

State and federal correctional authorities held an estimated 1.51 million prisoners at year-end 2016. This was down 21,200 prisoners (1%) from year-end 2015 and 110,100 (7%) from a peak at year-end 2009. The number of federal prisoners decreased from 196,455 in 2015 to 189,192 in 2016. During that same period, the number of state prisoners decreased from 1.33 million to 1.32 million.

### Sentenced population

The majority (97%) of prisoners in 2016 were sentenced to more than 1 year. The remaining portion of the prison population had not yet been sentenced for an offense or had received a sentence of 1 year or less. From 2015 to 2016, the overall number of state and federal prisoners who had been sentenced to more than 1 year declined by 18,700 (down 1%). However, the number of females sentenced to more than 1 year in state or federal prison increased by 500 (up less than 1%) from 2015 to 2016.

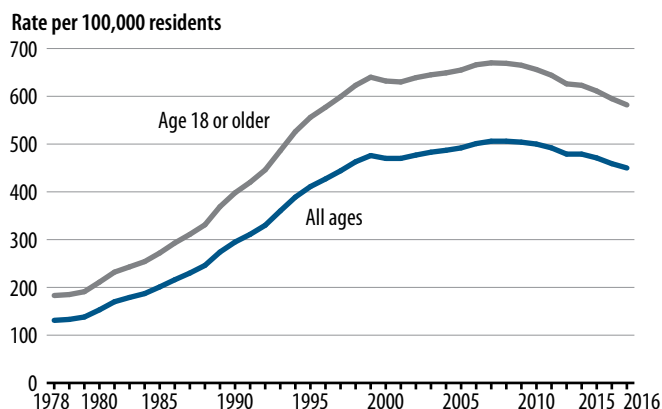
### Imprisonment rates

Overall, there were 450 prisoners per 100,000 U.S. residents of all ages and 582 per 100,000 residents age 18 or older in 2016. The imprisonment rate was down 2% from 2015 and the lowest observed since 1997. At year-end 2016, about 1% of U.S. adult males were serving prison sentences of more than 1 year (1,108 per 100,000 adult male residents), a decrease of 2% from year-end 2015 (1,135 per 100,000). From 2015 to 2016, the imprisonment rates for all races decreased. Specifically, the rate for black adults was down 4% from 2015 (1,670 per 100,000 black residents) to 2016 (1,608 per 100,000). This rate declined 29% from 2006 (2,261 per 100,000) to 2016.

### Admissions and releases

Federal and state correctional authorities admitted a total of 606,000 prisoners sentenced to more than 1 year in 2016—similar to the total number of prisoners admitted in 2015 (608,300). The Federal Bureau of Prisons (BOP) admitted 2,200 fewer prisoners in 2016 than in 2015 (down 5%), which that accounted for 96% of the total decline in 2016 U.S. prison admissions (down 2,300). Similarly, the BOP accounted for the majority of the change in prison releases. It released 8,100 fewer prisoners in 2016 and accounted for more than half (54%) of the total year-over-year change. Overall, the total number of prisoners released by state and federal correctional authorities decreased 2% from 2015 (641,000) to 2016 (626,000).

### Imprisonment rate of sentenced prisoners under the jurisdiction of state or federal correctional authorities, per 100,000 U.S. residents, 1978–2016



Note: Jurisdiction refers to the legal authority of state or federal correctional officials over a prisoner, regardless of where the prisoner is held. Counts are based on prisoners with sentences of more than 1 year.

Source: Bureau of Justice Statistics, National Prisoner Statistics, 1978–2016; and U.S. Census Bureau, postcensal resident population estimates for January 1 of the following calendar year.

### Demographic and offense characteristics

While the majority (93%) of prisoners were male, there were more than twice as many white females (48,900 prisoners) as black (20,300) or Hispanic (19,300) females in state and federal prison in 2016. However, the imprisonment rate for black females (96 per 100,000 black female residents) was almost double the rate for white females (49 per 100,000 white female residents). Black-to-white racial disparity was also observed among males. Black males ages 18 to 19 were 11.8 times more likely to be imprisoned than white males of the same age.

More than half (54%) of state prisoners sentenced to more than 1 year were serving time for a violent offense at year-end 2015 (the most recent year for which data are available). Overall, 15% of state prisoners at year-end 2015 had been convicted of a drug offense as their most serious crime. However, a higher percentage of females (25%) than males (14%) had a drug crime as their most serious offense. In comparison, nearly half (47%) of federal prisoners serving time in September 2016 (the most recent date for which data are available) were convicted of a drug offense. As in state prisons, a larger percentage of females (56%) than males (47%) were serving time in federal prison for drug crimes.

The full report (*Prisoners in 2016*, NCJ 251149), related documents, and additional information about the Bureau of Justice Statistics can be found at [www.bjs.gov](http://www.bjs.gov).

