

Incarceration in Local Jails and State Prisons



REGIONAL RANK

6 of 7 in total incarceration

Total people...

...locked up in Colorado



5,994 people (1983) | 31,910 people (2015)

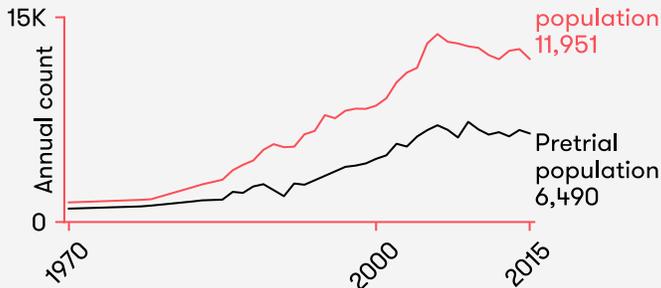
1983 | 2015

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
733% ↑	40% ↑

Since 1970, the total jail population has increased 733%. In 2015, pretrial detainees constituted 54% of the total jail population in Colorado.

PRISONS



% change in prison population

SINCE 1983	SINCE 2000
504% ↑	17% ↑

Since 1983, the prison custody population has increased 504%. In 2018, there were 19,579 people in the Colorado prison system.

RACE

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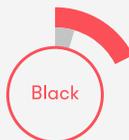
JAILS

2015
5% of state pop. | 17% of jail pop.



PRISONS

2017
5% of state pop. | 18% of prison pop.



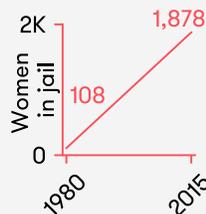
In Colorado, Black people constituted 5% of state residents, but 17% of people in jail and 18% of people in prison.

GENDER

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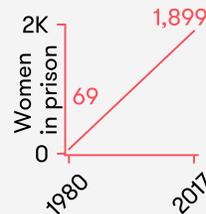
JAILS

1,630% ↑



PRISONS

2,652% ↑



Since 1980, the number of women in jail has increased 1,630%, and the number of women in prison has increased 2,652%.

GEOGRAPHY

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Top admission rates, 2015 (rate per 100K)

COUNTY	JAILS	COUNTY	PRISONS
Washington	80,495	Alamosa	643
Custer	77,072	Lincoln	603
Cheyenne	65,004	Moffat	582
Gilpin	25,722	Prowers	505
Lake	19,698	Pueblo	498

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

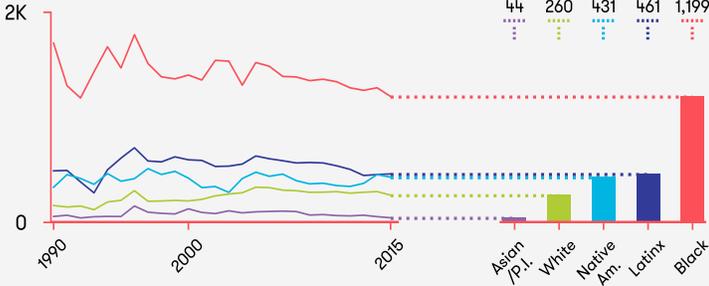


JAILS 2015

4% of state pop. | <1% of jail pop. | 71% of state pop. | 56% of jail pop. | 1% of state pop. | 1% of jail pop. | 20% of state pop. | 28% of jail pop. | 5% of state pop. | 17% of jail pop.



Rate per 100,000 ages 15-64



Since 1990, the Black incarceration rate has decreased 30 percent. In 2015, Black people were incarcerated at 4.6 times the rate of white people, and Native American people were incarcerated at 1.7 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 2001 is likely to be incarcerated 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.

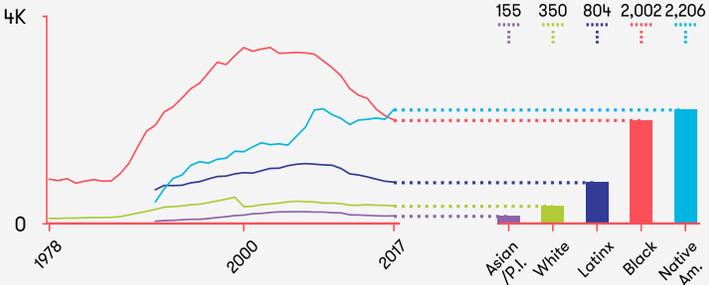


PRISONS 2017

4% of state pop. | 1% of prison pop. | 71% of state pop. | 46% of prison pop. | 20% of state pop. | 31% of prison pop. | 5% of state pop. | 18% of prison pop. | 1% of state pop. | 3% of prison pop.



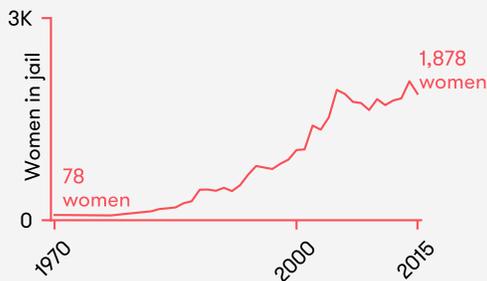
Rate per 100,000 ages 15-64



Since 1978, the Black incarceration rate has increased 133 percent. In 2017, Black people were incarcerated at 5.7 times the rate of white people, and Native American people were incarcerated at 6.3 times the rate of white people.

GENDER

JAILS



The number of women in Colorado's jails has increased more than 24-fold, from 78 in 1970 to 1,878 in 2015.

PRISONS



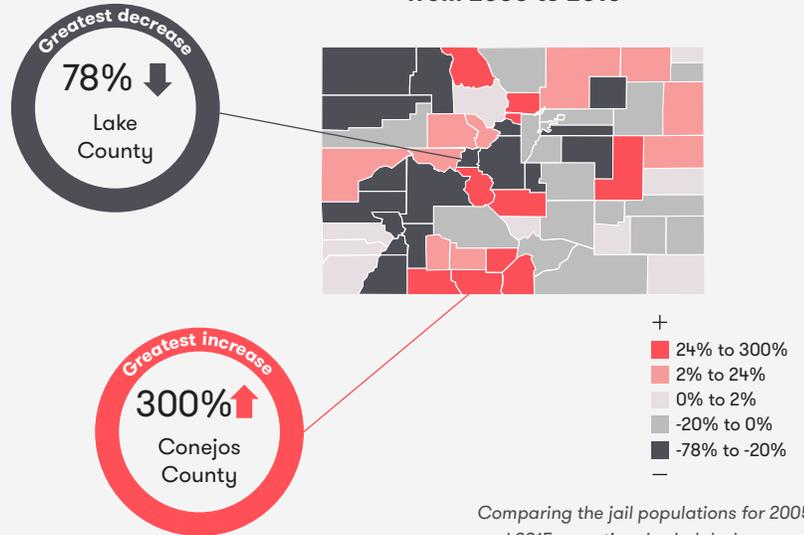
The number of women in Colorado's prisons has increased more than 28-fold, from 66 in 1970 to 1,899 in 2017.

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.

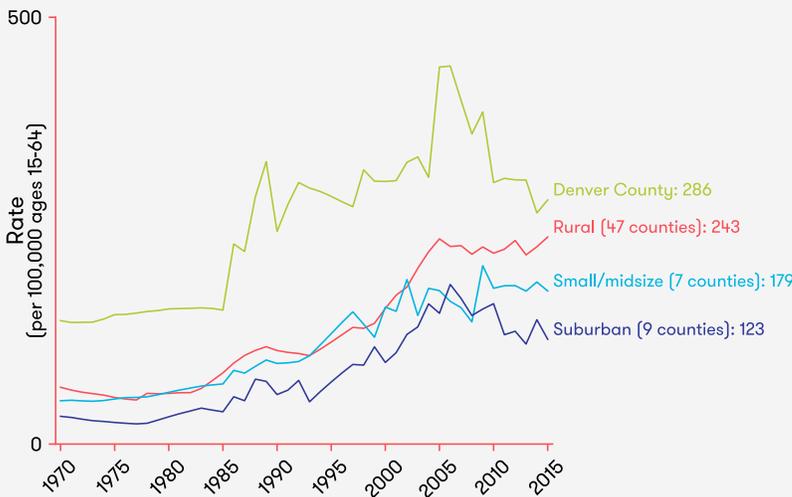
Statewide trends alone do not tell the whole story of incarceration: there is wide variation in the use of incarceration across the state. Today, the highest rates of prison admissions are in rural counties, and pretrial detention continues to increase in smaller counties even as it is on the decline 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 grey 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 53% in the state's 47 rural counties, 28% in the state's nine suburban counties, and 12% in the state's seven small/medium counties. It has decreased 7% in the state's one urban 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 64 COUNTIES)

COUNTY	Rate (per 100K)	COUNTY	Annual count
Washington	80,495	Denver	34,679
Custer	77,072	El Paso	22,712
Cheyenne	65,004	Jefferson	21,125
Gilpin	25,722	Arapahoe	17,909
Lake	19,698	Adams	16,310
Prowers	15,139	Larimer	11,151
Kiowa	14,944	Weld	10,531
Conejos	14,522	Pueblo	9,386
Chaffee	13,194	Boulder	8,566
Bent	13,142	Mesa	6,560

PRISON ADMISSIONS (TOP 10 OF 64 COUNTIES)

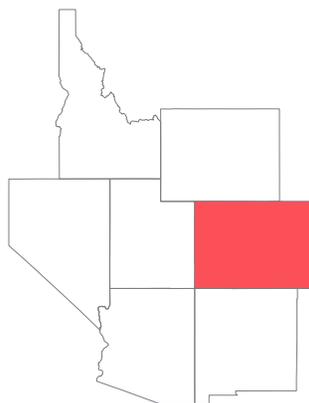
COUNTY	Rate (per 100K)	COUNTY	Annual count
Alamosa	643	Denver	1,513
Lincoln	603	El Paso	1,508
Moffat	582	Jefferson	1,008
Prowers	505	Adams	866
Pueblo	498	Arapahoe	764
Logan	454	Weld	645
Mesa	435	Pueblo	513
Conejos	424	Mesa	412
Otero	421	Larimer	402
Gilpin	388	Boulder	244

JAILS



Jail admissions

Rank	State	Rate (2015)	Rate change ('05-'15)
1	New Mexico	11,996	18%
2	Wyoming	8,021	-16%
3	Nevada	7,517	-22%
4	Idaho	6,268	-34%
5	Colorado	5,782	-26%
6	Utah	5,457	-17%
7	Arizona	4,584	-27%



Jail pretrial population

Rank	State	Rate (2015)	Rate change ('05-'15)
1	New Mexico	460	-4%
2	Idaho	236	-3%
3	Arizona	234	-21%
4	Wyoming	222	-14%
5	Nevada	202	-36%
6	Utah	188	-8%
7	Colorado	179	-14%

Jail sentenced population

Rank	State	Rate (2015)	Rate change ('05-'15)
1	Utah	207	0.0%
2	Wyoming	175	-0.1%
3	Nevada	175	0.6%
4	Colorado	150	-0.2%
5	New Mexico	143	-0.2%
6	Idaho	118	-0.2%
7	Arizona	82	-0.1%

PRISONS



Prison admissions

Rank	State	Rate (2016)	Rate change ('06-'16)
1	Idaho	549	27%
2	Nevada	331	-9%
3	Arizona	315	-13%
4	New Mexico	269	-19%
5	Wyoming	263	10%
6	Colorado	236	-30%
7	Utah	173	-19%

Prison population

Rank	State	Rate (2018)	Rate change ('08-'18)
1	Arizona	935	-3%
2	Idaho	797	9%
3	Nevada	700	-1%
4	Wyoming	691	22%
5	New Mexico	543	14%
6	Colorado	533	-22%
7	Utah	334	-12%

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.