



Bureau of Justice Statistics

Compendium of Federal Justice Statistics, 1992

Federal criminal case processing, 1992





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Highlights

During 1993 approximately 63,800 defendants were prosecuted by U.S. attorneys in U.S. district courts or were processed in U.S. courts of appeals; about a third of these defendants were prosecuted for drug offenses.

The vast majority (86%) of the 64,640 defendants whose cases were terminated in U.S. district courts in 1993 were convicted. Among those convicted, 65% were sentenced to prison. At yearend 1993, the Federal Bureau of Prisons held more than 82,000 prisoners, an increase of 11% over 1992.

Prosecution

U.S. attorneys opened matters for investigation against 110,286 suspects in 1993 — 30% were investigated for drug offenses, 28% for fraudulent property offenses, and less than 6% for violent offenses such as murder, rape, assault, and robbery.

U.S. attorneys prosecuted 59% of the 108,854 suspects in matters concluded in 1993. Drug suspects were more likely than other suspects to have charges filed against them: about 75% of the suspects in drug matters had proceedings brought against them.

Pretrial

In 1993 about 61% of the 47,755 defendants who were interviewed for pretrial services and whose cases were disposed had been released before the disposition. Those charged with embezzlement, fraud, forgery, or tax law violations were more likely to be released (about 86% were released) than were defendants charged with drug offenses (52%), weapons (56%), immigration (39%), or violent offenses (39%).

Forty-six percent of defendants were reported to have a prior criminal history, and 15% of defendants committed their offense while under criminal justice supervision for another offense. These defendants with a prior criminal history were less likely to be released than defendants without such involvement.

Eighty-six percent of the defendants released prior to trial completed their periods of release without violating conditions of their release; 5% of released defendants had their release revoked. Defendants charged with violent or drug offenses were less likely to complete release without a violation (82% and 79%, respectively) than other defendants.

Adjudication

Cases were terminated against 64,640 defendants in 1993, 79% of whom were felony defendants. Eighty-three percent of these defendants were convicted, and of the 53,435 defendants convicted, 48,022 (or 90%) pleaded guilty.

Average time from filing to disposition of

Most serious offense charged	Percent of defendants
All offenses	100 %
Felonies	79.4%
Violent offenses	5.3%
Property offenses	21.7%
Fraudulent	16.9
Other	4.8
Drug offenses	35.3%
Public-order offenses	17.1%
Regulatory	2.3
Other	14.8
Misdemeanors	20.6%
<hr/>	
Number of defendants whose case in U.S. district court was terminated in 1993	64,640

cases was slightly more than 8 months for all cases, but felonies took an average of 9½ months, as compared to an average of slightly more than 3 months for misdemeanors. Cases disposed of by guilty plea were disposed of in 7 months, on average.

Sentencing

Of the 53,435 defendants sentenced in 1993, 65% were given incarceration, another 30% were given probation (either alone or with incarceration), and 8% were given only a fine. Prison sentences were received by more than 90% of violent offenders, just under 90% of drug offenders, 55% of those convicted of fraud, and 49% of those convicted of embezzlement.

The average prison sentence imposed on convicted felony offenders was 63 months. Violent offenders (90 months) and drug offenders (82 months) received the longest average prison terms.

Corrections

A total of 20,449 probation supervisions were terminated during 1993. Of all probationers who had been convicted of a felony (11,664), 56% were convicted of a property offense, 24% of a public-order offense, and 17% of a drug offense. A total of 17,031 offenders were terminated from parole or supervised release during 1993. Of those who had been convicted of a felony (16,306), 25% were convicted of a property offense, 16% of a public-order offense, 46% of a drug offense, and 13% of a violent offense.

During 1993 the Federal Bureau of Prisons received 37,018 prisoners from U.S. district courts and an additional 10,814 prisoners from other sources (such as violations of parole, probation, or supervised release). Forty-six percent of the prisoners received from U.S. district courts were drug offenders.

During 1993 a total of 39,973 prisoners were released. This was 7,859 fewer than the total number of prisoners received by any means. Consequently, during 1993 the number of Federal prisoners grew to 82,698.

In 1993 prisoners released for the first time on their Federal sentence had served an average of 24 months. Violent offenders released for the first time in 1993 had served an average of almost 5 years (56 months), and drug offenders, almost 3 years (33 months).

Most serious offense at conviction	Average number of months served
All offenses	23.9 mo
Violent offenses	55.9 mo
Property offenses	15.4 mo
Fraudulent	14.5
Other	18.1
Drug offenses	33.0 mo
Public-order offenses	12.4 mo
Regulatory	18.0
Other	12.1
Weapons	23.5

Introduction

The 1993 Compendium of Federal Justice Statistics is a comprehensive Bureau of Justice Statistics report presenting an overview of Federal criminal case processing. The data in the compendium are extracted from the BJS Federal justice database, which links data describing each component of Federal processing. Data are presently included from the Executive Office for the U.S. Attorneys, the Administrative Office of the U.S. Courts — which maintains data for the Pretrial Services Agency, on the criminal caseload in Federal courts, and of the Federal Probation Supervision Information System — the U.S. Sentencing Commission, and the U.S. Bureau of Prisons. Future editions of the compendium will incorporate data from additional Federal agencies.

The compendium describes the progress of Federal criminal suspects through prosecution (chapter 1), pretrial release (chapter 2), adjudication (chapter 3), sentencing (chapter 4), and supervision and corrections (chapter 5). Tables follow the text of each chapter.

Both individual and corporate cases are included in the tables, as are both felonies and misdemeanors, unless otherwise indicated. Corporations are not represented in tables based on data collected during pretrial interviews, in tables showing defendant characteristics, or in tables showing offenders sentenced to supervision or incarceration.

The 1993 compendium, eighth in a series which includes 1984, 1985, 1986, 1988, 1989, 1990, and 1992, describes each aspect of processing in relation to suspects or defendants who completed a pertinent stage of

processing during calendar year 1993. For example, the tables in chapter 1 describe suspects whose criminal matters were initiated during 1993 or those whose matters were concluded during 1993. Chapter 3 describes defendants whose cases were terminated or disposed in the Federal courts during calendar year 1993. These are not necessarily the same as the suspects whose criminal matters are tabulated in chapter 1.

In text discussions of tables, any comments about changes between 1992 and 1993 or between 1984 and 1993 are based on comparisons with the corresponding table in the Compendium of Federal Justice Statistics for the indicated year.

In the Federal justice database, individuals and corporations are tracked from one stage of processing to the next. Files are linked on the basis of names, demographic characteristics, and key events to permit a system-wide view of the Federal justice process. Consistent with Federal statute, identifiable data in the database may not be revealed or used for any purposes other than research or statistics.

Incomplete linkages do not affect any of the tables in this publication that are derived from a single data source, since records are included in the tabulated statistics whether or not they have been linked to other records in the database. However, some tables in this compendium provide greater richness and detail by drawing on more than one data source for each case; these tables are necessarily based on linked records only.

Organization of the compendium

Each chapter of the compendium describes a major stage in the processing of criminal suspects and defendants and combines data from all U.S. judicial districts. Geographically detailed data appear in the district tables at the end of this compendium. The contents of the compendium include:

System overview. This section provides a graphic overview of the Federal system. Figure 1 is a flow chart of Federal processing during 1993. Figure 2 describes the attrition of suspects from prosecutorial review through sentencing.

Chapter 1. This chapter describes decisions taken by Federal prosecutors in screening criminal matters and the characteristics of cases prosecuted or declined.

Chapter 2. This chapter provides information on judicial officers' decisions regarding pretrial release and detention, on defendant conduct while awaiting trial, and on the characteristics of defendants terminating pretrial services.

Chapter 3. This chapter describes actions of judges in U.S. district courts in adjudicating guilt or innocence. Characteristics of offenses and convicted offenders are described.

Chapter 4. This chapter describes sentencing decisions and offense and offender characteristics.

Chapter 5. This chapter addresses corrections. Data describe the time served in incarceration, prisoner movements into and out of Federal prison, and the results of supervision

under probation, parole, or supervised release.

Methodology. This section describes the procedures followed in analyzing data and developing tables.

Data notes. This section contains information on the exact universes of data uses in the tables as well as information relevant to the interpretation of individual tables.

Glossary. This section contains definitions for terms used in the compendium. Since many terms used in the text or tables have specialized meanings (either because they refer to Federal law or because of reporting procedures in the Federal agencies supplying the source data), readers are encouraged to check the glossary for exact definitions of tabulated data.

Note to reader

The tables in the compendium were constructed to permit valid comparisons within each table and to allow the reader to compare percentages (but not raw totals) across tables. It should be understood, however, that the total number of subjects shown in a particular table may not equal the number of subjects involved in a particular stage of processing, since some records could not be linked and some data sources did not include information on particular data elements classified in a particular table. Data notes indicate the exact universe for individual tables. Numbers cited in the text are based on exact calculations and may vary slightly from totals derived from tables.

Comparisons between selected statistics for 1993 and those for other years are presented in the BJS

publication *Federal Criminal Case Processing, 1982-93*, which includes updates through part of 1994.* This compendium contains more complete information for 1993 than is found in *Federal Criminal Case Processing, 1982-93*.

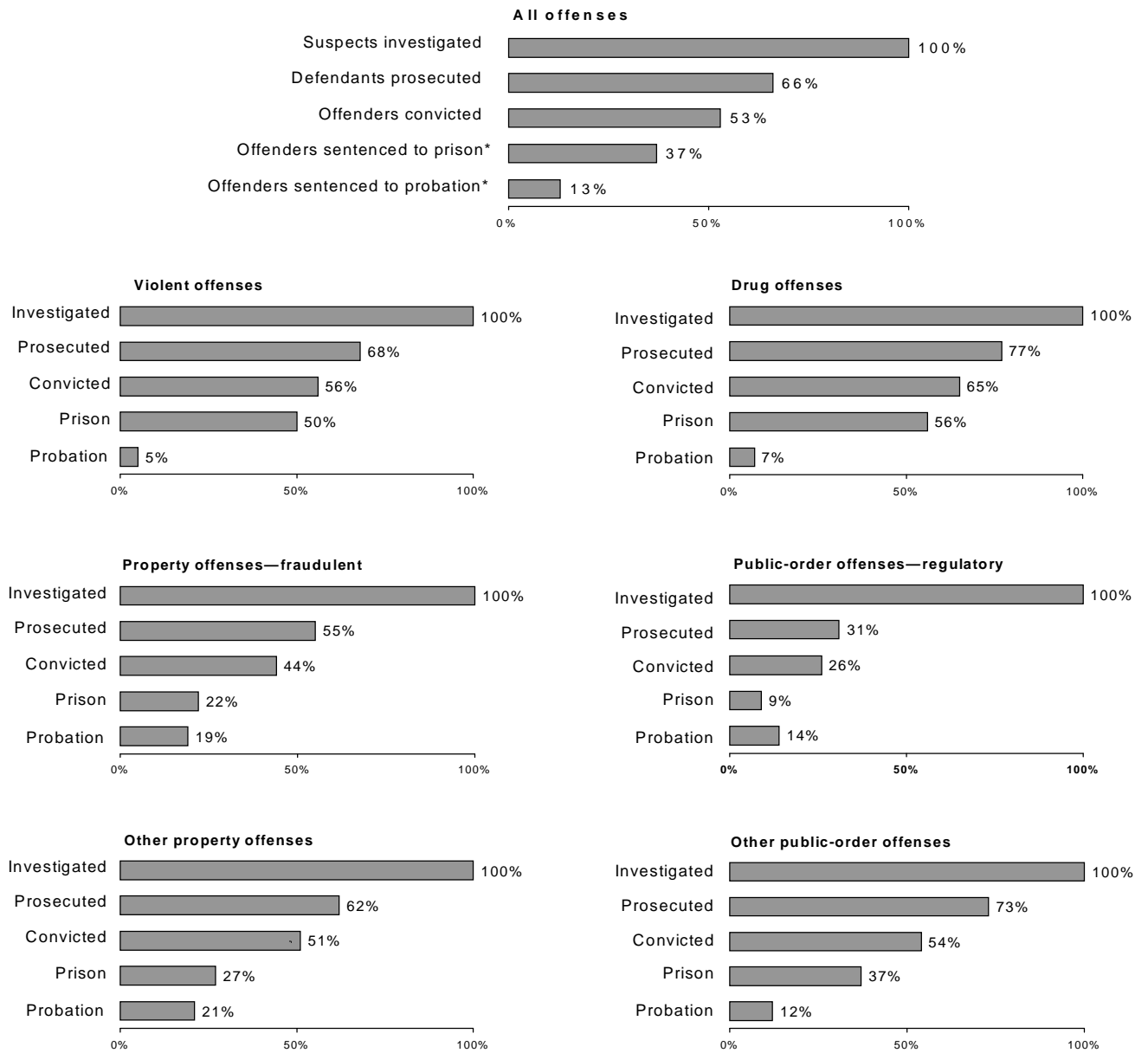
The compendium is a statistical presentation of Federal criminal justice information with limited analyses of trends or explanatory factors underlying the statistics. Analyses of Federal justice statistics may be found in Special Reports and other publications, some of which are cited in the compendium. Assessment of changing patterns in the compendium tabulations may depend on detailed examination of subcategories not shown in the tabulations or may require other sources of information, such as knowledge of legislation or Federal agency procedures.

The compendium is prepared under the Bureau of Justice Statistics Federal Justice Statistics Program. The BJS Federal justice database, maintained under the program, is available for public use at the National Archive of Criminal Justice Data, Interuniversity Consortium for Political and Social Research, as data collection ICPSR 9296.

* *Federal Criminal Case Processing, 1982-93, with Preliminary Data for 1994*, Bureau of Justice Statistics, May 1996 (NCJ-160088).

Federal criminal case processing, 1993

In matters concluded by U.S. attorneys:



Note: See data note 2.

*Prison includes split, life, indeterminate, regular, and youth sentences. Offenders not shown as sentenced to prison or probation were sentenced by magistrates or received a fine-only sentence in Federal court. Probation excludes persons sentenced to prison.

Figure 2.