

Incarceration Trends in ARKANSAS

Incarceration in Local Jails and State Prisons

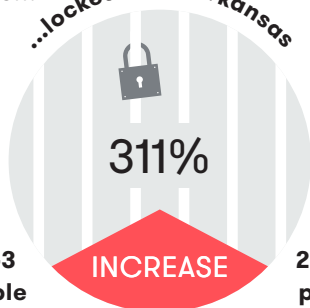


REGIONAL RANK

2 of 7 in total incarceration

Total people...

...locked up in Arkansas



5,743 people (1983) **23,632** people (2015)

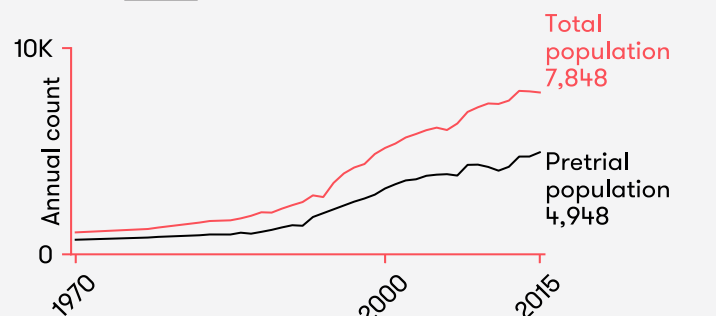
1983 2015

Since 1970, the rate of incarceration in America has expanded more than fourfold, and the United States leads the world in locking people up. Many places in America have begun to reduce their use of prisons and jails, but progress has been uneven. Although the number of people sent to state prisons and county jails from urban areas has decreased, that number has continued to rise in many rural places. Racial disparities in incarceration remain strikingly wide. Women constitute a rising number of those behind bars.

This fact sheet provides at-a-glance information about how many people are locked up in both state prisons and county jails and shows where the state stands on a variety of metrics, so that policymakers and the public can better determine where to target reforms.

STATE TOTALS

JAILS

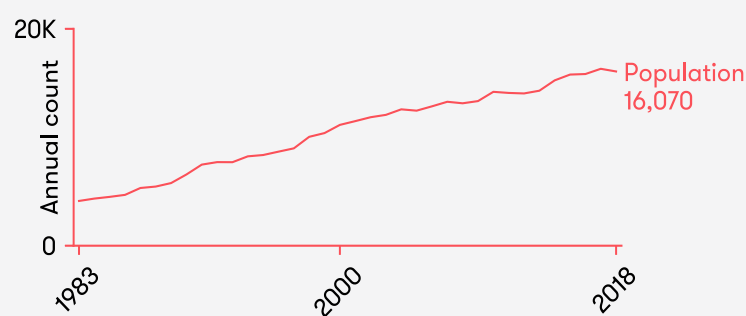


% change in jail population

| | |
|---------------|--------------|
| SINCE 1970 | SINCE 2000 |
| 638% ↑ | 52% ↑ |

Since 1970, the total jail population has increased 638%. In 2015, pretrial detainees constituted 63% of the total jail population in Arkansas.

PRISONS



% change in prison population

| | |
|---------------|--------------|
| SINCE 1983 | SINCE 2000 |
| 289% ↑ | 44% ↑ |

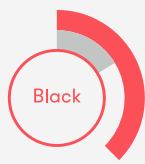
Since 1983, the prison custody population has increased 289%. In 2018, there were 16,070 people in the Arkansas prison system.

RACE

more on pg 2 →

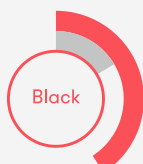
JAILS

2015
16% of state pop. | 37% of jail pop.



PRISONS

2017
16% of state pop. | 41% of prison pop.



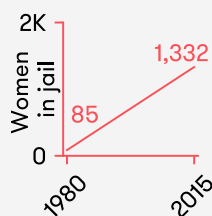
In Arkansas, Black people constituted 16% of state residents, but 37% of people in jail and 41% of people in prison.

GENDER

more on pg 2 →

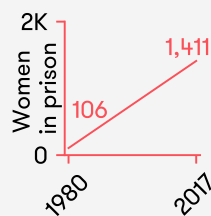
JAILS

1,456% ↑



PRISONS

1,231% ↑



Since 1980, the number of women in jail has increased 1,456%, and the number of women in prison has increased 1,231%.

GEOGRAPHY

more on pg 3 →

Top admission rates, 2015 (rate per 100K)

| COUNTY | JAILS | COUNTY | PRISONS |
|------------|--------|--------------|---------|
| Crittenden | 28,549 | Little River | 1,639 |
| Hempstead | 19,441 | Jackson | 1,523 |
| Lafayette | 19,060 | Howard | 1,242 |
| Sebastian | 16,844 | Monroe | 1,204 |
| Jackson | 16,667 | Sevier | 1,049 |

Incarceration is not only an urban phenomenon. In fact, on a per capita basis, the most rural places in the state often lock up the most people in jail and send the most people to prison.

RACE AND ETHNICITY

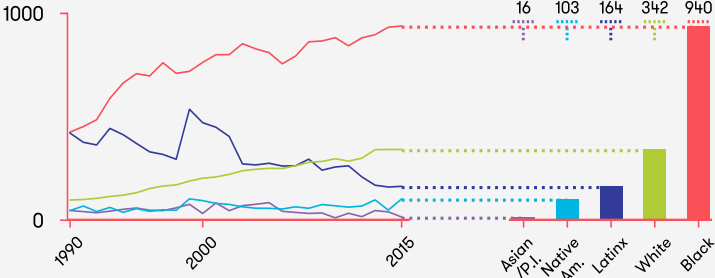


JAILS 2015

2% of state pop. | <1% of jail pop. | Asian /P.I.
 1% of state pop. | <1% of jail pop. | Native Am.
 7% of state pop. | 3% of jail pop. | Latinx
 74% of state pop. | 62% of jail pop. | White
 16% of state pop. | 37% of jail pop. | Black



Rate per 100,000 ages 15-64



Since 1990, the Black incarceration rate has increased 120 percent. In 2015, Black people were incarcerated at 2.7 times the rate of white people.

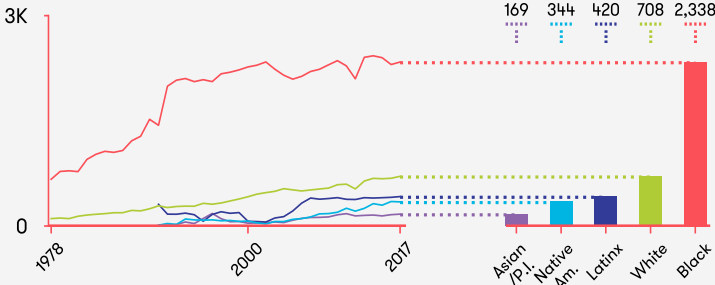


PRISONS 2017

2% of state pop. | <1% of prison pop. | Asian /P.I.
 1% of state pop. | <1% of prison pop. | Native Am.
 7% of state pop. | 3% of prison pop. | Latinx
 74% of state pop. | 55% of prison pop. | White
 16% of state pop. | 41% of prison pop. | Black



Rate per 100,000 ages 15-64



Since 1978, the Black incarceration rate has increased 251 percent. In 2017, Black people were incarcerated at 3.3 times the rate of white people.

NATIONAL CONTEXT

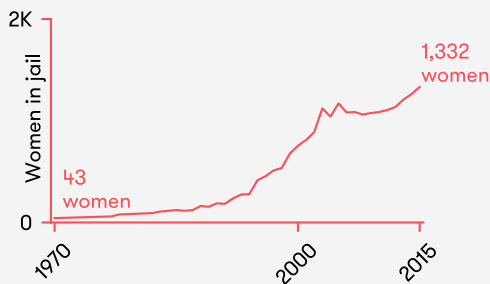
The overrepresentation of Black Americans in the justice system is well documented. Black men constitute about 13 percent of the male population, but about 35 percent of those incarcerated. One in five Black people born in their lifetime, compared to one in 10 Latinx people and one in 29 white people.

Discriminatory criminal justice policies and practices at all stages of the justice process have unjustifiably disadvantaged Black people, including through disparity in the enforcement of seemingly race-neutral laws. Studies have found that Black people are more likely to be stopped by the police, detained pretrial, charged with more serious crimes, and sentenced more harshly than white people—even when controlling for things like offense severity.

Nationally, Latinx people are also overrepresented in prisons and jails, yet common data misclassification leads to distorted, lower estimates of Latinx incarceration rates and distorted, higher estimates of white incarceration rates. Smaller and inconsistent data reporting make it difficult to measure the effects of racism for incarcerated people of other racial groups.

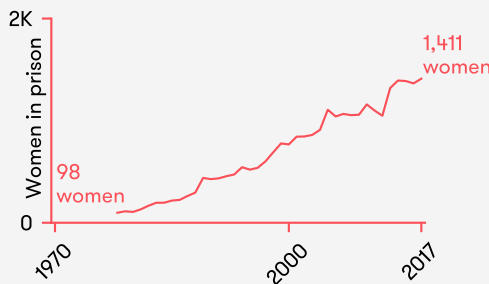
GENDER

JAILS



The number of women in Arkansas' jails has increased more than 30-fold, from 43 in 1970 to 1,332 in 2015.

PRISONS



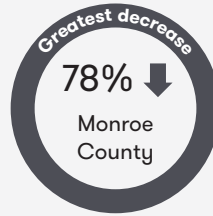
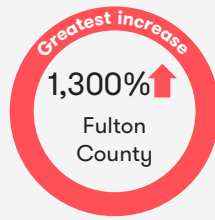
The number of women in Arkansas' prisons has increased more than 14-fold, from 98 in 1970 to 1,411 in 2017.

NATIONAL CONTEXT

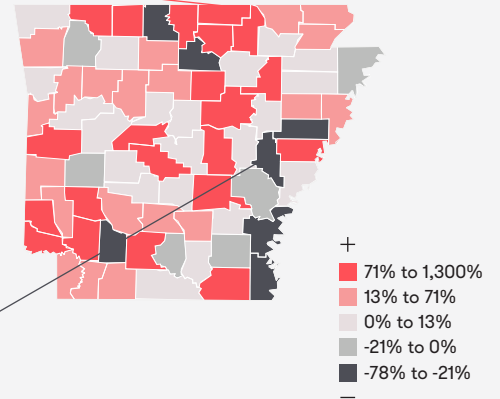
Although men's jail admissions have declined by 26 percent since 2008, women's admissions have increased both as a total number and as a proportion of all jail admissions. Women now make up almost one out of every four jail admissions, up from fewer than one in 10 in 1983. Since 1970, the number of women in U.S. jails has increased 14-fold—from fewer than 8,000 to nearly 110,000 in 2013—and women in jail now account for approximately half of all women behind bars in the country.

GEOGRAPHY

Statewide trends alone do not tell the whole story of incarceration: there is wide variation in the use of incarceration across the state. Today, the highest rates of prison admissions are in rural counties, and pretrial detention continues to increase in smaller counties even as it is on the decline in larger counties. It is critical to examine incarceration trends in every corner of the state, because although the largest counties may have the most people in jails—the highest rates of incarceration are in smaller cities and rural counties.

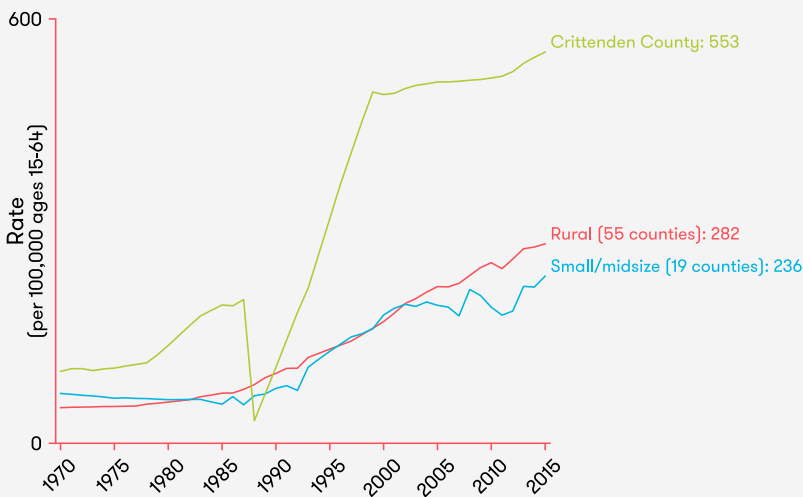


% change in jail population from 2005 to 2015



Comparing the jail populations for 2005 and 2015, counties shaded dark gray had fewer people in jail and those shaded dark red had more people in jail.

JAILS Pretrial population



Since 2000, the state's use of pretrial detention has taken different trajectories in different types of counties. The pretrial incarceration rate has increased 64% in the state's 55 rural counties, 30% in the state's 19 small/medium counties, and 12% in the state's one suburban county.

Vera's analysis of the urban-rural continuum changes the six categories defined by the National Center for Health Statistics Urban-Rural Classification Scheme for Counties to four. A county is labeled "urban" if it is one of the core counties of a metropolitan area with 1 million or more people and is labeled "suburban" if it is within the surrounding metropolitan area. Vera turns the remaining four categories into two by combining small and medium metropolitan areas ("small and midsize metro") and micropolitan and noncore areas ("rural").

JAIL ADMISSIONS (TOP 10 OF 75 COUNTIES)

| COUNTY | Rate (per 100K) | COUNTY | Annual count |
|------------|-----------------|------------|--------------|
| Crittenden | 28,549 | Pulaski | 24,265 |
| Hempstead | 19,441 | Sebastian | 13,900 |
| Lafayette | 19,060 | Washington | 11,619 |
| Sebastian | 16,844 | Garland | 9,334 |
| Jackson | 16,667 | Crittenden | 9,135 |
| Conway | 16,546 | Craighead | 8,997 |
| Scott | 16,343 | Saline | 5,793 |
| Cross | 16,324 | Crawford | 5,208 |
| Ashley | 15,956 | Faulkner | 4,276 |
| Garland | 15,734 | Jefferson | 3,859 |

PRISON ADMISSIONS (TOP 10 OF 75 COUNTIES)

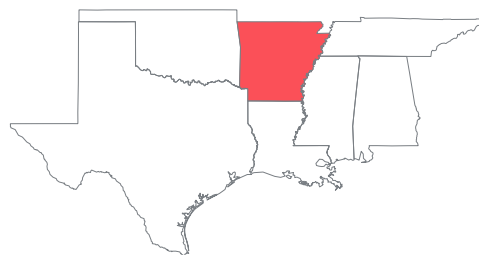
| COUNTY | Rate (per 100K) | COUNTY | Annual count |
|--------------|-----------------|------------|--------------|
| Little River | 1,639 | Pulaski | 1,190 |
| Jackson | 1,523 | Sebastian | 680 |
| Howard | 1,242 | Washington | 671 |
| Monroe | 1,204 | Benton | 510 |
| Sevier | 1,049 | Jefferson | 322 |
| Lawrence | 1,013 | Garland | 311 |
| Lafayette | 989 | Faulkner | 275 |
| Union | 968 | Saline | 273 |
| Miller | 947 | Craighead | 271 |
| Pike | 922 | Miller | 266 |

JAILS



Jail admissions

| Rank | State | Rate (2015) | Rate change ('05-'15) |
|------|-------------|-------------|-----------------------|
| 1 | Arkansas | 15,853 | 80% |
| 2 | Oklahoma | 11,183 | 21% |
| 3 | Tennessee | 9,609 | 4% |
| 4 | Louisiana | 9,174 | -19% |
| 5 | Mississippi | 8,335 | 13% |
| 6 | Alabama | 5,660 | -39% |
| 7 | Texas | 5,604 | -29% |



Jail pretrial population

| Rank | State | Rate (2015) | Rate change ('05-'15) |
|------|-------------|-------------|-----------------------|
| 1 | Louisiana | 456 | -4% |
| 2 | Mississippi | 350 | 9% |
| 3 | Tennessee | 339 | 18% |
| 4 | Oklahoma | 324 | 18% |
| 5 | Alabama | 261 | -19% |
| 6 | Arkansas | 258 | 22% |
| 7 | Texas | 252 | -11% |

Jail sentenced population

| Rank | State | Rate (2015) | Rate change ('05-'15) |
|------|-------------|-------------|-----------------------|
| 1 | Louisiana | 506 | 0.0% |
| 2 | Tennessee | 308 | 0.1% |
| 3 | Mississippi | 290 | 0.1% |
| 4 | Oklahoma | 182 | 0.6% |
| 5 | Arkansas | 152 | 0.2% |
| 6 | Alabama | 113 | -0.3% |
| 7 | Texas | 106 | -0.3% |

PRISONS



Prison admissions

| Rank | State | Rate (2016) | Rate change ('06-'16) |
|------|-------------|-------------|-----------------------|
| 1 | Arkansas | 531 | 64% |
| 2 | Louisiana | 518 | -1% |
| 3 | Texas | 424 | -7% |
| 4 | Mississippi | 385 | -26% |
| 5 | Alabama | 366 | 10% |
| 6 | Oklahoma | 347 | -4% |
| 7 | Tennessee | 298 | -10% |

Prison population

| Rank | State | Rate (2018) | Rate change ('08-'18) |
|------|-------------|-------------|-----------------------|
| 1 | Oklahoma | 1,066 | 4% |
| 2 | Louisiana | 1,062 | -17% |
| 3 | Mississippi | 1,013 | -13% |
| 4 | Arkansas | 928 | 18% |
| 5 | Texas | 874 | -17% |
| 6 | Alabama | 848 | -12% |
| 7 | Tennessee | 687 | 5% |

Data

This fact sheet uses data from four U.S. Bureau of Justice Statistics (BJS) data series and is supplemented with data obtained directly from state governments for the more recent years for which BJS data is not yet available, when available. The Annual Survey of Jails, Census of Jails, and National Corrections Reporting Program provides data through 2016; the National Prisoner Statistics program provides data through 2017, and 2018 data is sourced from state agencies. Rates are per 100,000 residents aged 15 to 64. See *Data and Methods for Vera's State Fact Sheets*: www.vera.org/incarceration-trends-fact-sheets-data-and-methods.pdf for complete details. County-level data is available at trends.vera.org.

Acknowledgments

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Credits

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For more information

For more information, visit www.vera.org. For more information about this fact sheet, contact Jacob Kang-Brown, senior research associate, at jkangbrown@vera.org.