



# Department of Justice



## Office of Justice Programs

\*\*\*EMBARGO UNTIL  
THURSDAY, APRIL 25, 2019, 9 A.M. ET  
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### **PRISON AND JAIL INCARCERATION RATES DECREASED BY MORE THAN 10% FROM 2007 TO 2017**

WASHINGTON — From 2007 to 2017, incarceration rates in both prisons and jails decreased by more than 10%, according to reports released today by the Bureau of Justice Statistics. Over a decade, the incarceration rate among state and federal prisoners sentenced to more than a year dropped by 13%, from 506 prisoners per 100,000 U.S. residents in 2007 to 440 prisoners per 100,000 in 2017. The prison incarceration rate also dropped 2.1% from 2016 to 2017, bringing it to the lowest level since 1997.

The jail incarceration rate decreased by 12% from 2007 to 2017, from 259 to 229 jail inmates per 100,000 U.S. residents, but did not decline from 2016 to 2017.

The U.S. prison population was 1.5 million prisoners at year-end 2017, and the population of jail inmates in the U.S. was 745,000 at midyear 2017. There were 1.3 million prisoners under state jurisdiction and 183,000 under federal jurisdiction. From the end of 2016 to the end of 2017, the number of prisoners under federal jurisdiction declined by 6,100 (down 3%), while the number of prisoners under state jurisdiction fell by 12,600 (down 1%).

By citizenship status, non-citizens made up roughly the same portion of the U.S. prison population (7.6%) as of the total U.S. population (7.0%, per the U.S. Census Bureau). This is based on prisoners held in the custody of publicly or privately operated state or federal prisons.

Among racial groups, the imprisonment rate for sentenced black adults declined by 31% from 2007 to 2017 and by 4% from 2016 to 2017, the largest declines of any racial group.

However, the imprisonment rate for sentenced black males was more than twice the rate for sentenced Hispanic males and almost six times that for sentenced white males (2,336 per 100,000 black males compared to 1,054 per 100,000 Hispanic males and 397 per 100,000 white males). The rate for sentenced black females was almost double that for sentenced white females (92 per 100,000 black females compared to 49 per 100,000 white females).

Among state prisoners sentenced to more than one year, more than half (55%) were serving a sentence for a violent offense at year-end 2016, the most recent year for which state data are available.

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An estimated 60% of blacks and Hispanics in state prisons were serving a sentence for a violent offense, compared to 48% of whites. At the end of fiscal year 2017, nearly half of all federal prisoners were serving a sentence for drug trafficking.

Privately operated prison facilities held 121,400 prisoners, or 8% of all state and federal prisoners, at year-end 2017. Inmates in these facilities were under the jurisdiction of 27 states and the Bureau of Prisons. The number of federal prisoners held in private facilities decreased by 6,600 from 2016 to 2017 (down 19%).

In 2017, almost two-thirds (482,000) of jail inmates were unconvicted, awaiting court action on a charge, while the rest (263,200) were convicted and either serving a sentence or awaiting sentencing.

The demographic characteristics of persons incarcerated in jails shifted from 2005 to 2017. During this period, the percentage of the jail population that was white increased from 44% to 50%, while the percentage that was black decreased from 39% to 34%. Hispanics accounted for 15% of all jail inmates in 2017, the same as in 2005. Asians accounted for less than 1% of jail inmates in both years. In 2017, the jail incarceration rate for blacks was more than 3 times the rate for whites and Hispanics, and more than 20 times the rate for Asians.

Jails reported 10.6 million admissions in 2017, which represented no change from 2016 but a 19% decline from 13.1 million in 2007. The overall weekly inmate turnover rate was 54% in 2017, while the estimated average time spent in jail before release was 26 days.

At midyear 2017, one in five jails were operating at or above 100% of their rated capacity, which is the number of beds or inmates that a rating official has assigned to a facility. The total rated capacity of county and city jails was 915,100 beds at midyear 2017. An estimated 81% of jail beds were occupied in 2017, down from 95% in 2005.

*[Jail Inmates in 2017 \(NCJ 251774\)](#)* was written by BJS statistician Zhen Zeng, Ph.D. *[Prisoners in 2017 \(NCJ 252156\)](#)* was written by BJS statisticians Jennifer Bronson, Ph.D., and E. Ann Carson, Ph.D. The reports, related documents and additional information about BJS's statistical publications and programs are available on the BJS website at [www.bjs.gov](http://www.bjs.gov).

The Bureau of Justice Statistics of the U.S. Department of Justice is the principal federal agency responsible for collecting, analyzing and disseminating reliable statistics on crime and criminal justice in the United States. Jeffrey H. Anderson is the director.

The Office of Justice Programs, directed by Principal Deputy Assistant Attorney General Matt M. Dummermuth, provides federal leadership, grants and resources to improve the nation's capacity to prevent and reduce crime, assist victims and enhance the rule of law by strengthening the criminal justice system. More information about OJP and its components can be found at [www.ojp.gov](http://www.ojp.gov).

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