

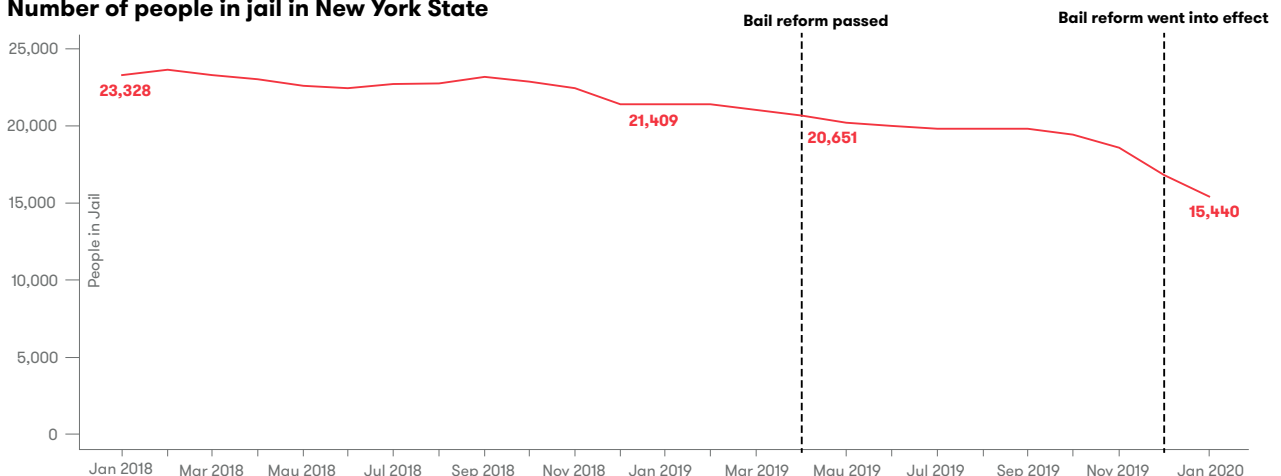
Bail Reform's Impact on Jail Incarceration: What We Know Thus Far

January 29, 2020

Although it is much too early to assess the long-term impact of New York bail reform, which went into effect on January 1, one thing is certain: jail incarceration counts have fallen across the state. On any given day in January 2019, there were more than 21,000 people incarcerated in local jails across New York State.¹ One year later, on any given day in January 2020, there were only 15,000 people in New York jails, a 27.9 percent drop.² That means that on any given day, approximately 6,000 additional people who would otherwise have been held pretrial across the state were free to return to their families, their jobs, and their homes. Counties saved thousands of dollars by not incarcerating people charged with low-level offenses who have not been convicted of a crime. And New York State got closer to ending mass incarceration.

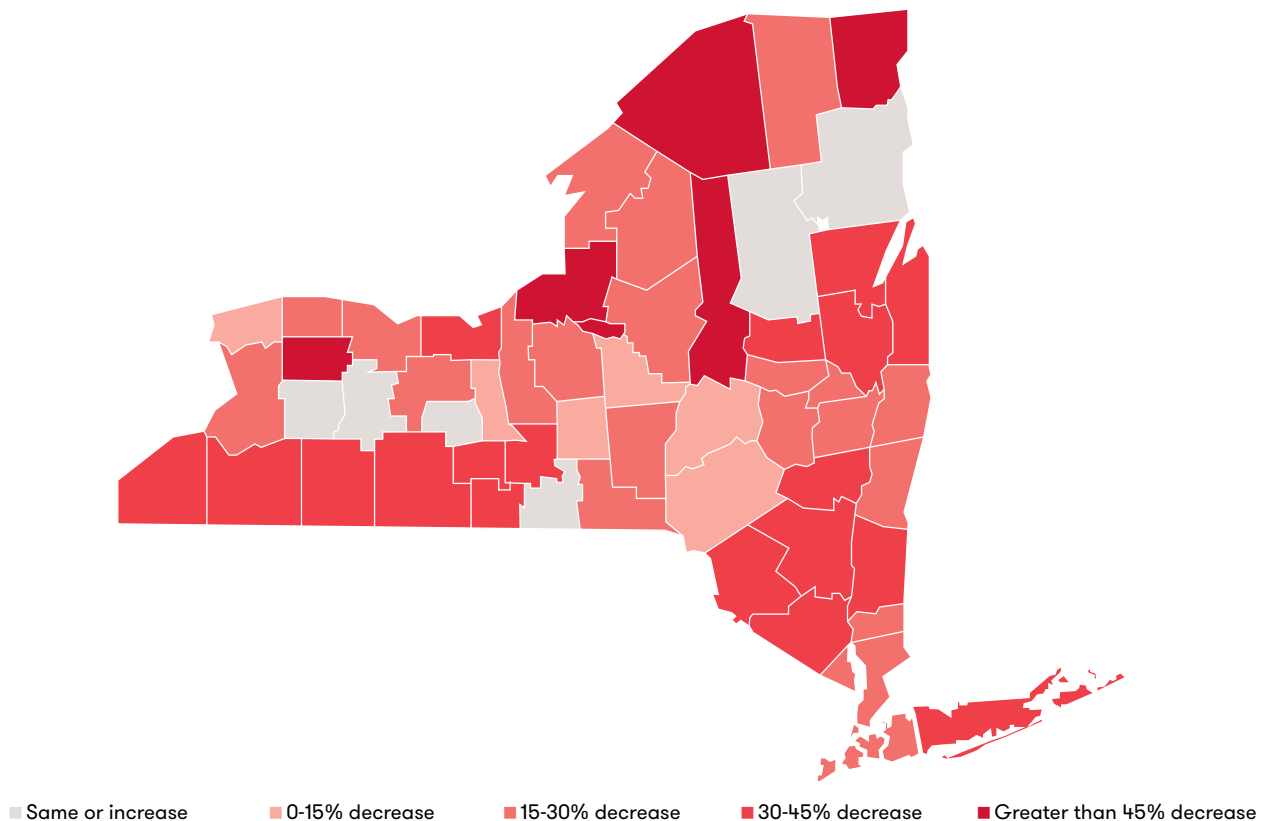
The drop in jail population did not happen overnight. As locales began preparing for bail reform to go into effect, the numbers of people incarcerated pretrial decreased. The greatest drop in the jail population, in fact, was between November and December 2019, when the jail population across the state dropped 9.7 percent. Between December 2019 and January 2020, the numbers continued to fall—this time by 8.5 percent. (See Figure below.)

Number of people in jail in New York State



Jail populations decreased across New York State, with counties outside New York City accounting for two-thirds of the change. Between January 2019 and January 2020, the number of people incarcerated in 54 of New York's 62 counties fell, including in some places by more than 50 percent. In Genesee County, which had the largest drop, the county jail population fell by 60.5 percent. Large counties—those that have more than 250,000 residents—showed the biggest drop in jail incarceration rates.³ The smallest counties—those with fewer than 60,000 residents—in general had the smallest jail population drops.⁴

Change in average daily jail census between 2019 and 2020



The following table shows how jail incarceration numbers have changed across New York State in the past year.

County	Region	January 2019	December 2019	January 2020	Change from 1/19 to 1/20	Percentage change from 1/19 to 1/20
Albany	Capital Region	491	356	386	-105	-21.4%
Allegany	Western New York	107	80	65	-42	-39.3%
Broome	Southern Tier	440	380	365	-75	-17.0%
Cattaraugus	Western New York	151	114	105	-46	-30.5%
Cayuga	Central New York	159	137	125	-34	-21.4%
Chautauqua	Western New York	233	180	148	-85	-36.5%
Chemung	Southern Tier	139	103	90	-49	-35.3%
Chenango	Southern Tier	90	72	63	-27	-30.0%
Clinton	North Country	222	130	100	-122	-55.0%
Columbia	Capital Region	73	70	53	-20	-27.4%
Cortland	Central New York	64	58	56	-8	-12.5%
Delaware	Southern Tier	64	45	60	-4	-6.2%
Dutchess	Hudson Valley	362	250	200	-162	-44.8%
Erie	Western New York	875	707	659	-216	-24.7%
Essex	North Country	69	61	69	0	0.0%
Franklin	North Country	85	76	60	-25	-29.4%
Fulton	Mohawk Valley	96	68	62	-34	-35.4%
Genesee	Finger Lakes	114	62	45	-69	-60.5%
Greene	Capital Region	39	33	25	-14	-35.9%
Hamilton	North Country	1	4	1	0	0.0%
Herkimer	Mohawk Valley	60	38	28	-32	-53.3%
Jefferson	North Country	130	124	100	-30	-23.1%
Lewis	North Country	29	29	24	-5	-17.2%
Livingston	Finger Lakes	109	123	111	2	1.8%
Madison	Central New York	94	85	84	-10	-10.6%
Monroe	Finger Lakes	1,094	815	795	-299	-27.3%
Montgomery	Mohawk Valley	96	80	74	-22	-22.9%
Nassau	Long Island	1,043	841	841	-202	-19.4%
New York City	New York City	7,880	6,239	5,659	-2,221	-28.2%
Niagara	Western New York	352	327	300	-52	-14.8%
Oneida	Mohawk Valley	360	295	277	-83	-23.1%
Onondaga	Central New York	872	687	666	-206	-23.6%
Ontario	Finger Lakes	135	145	97	-38	-28.1%
Orange	Hudson Valley	687	499	434	-253	-36.8%
Orleans	Finger Lakes	52	49	37	-15	-28.8%

Oswego	Central New York	149	89	77	-72	-48.3%
Otsego	Mohawk Valley	52	43	45	-7	-13.5%
Putnam	Hudson Valley	68	47	48	-20	-29.4%
Rensselaer	Capital Region	312	277	227	-85	-27.2%
Rockland	Hudson Valley	148	122	122	-26	-17.6%
Saratoga	Capital Region	187	143	127	-60	-32.1%
Schenectady	Capital Region	233	212	180	-53	-22.7%
Schoharie	Mohawk Valley	19	15	16	-3	-15.8%
Schuyler	Southern Tier	16	10	9	-7	-43.8%
Seneca	Finger Lakes	57	54	54	-3	-5.3%
St Lawrence	North Country	127	83	60	-67	-52.8%
Steuben	Southern Tier	183	117	112	-71	-38.8%
Suffolk	Long Island	1,146	864	775	-371	-32.4%
Sullivan	Hudson Valley	160	130	110	-50	-31.2%
Tioga	Southern Tier	49	51	51	2	4.1%
Tompkins	Southern Tier	71	46	42	-29	-40.8%
Ulster	Hudson Valley	229	177	139	-90	-39.3%
Warren	Capital Region	117	92	80	-37	-31.6%
Washington	Capital Region	65	71	45	-20	-30.8%
Wayne	Finger Lakes	77	55	45	-32	-41.6%
Westchester	Hudson Valley	1,001	718	718	-283	-28.3%
Wyoming	Finger Lakes	37	49	45	8	21.6%
Yates	Finger Lakes	39	48	49	10	25.6%
Total		21,409	16,875	15,440	-5,969	-27.9%

Endnotes

- 1 Data for the 2019 daily jail census is from the [Division of Criminal Justice Services Jail Population in New York State Average Daily Census by Month](#).
- 2 The daily jail census information for January 2020 was obtained from the [NYC OpenData](#) website and calls to 57 county jails asking for the number of people in jail on January 15 and January 16. Vera was not able to get updated estimates for Rockland, Tioga, and Westchester counties. Vera assumed that the jail population in these places did not change since December 2019.
- 3 This group includes New York City as well as Albany, Dutchess, Erie, Monroe, Nassau, Onondaga, Orange, Rockland, Suffolk, and Westchester counties.
- 4 This group includes Allegany, Chenango, Cortland, Delaware, Essex, Franklin, Fulton, Genesee, Greene, Hamilton, Lewis, Montgomery, Orleans, Schoharie, Schuyler, Seneca, Tioga, Wyoming, and Yates counties.

For more information

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