

Incarceration Trends in GEORGIA

Incarceration in Local Jails and State Prisons



REGIONAL RANK
3 of 7 in total incarceration

Total people...

...locked up in Georgia

329%

INCREASE

19,723 people

84,556 people

1983

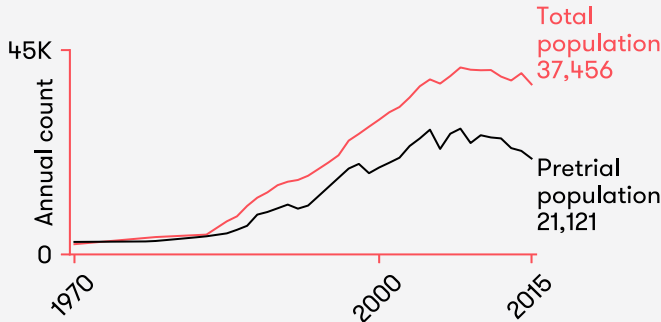
2015

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

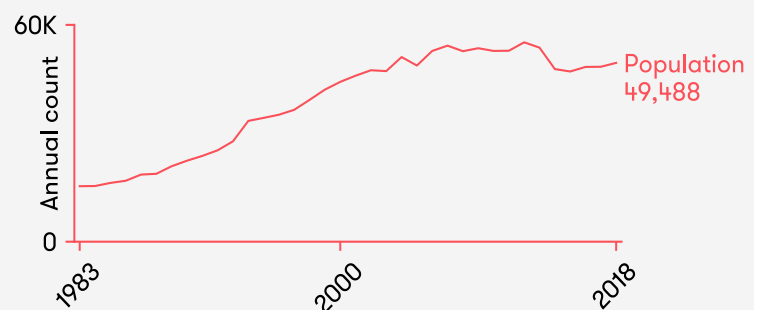
SINCE 2000

1,562% ↑

26% ↑

Since 1970, the total jail population has increased 1,562%. In 2015, pretrial detainees constituted 56% of the total jail population in Georgia.

PRISONS



% change in prison population

SINCE 1983

SINCE 2000

222% ↑

12% ↑

Since 1983, the prison custody population has increased 222%. In 2018, there were 49,488 people in the Georgia prison system.

RACE

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JAILS 2015

32% of state pop. | 51% of jail pop.



PRISONS 2017

32% of state pop. | 60% of prison pop.



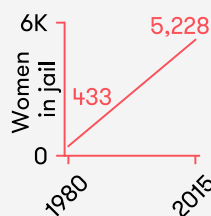
In Georgia, Black people constituted 32% of state residents, but 51% of people in jail and 60% of people in prison.

GENDER

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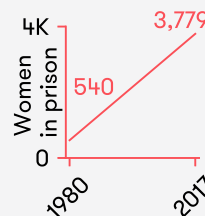
JAILS

1,107% ↑



PRISONS

600% ↑



Since 1980, the number of women in jail has increased 1,107%, and the number of women in prison has increased 600%.

GEOGRAPHY

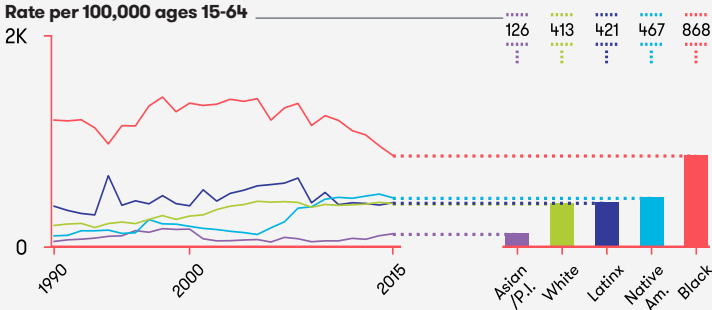
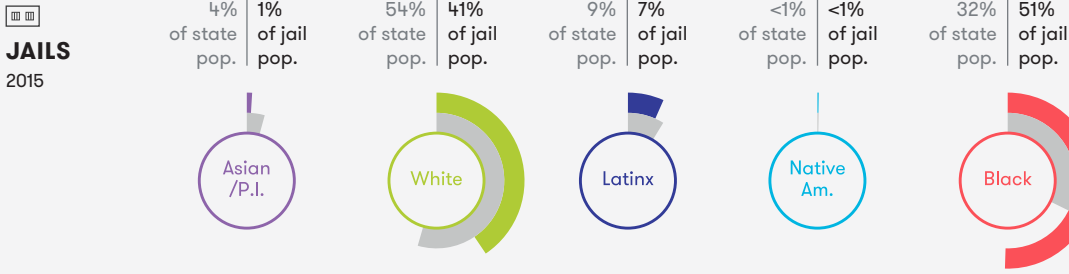
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Top admission rates, 2015 (rate per 100K)

COUNTY	JAILS	COUNTY	PRISONS
Irwin	125,429	Ben Hill	829
Peach	63,038	Chattooga	726
Turner	37,082	Floyd	677
Clinch	34,402	Treutlen	644
Atkinson	29,465	Crisp	637

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



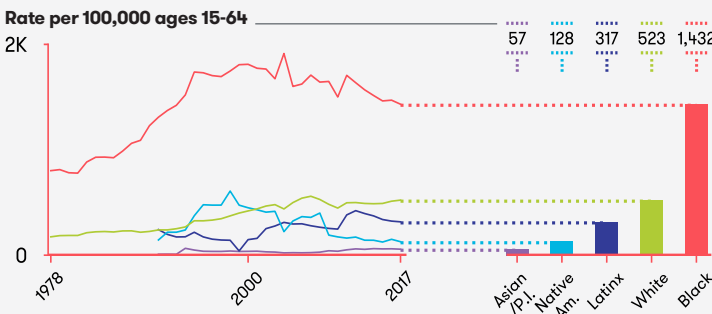
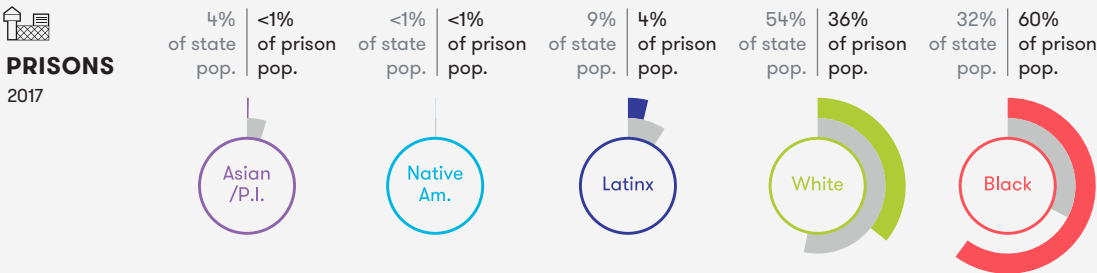
Since 1990, the Black incarceration rate has decreased 28 percent. In 2015, Black people were incarcerated at 2.1 times the rate of white people, and Native American people were incarcerated at 1.1 times the rate of white people.

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.

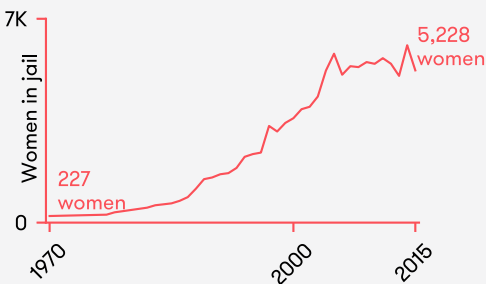
Nationally, Latinx people are also overrepresented in prisons and jails, yet common data misclassification leads to distorted, lower estimates of Latinx incarceration rates and distorted, higher estimates of white incarceration rates. Smaller and inconsistent data reporting make it difficult to measure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



Since 1978, the Black incarceration rate has increased 79 percent. In 2017, Black people were incarcerated at 2.7 times the rate of white people.

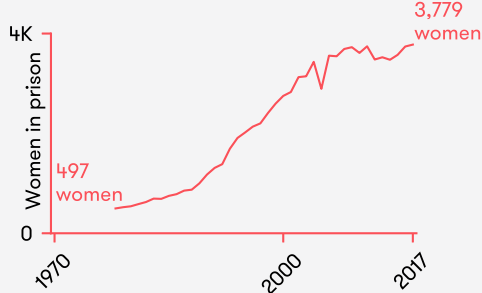
GENDER

JAILS



The number of women in Georgia's jails has increased more than 23-fold, from 227 in 1970 to 5,228 in 2015.

PRISONS



The number of women in Georgia's prisons has increased more than sevenfold, from 497 in 1978 to 3,779 in 2017.

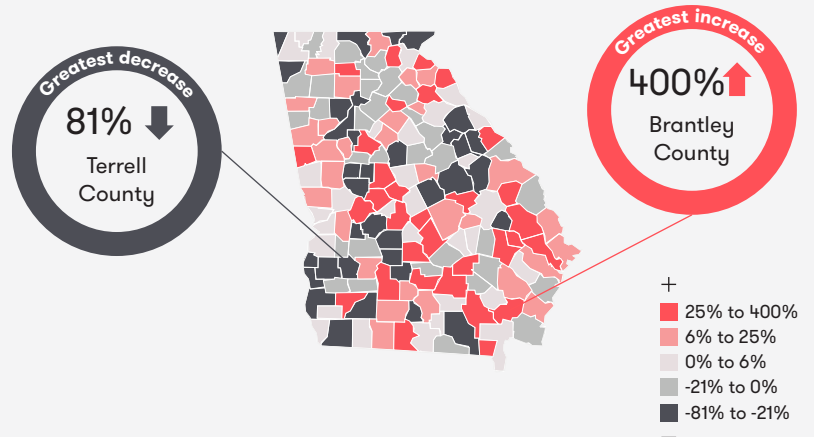
NATIONAL CONTEXT

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

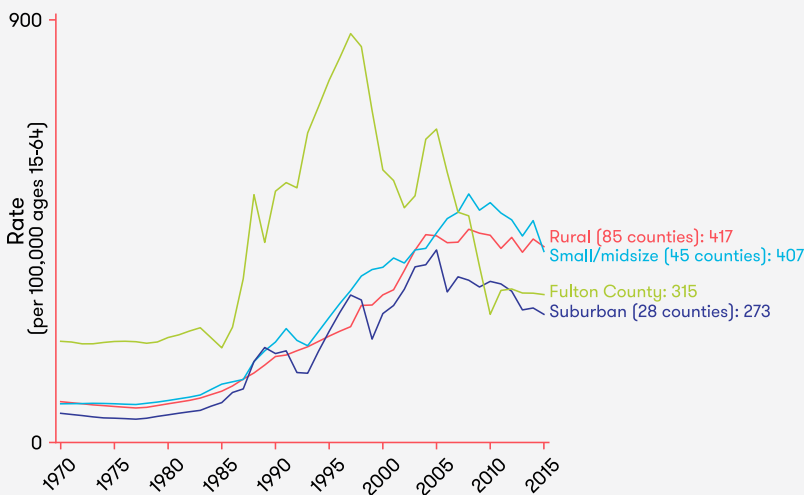
Statewide trends alone do not tell the whole story of incarceration: there is wide variation in the use of incarceration across the state. Today, the highest rates of prison admissions are in rural counties, and pretrial detention continues to increase in smaller counties even as it is on the decline 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 9% in the state's 45 small/medium counties, and 33% in the state's 85 rural counties. It has decreased 46% in the state's one urban county, and 1% in the state's 28 suburban counties.

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 159 COUNTIES)

COUNTY	Rate (per 100K)	COUNTY	Annual count
Irwin	125,429	Fulton	41,193
Peach	63,038	Gwinnett	33,395
Turner	37,082	DeKalb	30,688
Clinch	34,402	Cobb	25,097
Atkinson	29,465	Chatham	15,548
Cook	23,763	Richmond	14,738
Lamar	23,163	Henry	14,328
Elbert	17,995	Muscogee	13,915
Seminole	16,855	Peach	11,576
Butts	16,577	Douglas	10,487

PRISON ADMISSIONS

(TOP 10 OF 159 COUNTIES)

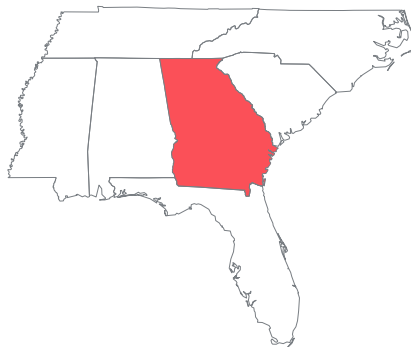
COUNTY	Rate (per 100K)	COUNTY	Annual count
Ben Hill	829	Cobb	1,272
Chattooga	726	Fulton	1,181
Floyd	677	Gwinnett	1,056
Treutlen	644	DeKalb	970
Crisp	637	Chatham	687
Toombs	613	Richmond	561
Early	582	Clayton	531
Troup	582	Douglas	484
Taliaferro	565	Floyd	422
Jenkins	564	Muscogee	357

JAILS



Jail admissions

Rank	State	Rate (2015)	Rate change ('05-'15)
1	Tennessee	9,609	4%
2	Mississippi	8,335	13%
3	Georgia	7,747	-26%
4	South Carolina	6,559	-15%
5	North Carolina	6,036	-26%
6	Alabama	5,660	-39%
7	Florida	5,166	-37%



Jail pretrial population

Rank	State	Rate (2015)	Rate change ('05-'15)
1	Mississippi	350	9%
2	Tennessee	339	18%
3	Georgia	313	-30%
4	Florida	284	-23%
5	Alabama	261	-19%
6	South Carolina	252	-17%
7	North Carolina	229	-9%

Jail sentenced population

Rank	State	Rate (2015)	Rate change ('05-'15)
1	Tennessee	308	0.1%
2	Mississippi	290	0.1%
3	Georgia	242	0.3%
4	Florida	139	-0.2%
5	Alabama	113	-0.3%
6	South Carolina	107	0.1%
7	North Carolina	49	0.6%

PRISONS



Prison admissions

Rank	State	Rate (2016)	Rate change ('06-'16)
1	Mississippi	385	-26%
2	Alabama	366	10%
3	Tennessee	298	-10%
4	Georgia	258	-27%
5	North Carolina	242	36%
6	Florida	225	-26%
7	South Carolina	210	-35%

Prison population

Rank	State	Rate (2018)	Rate change ('08-'18)
1	Mississippi	1,013	-13%
2	Alabama	848	-12%
3	Georgia	791	-2%
4	Florida	734	-13%
5	Tennessee	687	5%
6	South Carolina	587	-26%
7	North Carolina	518	-17%

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.