



# Bureau of Justice Statistics Bulletin

August 1998, NCJ 170014

# Prisoners in 1997

By  
Darrell K. Gilliard  
and Allen J. Beck, Ph.D.  
BJS Statisticians

The total number of prisoners under the jurisdiction of Federal or State adult correctional authorities was 1,244,554 at yearend 1997. During the year the States and the District of Columbia added 53,757 prisoners, and the Federal prison system added 7,429 prisoners. Overall, the Nation's prison population grew 5.2%, which was less than the average annual growth of 7.0% since 1990. In absolute numbers, prison growth during 1997 was equivalent to 1,177 more inmates per week, up from 1,106 per week in 1996.

At midyear 1997 (the latest available data), more than 1.7 million U.S. residents were in either jail or prison. State and Federal prisons housed two-thirds of the incarcerated population (1,158,763). Jails, which are locally operated and typically hold persons awaiting trial and those with sentences of a year or less, held the other third (567,079).

Relative to the number of U.S. residents, the rate of incarceration in prisons at yearend 1997 was 445 sentenced inmates per 100,000 residents — up from 292 in 1990. On December 31, 1997, 1 in every 117 men and 1 in every 1,852 women were sentenced prisoners under the jurisdiction of State or Federal correctional authorities.

## Highlights

December 31	Number of inmates		Sentenced prisoners per 100,000 resident population		Population housed as a percent of highest capacity	
	Federal	State	Federal	State	Federal	State
1990	65,526	708,393	20	272	151%	115%
1991	71,608	753,951	22	287	146	116
1992	80,259	802,241	26	305	137	118
1993	89,587	880,857	29	330	136	118
1994	95,034	959,668	30	356	125	117
1995	100,250	1,025,624	32	379	126	114
1996	105,544	1,077,824	33	394	125	116
1997	112,973	1,131,581	35	410	119	115

- During 1997 the number of female prisoners rose by 6.2%, slightly greater than the increase in male prisoners (5.2%). At yearend 1997 79,624 women were in State or Federal prisons — 6.4% of all prison inmates.

- On December 31, 1997, State prisons were operating at between 15% and 24% above capacity, while Federal prisons were operating at 19% above capacity.

- California (157,547), Texas (140,729), and the Federal system (112,973) together held 1 in every 3 prisoners in the Nation. Fifteen States, each holding fewer than 5,000 inmates, together held only 4% of the Nation's prisoners.

- Nine jurisdictions had increases of at least 10% in 1997, led by Hawaii (23.4%) and West Virginia (15.4%). Four jurisdictions, led by Oregon (down 7.6%) and Montana (-2.2%), experienced decreases.

- Analyses of imprisonment rates from 1990 to 1996, the year of the latest available data, reveal —
  - a 43% increase among males and a 65% increase among females in the number of sentenced prisoners per 100,000 U.S. residents.
  - sharp increases in rates among persons age 35-39 (up 66%), 40-44 (up 75%), and 45-54 (up 71%).
  - widespread disparities by race and Hispanic origin. In 1996 the rate among black males totaled 3,098 prisoners per 100,000 residents, compared to 1,278 among Hispanic males and 370 among white males.

- Sources of population growth differed among State inmates:
  - Violent offenders accounted for the largest source of growth among males (52%) and among whites (46%), blacks (50%), and Hispanics (54%).
  - Drug offenders accounted for 30% of the growth among blacks, 23% among Hispanics, and 16% among whites.
  - Only among females were drug offenders the largest source of growth (45% of the total increase).

**Table 1. Number of persons held in State or Federal prisons or in local jails, 1990-97**

Year	Total inmates in custody	Number of State and Federal prisoners on December 31		Inmates in local jails on June 30	Incarceration rate <sup>b</sup>
		Jurisdiction <sup>a</sup>	Custody		
1990	1,148,702	773,919	743,382	405,320	461
1991	1,219,014	825,559	792,535	426,479	483
1992	1,295,150	882,500	850,566	444,584	508
1993	1,369,185	970,444	909,381	459,804	531
1994	1,476,621	1,054,702	990,147	486,474	567
1995	1,585,589	1,125,874	1,078,542	507,044	601
1996	1,646,030	1,183,368	1,127,528	518,492	618
1997					
June 30	1,725,842	1,218,256	1,158,763	567,079	645
December 31	--	1,244,554	--	--	--
Average annual increase 12/31/90 - 6/30/97	6.5%	7.2%	7.1%	5.3%	

Note: Jail counts for 1994-97 exclude persons supervised outside of a jail facility.

--Not available.

<sup>a</sup>Includes prisoners held in local jails because of prison crowding.

<sup>b</sup>Number of prison and jail inmates per 100,000 U.S. residents at yearend.

From yearend 1990 to midyear 1997 —

- The Nation's incarcerated population rose by more than 577,100 inmates, increasing at an average annual rate of 6.5%.
- State, Federal, and local governments had to accommodate an additional 88,791 inmates per year (or the equivalent of 1,708 new inmates per week).

• The rate of incarceration increased from 1 in every 217 U.S. residents to 1 in every 155.

• The Nation's prison and local jail facilities added space for about 541,800 inmates. By 1997 State prisons were 15% above their highest capacity; Federal prisons 19% above their rated capacity; and local jails 3% below their rated capacity.

### U.S. prison population rose 5.2% during 1997

The 1997 prison growth rate of 5.2% was slightly larger than the percentage increase recorded during 1996 (5.1%). The total prison population increased by 61,186 inmates during 1997 — the largest increase since 1995 (table 2). Since 1990 the total prison population has grown an average of 63,955 per year, for an overall increase of 470,635 in 7 years.

Prisoners with sentences of more than 1 year ("sentenced prisoners") represented 96% of the total prison population at yearend 1997. During the 12-month period, the sentenced prison population grew 5.1% (table 3). The remaining prisoners had sentences of a year or less or were currently unsentenced (that is, awaiting trial in States with combined prison-jail systems).

The sentenced State prison population experienced slower growth during the year than the sentenced Federal prison population (5.0% compared to 6.9%). Both populations experienced faster growth in 1997 than in 1996 (4.7% State and 6.2% Federal).

### Prisoners under military jurisdiction, by branch of service, yearend 1996 and 1997

Branch of service	Number		Percent change, 1996-97	Percent of prisoners, 1997
	1996	1997		
<b>To which prisoners belonged</b>				
Total	2,747	2,772	0.9%	100.0%
Air Force*	487	575	18.1	20.7
Army	1,106	1,063	-3.9	38.3
Marine Corps	685	628	-8.3	22.7
Navy	455	490	7.7	17.7
Coast Guard	14	16	14.3	0.6
<b>Holding prisoners</b>				
Total	2,747	2,772	0.9%	100.0%
Air Force*	--	103	--	3.7
Army	1,486	1,494	0.5	53.9
Marine Corps	650	571	-12.2	20.6
Navy	611	604	-1.1	21.8

Note: Detail may not add to total because of rounding.

\*Data for 1996 exclude prisoners confined in Air Force facilities.

--Not available.

### At yearend 1997 U.S. military authorities held 2,772 prisoners in 64 facilities

About 89% of prisoners held by the Army, Air Force, Navy, and Marine Corps were convicted inmates; 11% were unconvicted persons whose cases had not been tried. Two-thirds of the prisoners (1,856) had sentences of 1 year or more.

At yearend 1997 the Army's Disciplinary Barracks, Fort Leavenworth, Kansas, and 6 other local or regional facilities held more than half (54%) of all inmates under military jurisdiction. The Navy's 12 facilities held 22% of all inmates; the Marine Corps' 7 facilities, 21% of all inmates; and the Air Force's 38 facilities held fewer than 4% of all inmates.

The operational capacity of the 64 military confinement facilities totaled 4,483. At yearend 1997 these facilities were operating at 62% of their operational capacity.

On December 31, 1997, the number of sentenced prisoners per 100,000 U.S. residents was 445. Of the 11 States with rates greater than that for the Nation, 7 were in the South, 3 in the West, and 1 in the Midwest. Four States — North Dakota (112), Minnesota (113), Maine (124), and Vermont (140) — had rates that were less than a third of the national rate. The District of Columbia, a wholly urban jurisdiction, held 1,682 sentenced prisoners per 100,000 residents.

Since 1990 the number of sentenced prisoners per 100,000 residents has risen from 292 to 445. During this period, incarceration rates rose most in the South (from 316 to 506) and West (from 277 to 405). The rate in the Midwest rose from 239 to 346, and the rate in the Northeast grew from 232 to 317. The number of sentenced Federal prisoners per 100,000 U.S. residents increased from 20 to 35.

**Table 2. Change in the State and Federal prison populations, 1990-97**

Year	Number of inmates	Annual increase	
		Number	Annual percent change
1990	773,919		
1991	825,559	51,640	6.7%
1992	882,500	56,941	6.9
1993*	970,444	64,992	7.4
1994	1,054,702	84,258	8.7
1995	1,125,874	71,172	6.7
1996	1,183,368	57,494	5.1
1997	1,244,554	61,186	5.2
Average annual increase 1990-97		63,955	7.0%

Note: All counts are for December 31 of each year and may reflect revisions of previously reported numbers.  
 \*Includes the jurisdiction populations in Massachusetts and Texas for the first time. The 1993 count (947,492), excluding the noncustody population in Texas and Massachusetts, may be used for comparisons.

**Table 3. Prisoners under the jurisdiction of State or Federal correctional authorities, by region and jurisdiction, yearend 1996 and 1997**

Region and jurisdiction	Total			Sentenced to more than 1 year			Incarceration rate, 1997 <sup>a</sup>
	Advance 1997	1996	Percent change, 1996-97	Advance 1997	1996	Percent change, 1996-97	
<b>U.S. total</b>	1,244,554	1,183,368	5.2%	1,197,590	1,138,984	5.1%	445
Federal	112,973	105,544	7.0%	94,987	88,815	6.9%	35
State	1,131,581	1,077,824	5.0	1,102,603	1,050,169	5.0	410
<b>Northeast</b>	172,244	169,261	1.8%	163,836	161,324	1.6%	317
Connecticut <sup>b,c</sup>	18,521	17,851	3.8	13,005	12,465	4.3	397
Maine	1,620	1,426	13.6	1,542	1,351	14.1	124
Massachusetts <sup>d</sup>	11,947	11,796	1.3	10,847	10,880	-0.3	278
New Hampshire	2,164	2,062	4.9	2,164	2,062	4.9	184
New Jersey <sup>e</sup>	28,361	27,490	3.2	28,361	27,490	3.2	351
New York	70,026	69,709	0.5	70,026	69,709	0.5	386
Pennsylvania	34,964	34,537	1.2	34,963	34,535	1.2	291
Rhode Island <sup>b</sup>	3,371	3,271	3.1	2,100	2,031	3.4	213
Vermont <sup>b,f</sup>	1,270	1,119	13.5	828	801	3.4	140
<b>Midwest</b>	216,757	204,657	5.9%	216,391	203,701	6.2%	346
Illinois <sup>e,f</sup>	40,788	38,852	5.0	40,788	38,852	5.0	342
Indiana	17,903	16,960	5.6	17,730	16,791	5.6	301
Iowa <sup>e,f</sup>	6,938	6,342	9.4	6,938	6,342	9.4	243
Kansas <sup>e</sup>	7,911	7,756	2.0	7,911	7,756	2.0	304
Michigan <sup>f</sup>	44,771	42,349	5.7	44,771	42,349	5.7	457
Minnesota	5,326	5,158	3.3	5,306	5,158	2.9	113
Missouri	23,998	22,003	9.1	23,980	22,003	9.0	442
Nebraska	3,402	3,287	3.5	3,329	3,223	3.3	200
North Dakota	797	722	10.4	715	650	10.0	112
Ohio <sup>e</sup>	48,002	46,174	4.0	48,002	46,174	4.0	429
South Dakota	2,239	2,063	8.5	2,239	2,063	8.5	303
Wisconsin	14,682	12,991	13.0	14,682	12,340	19.0	283
<b>South</b>	491,956	469,252	4.8%	480,061	458,671	4.7%	506
Alabama	22,290	21,760	2.4	21,680	21,108	2.7	500
Arkansas	10,021	9,407	6.5	9,936	8,992	10.5	392
Delaware <sup>b</sup>	5,435	5,110	6.4	3,264	3,119	4.6	443
District of Col. <sup>b</sup>	9,353	9,376	-0.2	8,814	8,668	1.7	1,682
Florida <sup>f</sup>	64,565	63,763	1.3	64,540	63,746	1.2	437
Georgia <sup>f</sup>	36,450	35,139	3.7	35,722	34,328	4.1	472
Kentucky	14,600	12,910	13.1	14,600	12,910	13.1	372
Louisiana	29,265	26,779	9.3	29,265	26,779	9.3	672
Maryland	22,232	22,050	0.8	21,088	20,980	0.5	413
Mississippi	15,447	13,859	11.5	14,548	13,143	10.7	531
North Carolina	31,638	30,647	3.2	27,726	27,751	-0.1	370
Oklahoma <sup>e</sup>	20,542	19,593	4.8	20,542	19,593	4.8	617
South Carolina	21,173	20,446	3.6	20,264	19,758	2.6	536
Tennessee <sup>e</sup>	16,659	15,626	6.6	16,659	15,626	6.6	309
Texas <sup>e</sup>	140,729	132,383	6.3	140,729	132,383	6.3	717
Virginia	28,385	27,655	2.6	27,524	27,062	1.7	407
West Virginia	3,172	2,749	15.4	3,160	2,725	16.0	174
<b>West</b>	250,624	234,654	6.8%	242,315	226,473	7.0%	405
Alaska <sup>b</sup>	4,220	3,716	13.6	2,571	2,335	10.1	420
Arizona <sup>e</sup>	23,484	22,493	4.4	22,353	21,523	3.9	484
California	157,547	146,049	7.9	154,368	142,865	8.1	475
Colorado	13,461	12,438	8.2	13,461	12,438	8.2	342
Hawaii <sup>b</sup>	4,949	4,011	23.4	3,424	2,954	15.9	288
Idaho	3,946	3,832	3.0	3,946	3,832	3.0	323
Montana	2,242	2,293	-2.2	2,242	2,293	-2.2	255
Nevada	9,024	8,439	6.9	8,884	8,439	5.3	518
New Mexico	4,688	4,724	-0.8	4,450	4,506	-1.2	256
Oregon	7,999	8,661	-7.6	7,589	7,316	3.7	232
Utah	4,284	3,972	7.9	4,263	3,946	8.0	205
Washington	13,214	12,527	5.5	13,198	12,527	5.4	233
Wyoming	1,566	1,499	4.5	1,566	1,499	4.5	326

Note: The advance count of prisoners is conducted in January and may be revised.  
<sup>a</sup>The number of prisoners with sentences of more than 1 year per 100,000 U.S. residents.  
<sup>b</sup>Prisons and jails form one integrated system. NPS data include jail and prison populations.  
<sup>c</sup>Jurisdiction data are reported for the first time. Comparisons to past counts are inapplicable.  
<sup>d</sup>Includes an estimated 6,200 inmates sentenced to more than 1 year but held in county facilities.  
<sup>e</sup>Sentenced inmates may include some inmates sentenced to a year or less.  
<sup>f</sup>Population figures are based on custody counts.

**Table 4. Change in the number of sentenced prisoners under the jurisdiction of State or Federal correctional authorities, 5-year and 10-year comparisons**

	1992-97		1987-97	
	Population difference	Percent change	Population difference	Percent change
<b>U.S. total</b>	351,313	41.5%	636,778	113.5%
Federal	29,281	44.6%	55,464	140.3%
State	322,032	41.3	581,314	111.5
<b>Northeast</b>	30,178	22.6%	76,569	87.7%
Connecticut	--	--	--	--
Maine	50	3.4	304	24.6
Massachusetts	--	--	--	--
New Hampshire	387	21.8	1,297	149.6
New Jersey	5,708	25.2	12,392	77.6
New York	8,290	13.4	29,184	71.5
Pennsylvania	9,997	40.0	18,717	115.2
Rhode Island	390	22.8	1,109	111.9
Vermont	--	--	--	--
<b>Midwest</b>	50,572	30.5%	105,651	95.4%
Illinois	9,148	28.9	20,938	105.5
Indiana	3,939	28.6	--	--
Iowa	2,420	53.6	4,087	143.4
Kansas	1,883	31.2	2,130	36.8
Michigan	5,658	14.5	20,892	87.5
Minnesota	1,484	38.8	2,760	108.4
Missouri	--	--	12,623	111.1
Nebraska	894	36.7	1,366	69.6
North Dakota	287	67.1	335	88.2
Ohio	9,624	25.1	23,762	98.0
South Dakota	752	50.6	1,106	97.6
Wisconsin	6,690	83.7	8,556	139.7
<b>South</b>	165,399	52.6%	264,259	122.5%
Alabama	4,742	28.0	9,078	72.0
Arkansas	1,741	21.2	4,495	82.6
Delaware	559	20.7	1,105	51.2
District of Col.	1,286	17.1	--	--
Florida	16,255	33.7	32,180	99.4
Georgia	10,874	43.8	17,998	101.5
Kentucky	4,236	40.9	8,163	126.8
Louisiana	8,369	40.1	13,890	90.3
Maryland	2,280	12.1	8,176	63.3
Mississippi	5,830	66.9	7,829	116.5
North Carolina	7,761	38.9	--	--
Oklahoma	5,721	38.6	10,903	113.1
South Carolina	2,652	15.1	8,402	70.8
Tennessee	4,810	40.6	9,020	118.1
Texas	--	--	--	--
Virginia	6,535	31.1	14,593	112.9
West Virginia	1,486	88.8	--	--
<b>West</b>	75,883	45.6%	134,835	125.5%
Alaska	--	--	804	45.5
Arizona	6,503	41.0	11,795	111.7
California	--	--	--	--
Colorado	4,464	49.6	8,653	180.0
Hawaii	1,202	54.1	1,892	123.5
Idaho	1,690	74.9	2,511	175.0
Montana	694	44.8	1,035	85.7
Nevada	2,835	46.9	4,450	100.4
New Mexico	1,296	41.1	1,864	72.1
Oregon	2,353	44.9	2,132	39.1
Utah	1,576	58.7	2,426	132.1
Washington	3,239	32.5	7,067	115.3
Wyoming	503	47.3	--	--

Note: Totals include data for States otherwise excluded because of reporting changes.  
 --Not applicable because of changes in reporting procedures.  
 See *NPS jurisdiction notes*.

### Nine States reported increases of at least 10% during 1997

Between January 1 and December 31, Hawaii experienced the largest increase (up 23.4%), followed by West Virginia (15.4%), Alaska and Maine (13.6%), Vermont (13.5%), Kentucky (13.1%), and Wisconsin (13.0%). Three States and the District of Columbia experienced a decline in prison populations. Oregon had the largest decline (down 7.6%), followed by Montana (down 2.2%), New Mexico (down 0.8%), and the District of Columbia (down 0.2%).

In absolute numbers of inmates, 5 jurisdictions grew by at least 2,000. California (up 11,498 inmates), experienced the largest growth, followed by Texas (up 8,346), the Federal system (up 7,429), Louisiana (up 2,486), and Michigan (up 2,422). These five jurisdictions, which incarcerated over 40% of all prisoners, accounted for 53% of the total growth during 1997.

### Western States recorded the fastest growth in prison populations

During 1997 the number of sentenced State and Federal prisoners grew by an additional 1,127 inmates per week. The 1997 average weekly increase was 89 inmates greater than the weekly increase in 1996 and 187 fewer than in 1995.

The Western States had the highest percentage increase in the number of sentenced prisoners, with a gain of 7.0% during 1997. The Midwest experienced a rise of 6.2% in the number of sentenced prisoners, followed by the South, 4.7%; and the Northeast, 1.6%.

Twenty-three States recorded higher growth rates of sentenced prisoners in 1997 than in 1996. Of these, nine recorded growth rates over 10% in 1997, led by Wisconsin (19.0%), West Virginia (16.0%), and Hawaii (15.9%). The District of Columbia (1.7%), Virginia (1.7%), and Florida (1.2%) reported increases of less than 2% during 1997. Montana (-2.2%), New Mexico (-1.2%), Massachusetts (-0.3%), and North Carolina (-0.1%) experienced declines.

Since 1992 the sentenced inmate population in State prisons has grown 41.5% (table 4). During this period nine States reported increases of at least 50%, led by West Virginia (up 88.8%) and Wisconsin (up 83.7%). Maine was the only State to report an increase of less than 10% (up 3.4%). During this time the Federal system reported an increase of 44.6% — 29,281 additional inmates with sentences of more than 1 year.

**Table 5. The 10 highest and lowest jurisdictions for selected characteristics of the prison population, yearend 1997**

Prison population	Number of inmates	Incarceration rates, 12/31/97	Sentenced prisoners per 100,000 State residents <sup>a</sup>	1-year growth, 1996-97	Percent change	5-year growth, 1992-97	Percent change
<b>10 highest:</b>							
California	157,547	Texas	717	Hawaii	23.4%	West Virginia	89.5%
Texas	140,729	Louisiana	672	West Virginia	15.4	Wisconsin	79.2
Federal	112,973	Oklahoma	617	Alaska	13.6	Texas	75.3
New York	70,026	South Carolina	536	Maine	13.6	Idaho	74.9
Florida	64,565	Mississippi	531	Vermont	13.5	Mississippi	73.5
Ohio	48,002	Nevada	518	Kentucky	13.1	Hawaii	69.1
Michigan	44,771	Alabama	500	Wisconsin	13.0	North Dakota	67.1
Illinois	40,788	Arizona	484	Mississippi	11.5	Utah	58.7
Georgia	36,450	California	475	North Dakota	10.4	North Carolina	54.7
Pennsylvania	34,964	Georgia	472	Iowa	9.4	Iowa	53.6
<b>10 lowest:</b>							
North Dakota	797	North Dakota	112	Oregon	-7.6%	District of Columbia	-14.0%
Vermont	1,270	Minnesota	113	Montana	-2.2	Maine	6.6
Wyoming	1,566	Maine	124	New Mexico	-0.8	Maryland	11.3
Maine	1,620	Vermont	140	District of Columbia	-0.2	New York	13.4
New Hampshire	2,164	West Virginia	174	New York	0.5	South Carolina	13.6
South Dakota	2,239	New Hampshire	184	Maryland	0.8	Michigan	14.5
Montana	2,242	Nebraska	200	Pennsylvania	1.2	Arkansas	21.0
West Virginia	3,172	Utah	205	Florida	1.3	Oregon	21.5
Rhode Island	3,371	Rhode Island	213	Massachusetts	1.3	Rhode Island	21.5
Nebraska	3,402	Oregon	232	Kansas	2.0	New Hampshire	21.8

<sup>a</sup>Prisoners with a sentence of more than a year. The Federal Bureau of Prisons and the District of Columbia are excluded.

**Among States, Texas had the highest incarceration rate; North Dakota, the lowest**

At yearend 1997 the 10 jurisdictions with the largest prison populations had under their jurisdiction 750,815 inmates or 60% of the Nation's total prison population (table 5). California (157,547), Texas (140,729), and the Federal system (112,973) accounted for a third of the population. The 10 States with the smallest prison populations each held fewer than 4,000 inmates. Collectively, these States held only 1.8% of the Nation's total prison population.

Texas had the highest prison incarceration rate (717 sentenced inmates per 100,000 residents), followed by Louisiana (672), Oklahoma (617), South Carolina (536), and Mississippi (531). Six States had prison incarceration rates below 200, led by North Dakota (112), Minnesota (113), and Maine (124).

Since 1992, five States had prison population increases of more than 70%: West Virginia (89.5%), Wisconsin (79.2%), Texas (75.3%), Idaho (74.9%), and Mississippi (73.5%).

Five States — Michigan (14.5%), South Carolina (13.6%), New York (13.4%), Maryland (11.3%), and Maine (6.6%) — had growth of less than 20%. The District of Columbia (down -14.0%) is the only jurisdiction to have experienced a decline in the number of inmates.

**Female prisoner population continues to grow at a fast pace**

During 1997 the number of women under the jurisdiction of State or Federal prison authorities increased 6.2%, from 74,970 to 79,624, outpacing the rise in the number of men for the second consecutive year (table 6). The number of men grew from 1,108,398 to 1,164,930, an increase of 5.2%. During 1996 the number of females grew at nearly double the rate of males (9.5% compared to 4.8%)

Since 1990 the annual rate of growth of the female inmate population has averaged 8.8%, higher than the 6.9% average increase in the number of male inmates. By yearend 1997 women accounted for 6.4% of all prisoners nationwide, up from 5.7% in 1990.

Relative to their number in the U.S. resident population, men were 16 times more likely than women to be incarcerated in a State or Federal prison. At yearend 1997 there were 54 sentenced female inmates per 100,000 women in the United States, compared to 853 sentenced male inmates per 100,000 men.

**Table 6. Prisoners under the jurisdiction of State or Federal correctional authorities, by sex of inmate, yearend 1996 and 1997**

	Men	Women
<b>Total</b>		
Advance 1997	1,164,930	79,624
Final 1996	1,108,398	74,970
Percent change, 1996-97	5.2%	6.2%
<b>Sentenced to more than 1 year</b>		
Advance 1997	1,123,478	74,112
Final 1996	1,069,257	69,727
Percent change, 1996-97	5.1%	6.3%
<b>Incarceration rate, 1997*</b>		
	853	54

\*The number of prisoners with sentences of more than 1 year per 100,000 residents on December 31, 1997.

**Table 7. Women under the jurisdiction of State or Federal correctional authorities, yearend 1997**

	Female inmates			
	Number	Percent of all inmates	Percent change, 1996-97	Incarceration rate, 1997 <sup>a</sup>
<b>U.S. total</b>	79,624	6.4%	6.2%	54
Federal	8,306	7.4%	7.9%	5
State	71,318	6.3	6.0	49
<b>Northeast</b>	9,122	5.3%	-0.6%	30
Connecticut	1,550	8.4	1.7	54
Maine	62	3.8	29.2	9
Massachusetts <sup>b</sup>	733	6.1	-2.3	14
New Hampshire	109	5.0	3.8	18
New Jersey	1,404	5.0	9.6	34
New York	3,584	5.1	-3.9	38
Pennsylvania	1,414	4.0	-4.3	23
Rhode Island	213	6.3	-7.0	15
Vermont <sup>c</sup>	53	4.2	65.6	11
<b>Midwest</b>	12,572	5.8%	7.6%	39
Illinois <sup>c</sup>	2,430	6.0	8.0	40
Indiana	1,071	6.0	6.3	35
Iowa <sup>c</sup>	528	7.6	12.3	36
Kansas	476	6.0	0	36
Michigan <sup>c</sup>	2,056	4.6	7.1	41
Minnesota	258	4.8	10.3	11
Missouri	1,693	7.1	15.6	61
Nebraska	225	6.6	0	25
North Dakota	62	7.8	37.8	17
Ohio	2,843	5.9	1.4	49
South Dakota	169	7.5	19.9	45
Wisconsin	761	5.2	18.0	29
<b>South</b>	32,048	6.5%	6.5%	63
Alabama	1,360	6.1	0.2	58
Arkansas	611	6.1	11.5	46
Delaware	383	7.0	1.1	42
District of Col.	407	4.4	-11.7	116
Florida <sup>c</sup>	3,404	5.3	3.1	45
Georgia <sup>c</sup>	2,258	6.2	0.8	56
Kentucky	1,052	7.2	28.3	52
Louisiana	1,868	6.4	19.7	83
Maryland	1,108	5.0	5.0	38
Mississippi	1,131	7.3	26.9	70
North Carolina	1,864	5.9	-0.2	36
Oklahoma	2,053	10.0	5.8	121
South Carolina	1,302	6.1	8.3	60
Tennessee	798	4.8	16.0	29
Texas	10,549	7.5	6.2	106
Virginia	1,710	6.0	1.4	46
West Virginia	190	6.0	27.5	20
<b>West</b>	17,576	7.0%	7.6%	55
Alaska	304	7.2	12.6	54
Arizona <sup>c</sup>	1,560	6.6	3.0	61
California	11,076	7.0	9.6	65
Colorado	949	7.1	12.3	48
Hawaii	505	10.2	31.2	60
Idaho	281	7.1	3.7	46
Montana	115	5.1	-23.8	26
Nevada	695	7.7	16.2	82
New Mexico	374	8.0	-1.1	36
Oregon	450	5.6	-21.2	24
Utah	212	4.9	0.5	20
Washington	924	7.0	0.4	32
Wyoming	131	8.4	17.0	55

Note: The January advance count of prisoners may be revised.  
<sup>a</sup>The number of female prisoners with sentences of more than 1 year per 100,000 U.S. residents.  
<sup>b</sup>The reference date is January 5, 1998. See *NPS Jurisdiction notes*.  
<sup>c</sup>Population figures are based on custody counts.

Over a third of all female prisoners were held in the three largest jurisdictions: California (11,076), Texas (10,549), and the Federal system (8,306) (table 7).

Oklahoma (with 121 sentenced female inmates per 100,000 female State residents) and Texas (with 106) had the highest female incarceration rates. Maine (with 9 sentenced female prisoners per 100,000 female residents), Minnesota and Vermont (with 11), and Massachusetts (with 14) had the lowest incarceration rates.

Hawaii (10.2%) and Oklahoma (10.0%) had the largest proportion of women among their inmates; Maine (3.8%) and Pennsylvania (4.0%) had the smallest.

Twenty-eight jurisdictions held fewer than 1,000 female inmates, accounting for about 13.8% of all female prisoners.

**Table 8. State prisoners held in local jails because of prison crowding, by State, yearend 1997 and 1996**

	State prisoners held in local jails			
	Number		As a percent of State inmates	
	1997	1996	1997	1996
U.S. total	33,736	30,741	3.0 %	2.9%
Louisiana	10,795	9,147	36.9%	34.2%
Virginia	3,753	2,506	13.2	9.1
New Jersey	2,864	4,367	10.1	15.9
Colorado	1,886	1,163	14.0	9.4
Alabama	1,824	1,168	8.2	5.4
Mississippi	1,463	3,242	9.5	23.4
Tennessee	1,428	1,958	8.6	12.5
Arkansas	1,376	1,201	13.7	12.8
Indiana	1,323	1,194	7.4	7.0
Kentucky	1,144	778	7.8	6.0
New York	918	0	1.3%	--
Oklahoma	802	285	3.9	1.5
West Virginia	775	286	24.4	10.4
New Mexico	557	307	11.9	6.5
Massachusetts	484	554	4.1	4.7
South Carolina	400	413	1.9	2.0
Utah	348	308	8.1	7.8
Wisconsin	284	338	1.9	2.6
North Carolina	282	516	0.9	1.7
Montana	217	85	9.7	3.7
Arizona <sup>a</sup>	211	124	0.9%	0.5%
Michigan <sup>a</sup>	151	330	0.3	0.8
Oregon	72	91	0.9	1.1
North Dakota	68	91	8.5	12.6
New Hampshire	66	65	3.0	3.2
Missouri	55	0	0.2	--
Alaska	55	0	1.3	--
Minnesota <sup>b</sup>	50	208	0.9	4.0
Idaho	31	0	0.8	--
Wyoming	29	16	1.9	1.1
Pennsylvania	25	0	0.1	--

--Not calculated.  
<sup>a</sup>For States without jail backups in their counts, the percentage is based on the total of State inmates in jail and prison.  
<sup>b</sup>Held in a private facility.

## Local jails held almost 34,000 State prisoners because of crowding

At the end of 1997, 31 States reported a total of 33,736 State prisoners held in local jails or other facilities because of crowding in State facilities (table 8). These inmates held in local jails represent 3.0% of all State prisoners, up slightly from 2.9% in 1996.

Louisiana and West Virginia had the largest percentage of their inmate population housed in local jails, 36.9% and 24.4% respectively. Four other States — Arkansas (13.7%), Virginia (13.2%), New Mexico (11.9%), and New Jersey (10.1%) — had at least 10% of their population housed in local jail facilities.

In addition to housing inmates in local jails, 14 States eased prison crowding by placing inmates in other States or in Federal facilities. On December 31, 1997, 5,877 prisoners nationwide were held under such arrangements — representing about half of one percent of all State prisoners. Colorado placed the most inmates (1,009), followed by Oklahoma (941), Wisconsin (819), and Idaho (608).

Montana (17.0%), Idaho (15.4%), Hawaii (12.1%), and New Mexico (10.4%) had more than 10% of their prison population housed in facilities of other States or of the Federal system.

States housing prisoners in other States or Federal facilities	Prisoners held in other States or Federal facilities	
	Number	As a percent of all State prisoners
U.S. total	5,877	0.5%
Colorado	1,009	7.5
Oklahoma	941	4.6
Wisconsin	819	5.6
Idaho	608	15.4
Hawaii	600	12.1
New Mexico	486	10.4
Montana	381	17.0
Alaska	332	7.9
Massachusetts	318	2.7
Alabama	104	0.5
Wyoming	99	6.3
New Hampshire	73	3.4
Indiana	69	0.4
Michigan	38	0.1

## Prison capacity measures vary

The extent of prison crowding is difficult to determine because of the absence of uniform measures for defining capacity. Jurisdictions apply a variety of capacity measures to reflect both the available space to house inmates and the ability to staff and operate an institution. To estimate the capacity of their prisons, jurisdictions were asked to supply three measures for yearend 1997: rated, operational, and design capacities. These measures were defined as follows:

*Rated capacity* is the number of beds or inmates assigned by a rating official to institutions within the jurisdiction.

*Operational capacity* is the number of inmates that can be accommodated based on a facility's staff, existing programs, and services.

*Design capacity* is the number of inmates that planners or architects intended for the facility.

### Prisoners in custody of correctional authorities in the U.S. Territories, yearend 1996 and 1997

	Total			Sentenced to more than 1 year			
	Advance 1997	Final 1996	Percent change, 1996-97	Advance 1997	Final 1996	Percent change, 1996-97	Incarceration rate, 1997*
Total	15,762	14,093	11.8%	11,790	10,734	9.8%	277
American Samoa	102	90	13.3	92	70	31.4	152
Guam	464	416	11.5	301	323	-6.8	206
Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands	63	59	6.8	63	50	26.0	99
Commonwealth of Puerto Rico	14,716	12,970	13.5	11,097	9,934	11.7	290
U.S. Virgin Islands	417	558	-25.3	237	357	-33.6	203

\*The number of prisoners with a sentence of more than 1 year per 100,000 persons in the resident population. Midyear population estimates were provided by the U.S. Bureau of the Census, International Data Base.

### U.S. Territories held over 15,000 inmates in 1997

The U.S. Territories and Commonwealths — American Samoa, Guam, Northern Mariana Islands, Puerto Rico, and Virgin Islands — reported 15,762 inmates under the jurisdiction of their prison systems at yearend 1997 — an increase of 11.8% since 1996. Prisoners with a sentence of more than 1 year totaled 11,790 (or nearly three-quarters of the total territorial prison population).

Relative to the resident populations in the Territories, the rate of incarceration was 277 prisoners per 100,000 residents — nearly two-thirds of the

combined rate of the 50 States and the District of Columbia. Of the 5 Territories, the Northern Mariana Islands had the lowest prison incarceration rate — 99 inmates per 100,000 residents, followed by American Samoa with 152. Puerto Rico with 290 prisoners per 100,000 residents and Guam (with 206) had the highest incarceration rates.

Puerto Rico, the largest of the Territories, had the most sentenced prisoners (11,097 at yearend 1997), up from 9,934 in 1996. In 1997, 23 States and the District of Columbia had fewer sentenced inmates than Puerto Rico; 17 States had equal or lower incarceration rates.

**Table 9. Reported Federal and State prison capacities, yearend 1997**

Region and jurisdiction	Type of capacity measure			Population as a percent of	
	Rated	Operational	Design	Highest capacity	Lowest capacity
Federal <sup>a</sup>	85,387	...	...	119%	119%
<b>Northeast</b>					
Connecticut <sup>b</sup>	...	...	...	...	...
Maine	1,437	1,590	1,437	102%	113%
Massachusetts <sup>a,c</sup>	...	...	8,138	137	137
New Hampshire <sup>c</sup>	1,841	1,644	1,744	110	123
New Jersey <sup>a,c</sup>	...	...	15,906	160	160
New York	60,947	65,823	53,463	106	131
Pennsylvania <sup>a,c</sup>	...	22,875	23,156	151	153
Rhode Island	3,774	3,774	3,774	89	89
Vermont	1,140	1,140	1,023	111	124
<b>Midwest</b>					
Illinois	28,797	28,797	25,135	142%	162%
Indiana <sup>c</sup>	13,611	16,892	...	98	121
Iowa	4,951	4,951	4,951	140	140
Kansas	8,168	...	...	97	97
Michigan <sup>a</sup>	...	45,146	...	99	99
Minnesota	5,327	5,327	5,327	98	98
Missouri <sup>a,c</sup>	...	22,317	...	107	107
Nebraska <sup>a</sup>	...	2,517	2,013	135	169
North Dakota <sup>c</sup>	579	579	579	126	126
Ohio <sup>a</sup>	34,706	...	...	138	138
South Dakota <sup>a</sup>	...	...	2,329	96	96
Wisconsin	10,288	10,288	10,288	129	129
<b>South</b>					
Alabama <sup>c,d</sup>	20,412	20,412	20,412	100%	100%
Arkansas <sup>a,c</sup>	8,760	8,760	8,760	99	99
Delaware <sup>a</sup>	...	4,206	3,192	129	170
District of Col. <sup>e</sup>	7,251	9,729	9,419	72	97
Florida <sup>a</sup>	77,425	71,276	52,865	83	122
Georgia	36,610	...	...	100	100
Kentucky <sup>a,c</sup>	10,774	10,827	8,934	124	151
Louisiana <sup>a,c</sup>	18,470	18,467	...	100	100
Maryland <sup>a</sup>	...	22,921	...	97	97
Mississippi <sup>c</sup>	...	14,428	15,187	92	97
North Carolina	26,887	...	26,887	117	117
Oklahoma	11,439	15,414	...	104	140
South Carolina <sup>c</sup>	...	22,474	21,731	92	96
Tennessee <sup>a,c</sup>	16,150	15,808	...	94	96
Texas	143,928	143,928	146,779	96	98
Virginia <sup>a,c</sup>	16,111	16,111	16,111	153	153
West Virginia <sup>c</sup>	2,378	2,404	2,370	100	101
<b>West</b>					
Alaska <sup>c</sup>	2,603	2,603	2,603	147%	147%
Arizona <sup>a</sup>	...	24,137	21,370	97	110
California	...	...	76,352	206	206
Colorado <sup>a,c</sup>	...	9,046	7,643	115	137
Hawaii <sup>a,c</sup>	...	2,912	1,991	149	218
Idaho <sup>a,c</sup>	2,483	3,437	2,483	96	133
Montana <sup>c</sup>	...	1,400	896	117	183
Nevada <sup>a</sup>	8,851	...	6,557	102	138
New Mexico <sup>c</sup>	...	4,435	...	82	82
Oregon <sup>a,c</sup>	...	7,548	...	105	105
Utah	4,495	4,261	...	88	92
Washington <sup>c</sup>	7,963	10,971	10,971	108	148
Wyoming <sup>c</sup>	1,231	1,243	1,047	116	137

... Data not available.

<sup>a</sup>See *NPS jurisdiction notes*.

<sup>b</sup>Connecticut no longer reports capacity due to a law passed in 1995.

See *NPS jurisdictional notes*.

<sup>c</sup>Population housed as a percent of capacity was calculated excluding jail backups and inmates held in another State from yearend counts.

<sup>d</sup>The capacity of community programs is not included.

<sup>e</sup>Population housed as a percent of capacity was calculated excluding inmates held in Federal facilities.

Of the 52 reporting jurisdictions, 33 supplied a rated capacity; 41, an operational capacity; and 37, a design capacity (table 9). Twenty-three jurisdictions provided only 1 measure or the same figure for each measure they reported. For the 29 jurisdictions with more than 1 reported type of capacity, estimates of population as a percent of capacity are based on the highest and lowest figures provided.

### Most jurisdictions were operating above capacity

Prisons generally require reserve capacity to operate efficiently. Dormitories and cells need to be maintained and repaired periodically, special housing is needed for protective custody and disciplinary cases, and space may be needed to cope with emergencies.

**Table 10. State prison population as a percent of capacity, yearend 1997**

	State prisons <sup>a</sup>
Highest capacity	947,750
Lowest capacity	874,792
<b>Net change in capacity, 1996-97</b>	
Highest	53,998
Lowest	38,520
<b>Population as a percent of capacity<sup>b</sup></b>	
Highest	
1990	115
1991	116
1992	118
1993	118
1994	117
1995	114
1996	116
1997	115
Lowest	
1990	127
1991	131
1992	131
1993	129
1994	129
1995	125
1996	124
1997	124

Note: States were asked to report their rated, operational, and design capacities. Data reflect the highest and lowest of the three capacities for 1990-97.

<sup>a</sup>Data include estimated capacity figures for Connecticut at yearend 1995-97.

<sup>b</sup>Excludes inmates sentenced to prison but held in local jails because of crowding.



At yearend 1997, 16 States and the District of Columbia reported that they were operating at or below 99% of their highest capacity. Thirty-six States and the Federal prison system reported operating at 100% or more of their lowest capacity. New Mexico, which was operating at 82% of its lowest capacity, had the least crowded prison system. California, operating at over twice its highest reported capacity (206%), had the most crowded system.

By yearend 1997 the Federal prison system was estimated to be operating at 19% over capacity, decreasing since yearend 1996 (25%). Overall, State prisons were estimated to be operating at 15% above their highest capacity, down slightly from the 16% for last year (table 10). Based on the lowest capacity figures, State prisons were operating at 24% over capacity at yearend 1997, continuing the steady decline from 31% in 1991.

### An increasing percentage of prisoners are black or Hispanic

	Percent of prisoners under State or Federal jurisdiction*	
	1990	1996
Total	100%	100%
White	50.1	47.9
Black	48.6	49.4
American Indian/ Alaska Native	0.9	1.8
Asian /Pacific Islander	0.4	0.8

\*Based on adjusted NPS counts.

**Table 11. Number of sentenced prisoners under State or Federal jurisdiction, by sex and race, 1990-96**

Year	Number of sentenced prisoners						
	Total	Male			Female		
		All <sup>a</sup>	White <sup>b</sup>	Black <sup>b</sup>	All <sup>a</sup>	White <sup>b</sup>	Black <sup>b</sup>
1990	739,980	699,416	350,700	340,300	40,564	20,200	19,700
1991	789,610	745,808	369,200	366,500	43,802	21,100	22,000
1992	846,277	799,776	394,500	393,700	46,501	22,200	23,600
1993	932,074	878,037	428,700	434,900	54,037	25,800	27,300
1994	1,016,691	956,566	465,300	474,800	60,125	28,800	30,200
1995	1,085,022	1,021,059	487,400	509,800	63,963	30,500	31,900
1996	1,138,984	1,069,257	510,900	528,200	69,727	33,800	33,900

Note: Previously published estimates by sex and race have been revised.

Sentenced prisoners are those with a sentence of more than 1 year.

<sup>a</sup>Includes Asians, Pacific Islanders, American Indians, Alaska Natives, and other racial groups.

<sup>b</sup>The numbers for sex and race were estimated and rounded to the nearest 100.

In each year Hispanics were identified among inmates of unknown racial origin. The race of these inmate was then estimated using inmate self-reported identification from the 1991 and 1997 State inmates surveys. For non-Hispanic inmates of unknown racial origin, race was estimated using the reported racial distribution in NPS.

Between 1990 and 1996 the number of prisoners with sentences of more than 1 year rose by more than 396,800 — or 54% (table 11). The number of white males increased by 46%, the number of black males by 55%, the number of white females by 67%, and the number of black females by 72%. At yearend 1996 (the latest available data), there were more black males in State or Federal prisons (528,200) than white males (510,900).

Hispanic inmates, who may be of any race, totaled an estimated 200,400 at yearend 1996 — increasing 54% from 1990 (table 12). The number of Hispanic males rose 53%, while the number of Hispanic females rose 71%.

Previously published numbers by race have been revised to take into account the racial identification of Hispanic inmates that some State prison authorities classified as persons of an unknown race. In some previous publications the reported racial distribution was used to estimate the race of inmates with unknown race. In recent years, as the number of Hispanic inmates with unknown race increased, this procedure has overestimated the number of black inmates.

Revised estimates have been produced for 1990 through 1996 by combining data from the NPS series and data from State prison inmate surveys conducted in 1991 and 1997. Estimates were obtained by first summing the numbers of Hispanic inmates among States that reported Hispanics as having an unknown race. The racial distribution of these inmates was then calculated using the racial self-identifications provided by Hispanic inmates in the prisoner surveys.

	Reported racial identification of Hispanic State prisoners	
	1991	1997*
Total	100%	100%
White	86.2	79.8
Black	11.3	8.6
Other	2.5	11.6

\*Data for 1997 are preliminary.

**Table 12. Number of sentenced Hispanic prisoners under State or Federal jurisdiction, by sex, 1990-96**

Year	Reported in NPS	Estimated from BJS surveys and inmate self-identification		
		Total	Male	Female
1990	98,500	130,000	123,500	6,500
1991	107,600	137,800	131,000	6,800
1992	119,900	148,500	141,600	6,900
1993	133,400	160,100	152,400	7,800
1994	151,300	175,600	167,400	8,200
1995	168,000	190,100	181,300	8,800
1996	179,800	200,400	189,300	11,100

Note: Sentenced prisoners are those with a sentence of more than 1 year. The total number of Hispanic inmates was estimated in each year by multiplying the percent identifying as Hispanic in the 1991 and 1997 surveys by the NPS sentenced inmate counts. Estimates have been rounded to the nearest 100.

The racial distribution of the remaining non-Hispanic inmates (for whom race was unknown) was then calculated using the combined distribution of all inmates for whom data on race was reported.

**Middle-age inmates comprise a growing part of the Nation's prison populations**

	Percent of inmates held State or Federal prison*	
	1991	1997
Total	100%	100%
17 or younger	0.6	0.4
18-19	2.9	2.7
20-24	17.4	15.8
25-29	23.6	18.7
30-34	21.3	19.2
35-39	14.4	17.5
40-44	9.1	12.1
45-54	7.2	10.3
55 or older	3.4	3.3

\*Based on data from the 1991 and 1997 surveys of State and Federal prison inmates.

The Nation's prison population is aging. Based on preliminary data from the 1997 surveys of State and Federal

prison inmates, 30% were between the ages of 35 and 44, compared with 23% in 1991. This rise was offset by a decline in the percentage of inmates 18 to 35. The percentage of inmates age 55 or older did not change — about 3% in both years. Nearly half of one percent were under age 18 in 1997, unchanged from 1991.

**Incarceration rates have risen sharply among older age groups, women, and minorities**

Relative to the number of U.S. residents, the rate of incarceration in State and Federal prison rose sharply between 1990 and 1996. At yearend 1996, there were 422 sentenced inmates per 100,000 residents — up from 292 in 1990 (table 13). Overall, the prison incarceration rate rose 45% in 6 years.

Incarceration rates rose the sharpest among older age groups. Between 1990 and 1996, the number of prisoners per 100,000 residents increased 66% among persons age 35 to 39;

75% among persons 40 to 44; and 71% among persons 45 to 54.

Relative to their number in the U.S. resident population, the number of men in prison grew more slowly than the number of women. During the 6-year period, the female prison incarceration rate rose 65% (from 31 per 100,000 to 51) while the male rate rose 43% (from 564 to 809). Among women age 35 to 54, these rates doubled.

In 1990 and 1996 non-Hispanic blacks were about twice as likely as Hispanics and nearly 8 times more likely than non-Hispanic whites to be in State or Federal prison. At yearend 1996 there were 1,571 sentenced black inmates per 100,000 blacks in the United States, compared to 688 sentenced Hispanic inmates per 100,000 Hispanics and 193 white inmates per 100,000 whites. For some age groups, the racial and ethnic disparities were even larger: among persons age 25 to 29, an estimated 4.1% of blacks were in prison in 1996, compared to 1.5% of Hispanics and 0.4% of whites.

**Table 13. Number of sentenced prisoners under State or Federal jurisdiction per 100,000 U.S. residents, by sex, race, Hispanic origin, and age, 1990 and 1996**

Age	Number of sentenced prisoners per 100,000 U.S. residents in each population group <sup>a</sup>											
	Total		Male		Female		White <sup>b</sup>		Black <sup>b</sup>		Hispanic	
	1990	1996	1990	1996	1990	1996	1990	1996	1990	1996	1990	1996
Total	292	422	564	809	31	51	139	193	1,067	1,571	548	688
18-19	271	407	518	771	13	27	90	143	1,084	1,337	360	688
20-24	652	995	1,220	1,886	61	71	295	406	2,296	3,385	972	1,514
25-29	799	1,078	1,493	2,024	95	123	354	442	2,949	4,131	1,341	1,488
30-34	708	1,006	1,327	1,845	87	160	336	469	2,640	3,671	1,185	1,446
35-39	526	875	989	1,615	67	134	245	412	1,973	3,398	1,069	1,279
40-44	375	658	715	1,244	41	82	196	322	1,433	2,431	779	1,233
45-54	211	360	410	692	21	42	137	198	590	1,347	535	690
55 or older	49	69	109	151	3	5	32	44	168	218	142	188

<sup>a</sup>Based on estimates of the U.S. resident population on July 1 of each year and adjusted for the Census undercount. See *Methodology* for further details.

<sup>b</sup>Excludes Hispanics.

**An estimated 7% of black males in their twenties and thirties were in prison in 1996**

When incarceration rates are estimated separately for men and women, black males in their twenties and thirties are found to have very high rates relative to other groups (table 14). Expressed in terms of percentages, 8.3% of black males age 25 to 29 were in prison in 1996, compared to 2.6% of Hispanic males and about 0.8% of white males in the same age group. Although incarceration rates drop with age, the percentage of black males age 45 to 54 in prison in 1996 was still nearly 2.8% — equivalent to the highest rate among Hispanic males (age 20 to 24) and more than 3 times larger than the highest rate (0.9%) among white males (age 30 to 34).

Female incarceration rates, though substantially lower than male incarceration rates at every age, reveal similar racial and ethnic disparities. Black females (with an incarceration rate of 188 per 100,000) were more than twice as likely as Hispanic females (78 per 100,000) and 8 times more likely than white females (23 per 100,000) to be in prison in 1996. These differences among white, black, and Hispanic females were consistent across all age groups.

**Growth linked to increasing number of inmates in State prison for violent and drug offenses**

Between 1990 and 1996 the distribution of the four major offense categories — violent, property, drug, and public-order offenses — did not change among State prisoners.

	Percent of sentenced State inmates*	
	1990	1996
Total	100%	100%
Violent	46	47
Property	25	23
Drug	22	23
Public-order	7	7

\*See *Methodology* for estimation procedures for each year.

In absolute numbers, however, the largest growth in State inmates was among violent offenders. Between 1990 and 1996 the number of violent offenders grew 179,500, while the number of drug offenders grew 87,900 (table 15). As a percentage of the total growth, violent offenders accounted for 50% of the total growth, drug offenders 25%, property offenders 18%, and public-order offenders 7%.

Detailed estimates of the State inmates at yearend 1990 and 1996 reveal differences in the sources of growth among male and female inmates. During the period the number of female inmates serving time for drug offenses doubled, while the number of male inmates in for drug offenses rose 55%. The number serving time for violent offenses, however, rose at about the same pace (up 57% for men and 58% for women).

**Table 14. Number of sentenced prisoners under State or Federal jurisdiction per 100,000 residents, by sex, race, Hispanic origin, and age, 1996**

Age	Number of sentenced prisoners per 100,000 residents of each group							
	Male				Female			
	Total	White	Black	Hispanic	Total	White	Black	Hispanic
Total	809	370	3,098	1,278	51	23	188	78
18-19	771	263	2,615	1,303	27	17	74	32
20-24	1,886	762	6,740	2,774	71	35	203	115
25-29	2,024	829	8,319	2,609	123	54	415	186
30-34	1,845	862	7,052	2,547	160	73	597	200
35-39	1,615	759	6,601	2,278	134	61	518	193
40-44	1,244	606	4,824	2,308	82	38	326	126
45-54	692	380	2,768	1,313	42	20	161	93
55 or older	151	96	505	413	5	3	18	9

**Table 15. Estimated number of sentenced prisoners under State jurisdiction, by offense and sex, 1990 and 1996**

Offenses	All prisoners		Male		Female	
	1990	1996	1990	1996	1990	1996
<b>Total</b>	689,600	1,048,000	652,800	984,600	36,700	63,400
<b>Violent offenses</b>	315,900	495,400	304,800	477,900	11,100	17,500
Murder <sup>a</sup>	72,500	112,700	68,400	107,700	4,100	5,000
Manslaughter	13,300	16,900	12,000	15,400	1,300	1,600
Rape	24,700	39,200	24,600	38,800	100	300
Other sexual assault	39,400	63,200	39,000	62,600	400	600
Robbery	99,900	142,000	97,200	137,800	2,700	4,200
Assault	53,700	98,600	51,600	94,400	2,100	4,200
Other violent	12,500	22,700	11,900	21,400	600	1,400
<b>Property offenses</b>	175,000	240,000	163,300	222,600	11,700	17,500
Burglary	87,800	111,100	86,200	108,100	1,600	3,100
Larceny	35,100	49,800	31,000	43,700	4,100	6,200
Motor vehicle theft	14,500	21,600	14,300	20,800	200	800
Fraud	20,300	27,800	16,500	21,700	3,800	6,100
Other property	17,200	29,600	15,200	28,300	2,000	1,300
<b>Drug offenses</b>	149,700	237,600	137,900	213,900	11,800	23,700
<b>Public-order offenses<sup>b</sup></b>	45,800	71,300	43,900	67,000	1,900	4,400
<b>Other/unspecified<sup>c</sup></b>	3,100	3,700	2,900	3,400	200	300

Note: Offense distributions for yearend 1990 and 1996 were estimated using *stock-flow method* procedures that combine data from the 1991 and 1997 surveys of State prison inmates with estimates of admissions and releases obtained in the National Corrections Reporting Program, 1990-96. See *Methodology* for further details.

<sup>a</sup>Includes nonnegligent manslaughter.

<sup>b</sup>Includes weapons, drunk driving, court offenses, commercialized vice, morals and decency charges, liquor law violations and other public-order offenses.

<sup>c</sup>Includes juvenile offenses and unspecified felonies.

Percent change in number of State inmates, 1990-96

	Male	Female
Total	51%	73%
Violent	57	58
Property	36	50
Drug	55	101
Public-order	53	132

\*Based on State inmates with a sentence of more than 1 year.

### Sources of population growth differ for white, black, and Hispanic inmates

Estimates of the offense distributions of State inmates also reveal differences in the sources of population growth among white, black, and Hispanic prisoners (table 16). Between 1990 and 1996 the number of black inmates serving time for drug offenses increased from 79,800 to 133,400 (an increase of 67%), while the number of white inmates held for drug offenses increased from 29,600 to 46,300 (up 56%) and the number of Hispanic inmates held for drug offenses increased from 38,700 to 52,300 (up 35%). The number of violent offenders also rose more sharply among black inmates (up 60%) and Hispanic inmates (up 74%) than among white inmates (up 42%).

Overall, the increasing number of drug offenses accounted for 30% of the total growth among black inmates, 23% of the total growth among Hispanic inmates, and 16% of the growth among white inmates (table 17). Violent offenders accounted for the largest source of growth for all groups — among white State inmates (46%), black inmates (50%), and Hispanic inmates (54%).

### Changing Federal prison population related to drug and weapons violations

Prisoners sentenced for drug offenses constituted the largest group of Federal inmates (60%) in 1996, up from 53% in 1990 (table 18). On September 30, 1996, the date of the latest available data, Federal prisons held 55,194 sentenced drug offenders, compared to 31,300 at yearend 1990.

**Table 16. Estimated number of sentenced prisoners under State jurisdiction, by offense, race, and Hispanic origin, 1990 and 1996**

Offenses	White		Black		Hispanic	
	1990	1996	1990	1996	1990	1996
<b>Total</b>	243,400	350,700	314,700	490,500	115,300	175,500
<b>Violent offenses</b>	117,600	167,200	146,100	234,400	43,700	76,100
Murder	28,400	36,300	32,100	56,300	10,000	17,100
Manslaughter	5,100	6,000	5,700	7,000	2,400	3,200
Rape	11,700	18,100	9,900	16,400	2,000	2,800
Other sexual assault	24,700	38,200	9,000	15,300	4,800	7,800
Robbery	24,600	29,800	59,100	85,600	14,200	21,700
Assault	17,300	31,300	25,500	44,100	8,800	18,800
Other violent	5,800	10,300	4,800	7,800	1,500	3,800
<b>Property offenses</b>	75,200	105,100	70,900	96,200	24,200	33,700
Burglary	38,300	48,600	33,800	44,600	13,700	15,700
Larceny	13,700	19,400	16,300	22,500	4,200	6,600
Motor vehicle theft	5,800	8,600	5,800	7,800	2,600	4,800
Fraud	9,800	14,500	8,200	10,400	1,500	2,600
Other property	7,600	13,700	6,700	11,200	2,200	4,100
<b>Drug offenses</b>	29,600	46,300	79,800	133,400	38,700	52,300
<b>Public-order offenses</b>	19,700	31,400	16,600	24,700	8,300	12,600
<b>Other/unspecified</b>	1,300	700	1,400	1,900	400	800

**Table 17. Partitioning the total growth of sentenced prisoners under State jurisdiction, by offense, race, and Hispanic origin, 1990-96**

	White		Black		Hispanic	
	Increase 1990-96	Percent of total	Increase 1990-96	Percent of total	Increase 1990-96	Percent of total
Total	107,300	100%	175,800	100%	60,200	100%
Violent	49,600	46	88,300	50	32,400	54
Property	29,900	28	25,300	14	9,500	16
Drug	16,700	16	53,600	30	13,600	23
Public-order	11,700	11	8,100	5	4,300	7

**Table 18. Number and percent of sentenced inmates in Federal prisons, by offense, 1990 and 1996**

	Federal inmates of any sentence length			
	Number		Percent	
	1990	1996	1990	1996
Total	59,526	92,672	100%	100%
<b>Violent offenses</b>	10,728	11,523	18.0%	12.4%
Homicide	1,316	1,084	2.2	1.2
Robbery	7,304	8,334	12.3	9.0
Assault	808	645	1.4	0.7
Other violent	1,300	1,460	2.2	1.6
<b>Property offenses</b>	8,307	7,781	14.0%	8.4%
Burglary	412	181	0.7	0.2
Fraud	5,386	5,807	9.0	6.3
Other property	2,509	1,793	4.2	1.9
<b>Drug offenses</b>	31,300	55,194	52.6%	59.6%
<b>Public-order offenses</b>	8,826	17,227	14.8%	18.6%
Immigration	1,645	4,476	2.8	4.8
Weapons	3,234	7,480	5.4	8.1
Other public-order	3,947	5,271	6.6	5.7
<b>Other/unknown</b>	365	947	0.6%	1.0%

Note: Data for December 31, 1990, and September 30, 1996, were obtained from the BJS Federal justice database.

Between 1990 and 1996 the percentage of violent Federal inmates declined from 18% to 12%. As a percentage of all Federal inmates, robbers showed the largest decline, from 12% to 9% .

During the period, the number of Federal inmates held for weapons and immigration offenses more than doubled. The number of weapons offenders rose from 3,234 in 1990 to 7,480 in 1996; immigration offenders rose from 1,645 to 4,476. By September 30, 1996, weapon offenders represented 8.1% of Federal inmates and immigration violators 4.8%.

As a consequence of the dramatic growth in the number of drug offenders, an increasing percentage of Federal prisoners are black or Hispanic. Between 1990 and 1996, the percent black among Federal inmates rose from 30% to 38%, while the percent white declined from 38% to 30% and the percent Hispanic remained unchanged (about 28%).

As a percent of the total growth, drug offenses accounted for a greater share of the increases among black inmates (82%) than among Hispanic (67%) or white inmates (65%) (table 19). Overall, black and Hispanic inmates accounted for three-quarters of the total increase in Federal inmates.

## Methodology

### *National Prisoner Statistics (NPS)*

The Bureau of Justice Statistics (BJS), with the U.S. Bureau of the Census as its collection agent, obtains yearend and midyear counts of prisoners from departments of correction in each of the 50 States, the District of Columbia, and the Federal Bureau of Prisons. In an effort to collect comparable data from all jurisdictions, NPS distinguishes prisoners in custody from those under jurisdiction. To have custody of a prisoner, a State must hold that person in one of its facilities. To have jurisdiction means that a State has legal authority over the prisoner. Prisoners under a State's jurisdiction may be in the custody of a local jail, another State's prison, or other correctional facility. Some States are unable to provide both custody and jurisdiction counts. (See NPS jurisdiction notes.)

Excluded from NPS counts are persons confined in locally administered confinement facilities who are under the jurisdiction of local authorities. NPS counts include all inmates in State-operated facilities in Alaska, Connecticut, Delaware, Hawaii, Rhode Island, and Vermont, which have combined jail-prison systems.

### *Military Corrections Statistics*

BJS obtains yearend counts of prisoners in the custody of U.S. military authorities from the Department of Defense Corrections Council. In 1994 the council, comprised of representatives from each branch of military service, adopted a standardized report

(DD Form 2707) with a common set of items and definitions. This report provides information on persons held in U.S. military confinement facilities inside and outside the continental United States, by branch of service, sex, race, and Hispanic origin, conviction status and sentence length, and offense. It also includes data on the number of facilities, and their design and rated capacities.

Before 1997 all services except the Air Force submitted these reports annually. Information on prisoners held in Air Force facilities was reported for the first time in 1997.

### *Survey of Inmates in State and Federal Correctional Facilities*

The Surveys of Inmates in State and Federal Correctional Facilities, which BJS conducts regularly every 5 to 6 years, provide detailed data on individual characteristics of prison inmates. Based on scientifically selected samples of facilities and of inmates held in them, these surveys provide detailed information unavailable from any other source. (See Harlow, *Comparing Federal and State Prison Inmates, 1991*, NCJ 145864, for a description of the 1991 surveys, sample designs, and accuracy.)

For this report, information on sex, race/Hispanic origin, age, and offense were drawn from the 1991 surveys. Preliminary data from the 1997 surveys were used to estimate changes since 1991. Publications from the 1997 surveys are expected to be released in late 1998 or early 1999.

**Table 19. Partitioning the total growth of sentenced prisoners under Federal jurisdiction, by offense, sex, race, and Hispanic origin, 1990-96**

	Total		Male		Female		White		Black		Hispanic	
	Increase 1990-96	Percent of total	Increase 1990-96	Percent of total	Increase 1990-96	Percent of total	Increase 1990-96	Percent of total	Increase 1990-96	Percent of total	Increase 1990-96	Percent of total
Total	33,146	100%	31,089	100%	2,057	100%	4,971	100%	15,609	100%	9,667	100%
Violent	795	2	765	2	30	1	246	5	-201	-1	34	0
Property	-526	-2	-524	-2	-2	0	-201	-4	-525	-3	35	0
Drug	23,894	72	22,173	71	1,721	84	3,211	65	12,852	82	6,482	67
Public-order	8,401	25	8,118	26	283	14	1,626	33	3,258	21	3,064	32

---

### *Estimating age-specific incarceration rates*

The number of sentenced prisoners within each age group was estimated for men, women, whites, blacks, and Hispanics. Estimates for 1990 and 1996 were produced by combining data from NPS and from the State and Federal prison inmate surveys. The following procedures were used:

1. To obtain estimates of the number of sentenced State and Federal inmates by sex, race, and Hispanic origin in each year, NPS custody counts for men and women were used. These counts of State and Federal inmates were multiplied by the proportion white, black, Hispanic, or other race as estimated from the State and Federal inmate surveys in each year. The estimates were then adjusted to equal the number of sentenced inmates by sex in State and Federal prisons as reported in NPS for yearend 1990 and 1996.
2. To obtain estimates by age in each year, age distributions for each demographic group were drawn from the State and Federal prison inmate surveys. These percentages were then multiplied by the number of sentenced inmates for each group defined by sex, race, and Hispanic origin.
3. Estimates of the U.S. resident population for July 1, 1990, and 1996, were obtained from the U.S. Bureau of the Census. (See *U.S. Population estimates, by Age, Sex, Race, and Hispanic Origin: 1990 to 1995*, PPL-41, and update for 1996.) These data were then adjusted for the 1990 decennial census, using the 1990 Post Enumeration Survey.
4. Age-specific rates of incarceration for each demographic group were calculated by dividing the estimated number of sentenced prisoners in each age group by the number of U.S. residents in each age group and then multiplying by 100,000.

### *Estimating offense distributions*

The offense distributions of State prisoners were also estimated by combining data from the 1986, 1991, and 1997 State prison inmate surveys, counts by offense of annual admissions and releases in the National Corrections Reporting Program (NCRP, 1986-96), and NPS data for 1990 and 1996. The following procedures were used:

1. The total number of sentenced prisoners under State jurisdiction in 1990 by offense was estimated using the forward and backward stock-flow procedures, as outlined in *Prisoners in 1996* (NCJ-164619). The offense distributions for each year through 1996 were derived from the NCRP using the forward estimation procedures only. In each year estimates of the number of inmates by offense were calculated by adding all admissions and subtracting all releases from the base population of the previous year. The estimated end-of-year distribution was then used as the base for the next year. This procedure was repeated for each year through 1996.
2. Within each offense category, the distribution by sex, race, and Hispanic origin were obtained from the 1991 and 1997 State inmate surveys. These percents were then multiplied by the estimated total number in each offense category in 1990 and 1996.
3. Final estimates were obtained through an iterative process so that the estimated numbers for men and women equaled the number of sentenced inmates reported in NPS in each year.

### **NPS jurisdiction notes**

**Alabama** — Capacity figures exclude community programs.

**Alaska** — Prisons and jails form one integrated system. All NPS data include jail and prison populations.

**Arizona** — Population counts are based on custody data.

Operational capacity excludes temporary beds and double bunks used in situations of crowding.

**Arkansas** — Only one type of capacity, set by the Board of Corrections and Community Punishment, is reported.

**Colorado** — Capacity figures exclude Bent County Correctional Center, Huerfano Correctional Center, and facilities under contract in Minnesota.

**Connecticut** — Prisons and jails form one integrated system. All NPS data include jail and prison populations.

Legislation in 1995 abolished the capacity law so that prisons no longer have a rated or operational capacity. Design capacity is recorded separately in each facility.

Population counts were based on jurisdiction data for the first time in 1997. Counts for 1996 were revised.

**Delaware** — Prisons and jails form one integrated system. All NPS data include jail and prison populations.

Capacity counts include Department of Correction halfway houses.

**District of Columbia** — Prisons and jails form one integrated system. All NPS data include jail and prison populations.

**Federal** — Rated capacity excludes contract beds.

**Florida** — Population counts are based on custody data.

Rated capacity is the maximum safe capacity, and operational capacity is

---

the lawful capacity, as decided by the legislature.

**Georgia** — Population counts are based on custody data.

**Hawaii** — Prisons and jails form one integrated system. All NPS data include jail and prison populations.

**Idaho** — Operational capacity is the emergency maximum capacity.

**Illinois** — Population counts are based on custody data.

Population counts of inmates with a maximum sentence of more than 1 year include an undetermined number of inmates with a sentence of 1 year or less.

**Iowa** — Population counts are based on custody data.

Population counts of inmates with a maximum sentence of more than 1 year include an undetermined number of inmates with a sentence of 1 year or less.

**Kansas** — Population counts of inmates with a maximum sentence of more than 1 year include an undetermined number of inmates with a sentence of 1 year or less.

**Kentucky** — Capacity figures exclude private contract prisons.

**Louisiana** — Operational capacity is based on day-to-day operation. Rated and operational capacities include contractual work release facilities.

**Maryland** — Design capacity is no longer reported because of renovations and other changes.

**Massachusetts** — Population counts are for January 5, 1998.

By law, offenders may be sentenced to terms of up to 2½ years in locally-operated jails. Such offenders are included in counts and rates for local jails. About 6,200 inmates with sentences of more than 1 year were held in local jails in 1997.

**Michigan** — Population counts are based on custody data. Counts include adults housed in institutions, camps, and community correction centers and on electronic monitoring.

Operational capacity includes institution and camp net capacities and populations in community programs.

**Nebraska** — Operational capacity is defined as stress capacity (or 125% of design capacity), which is ordered by the governor and set by the Department of Corrections.

**Nevada** — Rated capacity is defined as emergency capacity.

**New Jersey** — Rated and operational capacity figures are not maintained.

Population counts of inmates with a maximum sentence of more than 1 year include an undetermined number of inmates with a sentence of 1 year or less.

**Ohio** — Population counts of inmates with a maximum sentence of more than 1 year include an undetermined number of inmates with a sentence of 1 year or less.

**Oklahoma** — For the first time in 1997 population counts based on jurisdiction data include jail backlogs.

Population counts of inmates with a maximum sentence of more than 1 year include an undetermined number of inmates with a sentence of 1 year or less.

**Oregon** — Under a new law, inmates with under 1 year maximum sentence remain under the control of local counties. Offenders in this category are being phased out of the inmate counts.

Rated and design capacities are not recognized.

**Pennsylvania** — Reported capacities are single cell capacities.

**Rhode Island** — Prisons and jails form one integrated system. All NPS data include jail and prison populations.

**South Carolina** — Population counts include unsentenced inmates on Youthful Offender Act observation status.

**South Dakota** — Operation capacity is defined as planned capacity. Rated and design capacities are not recognized.

**Tennessee** — Rated capacity is the total beds available based on the original design plus any modifications. Operational capacity is defined as the percent of total beds deemed appropriate by the Department of Corrections.

Population counts of inmates with a maximum sentence of more than 1 year include an undetermined number of inmates with a sentence of 1 year or less.

**Texas** — Population counts of inmates with a maximum sentence of more than 1 year include an undetermined number of inmates with a sentence of 1 year or less.

**Vermont** — Prisons and jails form one integrated system. All NPS data include jail and prison populations.

Population counts are based on custody data. Population counts exclude inmates on furlough or intermediate sanctions.

**Virginia** — Population counts for inmates with a sentence of 1 year or less were affected by a new law on January 1, 1995, making the State responsible for felons with a sentence of 6 months or more, and a subsequent change, effective July 1, 1997, limiting responsibility to those with a sentence of 1 year or more.

Rated, operational, and design capacity figures are calculated using the base capacity method in which only the bunks that touch the floor are counted. Top bunks are excluded.

**Washington** — Reported capacities exclude work release and pre-release facilities, because the facilities are not reserved specifically for State inmates.

---

The Bureau of Justice Statistics is the statistical agency of the U.S. Department of Justice. Jan M. Chaiken, Ph.D., is director.

BJS Bulletins present the first release of findings from permanent data collection programs such as the National Prisoner Statistics.

Darrell Gilliard and Allen Beck, Ph.D., of BJS wrote this report. Christopher J. Mumola provided statistical verification. Tom Hester produced

and edited the report. Lyndon Diaz produced the Internet version. Marilyn Marbrook administered final production, assisted by Yvonne Boston.

Data collection and processing for the NPS program were carried out by Marc I. Roemer under the supervision of Gertrude Odom and Kathleen Creighton, Demographic Surveys Division, U.S. Bureau of the Census.

August 1998, NCJ 170014

This report in portable document format and in ascii, its tables, and related statistical data are available at the BJS World Wide Web Internet site:  
<http://www.ojp.usdoj.gov/bjs/>