

## Incarceration in Local Jails and State Prisons



### REGIONAL RANK

**2** of 7 in total incarceration

Total people...

...locked up in Tennessee



13,944 people

47,697 people

1983

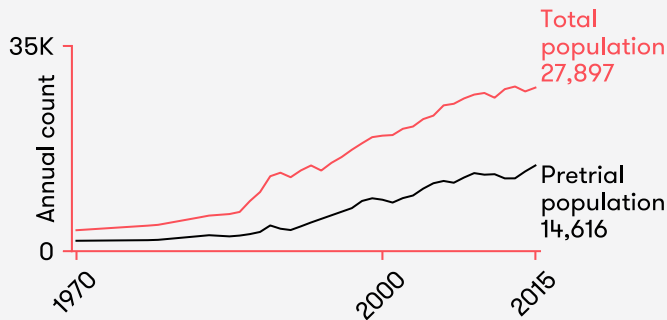
2015

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

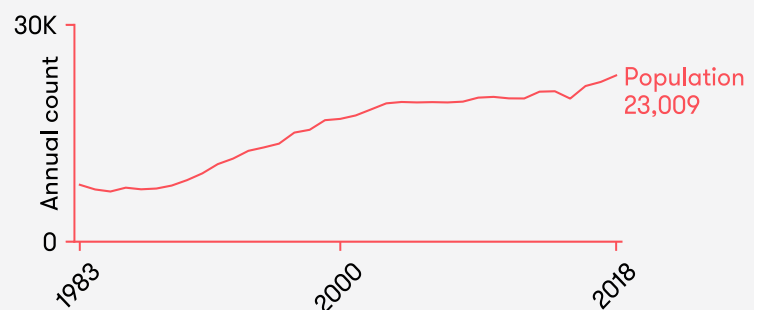


#### % change in jail population

SINCE 1970	SINCE 2000
681% ↑	42% ↑

Since 1970, the total jail population has increased 681%. In 2015, pretrial detainees constituted 52% of the total jail population in Tennessee.

### PRISONS



#### % change in prison population

SINCE 1983	SINCE 2000
192% ↑	35% ↑

Since 1983, the prison custody population has increased 192%. In 2018, there were 23,009 people in the Tennessee prison system.

## RACE

more on pg 2 →

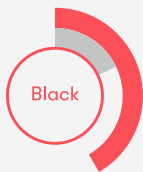
### JAILS

18% of state pop. | 36% of jail pop.



### PRISONS

18% of state pop. | 42% of prison pop.



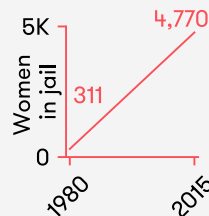
In Tennessee, Black people constituted 18% of state residents, but 36% of people in jail and 42% of people in prison.

## GENDER

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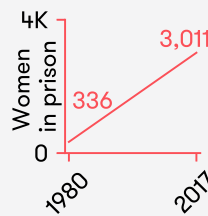
### JAILS

1,431% ↑



### PRISONS

796% ↑



Since 1980, the number of women in jail has increased 1,431%, and the number of women in prison has increased 796%.

## GEOGRAPHY

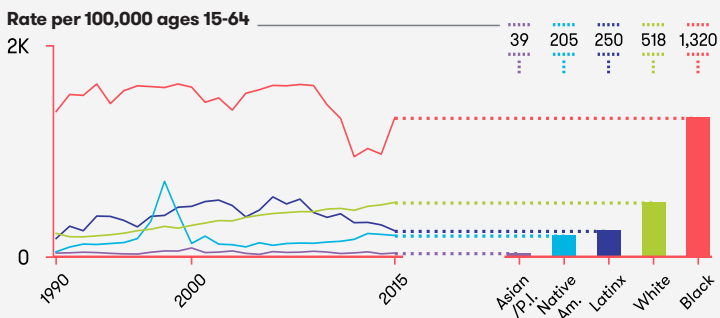
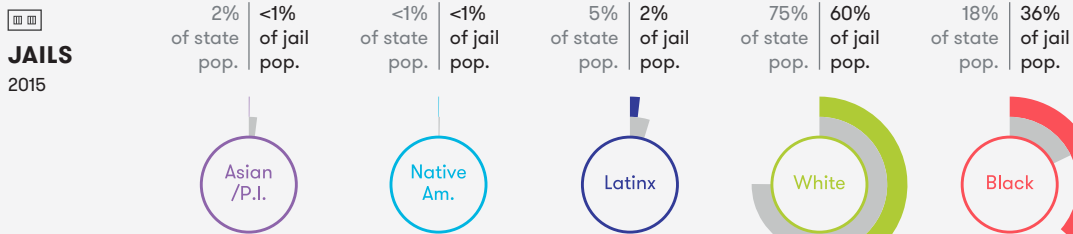
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### Top admission rates, 2015 (rate per 100K)

COUNTY	JAILS	COUNTY	PRISONS
Lauderdale	48,702	Hancock	1,088
Marshall	22,343	Lawrence	760
Clay	17,592	Moore	754
Hancock	17,475	DeKalb	713
Henderson	16,347	Grundy	703

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



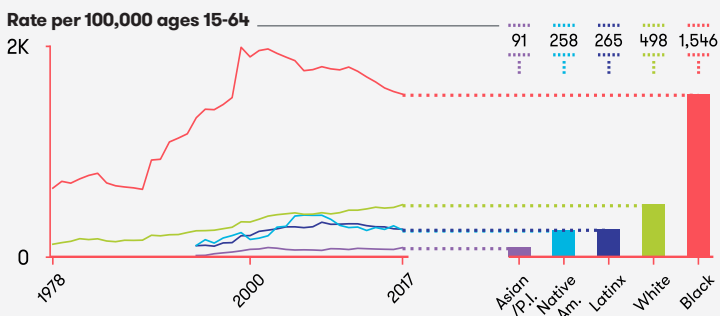
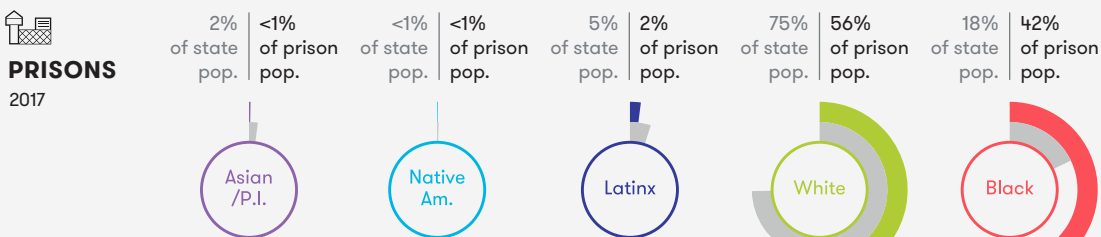
Since 1990, the Black incarceration rate has decreased 4 percent. In 2015, Black people were incarcerated at 2.5 times the rate of white people.

### 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 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.

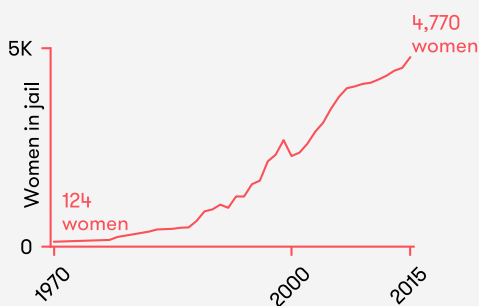
Nationally, Latinx people are also overrepresented in prisons and jails, yet common data misclassification leads to distorted, lower estimates of Latinx incarceration rates and distorted, higher estimates of white incarceration rates. Smaller and inconsistent data reporting make it difficult to measure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



Since 1978, the Black incarceration rate has increased 136 percent. In 2017, Black people were incarcerated at 3.1 times the rate of white people.

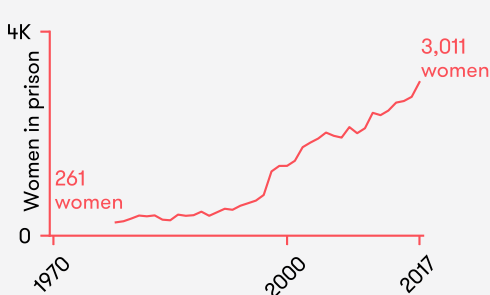
## GENDER

### JAILS



The number of women in Tennessee's jails has increased more than 38-fold, from 124 in 1970 to 4,770 in 2015.

### PRISONS



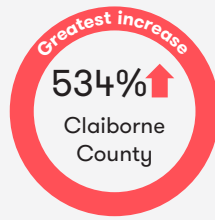
The number of women in Tennessee's prisons has increased more than 11-fold, from 261 in 1970 to 3,011 in 2017.

### NATIONAL CONTEXT

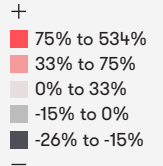
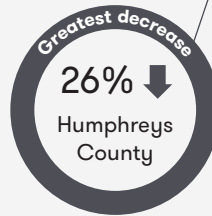
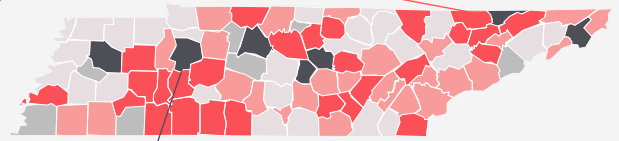
Although men's jail admissions have declined by 26 percent since 2008, women's admissions have increased both as a total number and as a proportion of all jail admissions. Women now make up almost one out of every four jail admissions, up from fewer than one in 10 in 1983. Since 1970, the number of women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

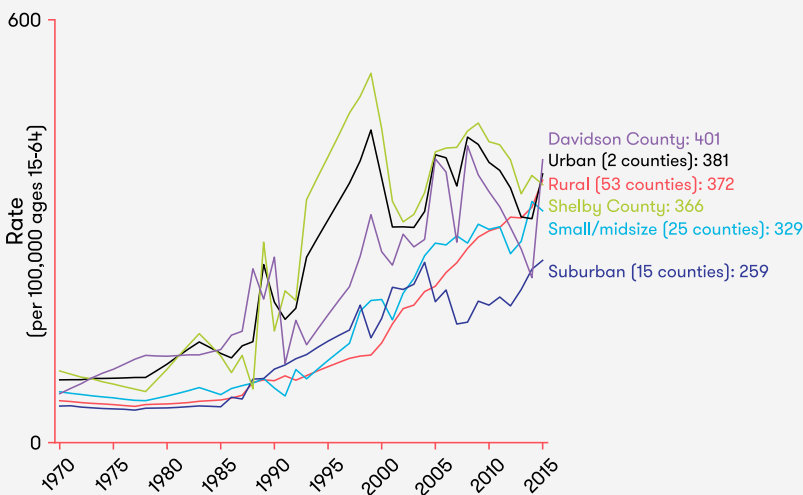


## % change in jail population from 2005 to 2015



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 62% in the state's 25 small/medium counties, 47% in the state's 15 suburban counties, 2% in the state's two urban counties, and 163% in the state's 53 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 (TOP 10 OF 95 COUNTIES)

COUNTY	Rate (per 100K)	COUNTY	Annual count
Lauderdale	48,702	Davidson	55,768
Marshall	22,343	Shelby	49,406
Clay	17,592	Knox	24,474
Hancock	17,475	Hamilton	21,570
Henderson	16,347	Rutherford	15,708
Decatur	16,332	Sumner	10,165
Benton	16,140	Montgomery	9,376
Hardeman	15,859	Madison	9,334
Cheatham	15,666	Lauderdale	8,947
Dyer	15,507	Williamson	7,096

## PRISON ADMISSIONS (TOP 10 OF 95 COUNTIES)

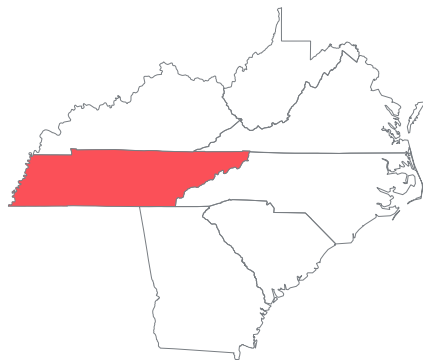
COUNTY	Rate (per 100K)	COUNTY	Annual count
Hancock	1,088	Shelby	2,190
Lawrence	760	Davidson	1,705
Moore	754	Knox	1,032
DeKalb	713	Hamilton	510
Grundy	703	Rutherford	462
Clay	677	Sullivan	456
Hamblen	670	Sumner	319
Cumberland	634	Madison	307
Fentress	611	Blount	284
Trousdale	610	Bradley	275

## JAILS



## Jail admissions

Rank	State	Rate (2015)	Rate change ('05-'15)
1	Kentucky	9,631	-9%
2	<b>Tennessee</b>	9,609	4%
3	Georgia	7,747	-26%
4	South Carolina	6,559	-15%
5	North Carolina	6,036	-26%
6	Virginia	5,547	-20%
7	West Virginia	4,071	11%



## Jail pretrial population

Rank	State	Rate (2015)	Rate change ('05-'15)
1	<b>Tennessee</b>	339	18%
2	Georgia	313	-30%
3	Kentucky	312	3%
4	South Carolina	252	-17%
5	Virginia	234	2%
6	North Carolina	229	-9%
7	West Virginia	192	39%

## Jail sentenced population

Rank	State	Rate (2015)	Rate change ('05-'15)
1	Kentucky	410	0.4%
2	<b>Tennessee</b>	308	0.1%
3	Virginia	283	0.0%
4	Georgia	242	0.3%
5	West Virginia	173	-0.1%
6	South Carolina	107	0.1%
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	<b>Tennessee</b>	298	-10%
4	Georgia	258	-27%
5	North Carolina	242	36%
6	Virginia	216	-10%
7	South Carolina	210	-35%

## Prison population

Rank	State	Rate (2018)	Rate change ('08-'18)
1	Kentucky	831	10%
2	Georgia	791	-2%
3	<b>Tennessee</b>	687	5%
4	Virginia	662	-6%
5	South Carolina	587	-26%
6	West Virginia	584	18%
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](http://www.vera.org/incarceration-trends-fact-sheets-data-and-methods.pdf) for complete details. County-level data is available at [trends.vera.org](http://trends.vera.org).

## Acknowledgments

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## For more information

For more information, visit [www.vera.org](http://www.vera.org). For more information about this fact sheet, contact Jacob Kang-Brown, senior research associate, at [jkangbrown@vera.org](mailto:jkangbrown@vera.org).