

At yearend 2015, an estimated 1.53 million prisoners were held in state and federal facilities across the United States. This was a 2.3% decrease from yearend 2014, and the largest decline since 1978. Forty percent of the decrease in the total prison population from 2014 to 2015 can be attributed to a decline in the number of inmates under Federal Bureau of Prisons (BOP) jurisdiction, which decreased 7% (14,100 inmates) during this period.

Prison population trends

A decrease in prison admissions and an increase in releases also contributed to the overall population decline. State and federal prisons admitted 608,300 persons in 2015, which was 17,800 fewer than in 2014. They released 641,000 persons in 2015, 4,700 more than in 2014. There were also 30,900 fewer prisoners sentenced to more than 1 year under the jurisdiction of state or federal authorities at yearend 2015 than at yearend 2014. Additionally, the number of female prisoners sentenced to more than 1 year in a state or federal facility decreased by 1% during this period.

U.S. imprisonment rate

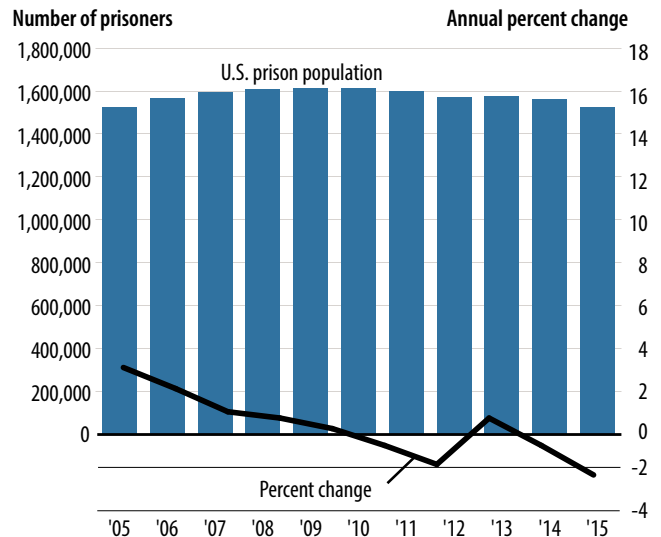
The overall U.S. imprisonment rate declined from 2014 (471 sentenced prisoners per 100,000 U.S. residents of all ages) to 2015 (458 per 100,000). The male imprisonment rate declined by almost 3% from 2014 (889 per 100,000 U.S. male residents) to 2015 (863 per 100,000). More than 2% of male residents ages 30 to 34 were sentenced to more than 1 year in state or federal prison at yearend 2015. In this age group, imprisonment rates were 5,948 per 100,000 black males, 2,365 per 100,000 Hispanic males, and 1,101 per 100,000 white males.

The female imprisonment rate was down by almost 2% from 2014 (65 per 100,000 U.S. female residents) to 2015 (64 per 100,000). There were twice as many white females (52,700) as black females (21,700) in the sentenced prison population at yearend 2015, but the imprisonment rate for black females (103 per 100,000 U.S. female residents) was twice the rate for white females (52 per 100,000).

About state and federal prisoners

More than half (53%) of state prisoners were serving sentences for violent offenses in 2014 (the most recent year for which offense data are available), compared to 19% for property offenses and less than 16% for drug crimes. Half (50%) of BOP inmates were serving sentences for drug

Prisoners under the jurisdiction of state or federal correctional authorities, December 31, 2005–2015



Note: Jurisdiction refers to the legal authority of state or federal correctional officials over a prisoner, regardless of where the prisoner is held.
Source: Bureau of Justice Statistics, National Prisoner Statistics, 2005–2015.

offenses and 7% were serving sentences for violent offenses on September 30, 2015, the most recent date for which federal offense data were available.

At yearend 2015, females made up 7% (105,000 prisoners) of the sentenced federal and state prison population. Almost 11% of the sentenced state and federal prison population were age 55 or older, and 2% were age 65 or older. State prisons had jurisdiction over an estimated 1,000 prisoners age 17 or younger at yearend 2015. Additionally, the BOP had custody of 21,500 inmates it identified as noncitizens, and state prisons held 43,600 noncitizen inmates at yearend 2015.

Use of private prisons

Six states (Hawaii, Mississippi, Montana, New Mexico, North Dakota, and Oklahoma) housed at least 20% of their prison population in privately operated facilities at yearend 2015. Almost 7% of state prisoners (91,300 inmates) and 18% of federal prisoners (34,900) were held in private prison facilities in 2015. An additional 6% of state prisoners (80,400 inmates) were in the custody of local jails at yearend 2015.

The full report (*Prisoners in 2015*, NCJ 250229), related documents, and additional information about the Bureau of Justice Statistics can be found at www.bjs.gov.

