Incarceration Trends in MICHIGAN

Vera

Incarceration in Local Jails and State Prisons

REGIONAL RANK
5 of 7 in total incarceration

Total people...
...locked up in Michigan

165% INCREASE

22,164 people — 1983

58,735 people — 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

Annual count

Total population 16,107

Pretrial population 8,273

1970 — 2000 — 2015
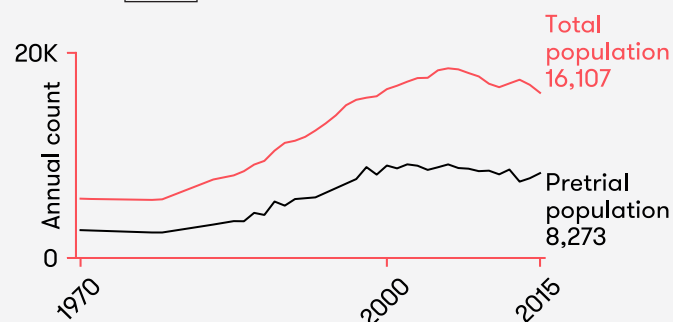
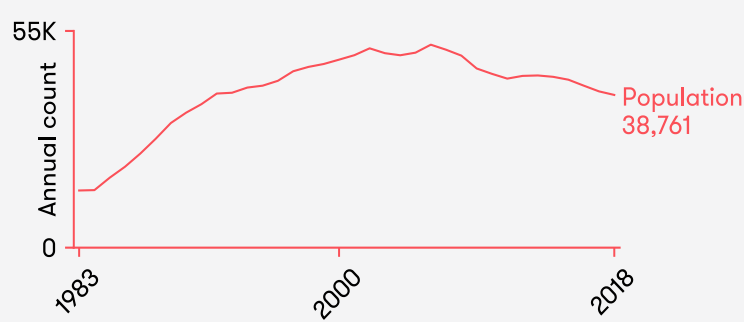**% change in jail population**

SINCE 1970	SINCE 2000
178% ▲	-2% ▼

Since 1970, the total jail population has increased 178%. In 2015, pretrial detainees constituted 51% of the total jail population in Michigan.

PRISONS

Annual count

55K

Population 38,761

1983 — 2000 — 2018

% change in prison population

SINCE 1983	SINCE 2000
167% ▲	-19% ▼

Since 1983, the prison custody population has increased 167%. In 2018, there were 38,761 people in the Michigan prison system.
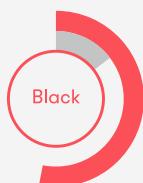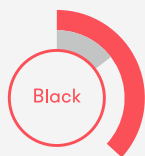
RACE
more on pg 2 →

JAILS 2015

15% of state pop. | 37% of jail pop.

Black

PRISONS 2017

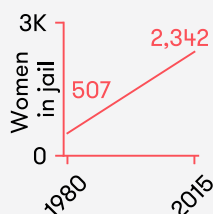15% of state pop. | 53% of prison pop.

Black

In Michigan, Black people constituted 15% of state residents, but 37% of people in jail and 53% of people in prison.
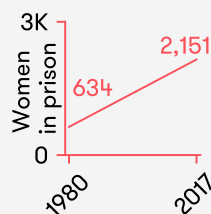
GENDER
more on pg 2 →

JAILS

362% ▲

Women in jail

3K

507 → 2,342

1980 — 2015

PRISONS

239% ▲

Women in prison

3K

634 → 2,151

1980 — 2017

Since 1980, the number of women in jail has increased 362%, and the number of women in prison has increased 239%.
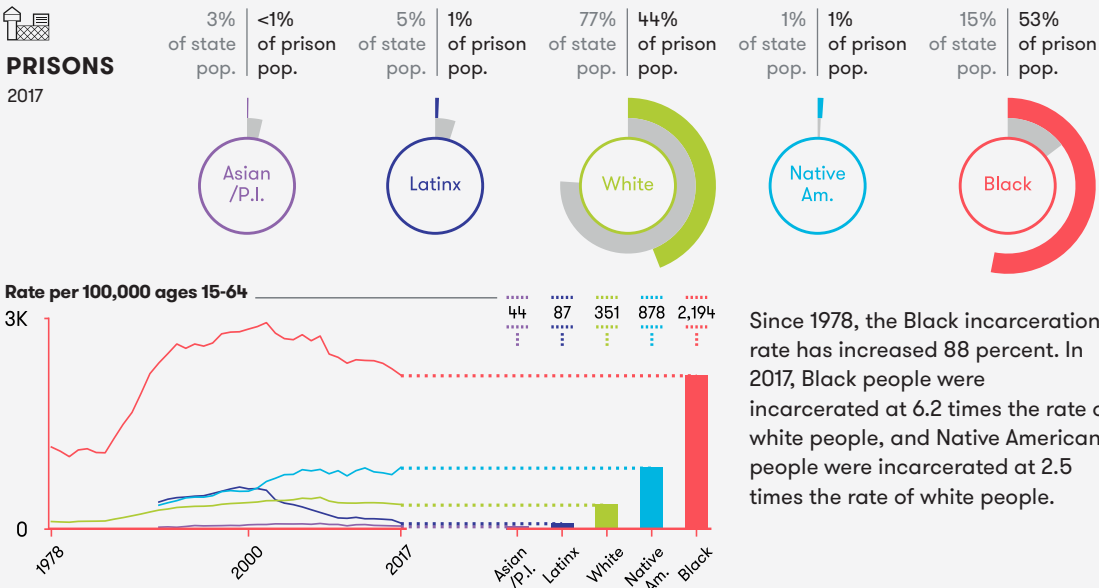
GEOGRAPHY
more on pg 3 →

Top admission rates, 2015 (rate per 100K)

COUNTY	JAILS	COUNTY	PRISONS
Presque Isle	24,048	Chippewa	371
Leelanau	19,232	Branch	345
Clare	16,225	Alger	317
Crawford	15,710	Gratiot	309
Lake	14,430	Muskegon	301

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

Asian/P.I.	White	Latinx	Native Am.	Black
3% of state pop. | <1% of jail pop.	77% of state pop. | 54% of jail pop.	5% of state pop. | 4% of jail pop.	1% of state pop. | 1% of jail pop.	15% of state pop. | 37% of jail pop.

Rate per 100,000 ages 15-64

800

11	171	231	336	614

1990   2000   2015

Asian/P.I.   White   Latinx   Native Am.   Black

Since 1990, the Black incarceration rate has increased 20 percent. In 2015, Black people were incarcerated at 3.6 times the rate of white people, and Native American people were incarcerated at 2.0 times the rate of white people.

PRISONS
2017

Asian/P.I.	Latinx	White	Native Am.	Black
3% of state pop. | <1% of prison pop.	5% of state pop. | 1% of prison pop.	77% of state pop. | 44% of prison pop.	1% of state pop. | 1% of prison pop.	15% of state pop. | 53% of prison pop.

Rate per 100,000 ages 15-64

3K

44	87	351	878	2,194

1978   2000   2017

Asian/P.I.   Latinx   White   Native Am.   Black

Since 1978, the Black incarceration rate has increased 88 percent. In 2017, Black people were incarcerated at 6.2 times the rate of white people, and Native American people were incarcerated at 2.5 times the rate of white people.
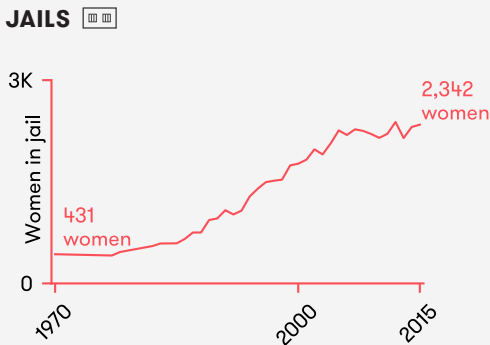
NATIONAL CONTEXT

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.

GENDER

JAILS

3K

431 women

2,342 women

1970   2000   2015

The number of women in Michigan's jails has increased more than fivefold, from 431 in 1970 to 2,343 in 2015.

PRISONS

3K

621 women

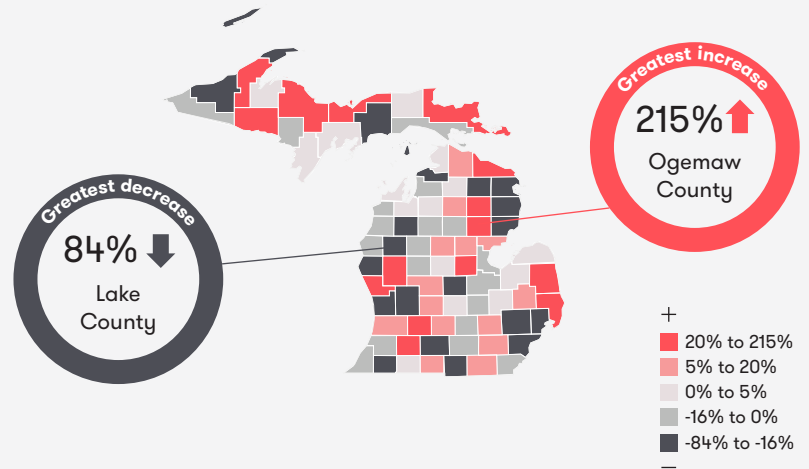2,151 women

1970   2000   2017
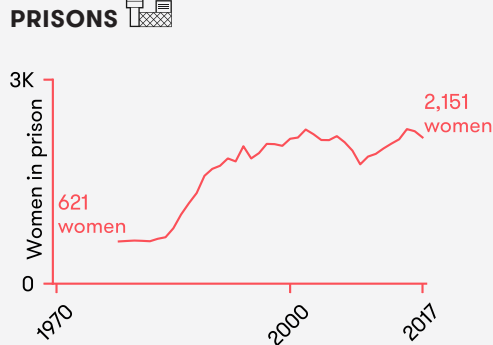
The number of women in Michigan's prisons has increased more than threefold, from 621 in 1978 to 2,151 in 2017.

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.
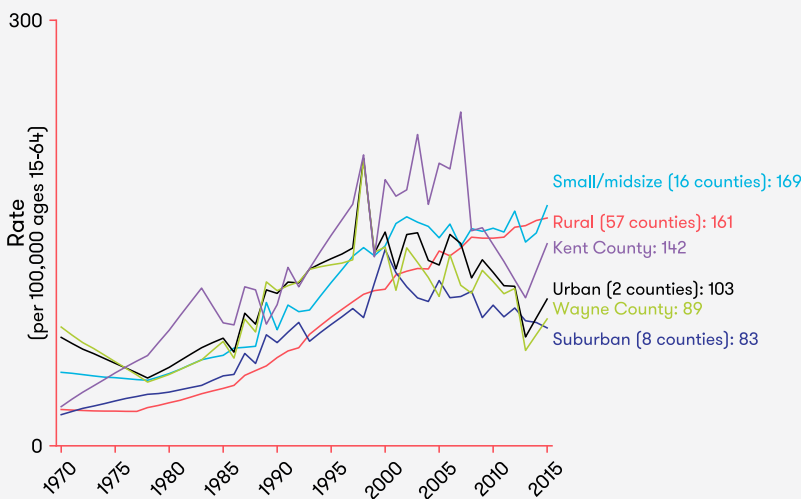
Statewide trends alone do not tell the whole story of incarceration: there is wide variation in the use of incarceration across the state. Today, the highest rates of prison admissions are in rural counties, and pretrial detention continues to increase in smaller counties even as it is on the decline 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

Greatest decrease
84% ↓
Lake County

Greatest increase
215% ↑
Ogemaw County

+
- 20% to 215%
- 5% to 20%
- 0% to 5%
- -16% to 0%
- -84% to -16%
−

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

Rate (per 100,000 ages 15-64)

Small/midsize (16 counties): 169
Rural (57 counties): 161
Kent County: 142
Urban (2 counties): 103
Wayne County: 89
Suburban (8 counties): 83

Since 2000, the state's use of pretrial detention has taken different trajectories in different types of counties. The pretrial incarceration rate has increased 45% in the state's 57 rural counties, and 20% in the state's 16 small/medium counties. It has decreased 40% in the state's eight suburban counties, and 31% in the state's two urban 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 🔲

2015   (TOP 10 OF 83 COUNTIES)

COUNTY	Rate (per 100K)	COUNTY	Annual count
Presque Isle	24,048	Wayne	28,251
Leelanau	19,232	Kent	24,598
Clare	16,225	Oakland	19,009
Crawford	15,710	Macomb	17,291
Lake	14,430	Genesee	15,853
Calhoun	12,955	Kalamazoo	13,036
Delta	12,880	Calhoun	11,251
Newaygo	12,312	Ingham	10,190
Roscommon	11,506	Washtenaw	8,656
Isabella	11,479	Muskegon	8,002

PRISON ADMISSIONS 🏚️

2015   (TOP 10 OF 83 COUNTIES)

COUNTY	Rate (per 100K)	COUNTY	Annual count
Chippewa	371	Wayne	2,017
Branch	345	Oakland	998
Alger	317	Kent	832
Gratiot	309	Macomb	717
Muskegon	301	Genesee	425
Berrien	276	Ingham	341
Luce	258	Muskegon	339
Emmet	256	Saginaw	279
Cheboygan	255	Berrien	273
Roscommon	247	Kalamazoo	241

JAILS

Jail admissions

Rank	State	Rate (2015)	Rate change ('05–'15)
1	Iowa	6,216	-11%
2	Wisconsin	5,352	-18%
3	Minnesota	5,268	-6%
4	Indiana	5,247	-24%
5	Ohio	5,029	-15%
6	**Michigan**	4,680	-21%
7	Illinois	3,808	-17%

Jail pretrial population

Rank	State	Rate (2015)	Rate change ('05–'15)
1	Indiana	272	8%
2	Wisconsin	158	1%
3	Iowa	158	5%
4	Illinois	157	-19%
5	Ohio	146	-4%
6	**Michigan**	126	-4%
7	Minnesota	111	5%

Jail sentenced population

Rank	State	Rate (2015)	Rate change ('05–'15)
1	Wisconsin	181	-0.2%
2	**Michigan**	119	-0.2%
3	Indiana	114	-0.3%
4	Ohio	91	-0.2%
5	Minnesota	75	-0.2%
6	Illinois	64	0.5%
7	Iowa	54	0.2%

PRISONS

Prison admissions

Rank	State	Rate (2016)	Rate change ('06–'16)
1	Ohio	300	-28%
2	Illinois	299	-36%
3	Iowa	298	-11%
4	Indiana	297	-29%
5	Minnesota	223	6%
6	**Michigan**	192	-12%
7	Wisconsin	175	-24%

Prison population

Rank	State	Rate (2018)	Rate change ('08–'18)
1	Ohio	666	-1%
2	Wisconsin	637	3%
3	Indiana	620	-6%
4	**Michigan**	594	-18%
5	Illinois	472	-10%
6	Iowa	469	5%
7	Minnesota	279	-0.7%

Credits

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.

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