

Incarceration Trends in MONTANA

Incarceration in Local Jails and State Prisons



REGIONAL RANK

4 of 7 in total incarceration

Total people...

...locked up in Montana

355%

INCREASE

1,206 people

5,489 people

1983

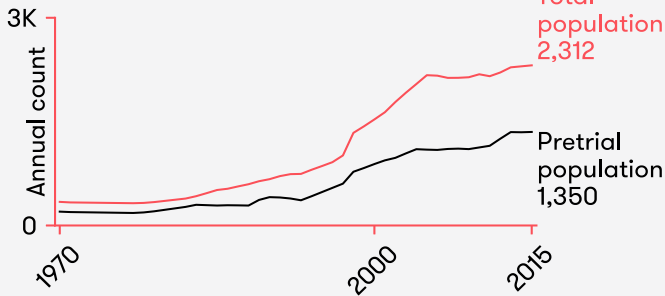
2015

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

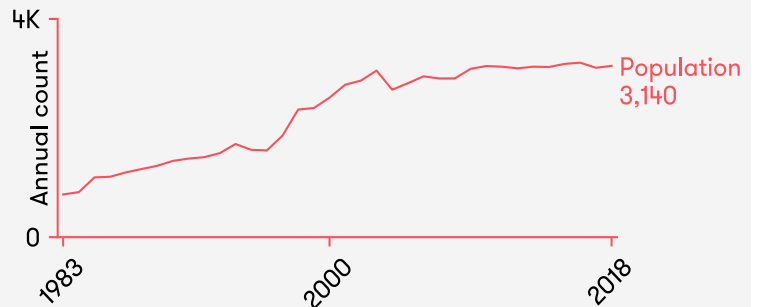
SINCE 2000

578% ↑

51% ↑

Since 1970, the total jail population has increased 578%. In 2015, pretrial detainees constituted 58% of the total jail population in Montana.

PRISONS



% change in prison population

SINCE 1983

SINCE 2000

301% ↑

23% ↑

Since 1983, the prison custody population has increased 301%. In 2018, there were 3,140 people in the Montana prison system.

RACE

more on pg 2 →

JAILS 2015

6% of state pop. | 25% of jail pop.



PRISONS 2017

6% of state pop. | 22% of prison pop.



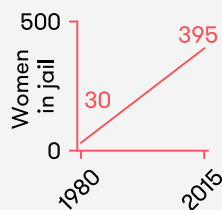
In Montana, Native American people constituted 6% of state residents, but 25% of people in jail and 22% of people in prison.

GENDER

more on pg 2 →

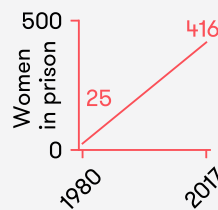
JAILS

1,197% ↑



PRISONS

1,564% ↑



Since 1980, the number of women in jail has increased 1,197%, and the number of women in prison has increased 1,564%.

GEOGRAPHY

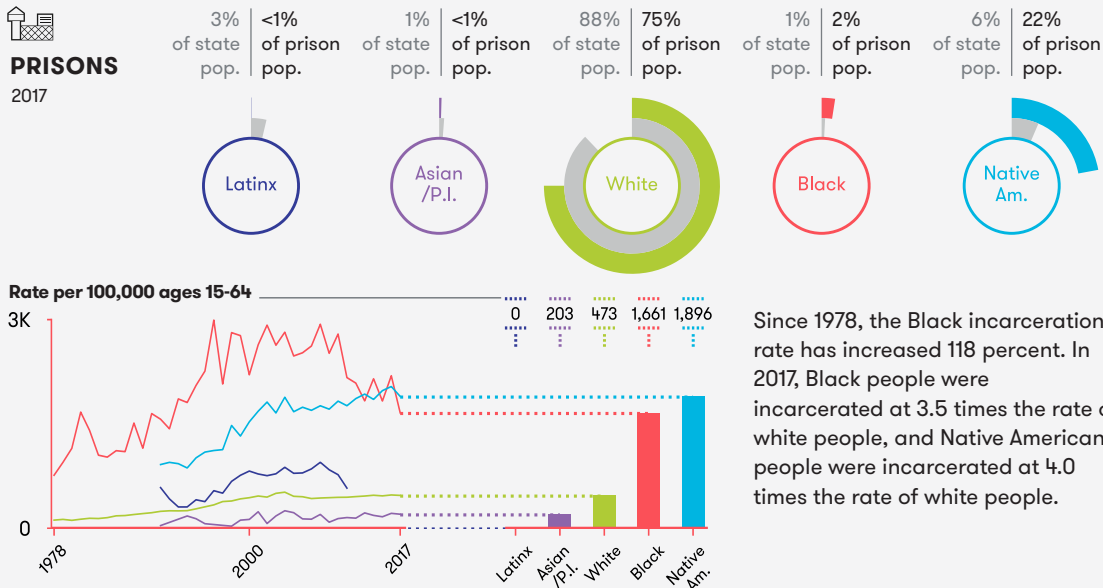
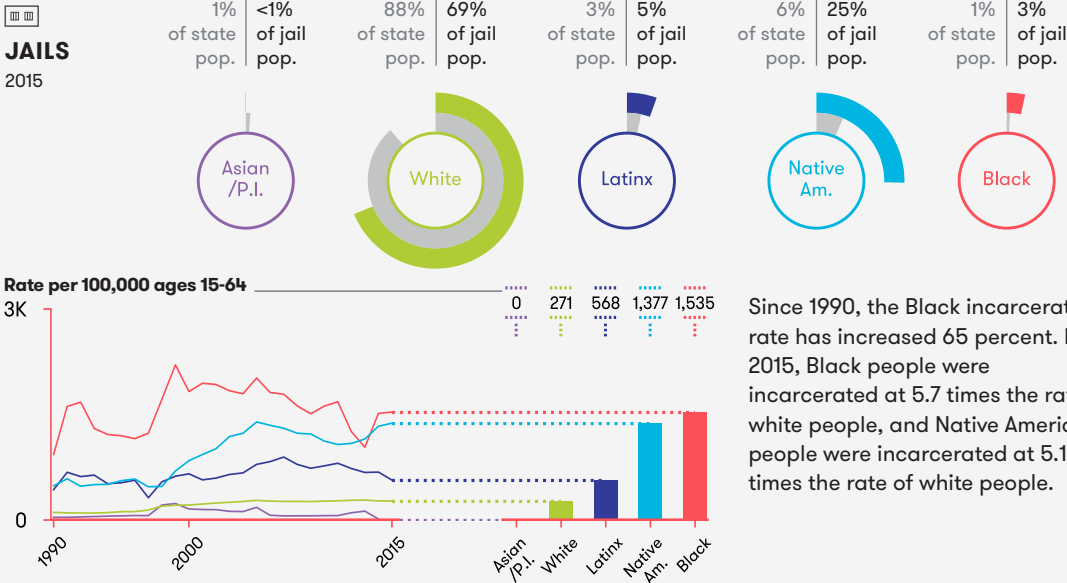
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Top admission rates, 2015 (rate per 100K)

COUNTY	JAILS
Hill	20,055
Valley	13,694
Meagher	13,150
Broadwater	12,983
Deer Lodge	11,524

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



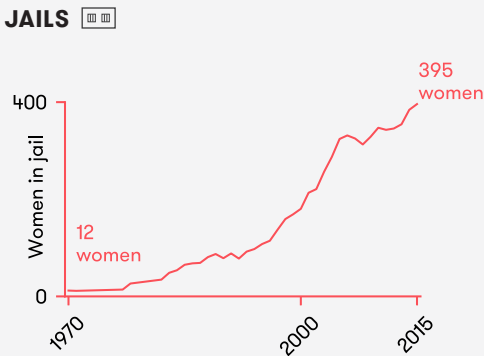
NATIONAL CONTEXT

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.

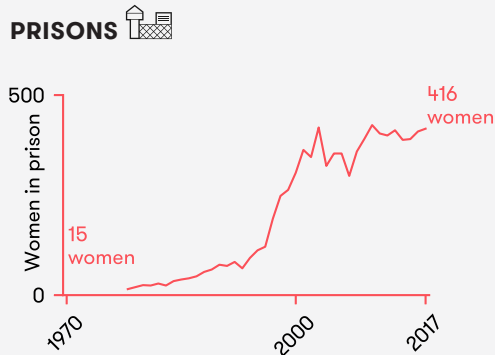
Discriminatory criminal justice policies and practices at all stages of the justice process have unjustifiably disadvantaged Black people, including through disparity in the enforcement of seemingly race-neutral laws. Studies have found that Black people are more likely to be stopped by the police, detained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



The number of women in Montana's jails has increased more than 32-fold, from 12 in 1970 to 396 in 2015.

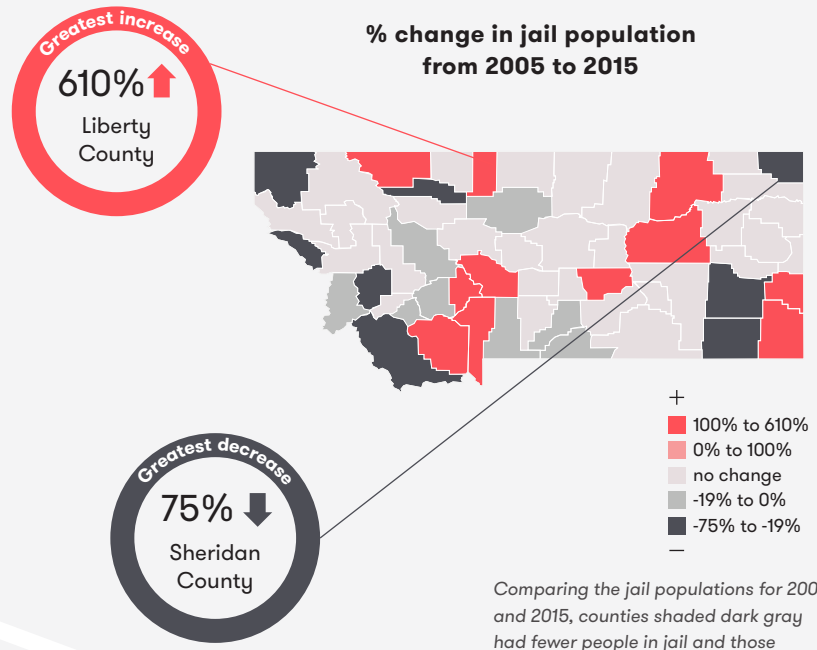


The number of women in Montana's prisons has increased more than 27-fold, from 15 in 1978 to 416 in 2017.

NATIONAL CONTEXT

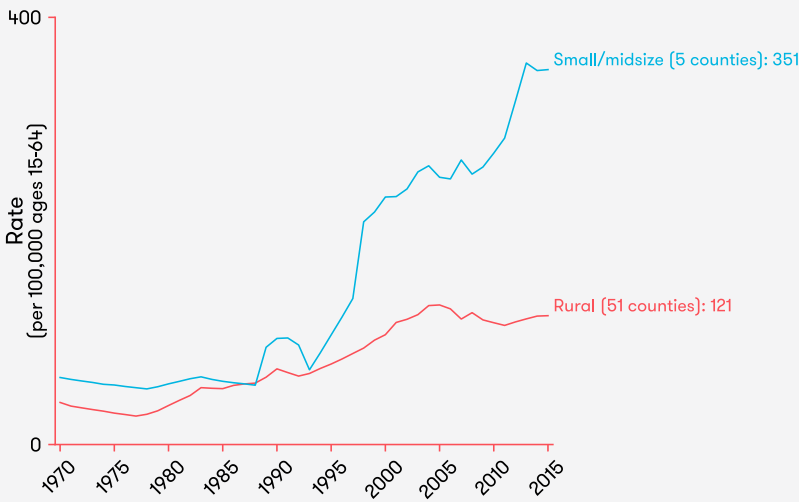
Although men's jail admissions have declined by 26 percent since 2008, women's admissions have increased both as a total number and as a proportion of all jail admissions. Women now make up almost one out of every four jail admissions, up from fewer than one in 10 in 1983. Since 1970, the number of women 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.



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 51% in the state's five small/medium counties, and 17% in the state's 51 rural 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 115 COUNTIES)

COUNTY	Rate (per 100K)
Hill	20,055
Valley	13,694
Meagher	13,150
Broadwater	12,983
Deer Lodge	11,524
Lake	11,390
Silver Bow	10,651
Mineral	10,590
Dawson	9,037
Cascade	8,965

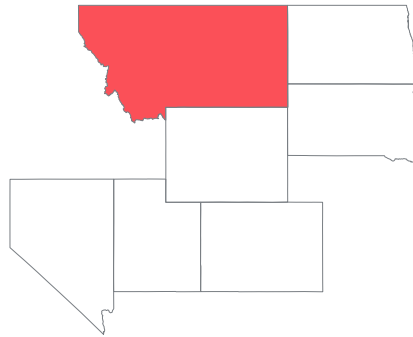
COUNTY	Annual count
Yellowstone	6,922
Missoula	5,834
Cascade	4,717
Gallatin	4,137
Lewis and Clark	3,101
Silver Bow	2,428
Flathead	2,261
Hill	2,086
Lake	2,000
Ravalli	1,315

JAILS



Jail admissions

Rank	State	Rate (2015)	Rate change ('05-'15)
1	South Dakota	11,426	-3%
2	North Dakota	8,529	10%
3	Wyoming	8,021	-16%
4	Nevada	7,517	-22%
5	Montana	6,753	-9%
6	Colorado	5,782	-26%
7	Utah	5,457	-17%



Jail pretrial population

Rank	State	Rate (2015)	Rate change ('05-'15)
1	South Dakota	231	58%
2	Wyoming	222	-14%
3	Montana	203	17%
4	Nevada	202	-36%
5	North Dakota	201	68%
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	Montana	145	-0.1%
6	North Dakota	90	0.0%
7	South Dakota	77	-0.5%

PRISONS



Prison admissions

Rank	State	Rate (2016)	Rate change ('06-'16)
1	South Dakota	552	15%
2	Montana	402	9%
3	Nevada	331	-9%
4	North Dakota	325	28%
5	Wyoming	263	10%
6	Colorado	236	-30%
7	Utah	173	-19%

Prison population

Rank	State	Rate (2018)	Rate change ('08-'18)
1	South Dakota	713	11%
2	Nevada	700	-1%
3	Wyoming	691	22%
4	Montana	558	3%
5	Colorado	533	-22%
6	North Dakota	345	4%
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.