of youth development outcomes.

1. All youth have safe and supportive families, schools, and communities
2. All youth are healthy and socially competent
3. All youth are successful in school
4. All youth are prepared for a productive adulthood

High quality relationships and social skills have great benefits for youth such as psychological health, improved academic performance, and success in relationships as adults. Four leading indicators have been identified as a tool to measure progress in the area of socially competent youth.

1. Empathy
2. Self-Confidence
3. Violent or Aggressive Behavior
4. Juvenile Delinquency Complaints

### INDICATOR 1: **EMPATHY**

Empathy is the understanding and/or sharing of the feelings of another. This positive social behavior can be linked to higher academic achievement and lower levels of criminal activity.<sup>2,3</sup> The Iowa Youth Survey (IYS) measures empathy through a construct consisting of three questions:<sup>4</sup>

1. It is important to help other people.
2. I care about other people's feelings.
3. I feel sorry for people who have had things stolen or damaged.

Overall, state-level results in Iowa have been consistently high for the empathy construct from 1999 through 2005. Approximately 85.0% to 90.0% of students answered positively to all of the questions in the empathy construct. There is little variance among the responses of 6th, 8th, and 11th graders.

<sup>1</sup> The Iowa Collaboration for Youth Development is a non-statutory network of state agencies committed to improving results among Iowa's youth. <http://www.icyd.org>

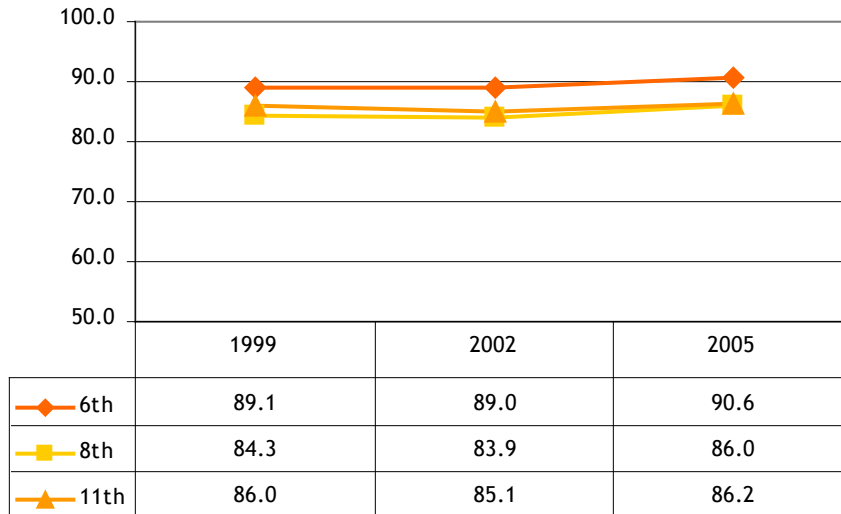
<sup>2</sup> Swick, Kevin. Preventing Violence Through Empathy Development in Families. *Early Childhood Education Journal*, v.33 n.1, 53-59.

<sup>3</sup> Cotton, Kathleen. Developing Empathy in Children and Youth. Northwest Regional Education Laboratory, School Improvement Research Series, Close-Up #13.

<sup>4</sup> Iowa Department of Public Health, Iowa Youth Survey. <http://www.iowayouthsurvey.org>

## IYS - Empathy Construct: State Results, 1999-2005<sup>5</sup>

Percent of Students Giving Positive Responses to All Questions in the Construct

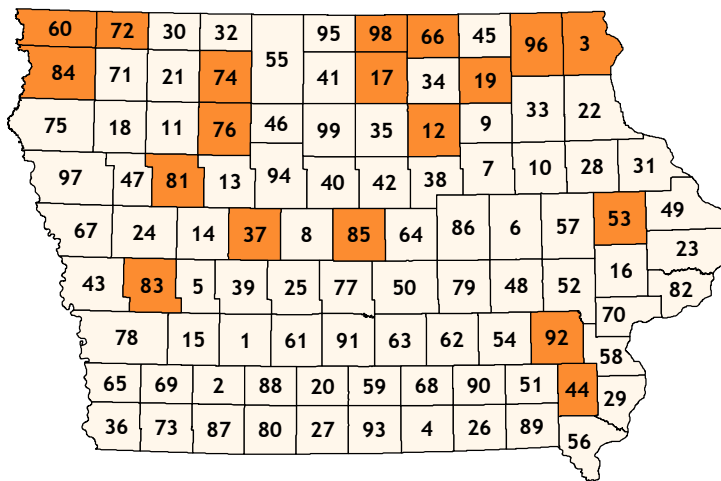


As indicated in the map below, 90.0% or more of students in nineteen counties gave positive responses to all questions in the empathy construct. In the remaining eighty counties, between 80.2% and 89.9% of students gave positive responses to all of the questions.

## IYS - Empathy Construct: County Results, 2005<sup>5</sup>

Percentage of Students Giving Positive Responses to All Questions in the Construct

□ Less than 90.0%    ■ 90.0% or More



<sup>5</sup> Iowa Department of Public Health, Iowa Youth Survey. <http://www.iowayouthsurvey.org>

County List

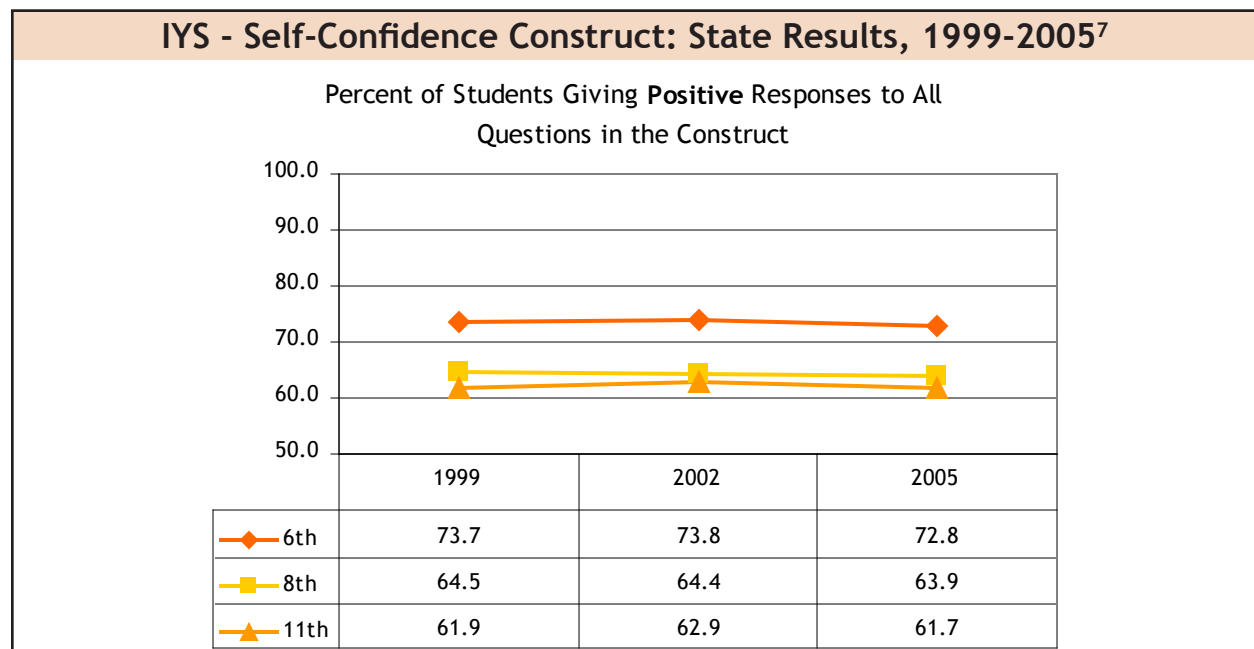
|                |               |              |             |                  |               |
|----------------|---------------|--------------|-------------|------------------|---------------|
| 1-Adair        | 18-Cherokee   | 35-Franklin  | 52-Johnson  | 68-Monroe        | 84-Sioux      |
| 2-Adams        | 19-Chichasaw  | 36-Fremont   | 53-Jones    | 69-Montgomery    | 85-Story      |
| 3-Allamakee    | 20-Clarke     | 37-Greene    | 54-Keokuk   | 70-Muscatine     | 86-Tama       |
| 4-Appanoose    | 21-Clay       | 38-Grundy    | 55-Kossuth  | 71-O'Brien       | 87-Taylor     |
| 5-Audubon      | 22-Clayton    | 39-Guthrie   | 56-Lee      | 72-Osceola       | 88-Union      |
| 6-Benton       | 23-Clinton    | 40-Hamilton  | 57-Linn     | 73-Page          | 89-Van Buren  |
| 7-Black Hawk   | 24-Crawford   | 41-Hancock   | 58-Louisa   | 74-Palo Alto     | 90-Wapello    |
| 8-Boone        | 25-Dallas     | 42-Hardin    | 59-Lucas    | 75-Plymouth      | 91-Warren     |
| 9-Bremer       | 26-Davis      | 43-Harrison  | 60-Lyon     | 76-Pocahontas    | 92-Washington |
| 10-Buchanan    | 27-Decatur    | 44-Henry     | 61-Madison  | 77-Polk          | 93-Wayne      |
| 11-Buena Vista | 28-Delaware   | 45-Howard    | 62-Mahaska  | 78-Pottawattamie | 94-Webster    |
| 12-Butler      | 29-Des Moines | 46-Humboldt  | 63-Marion   | 79-Poweshiek     | 95-Winnebago  |
| 13-Calhoun     | 30-Dickinson  | 47-Ida       | 64-Marshall | 80-Ringgold      | 96-Winneshiek |
| 14-Carroll     | 31-Dubuque    | 48-Iowa      | 65-Mills    | 81-Sac           | 97-Woodbury   |
| 15-Cass        | 32-Emmet      | 49-Jackson   | 66-Mitchell | 82-Scott         | 98-Worth      |
| 16-Cedar       | 33-Fayette    | 50-Jasper    | 67-Monona   | 83-Shelby        | 99-Wright     |
| 17-Cerro Gordo | 34-Floyd      | 51-Jefferson |             |                  |               |

**INDICATOR 2: SELF-CONFIDENCE**

Self-confidence among youth can have positive effects on problem-solving, social relations, school adjustment, and high-risk behaviors.<sup>6</sup> The self-confidence indicator can also be measured by a construct from the Iowa Youth Survey that contains the following four questions.<sup>7</sup>

1. I accept responsibility for my actions when I make a mistake or get into trouble.
2. I am good at making friends.
3. When I have problems, I am good at finding a way to fix them.
4. I think things through carefully before I make a decision.

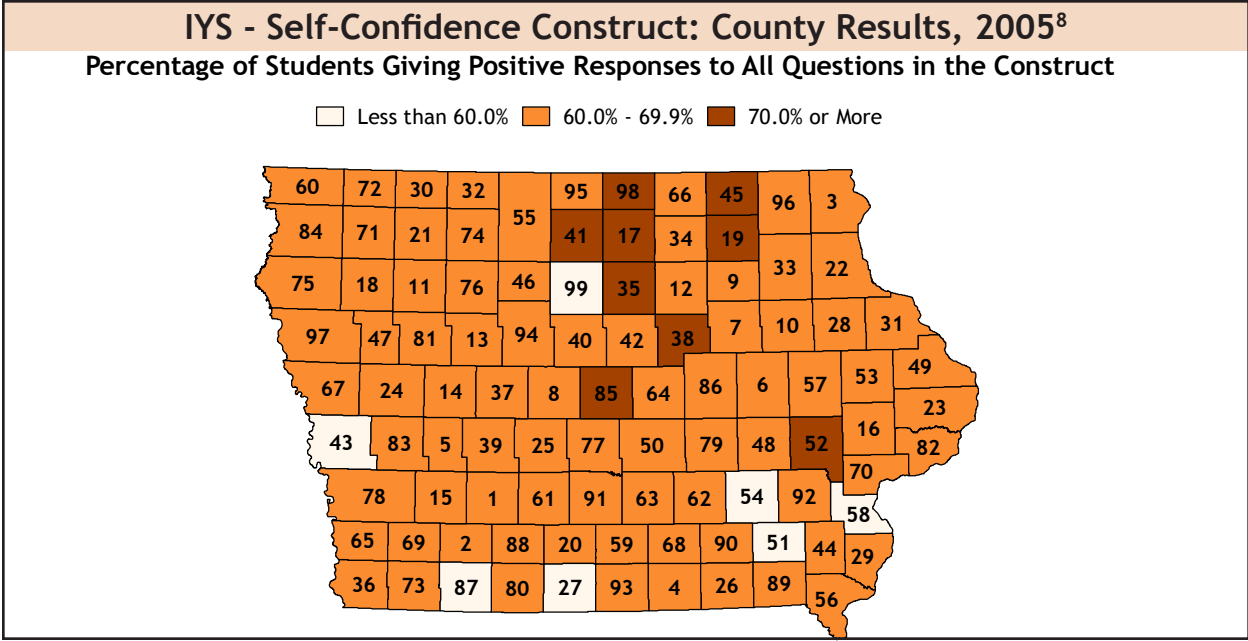
The following chart shows that students in Iowa within each grade-level have consistently answered the questions in this construct from 1999 through 2005. The percentage of students who answered positively to all of the questions has averaged approximately 73.0% for 6th graders, 64.0% for 8th graders, and 62.0% for 11th graders.



<sup>6</sup> Scott, Dawn. Program Outcomes for Youth: Social Competencies. [http://ag.arizona.edu/fcs/cyfernet/nowg/social\\_comp.html](http://ag.arizona.edu/fcs/cyfernet/nowg/social_comp.html)

<sup>7</sup> Iowa Department of Public Health, Iowa Youth Survey. <http://www.iowayouthsurvey.org>

The map below indicates that in nine Iowa counties, 70.0% or more of students responded positively to each question in the self-confidence construct. In seven counties, less than 60% of students did. The minimum percentage of students who answered positively to all questions in the construct in any county was 57.1%, while the maximum was 74.1%.



**INDICATOR 3: *VIOLENT OR AGGRESSIVE BEHAVIOR***

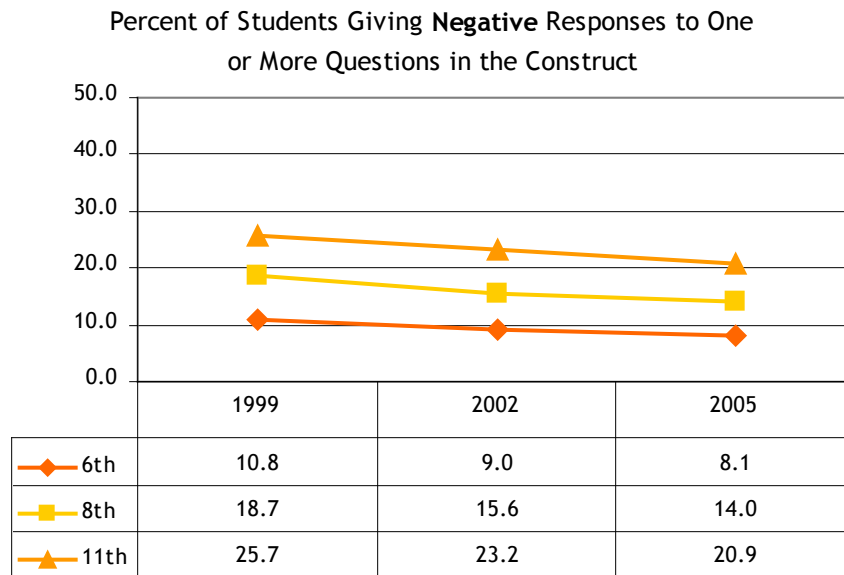
The third indicator in the social competence result area is violent or aggressive behavior. Youth who engage in violent behavior are also often involved in other high-risk activities such as drug and alcohol use, carrying weapons, and unsafe sex.<sup>9</sup> The following chart and map use data from the violent/aggressive behavior construct on the Iowa Youth Survey. The construct contains the following six questions:

- In the past 12 months how often have you:
1. carried a gun, knife, club, or other weapon to school?
  2. used alcohol or other illegal drugs on school property?
  3. damaged property just for fun (like breaking windows, scratching a car, etc)?
  4. beaten up on or fought someone because they made you angry?
  5. used a weapon, force, or threats to get money or things from someone else?
  6. verbally threatened to physically harm someone?

Statewide, violent or aggressive behavior has decreased slightly each year from 1999 through 2005. This downward trend is consistent at each grade-level, although 11th graders are more likely than 6th or 8th graders to have answered negatively to at least one of the questions in this construct.

<sup>8</sup> Iowa Department of Public Health, Iowa Youth Survey. <http://www.iowayouthsurvey.org>  
<sup>9</sup> Child Trends DataBank. <http://www.childtrendsdatabank.org/>

## IYS - Violent/Aggressive Behavior Construct: State Results, 1999-2005<sup>10</sup>

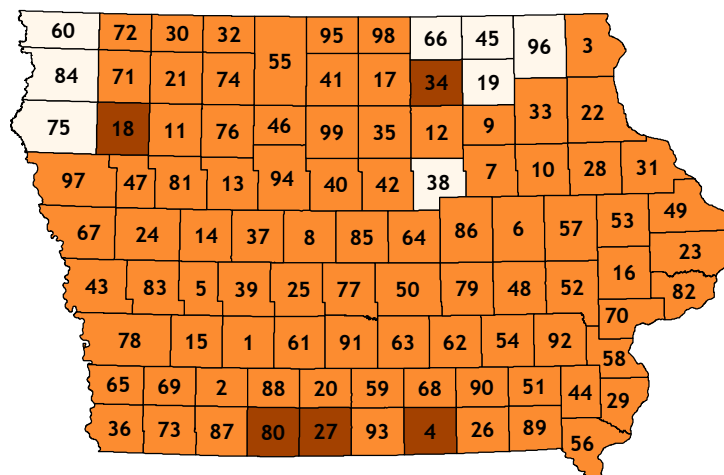


Lower levels of violent or aggressive behavior are more prevalent in the northern part of the state, where eight counties had fewer than 10.0% of students who responded negatively to one or more questions in the construct. In five counties, 20.0% or more of students indicated they had participated in violent/aggressive behavior by answering negatively to one or more questions in the construct. The minimum percentage of students who answered negatively to one or more questions in the construct in any county was 7.4% while the maximum was 26.7%.

## IYS - Violent/Aggressive Behavior Construct: County Results, 2005<sup>10</sup>

Percentage of Students Giving Negative Responses to One or More Questions in the Construct

□ Less than 10.0%    ■ 10.0% - 19.9%    ■ 20.0% or More

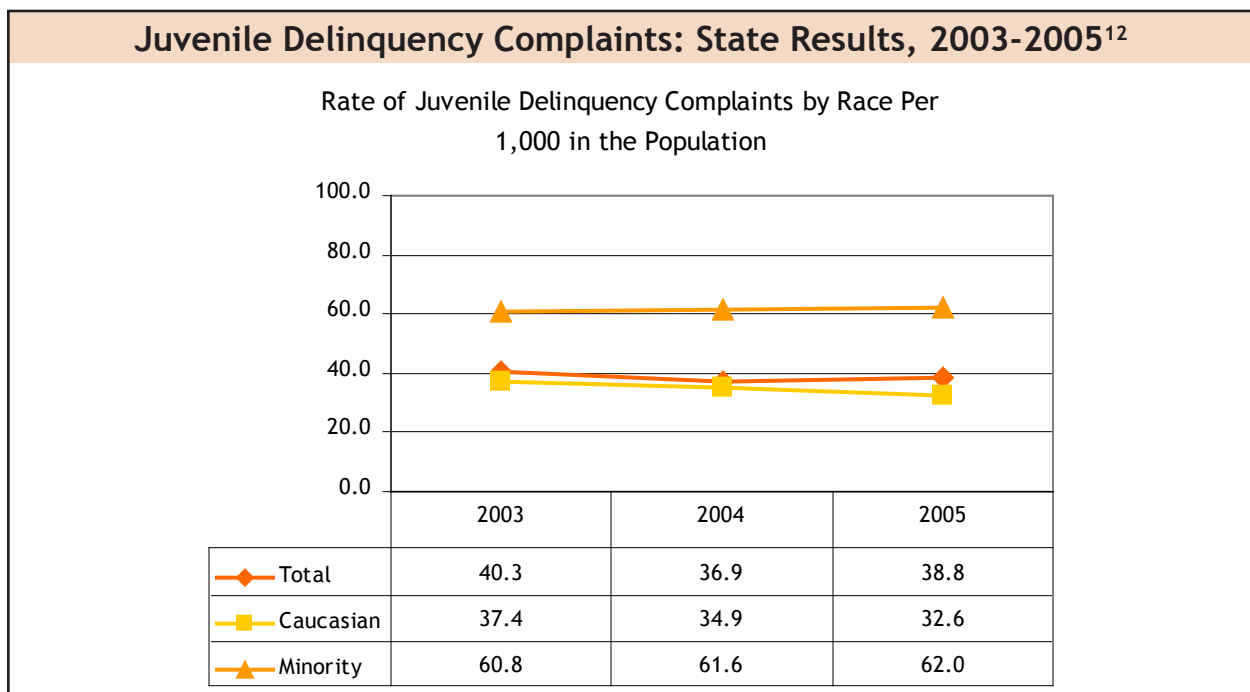


<sup>10</sup> Iowa Department of Public Health, Iowa Youth Survey. <http://www.iowayouthsurvey.org>

## INDICATOR 4: *JUVENILE DELINQUENCY COMPLAINTS*

As with violent or aggressive behavior, juvenile delinquency is a negative indicator of social competency. Juvenile delinquency complaints are law violations by juveniles typically referred to juvenile court by law enforcement and processed by juvenile court services staff.<sup>11</sup> There may be more than one violation included in a complaint.

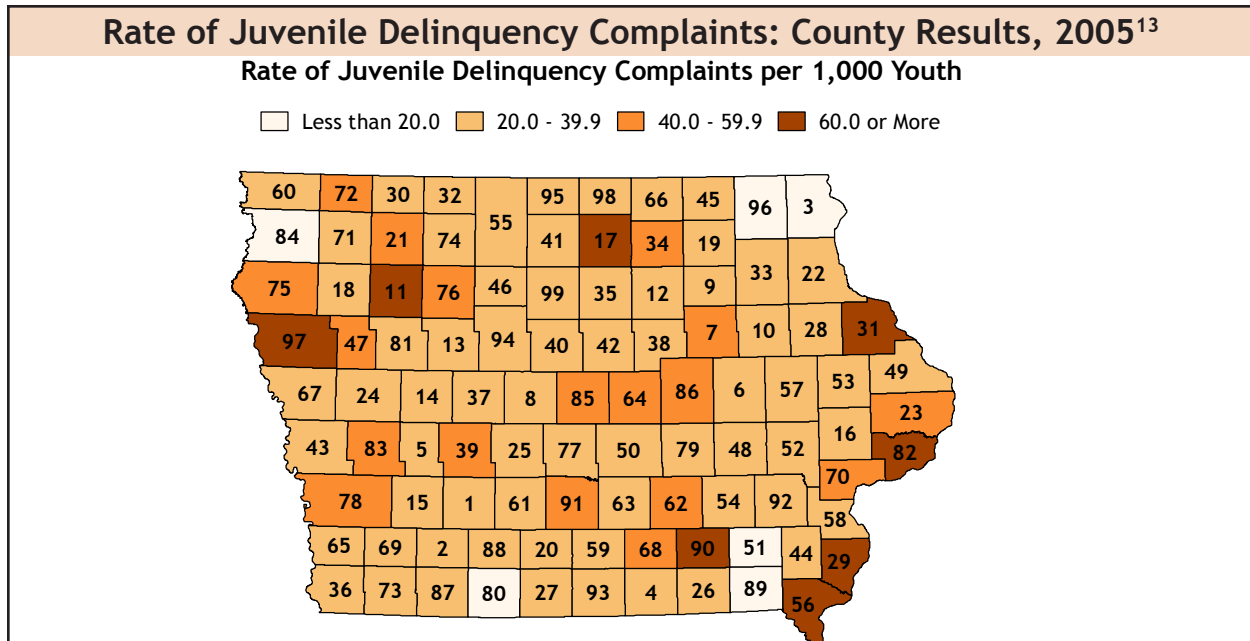
The total rate of juvenile delinquency complaints in Iowa has remained fairly steady from 2003 to 2005 with about 40.0 complaints per 1,000 youth. This rate is equal to approximately 28,000 complaints per year. The rate of juvenile delinquency complaints against Minority youth are significantly higher than the rate of complaints against Caucasian youth. In 2005, the rate of complaints for Minority youth was 62.0 per 1,000 youth, while the rate for Caucasian youth was 32.6. National comparison data were not available for this indicator because of the differences in processing procedures at the state level.



<sup>11</sup> Serving Iowa Youth and Families with a Youth Development Approach, JJDP Act Formula Grant Application and Three-Year Plan, Iowa Department of Human Rights, Division of Criminal and Juvenile Justice Planning and Iowa's Juvenile Justice Advisory Council. [http://www.state.ia.us/dhr/cjpp/publications/juve\\_reports.html](http://www.state.ia.us/dhr/cjpp/publications/juve_reports.html)

<sup>12</sup> Iowa Department of Human Rights, Division of Criminal and Juvenile Justice Planning, Juvenile Court Services Annual Report. [http://www.state.ia.us/government/dhr/cjpp/publications/juve\\_reports.html](http://www.state.ia.us/government/dhr/cjpp/publications/juve_reports.html)

The following map shows the rate of juvenile complaints by county. The majority of counties in Iowa had a rate of 20.0 to 39.9 complaints per 1,000 youth in 2005. The eight counties with the highest rates ranged from 60.0 to 72.0 complaints per 1,000 youth. Six counties had relatively low rates ranging from 11.7 to 19.9 complaints per 1,000 youth.



This data brief was prepared for ICYD by the Iowa Department of Education; Iowa Department of Human Rights, Division of Criminal and Juvenile Justice Planning; and Iowa Department of Public Health. Funding was provided in part by the U.S. Department of Education through Grants to States to Improve Management of Drug and Violence Prevention Programs (Q184R040004). It is intended to inform interested parties of the progress the state of Iowa is making in improving on the result areas relative to youth development.

Questions concerning the report should be directed to: [janell.brandhorst@iowa.gov](mailto:janell.brandhorst@iowa.gov)

Other data briefs available:

Youth are in Safe and Supportive Families

Youth are Prepared for Productive Adulthood

V5

<sup>13</sup> Department of Human Rights, Division of Criminal and Juvenile Justice Planning, Data Warehouse. [http://www.state.ia.us/government/dhr/cjpp/juve\\_delinq\\_data/index.html](http://www.state.ia.us/government/dhr/cjpp/juve_delinq_data/index.html)