

Incarceration Trends in KENTUCKY

Incarceration in Local Jails and State Prisons



REGIONAL RANK

1 of 7 in total incarceration

Total people...

...locked up in Kentucky

287%

INCREASE

8,525 people

33,025 people

1983

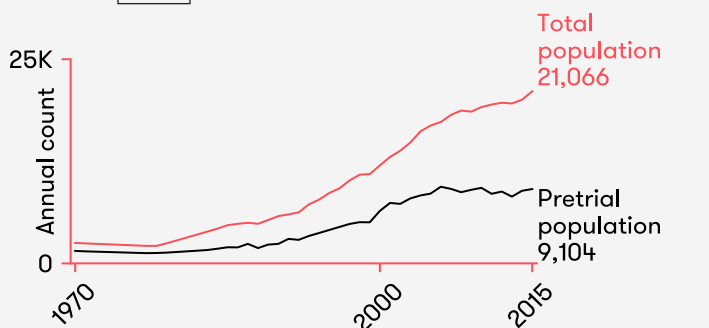
2015

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

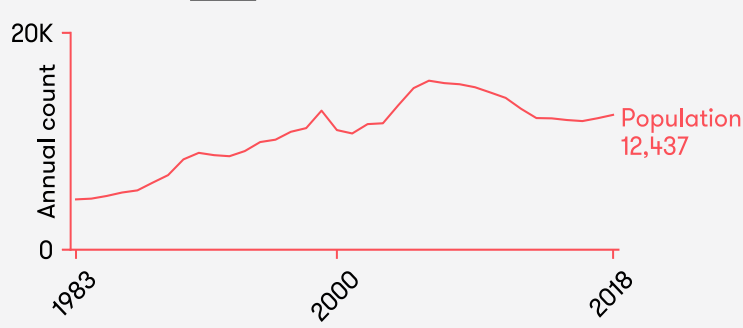
SINCE 2000

740% ↑

76% ↑

Since 1970, the total jail population has increased 740%. In 2015, pretrial detainees constituted 43% of the total jail population in Kentucky.

PRISONS



% change in prison population

SINCE 1983

SINCE 2000

168% ↑

13% ↑

Since 1983, the prison custody population has increased 168%. In 2018, there were 12,437 people in the Kentucky prison system.

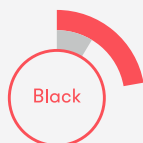
RACE

more on pg 2 →

JAILS

2015

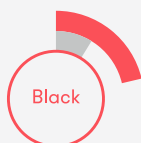
9% of state pop. | 22% of jail pop.



PRISONS

2017

9% of state pop. | 21% of prison pop.



In Kentucky, Black people constituted 9% of state residents, but 22% of people in jail and 21% of people in prison.

GENDER

more on pg 2 →

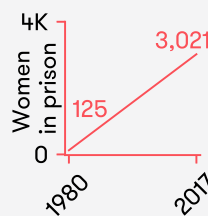
JAILS

1,694% ↑



PRISONS

2,317% ↑



Since 1980, the number of women in jail has increased 1,694%, and the number of women in prison has increased 2,317%.

GEOGRAPHY

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Top admission rates, 2015 (rate per 100K)

COUNTY	JAILS	COUNTY	PRISONS
Grayson	68,293	Bell	1,697
Clay	21,820	Fulton	1,645
Clark	20,763	Carroll	1,544
Meade	20,718	Mason	1,268
Fulton	19,611	Muhlenberg	1,236

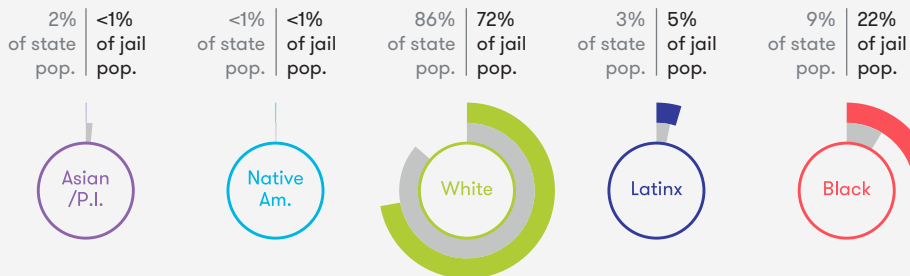
Incarceration is not only an urban phenomenon. In fact, on a per capita basis, the most rural places in the state often lock up the most people in jail and send the most people to prison.

RACE AND ETHNICITY

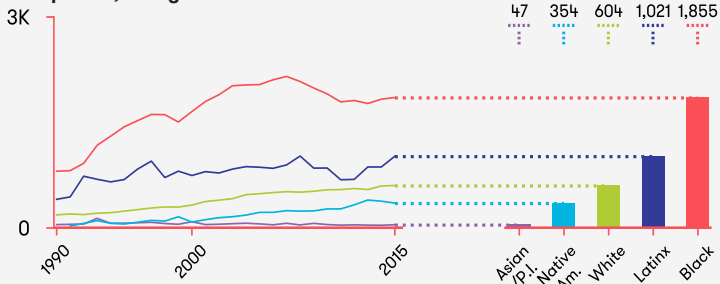


JAILS

2015



Rate per 100,000 ages 15-64



Since 1990, the Black incarceration rate has increased 130 percent. In 2015, Black people were incarcerated at 3.1 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 2001 is likely to be incarcerated in their lifetime, compared to one in 10 Latinx people and one in 29 white people.

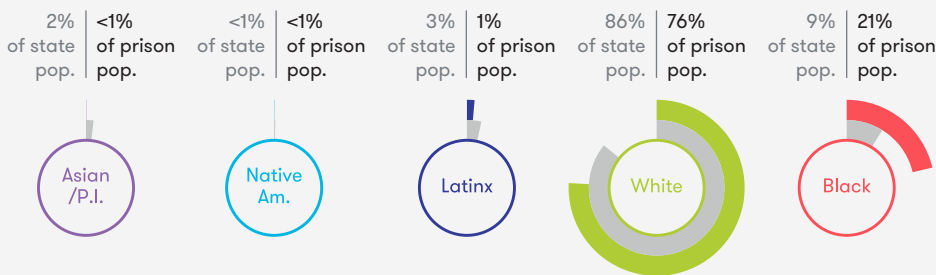
Discriminatory criminal justice policies and practices at all stages of the justice process have unjustifiably disadvantaged Black people, including through disparity in the enforcement of seemingly race-neutral laws. Studies have found that Black people are more likely to be stopped by the police, detained 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.

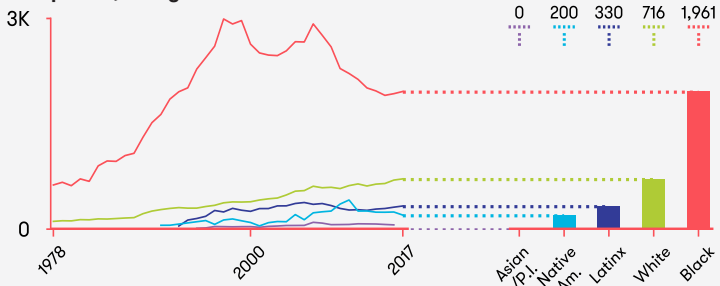


PRISONS

2017



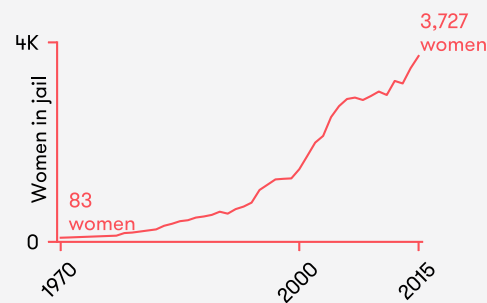
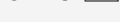
Rate per 100,000 ages 15-64



Since 1978, the Black incarceration rate has increased 212 percent. In 2017, Black people were incarcerated at 2.7 times the rate of white people.

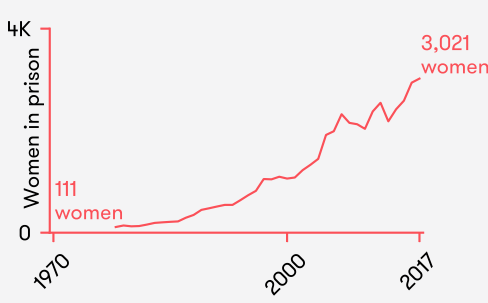
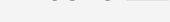
GENDER

JAILS



The number of women in Kentucky's jails has increased more than 44-fold, from 83 in 1970 to 3,727 in 2015.

PRISONS



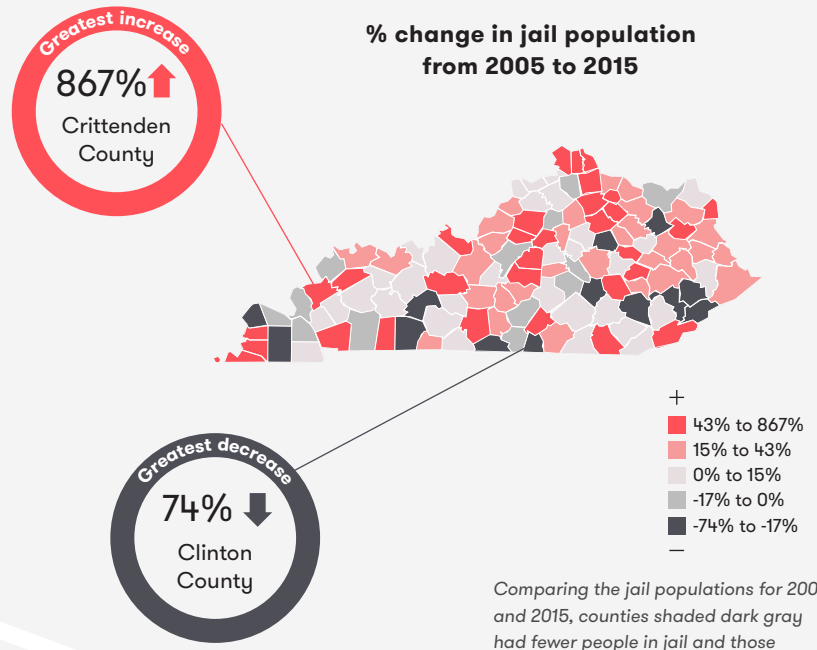
The number of women in Kentucky's prisons has increased more than 27-fold, from 111 in 1970 to 3,021 in 2017.

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.

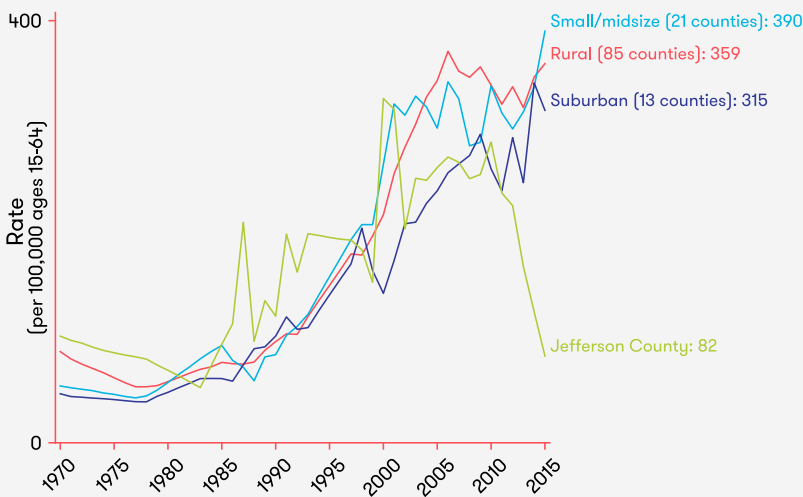
GEOGRAPHY

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.



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 66% in the state's 85 rural counties, 48% in the state's 21 small/medium counties, and 122% in the state's 13 suburban counties. It has decreased 75% 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 120 COUNTIES)

COUNTY	Rate (per 100K)	COUNTY	Annual count
Grayson	68,293	Jefferson	32,201
Clay	21,820	Fayette	17,366
Clark	20,763	Grayson	11,411
Meade	20,718	Kenton	10,257
Fulton	19,611	Hardin	8,668
Hickman	19,384	Daviess	8,327
Carlisle	19,281	Warren	8,256
Simpson	19,220	Campbell	8,186
Wayne	18,945	Boone	7,546
Henderson	18,898	Christian	7,518

PRISON ADMISSIONS (TOP 10 OF 120 COUNTIES)

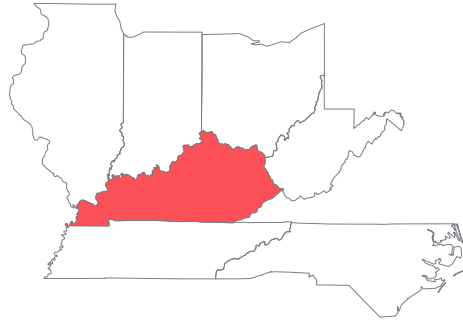
COUNTY	Rate (per 100K)	COUNTY	Annual count
Bell	1,697	Jefferson	2,137
Fulton	1,645	Fayette	960
Carroll	1,544	Kenton	763
Mason	1,268	Campbell	665
Muhlenberg	1,236	Warren	603
Henderson	1,174	Hardin	515
Union	1,127	Boone	489
Ballard	1,107	Madison	446
Hickman	1,092	Daviess	412
Campbell	1,066	Pulaski	395

JAILS



Jail admissions

Rank	State	Rate (2015)	Rate change ('05-'15)
1	Kentucky	9,631	-9%
2	Tennessee	9,609	4%
3	North Carolina	6,036	-26%
4	Indiana	5,247	-24%
5	Ohio	5,029	-15%
6	West Virginia	4,071	11%
7	Illinois	3,808	-17%



Jail pretrial population

Rank	State	Rate (2015)	Rate change ('05-'15)
1	Tennessee	339	18%
2	Kentucky	312	3%
3	Indiana	272	8%
4	North Carolina	229	-9%
5	West Virginia	192	39%
6	Illinois	157	-19%
7	Ohio	146	-4%

Jail sentenced population

Rank	State	Rate (2015)	Rate change ('05-'15)
1	Kentucky	410	0.4%
2	Tennessee	308	0.1%
3	West Virginia	173	-0.1%
4	Indiana	114	-0.3%
5	Ohio	91	-0.2%
6	Illinois	64	0.5%
7	North Carolina	49	0.6%

PRISONS



Prison admissions

Rank	State	Rate (2016)	Rate change ('06-'16)
1	Kentucky	694	39%
2	West Virginia	302	30%
3	Ohio	300	-28%
4	Illinois	299	-36%
5	Tennessee	298	-10%
6	Indiana	297	-29%
7	North Carolina	242	36%

Prison population

Rank	State	Rate (2018)	Rate change ('08-'18)
1	Kentucky	831	10%
2	Tennessee	687	5%
3	Ohio	666	-1%
4	Indiana	620	-6%
5	West Virginia	584	18%
6	North Carolina	518	-17%
7	Illinois	472	-10%

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.