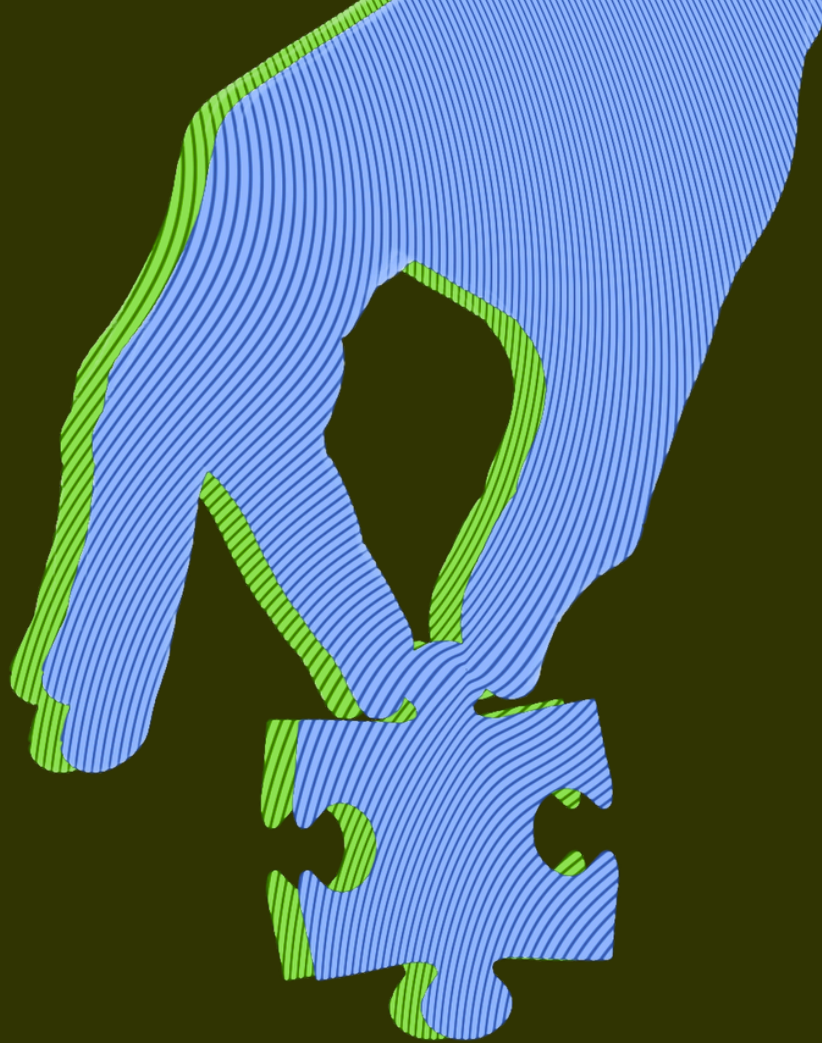
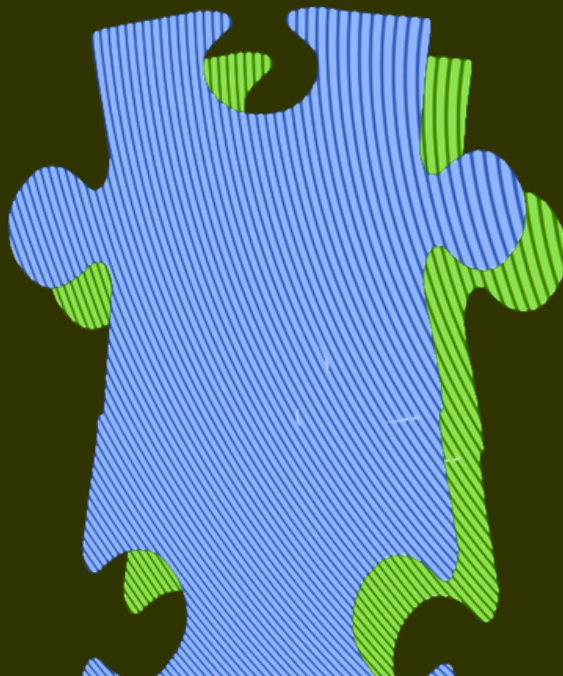




PIECING IT ALL TOGETHER:

AN ANALYSIS OF THE AVAILABLE DATA FOR THE FIRST TIME WEAPONS OFFENSE PROGRAM



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INTRODUCTION

The First Time Weapon Offense Program (FTWOP) has existed in some form for approximately eight years in the state of Illinois. Chicago Appleseed Center for Fair Courts (Chicago Appleseed) and the Better Government Association (BGA) sought to better understand how it has been used across Illinois, how often the program has been completed successfully, and what roadblocks exist for the program.

Chicago Appleseed and BGA analyzed records obtained from 13 counties and found that after the expansion of the program in 2023 participation increased and successful completion rates were often high. However, the state's attorney's ability to withhold consent for the defendant to participate is a potential stumbling block for full utilization of this program.

A significant barrier to Chicago Appleseed and BGA's analysis of the FTWOP was the fact that the judicial branch is exempted from Illinois' main public records law. The FTWOP is run by the courts, and without the mandate of Illinois' Freedom of Information Act, the courts are not required to turn over documents or data related to the programs they run.

BACKGROUND

Gun Possession Statutes

Unlawful possession of a weapon (UPW) is the criminal offense associated with owning or carrying a gun (or some other weapons) in an illegal manner. UPW offenses do not involve discharging a weapon, nor do they involve any violence.

A common reason that someone's possession of a gun might be illegal is that they do not have the proper licensure. Illinois requires two licenses for someone to legally carry a gun concealed on their person or in a vehicle: They need a Firearm Owners Identification (FOID) card to own the gun at all, and they need a FOID card and a concealed carry license (CCL) to

carry it in public. Gun possession can be illegal for other reasons as well, even by someone with both licenses; for example, it is illegal for anyone to possess a machine gun or bring a gun into a bar.

At a minimum, UPW charges are Class A misdemeanors for first-time offenses and Class 3 felonies for subsequent offenses, but charges can be enhanced for various reasons. For example, if illegal gun possession occurs in certain locations, such as a school or courthouse, it starts at a Class 3 felony even for a first-time offense.

More often than not,¹ gun possession is charged as aggravated unlawful possession of a weapon (AUPW), which is generally a Class 4 felony for first-time offenses and a Class 2 felony for subsequent offenses. There are many “aggravating” factors that can be used by a state’s attorney’s office to justify an AUPW charge, such as the gun being uncased with ammunition accessible, the accused person not having a valid FOID card, or the accused person engaging in a misdemeanor drug violation while illegally possessing the gun.

Illegal gun possession charges can be elevated even further. Possession of a stolen firearm, for example, starts at a Class 2 felony even for a first-time offense. If the accused person has ever been convicted of a felony, their charge can be elevated to unlawful possession of a weapon by a felon, which starts at a Class 3 felony. If they have been charged with two or more felonies for certain offenses, they can be charged with unlawful possession of a weapon by a repeat felony offender, which is always a Class X felony, the highest felony class below murder.

First Time Weapon Offense Program

The First Time Weapon Offense Program (FTWOP) was established as a pilot program in 2018 as part of the Safe Neighborhoods Reform Act. The act allows Illinois courts to sentence eligible defendants charged with UPW or AUPW offenses that are Class 4 felonies² or misdemeanors to the program, with the consent of the state’s attorney and the defendant themselves.

After a minor amendment in 2021 and an extension of the pilot in 2022, Public Act 103-370 made the FTWOP permanent in 2023. The act also did the following: expanded its age eligibility to include people of all ages rather than people younger than 21, lowered the

minimum program length from 18 months to six months, and changed the standard and discretionary program requirements. The only major amendment since then was Public Act 104-398, enacted in 2026, which enabled people who have successfully completed the program to apply for and receive a FOID card if they are eligible.

A defendant is only eligible for the FTWOP if they are charged with misdemeanor UPW, Class 4 UPW, or Class 4 AUPW. Because of how charging works for gun possession, this means that they are ineligible for the program if they have any prior gun possession convictions. Furthermore, they are only eligible for the FTWOP if they meet all of the following criteria:

- They did not possess a gun during the commission of a violent act;
- They have never been convicted or placed on probation or conditional discharge for a violent offense;
- They have not previously successfully completed the FTWOP;
- They were never adjudicated a delinquent minor for a violent act; and
- They do not have an order of protection against them.

However, a defendant's eligibility does not guarantee their participation in the FTWOP. A judge or state's attorney can deny them entry into the program, or their circuit court may not operate such a program at all. Though bills have been introduced to remove prosecutorial discretion from the FTWOP,³ none have passed.

The FTWOP is a post-plea diversion program, meaning that a defendant must plead guilty to their offense in order to participate. If they successfully complete the program, the court dismisses their case; any violation of the program's conditions, however, could result in a conviction. The program lasts between six and 24 months; during that time, participants must avoid any criminal activity, not possess any guns, and attend required programming, which could potentially include counseling or education. The court may also impose discretionary requirements, such as obtaining employment or certification of education, abstinence from drug use, community service, or fines and fees.

Beyond the standard eligibility requirements described above, defendants may be required to meet other criteria in order to participate. Because the state's attorney must sign off on participation, they essentially have a de facto power to expand the eligibility requirements however they would like. The state's attorney also has a say in the length of time

defendants stay in the program. As written, the statute grants the court and the state's attorney's office broad leeway to set requirements for defendants within the FTWOP, stating that defendants must "comply with such other reasonable conditions as the court may impose."

¹AUPW offenses accounted for a majority of gun possession cases filed in Cook County in 2025, according to Cook County Justice Dashboard. (2026). Cases filed in court. <https://cook-dashboard.loyolaccj.org/court-filings-bond/cases-filed-in-court>.

²Class 4 is the lowest class of felonies.

³104th Illinois General Assembly. (2026). HB4422.

<https://ilga.gov/Legislation/BillStatus?DocNum=4422&GAID=18&DocTypeID=HB&LegId=165103&SessionID=114>;

104th Illinois General Assembly. (2026). SB3563.

<https://ilga.gov/Legislation/BillStatus?DocNum=3563&GAID=18&DocTypeID=SB&LegId=166613&SessionID=114>.

METHODS

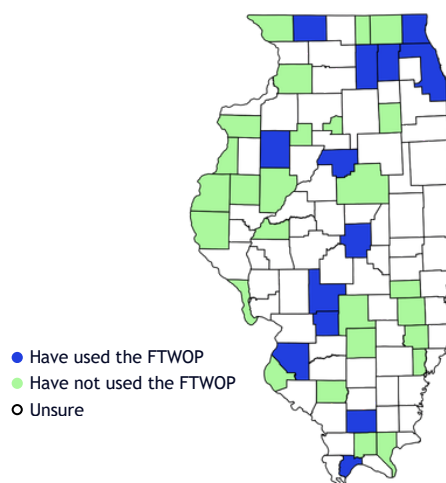
Two Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) requests were emailed to each of the 102 state's attorney's offices in Illinois:

- All prior or present internal policies that govern the office's relationship with and use of the FTWOP; and
- Any data the office maintains regarding usage of the FTWOP, including data on charges, racial and age demographics, successful completion rate, and duration.

81 of the 102 state's attorney's offices responded to either or both of these requests. Of the remaining 21 counties, we were able to confirm that 11 of them were contacted through an appropriate email address.

FIGURE 1

MAP OF ILLINOIS COUNTIES
COLORED BY THEIR USAGE OF
THE FTWOP, 2018 – 2025



Overall, three counties supplied policies (though one was simply a copy of the statute governing the FTWOP), and 13 counties supplied data. Some counties clarified that their circuit had never used the program, while others simply stated that they maintained no records responsive to the requests. The data provided was not consistent across counties. While some provided detailed spreadsheets of data, others responded with police reports, court records, or other documents to respond to the data request. Some counties only provided a portion of the data requested. Where possible, Chicago Appleseed and BGA used the data provided to determine participants' age, race, charge, length of time in the program, whether they successfully completed the program, and other parameters.

Cook, Lake, Kane, DeKalb, and St. Clair Counties provided enough information for more detailed analyses. Others provided only enough data to confirm that the program had been used, but not enough for a more thorough analysis. Some counties provided data that was incomplete or partially redacted. For example, Lake and Kane Counties provided case initiation dates rather than program initiation dates, so for some cases the date might be multiple years before the defendant began the program. Also, Stephenson County only provided the year of each participants' date of birth, meaning that our calculations of their ages at the start of the program are estimates.

After analyzing the documents provided to create our dataset, Chicago Appleseed and BGA sought to determine the demographic composition of participants, the most common charges for people in the program, lengths of stay in the program, and how P.A. 103-370 changed the way the program was used when it went into effect in July of 2023.

FINDINGS

Cook County

The Cook County FTWOP has seen a lot of growth since it started. In 2018, 2019, and 2020, there were under 100 cases, growing to over 1,000 participants in both 2024 and 2025. With an increase in participants, the program has also seen an overall increase in its successful completion rate. 2025 had the highest rate of successful completion at 92%.

This is especially promising because eligibility for the program was expanded in July of 2023, allowing those 21 and older to participate in the program. Every year since 2023 has seen a higher rate of successful completion than the year before, suggesting that opening up the program's eligibility has improved its effectiveness. Of the people who did not successfully complete the FTWOP since its inception, on average they were arrested for a new offense within the first 9 months.

FIGURE 2

CASES DIVERTED TO THE FTWOP IN COOK COUNTY BY YEAR, 2018–2025

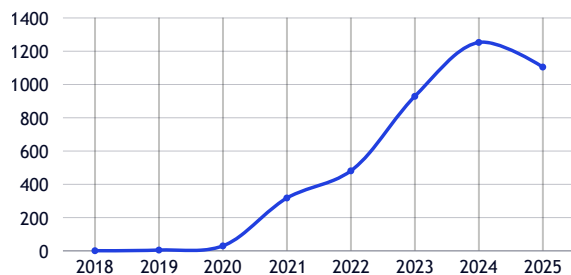
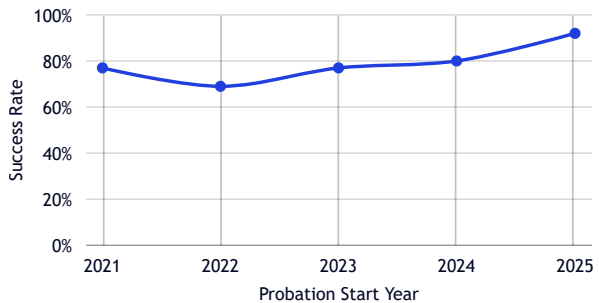


FIGURE 3

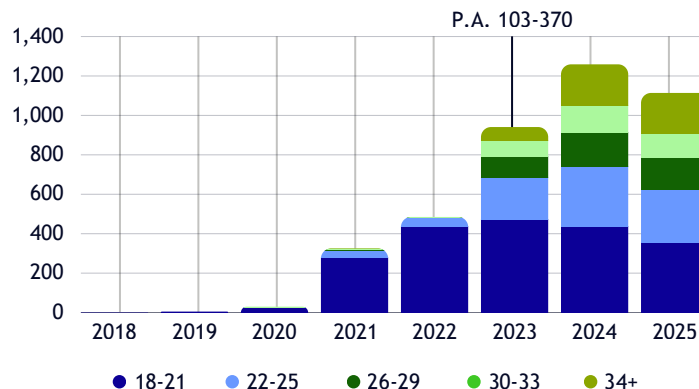
COOK COUNTY FTWOP SUCCESS RATE, 2021–2025



Analyzing the age of participants by year shows that Cook County took advantage of the expanded age eligibility in 2023 due to P.A. 103-370, as the age distribution of the participants shifted following the change. In fact, the median age of the participants in 2025 was older than the prior cutoff point for eligibility.

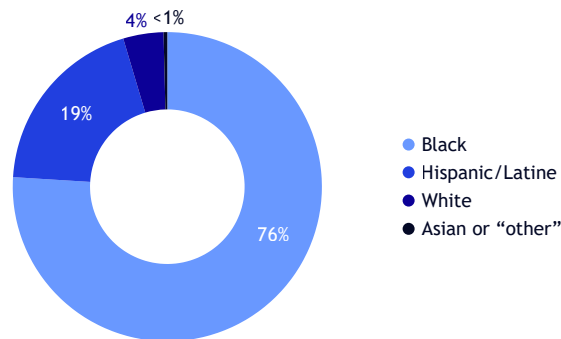
FIGURE 4

AGE COHORTS OF PEOPLE IN THE FTWOP IN COOK COUNTY BY YEAR, 2018–2025



Of everyone who participated in Cook County’s FTWOP between 2018 and 2025, 76.0% were Black, 19.4% were Hispanic/Latine, 4.2% were white, 0.2% were Asian, and 0.1% were labelled as “other.” The other 86 participants’ races and ethnicities were unknown. These racial-ethnic demographics are comparable to the demographics of people charged with UPW or AUPW in Cook County.

FIGURE 5
RACIAL-ETHNIC DEMOGRAPHICS OF PEOPLE
IN THE FTWOP IN COOK COUNTY, 2018–
2025



The vast majority (99.5%) of people in the program were charged with aggravated unlawful possession of a weapon and, in order to participate in the program, pled guilty. Only 17 people charged with misdemeanor unlawful possession of a weapon have ever participated in Cook County’s FTWOP, and only 12 people charged with felony unlawful possession of a weapon have ever participated.

FIGURE 6
CHARGE DEMOGRAPHICS OF CASES IN THE
FTWOP IN COOK COUNTY, 2018–2025

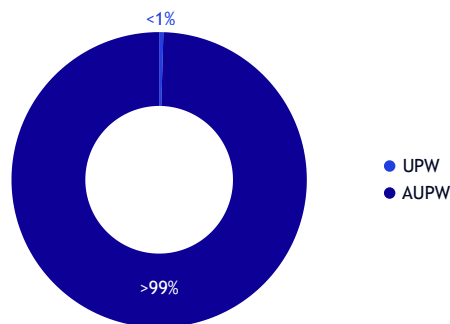
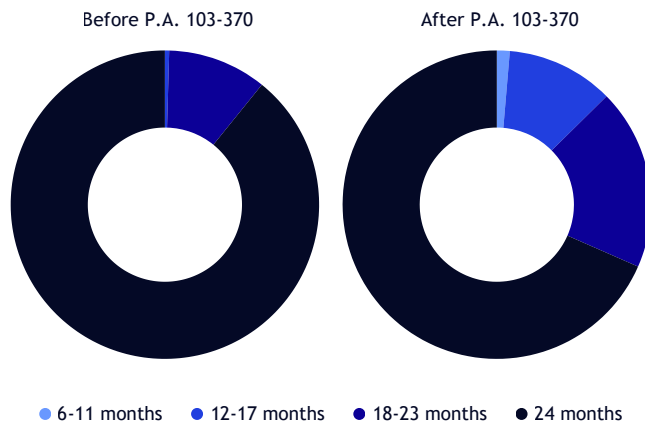


FIGURE 7

SENTENCE LENGTHS FOR FTWOP CASES IN COOK COUNTY BEFORE AND AFTER THE ENACTMENT OF PUBLIC ACT 103-370



P.A. 103-370 also changed the minimum length of the FTWOP from 18 months to six. This change could also be part of the reason for the increase in successful completions after 2023, but in a vast majority of cases, participants were sentenced to the program for over 18 months, even after the change.

Cook County had the most use of and the most data on the FTWOP, allowing for a more detailed analysis than the other counties. For that reason, much of what

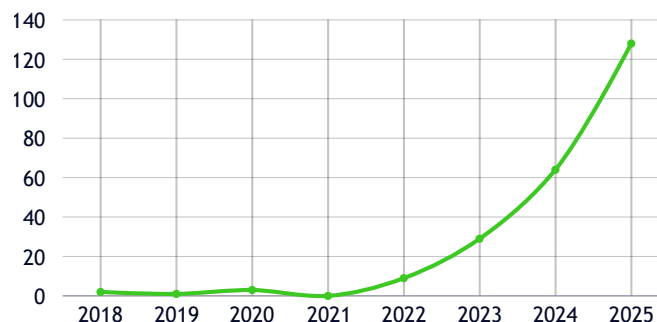
we know about the FTWOP comes from Cook County, although some counties had data that showed divergence from Cook County.

Lake County

Lake County's FTWOP was rarely used before 2023. However, similar to Cook County, Lake County has seen an increase in participation over the past seven years, from under 10 annual participants between 2018 and 2022 to nearly 130 in 2025 alone.

FIGURE 8

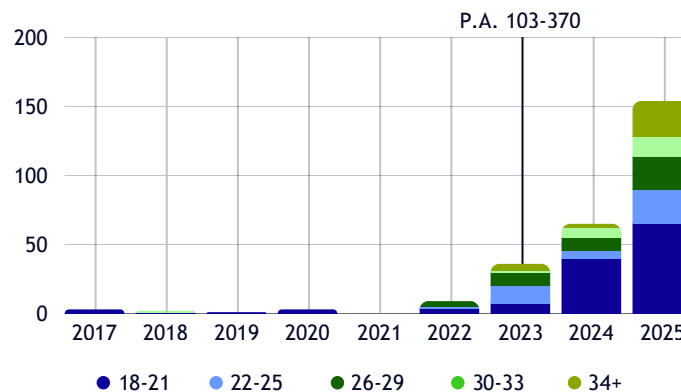
CASES DIVERTED TO THE FTWOP IN LAKE COUNTY BY YEAR, 2018–2025



While there are participants of all ages in the Lake County FTWOP, the largest cohort in both 2024 and 2025 were those between the ages of 18 and 20. Still, people older than 20 have represented a significant number of participants since 2023, which is a promising sign that this program benefits people of all ages in Lake County. The graph below shows when cases were initiated, not when participants entered into the program, which likely explains why some participants older than 21 are shown as participants before 2023.

FIGURE 9

AGE COHORTS OF PEOPLE IN THE FTWOP IN LAKE COUNTY BY THE YEAR THE CASE STARTED, 2017-2025



Most participants were Hispanic/Latine, the second most populous group was Black participants, and white participants made up the smallest cohort. Similar to Cook County, aggravated unlawful possession of a weapon is the most common charge in Lake County's FTWOP at 94%.

FIGURE 10

RACIAL-ETHNIC DEMOGRAPHICS OF PEOPLE IN THE FTWOP IN LAKE COUNTY, 2018–2025

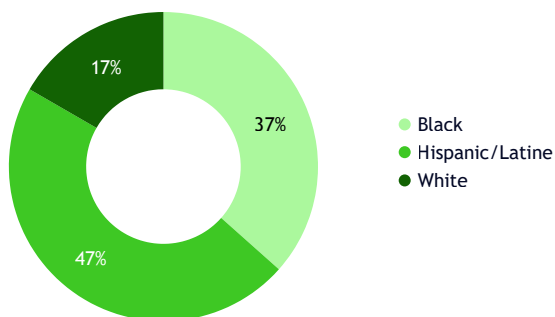
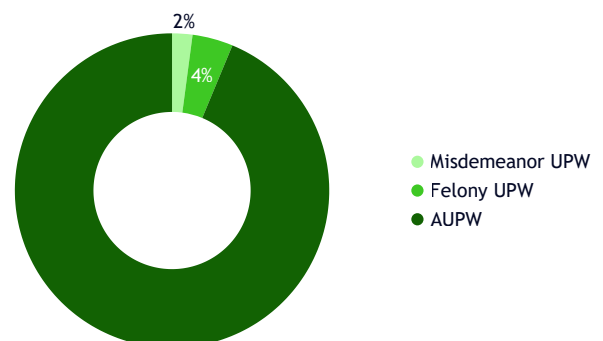


FIGURE 11

CHARGE DEMOGRAPHICS OF CASES IN THE FTWOP IN LAKE COUNTY, 2018–2025

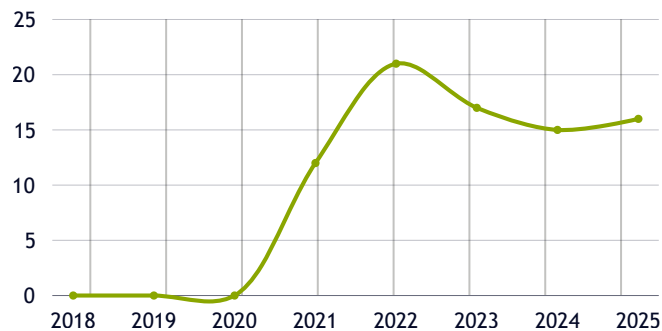


Kane County

Kane County's program has seen less growth than the other large counties that provided data. Even the increase in 2023 that other counties experienced is not evident here.

FIGURE 12

CASES DIVERTED TO THE FTWOP IN KANE COUNTY BY YEAR, 2018–2025



Note: the graph appears to go below zero because of smoothing.

Kane County shows very high completion rates, and the data on the Kane County SAFE-T Act dashboard suggests that use of the program is close to the number of relevant charges in Kane County, although data for the dashboard only began being collected on September 18, 2023. It's unclear why Kane County and Lake County have such different degrees of use for the FTWOP, and the difference is not immediately addressed by their relevant sizes given that Lake County has an approximate population of 719,339, and Kane County has an approximate population of 525,757.

FIGURE 13

KANE COUNTY FTWOP SUCCESS RATE, 2021–2025

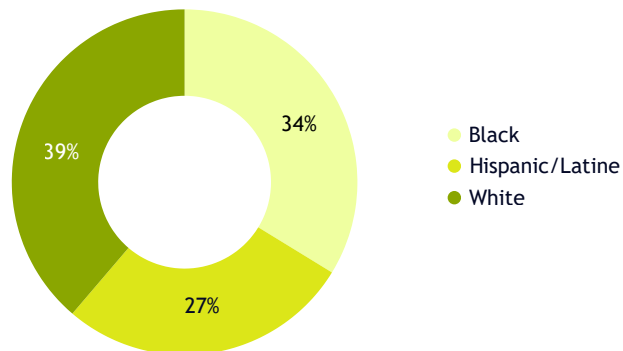


Although both counties have a SAFE-T Act data dashboard, the different approaches the two counties utilize make the data hard to compare. The SAFE-T Act requires the Administrative Office of the Illinois Courts (AOIC) to collect this data and make regular reports on it, but the AOIC has failed in meeting its full obligations.

White participants (39%) made up the highest percentage of participants, but the majority of participants in Kane County were Black or Hispanic/Latine (34% and 27%). Approximately 60% of Kane County's population is white.

FIGURE 14

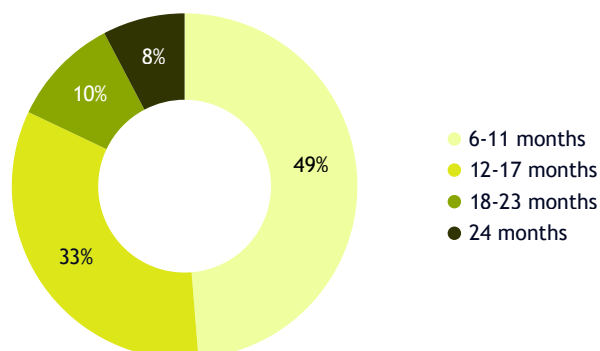
RACIAL-ETHNIC DEMOGRAPHICS OF PEOPLE
IN THE FTWOP IN KANE COUNTY, 2018—
2025



The Kane County data below is for time spent in the program, regardless of whether they successfully completed the program. Given the nature of the data, it is hard to draw larger conclusions about how long participants are in the program or if they have been removed from the program for breaking a condition of their probation. This is another hole in the data that needs judicial FOIA to fill.

FIGURE 15

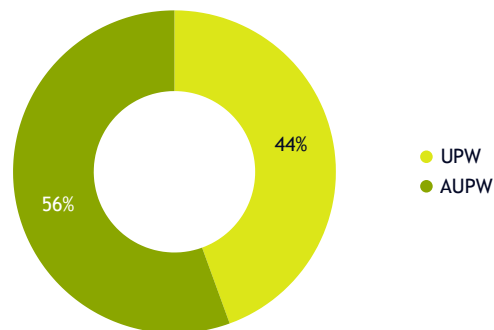
SENTENCE LENGTHS FOR FTWOP CASES IN
KANE COUNTY, 2023–2025



Interestingly, unlike Lake and Cook counties, Kane had a more even split between those charged with aggravated unlawful possession of a weapon and unlawful possession of a weapon. This could be for a variety of reasons. Cases involving the use of weapons besides guns may be more prevalent in the Kane County FTWOP than in other counties, or it could be choices that the Kane County State's Attorney Office makes when it comes to charging. More data is needed to say for sure why this is the case.

FIGURE 16

CHARGE DEMOGRAPHICS OF CASES IN THE FTWOP IN KANE COUNTY, 2018–2025



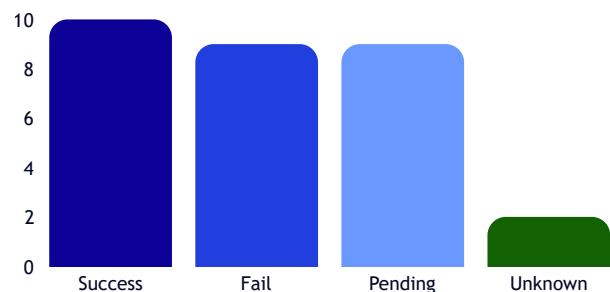
DeKalb County

The DeKalb County State's Attorney's Office provided data showing that they have used the FTWOP 30 times between 2020 and 2026.

Ten people successfully completed the program, nine were removed from the program before completion, nine people were still in the program when the data was shared, and the outcomes were unknown for two people.

FIGURE 17

OVERALL OUTCOMES FOR THE FTWOP IN DEKALB COUNTY



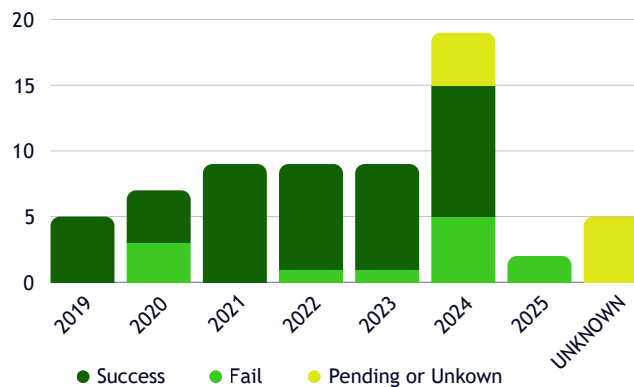
For each participant who was removed from the FTWOP, DeKalb County provided reasons for their removal. Of the nine people who did not successfully complete the program, five were due to a new criminal offense by the participant. A sixth participant was also charged with a new criminal offense and had another reason marked as well. Two participants were removed because they failed to pay fines and failed to perform community service, and one participant was removed due to not paying fines and fees plus another reason listed as “other.”

St. Clair County

St. Clair has used the FTWOP since 2019, but 2025 saw a steep decline with only two participants. The reason for this change is unknown, but even at its peak in 2024 the program only had 19 annual participants. Even though participation is low, the success rate is high, with 67% of cases finishing successfully.

FIGURE 18

OUTCOMES BY YEAR FOR THE FTWOP IN ST. CLAIR COUNTY



Other Counties with Data

Use of the FTWOP in other counties is sparse, and these counties did not provide the data necessary to have as in-depth analysis of the program as the counties above did. Between 2018 and 2025, Bond, Knox, Montgomery, Pulaski, and Williamson Counties all had fewer than ten participants. Stephenson County had nine participants successfully complete the

FTWOP, and one participant who did not successfully complete the program. Woodford has one pending case as of 2026.

Macon County provided data sufficient to show that 26 people participated in the program, but the data did not include outcomes, further highlighting the dearth of information regarding the FTWOP without being able to FOIA the courts for information.

FTWOP Policies

Only three counties provided policy documents in response to the FOIA request: Bond, Kane, and St. Clair Counties. Bond County only provided a copy of the statute governing the FTWOP; Kane County provided a brochure describing the program; and St. Clair County provided both internal policies for how the program is run as well as external documents used to explain the program to public defenders, defendants, and others. The analysis that follows covers the way the program is described by Kane and St. Claire Counties.

Both counties include extra eligibility requirements beyond what is laid out in the statute, with some overlapping requirements and others unique to one of the two counties. Both programs require participants to pay fines, costs, and fees⁴ and participate in community service.⁵

Kane County excludes any defendant who it believes is a “gang member, associate or affiliate”⁶ and requires defendants to participate in moral recognition therapy, electronic home monitoring, and a restorative justice meeting with the arresting officer or police department.⁷ This requirement parallels Cook County’s Restorative Justice Community Courts in using restorative justice practices in cases without an identifiable victim, which Chicago Appleseed has written extensively about.⁸

St. Clair County requires participants to do all of the following:

- Obtain or attempt to obtain employment
- Attend educational courses designed to prepare them to obtain a high school diploma, pass a high school equivalency test, or complete a vocational training program
- Refrain from using any drugs prohibited by the Methamphetamine Control and Community Protection Act, the Cannabis Control Act, or the Illinois Controlled Substances Act, unless prescribed by a physician, and complete drug tests.⁹

It is important to note that requirements such as needing to pay fines, costs, and fees and participate in community service are beyond what is required by the statute governing the FTWOP. In DeKalb County, the only county for which we have the relevant data, failing to pay fees or finish community service hours were often listed as the reason someone was dropped from the program.

⁴Kane County First-Time Weapon Offender Deferred Prosecution Brochure, Overview, paragraph 2 and St. Clair County, Conditions of the Program, item 8, page 5.

⁵Kane County First-Time Weapon Offender Deferred Prosecution Brochure, Overview, paragraph 2 and St. Clair County, Conditions of the Program, item 6, page 5.

⁶Kane County First-Time Weapon Offender Deferred Prosecution Brochure, Ineligibility, item 4.

⁷Kane County First-Time Weapon Offender Deferred Prosecution Brochure, Overview, paragraph 2.

⁸Chicago Appleseed Center for Fair Courts and Chicago Council of Lawyers, *Restorative Justice, Community, and the Courts*, February 2024, page 30, final paragraph.

⁹St. Clair County, Conditions of the Program, items 3, 4, and 5, page 5.

Jasper County

The Jasper County State's Attorney told Chicago Appleseed and BGA that he had never sentenced anyone to the FTWOP, instead favoring other means of diversion that do not involve charging someone with "a felony at all and may involve a lesser misdemeanor supervision or probation if not a full dismissal." This practice should be considered by other state's attorney's offices, as it could allow people arrested for illegal gun possession to avoid the harmful process of a felony charge altogether and reduce the likelihood of them ending up with a felony conviction.

This response also suggests that a future analysis of pre-plea diversion programs (programs that do not require a guilty plea to participate) with similar eligibility criteria may be fruitful, but that is beyond the scope of this report.

DISCUSSION

Increased usage of the FTWOP across counties, especially since P.A. 103-370 in 2023, suggests that diversion programs can be a useful tool for minimizing unnecessary involvement with the criminal legal system. For the counties that provided data, the FTWOP often has high rates of successful completion. This suggests that the program should be expanded.

Although the data analyzed showed promising results, one significant drawback to this analysis is that Chicago Appleseed and BGA did not consult the participants in the FTWOP, or anyone who had graduated from it. This means there are certainly oversights as to the lived experience of those in the program.

The fact that completion rates remain strong after 2023 is particularly noteworthy. While the initial intention of the program was to take into account those younger than 21, the current program allows adults of any age. The high completion rates since the program's expansion evidences why programs like these are useful for people of all ages.

Alongside these benefits, there are also changes that could be made to strengthen the program. The state's attorney's ability to withhold consent and prevent someone from entering the program is a stumbling block of the FTWOP and should be removed. If a state's attorney believes that a defendant should not participate in the program, there are already processes in place for them to voice their concerns to the court, which can then make an informed decision after reviewing all the facts. The courts have broad discretion to determine whether a defendant should be allowed within the program. There is no need to create a second set of hoops to jump through.

Furthermore, the ability of the state's attorney to withhold consent allows for two people charged with the same crime in two different counties to have very different experiences in the criminal justice system. In a county where the state's attorney is open to using the program, the defendant may, after successful completion, have their case dismissed. But for defendants in counties without a state's attorney who is open to using the program, or where the state's attorney includes extra requirements, then no such recourse is available to them.

In addition, the requirement in many counties that FTWOP participants pay fines and fees or complete community service should be eliminated. Illinois has been boldly leading the charge in ensuring that one's access to money does not determine the quality of the justice they receive. No one should be removed from this program because they are unable to afford it.

Similarly, community service can be costly in time. Simple and aggravated unlawful possession of a weapon offenses often reflect an accused person's failure to get proper certification to carry a gun. If someone is able to conform to the rules of the program, turn over their weapons, and break no other laws, they should be allowed to have their cases dismissed without needing to find the time to do community service.

Judicial FOIA

The Illinois Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) allows anyone to request information from Illinois' public bodies. There are exemptions to what can be accessed under FOIA, and public bodies cannot be forced to create new documents, but on the whole it provides the clearest route to accessing information from the Illinois government. But, because the judicial branch is not listed as a public body per FOIA, the judiciary is exempt.

Since the FTWOP is administered by the courts it is also not subject to FOIA, and any records that the judicial branch maintains for its operation of the FTWOP are also not available to the public through FOIA.

On top of granting access to governmental documents, an often unspoken benefit of Illinois' FOIA is that it necessitates the creation of a communication structure. To be compliant with the FOIA, an office needs to name someone a FOIA officer (although it need not be their full-time job), and their contact information must be made publicly available. If someone else in the office receives a FOIA request, they can answer it or send it along to the appointed person.

Whereas other branches of government (such as state's attorney's offices that Chicago Appleseed and BGA contacted) are required by law to make contact information for a FOIA officer publicly available, the judicial branch is under no such obligation. In some cases, there is no readily available contact information for elements of the judiciary.

Being exempt from the FOIA, the courts have had no force to compel them to create a communications system, and for the most part they have not created it. In July 2026, during the creation of this report—and in response to a judicial FOIA bill championed by Chicago Appleseed, BGA, and the Court Transparency Coalition—the Illinois Supreme Court created a new transparency policy with a public information officer in both the Administrative Office of the Illinois Courts and the Office of Statewide Pretrial Services.

Given that data collection for this project began before this policy was implemented, it still remains to be seen how this new transparency policy will impact future research efforts. However, since the data for this project originated within the circuit courts, no policy will allow for full transparency into court-run systems unless the circuit courts are compelled to turn over data to the public.

CONCLUSION

Chicago Appleseed and BGA's analysis of data and policy documents concerning the FTWOP shows that the program has improved the lives of thousands of people since its inception, and there is the potential for more people to benefit given the high rates of success for this program. One potential roadblock to higher participation could be that, as written, the state's attorney must consent for a defendant to participate in the program.

It is Chicago Appleseed and BGA's recommendation that this power be removed. As stated previously, bills have been introduced that include removal of prosecutorial discretion from the FTWOP,¹⁰ and we recommend continuing these efforts.

Poor access to data on the program also proved to be an issue. Much of the data provided seemed to stem from tracking fees that defendants owed the court. Using the data provided to create a dataset that allowed for cross-county comparison proved challenging, as different counties track different data points and use different terms. A universal coding system and an increased awareness of this program could be useful in seeing its expansion and providing more data to better analyze where the roadblocks and/or bottlenecks lie.

To ensure future evaluations of the FTWOP, Chicago Appleseed and BGA recommend the program be amended to create a mandate for uniform data collection across all counties, using a shared standard for coding the data, to be submitted annually to the General Assembly. This would be necessary even if the courts were subject to FOIA, but especially since they are not it is of the utmost importance that the public has a way to get this data.

Diversion programs that allow transgressions to be addressed and ultimately dismissed provide an untold value to the public. They save taxpayers the costly expense of putting a neighbor through the criminal legal system, and they grant defendants opportunities to avoid the destabilizing consequences of a felony conviction. Whenever possible, programs such as the FTWOP should be expanded.

¹⁰ 104th Illinois General Assembly. (2026). HB4422.

<https://ilga.gov/Legislation/BillStatus?DocNum=4422&GAID=18&DocTypeID=HB&LegId=165103&SessionID=114;>

104th Illinois General Assembly. (2026). SB3563.

<https://ilga.gov/Legislation/BillStatus?DocNum=3563&GAID=18&DocTypeID=SB&LegId=166613&SessionID=114.>