

Incarceration in Local Jails and State Prisons



REGIONAL RANK

6 of 6 in total incarceration

Total people...

...locked up in Rhode Island

389%

INCREASE

664 people

3,248 people

1978

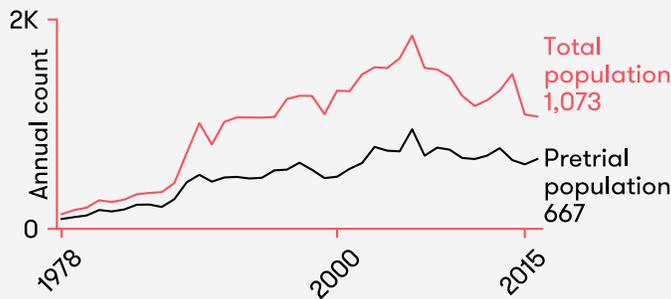
2015

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*

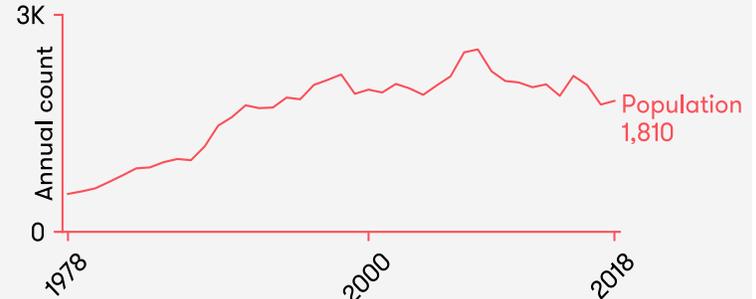


% change in jail population

SINCE 1970	SINCE 2000
680% ↑	-17% ↓

Since 1978, the total jail population has increased 680%. In 2015, pretrial detainees constituted 56% of the total jail population in Rhode Island.

PRISONS



% change in prison population

SINCE 1983	SINCE 2000
245% ↑	-8% ↓

Since 1978, the prison custody population has increased 245%. In 2018, there were 1,810 people in the Rhode Island prison system.

RACE

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TOTAL INCARCERATION 2015

7% of state pop. | 30% of incarcerated pop.



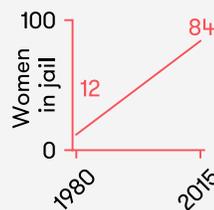
In Rhode Island, Black people constituted 7% of state residents, but 30% of the incarcerated population.

GENDER

more on pg 2 →

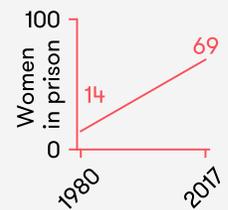
JAILS*

600% ↑



PRISONS

393% ↑



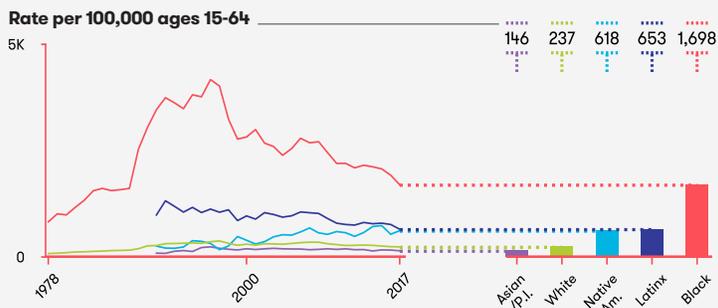
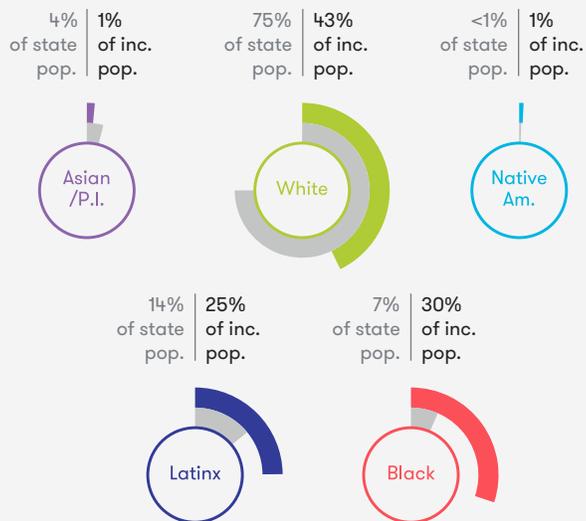
Since 1980, the number of women in jail has increased 600%, and the number of women in prison has increased 393%.

RACE AND ETHNICITY



TOTAL INCARCERATION

2017



Since 1978, the Black incarceration rate has increased 106 percent. In 2017, Black people were incarcerated at 7.2 times the rate of white people, and Native American people were incarcerated at 2.6 times the rate of white people.

NATIONAL CONTEXT

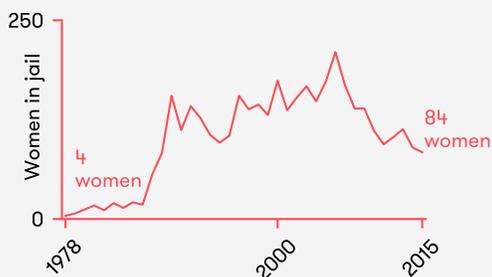
The overrepresentation of Black Americans in the justice system is well documented. Black men constitute about 13 percent of the male population, but about 35 percent of those incarcerated. One in five Black people born in 2001 is likely to be incarcerated in their lifetime, compared to one in 10 Latinx 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.

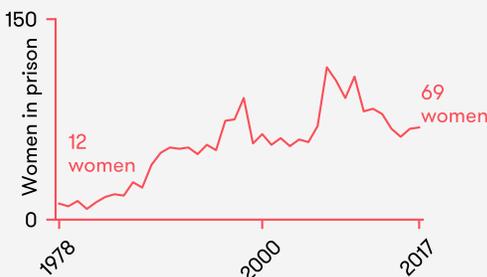
GENDER

JAILS*



The number of women in Rhode Island's jails has increased more than 27-fold, from 4 in 1978 to 108 in 2016.

PRISONS



The number of women in Rhode Island's prisons has increased more than fivefold, from 12 in 1978 to 69 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.

JAILS*



Jail admissions

Rank	State	Rate (2015)	Rate change ('05-'15)
1	Maine	4,520	-2%
2	New Hampshire	2,329	10%
3	Massachusetts	1,274	-37%
4	Vermont	408	-25%
5	Connecticut	232	-19%
6	Rhode Island	89	-31%

Jail pretrial population

Rank	State	Rate (2015)	Rate change ('05-'15)
1	Connecticut	137	-13%
2	Maine	126	12%
3	Massachusetts	126	7%
4	New Hampshire	124	7%
5	Vermont	87	-2%
6	Rhode Island	86	-16%

Jail sentenced population

Rank	State	Rate (2015)	Rate change ('05-'15)
1	Massachusetts	107	-0.4%
2	Maine	79	0.2%
3	New Hampshire	78	0.0%
4	Rhode Island	67	-0.5%
5	Connecticut	54	-0.5%
6	Vermont	23	-0.4%

PRISONS



Prison admissions

Rank	State	Rate (2016)	Rate change ('06-'16)
1	New Hampshire	173	-41%
2	Maine	79	14%
3	Massachusetts	45	-26%

Prison population

Rank	State	Rate (2018)	Rate change ('08-'18)
1	Connecticut	400	-33%
2	Vermont	298	-20%
3	New Hampshire	293	-1%
4	Maine	282	15%
5	Rhode Island	255	-27%
6	Massachusetts	188	-27%



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. Rhode Island does not have local jails, and instead uses a “unified” corrections system whereby the state administers facilities that hold people in both pretrial and sentenced status. The “jails” data in this document includes people in pretrial status and with sentences of 1 year or less. 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.