

Incarceration Trends in

WEST VIRGINIA

Incarceration in Local Jails and State Prisons



REGIONAL RANK

6 of 7 in total incarceration

Total people...

...locked up in West Virginia

284%

INCREASE

2,686 people

10,320 people

1983

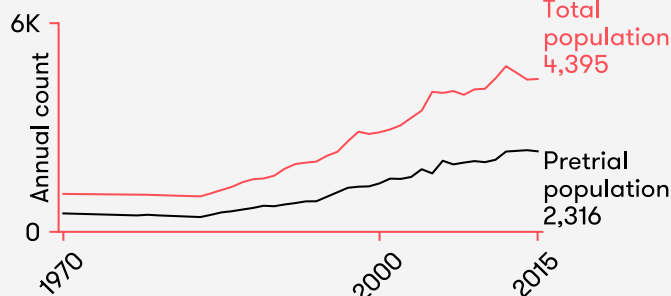
2015

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

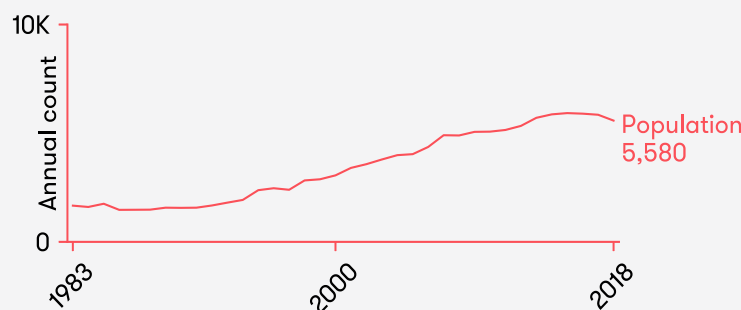
SINCE 2000

303% ↑

54% ↑

Since 1970, the total jail population has increased 303%. In 2015, pretrial detainees constituted 53% of the total jail population in West Virginia.

PRISONS



% change in prison population

SINCE 1983

SINCE 2000

235% ↑

82% ↑

Since 1983, the prison custody population has increased 235%. In 2018, there were 5,580 people in the West Virginia prison system.

RACE

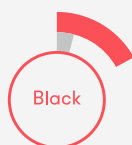
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JAILS



2015

4% of state pop. | 17% of jail pop.



PRISONS



2017

4% of state pop. | 12% of prison pop.



In West Virginia, Black people constituted 4% of state residents, but 17% of people in jail and 12% of people in prison.

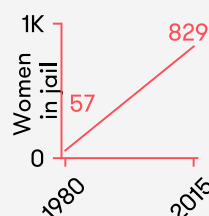
GENDER

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JAILS



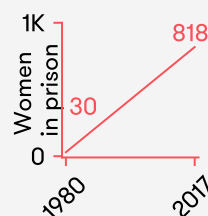
1,354% ↑



PRISONS



2,627% ↑



Since 1980, the number of women in jail has increased 1,354%, and the number of women in prison has increased 2,627%.

GEOGRAPHY

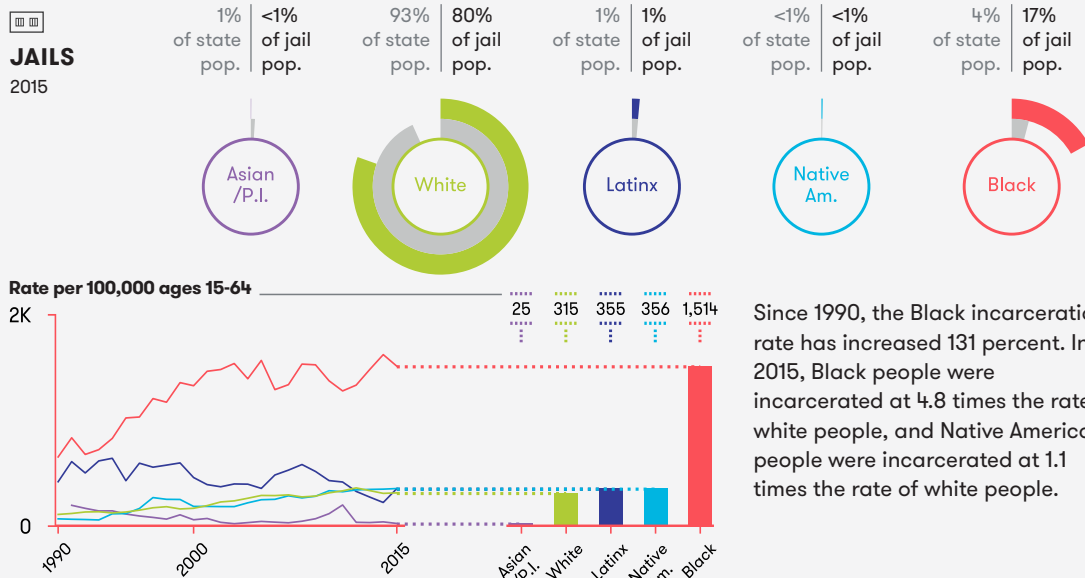
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Top admission rates (rate per 100K)

2015		2014	
COUNTY	JAILS	COUNTY	PRISONS
Boone	7,681	Webster	1,130
Mingo	7,646	Mercer	626
Logan	7,599	Lewis	582
Lewis	5,211	Braxton	499
Braxton	5,183	Fayette	471

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

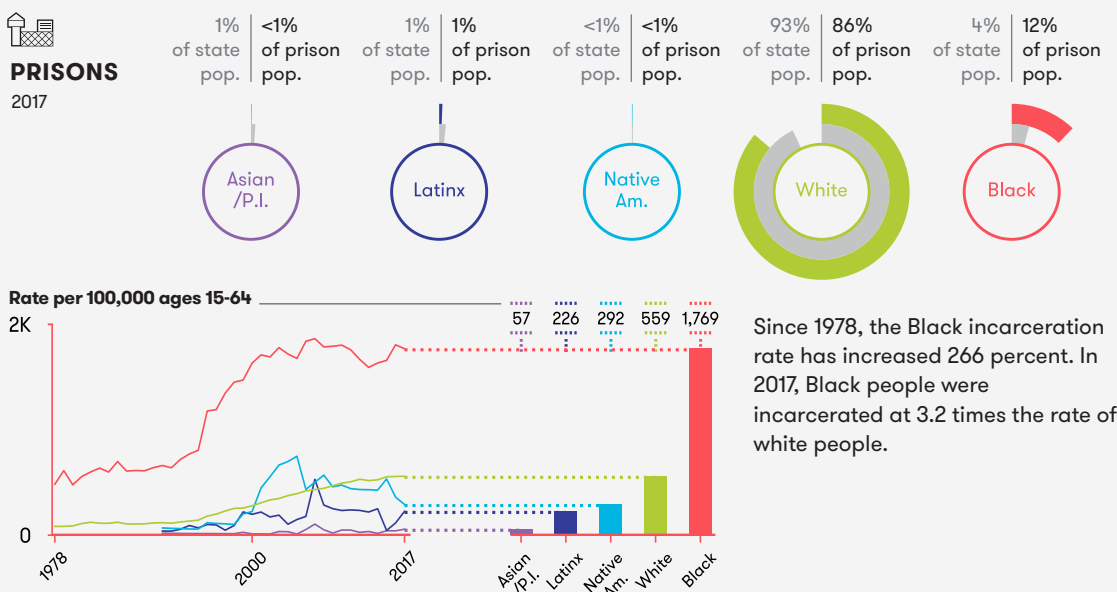


NATIONAL CONTEXT

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 2001 is likely to be incarcerated in their lifetime, compared to one in 10 Latinx people and one in 29 white people.

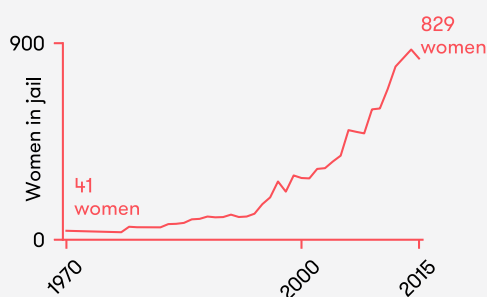
Discriminatory criminal justice policies and practices at all stages of the justice process have unjustifiably disadvantaged Black people, including through disparity in the enforcement of seemingly race-neutral laws. Studies have found that Black people are more likely to be stopped by the police, detained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



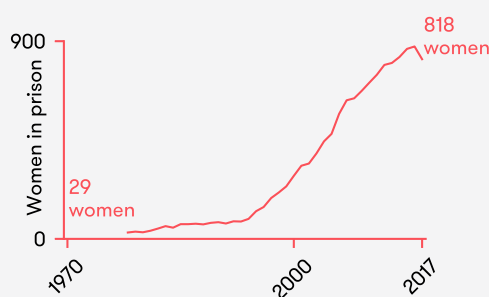
GENDER

JAILS



The number of women in West Virginia's jails has increased more than 20-fold, from 41 in 1970 to 830 in 2015.

PRISONS



The number of women in West Virginia's prisons has increased more than 28-fold, from 29 in 1978 to 818 in 2017.

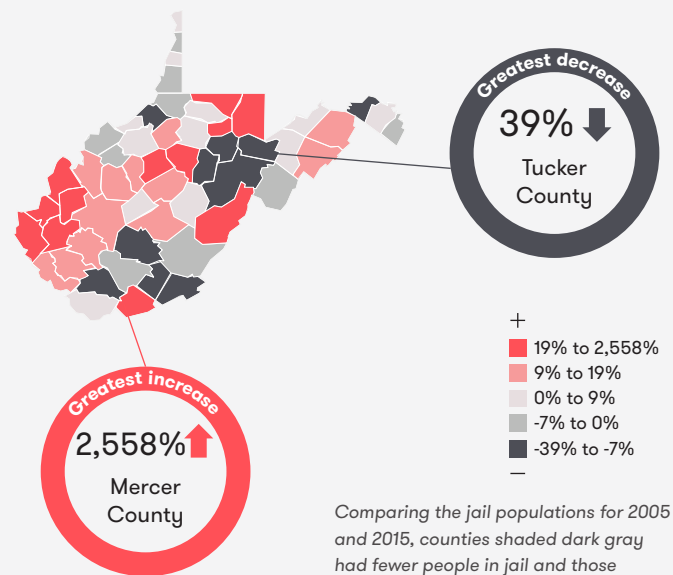
NATIONAL CONTEXT

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

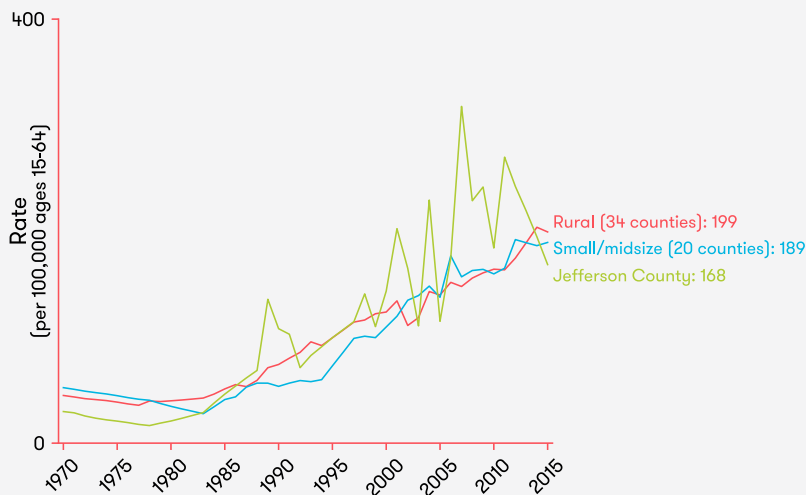
Statewide trends alone do not tell the whole story of incarceration: there is wide variation in the use of incarceration across the state. Today, the highest rates of prison admissions are in rural counties, and pretrial detention continues to increase in smaller counties even as it is on the decline 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 73% in the state's 20 small/medium counties, 61% in the state's 34 rural counties, and 17% in the state's one suburban county.

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 55 COUNTIES)

COUNTY	Rate (per 100K)	COUNTY	Annual count
Boone	7,681	Kanawha	5,445
Mingo	7,646	Berkeley	3,501
Logan	7,599	Cabell	2,724
Lewis	5,211	Raleigh	2,073
Braxton	5,183	Monongalia	1,971
Clay	5,182	Logan	1,764
Nicholas	5,149	Jefferson	1,762
Roane	5,142	Mercer	1,614
Webster	5,104	Putnam	1,559
Calhoun	5,097	Wood	1,385

PRISON ADMISSIONS (TOP 10 OF 55 COUNTIES)

COUNTY	Rate (per 100K)	COUNTY	Annual count
Webster	1,130	Kanawha	357
Mercer	626	Mercer	247
Lewis	582	Cabell	235
Braxton	499	Harrison	150
Fayette	471	Wood	143
Upshur	468	Fayette	139
Clay	468	Berkeley	134
Roane	456	Monongalia	124
Monroe	439	Raleigh	111
Morgan	420	Wayne	110

HOW DOES

WEST VIRGINIA

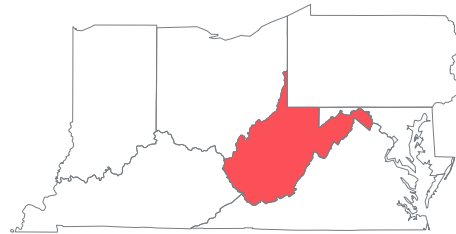
COMPARE?

JAILS



Jail admissions

Rank	State	Rate (2015)	Rate change ('05-'15)
1	Kentucky	9,631	-9%
2	Virginia	5,547	-20%
3	Indiana	5,247	-24%
4	Ohio	5,029	-15%
5	West Virginia	4,071	11%
6	Maryland	2,484	-28%
7	Pennsylvania	2,410	-16%



Jail pretrial population

Rank	State	Rate (2015)	Rate change ('05-'15)
1	Kentucky	312	3%
2	Indiana	272	8%
3	Pennsylvania	267	15%
4	Virginia	234	2%
5	West Virginia	192	39%
6	Maryland	155	-27%
7	Ohio	146	-4%

Jail sentenced population

Rank	State	Rate (2015)	Rate change ('05-'15)
1	Kentucky	410	0.4%
2	Virginia	283	0.0%
3	West Virginia	173	-0.1%
4	Pennsylvania	164	-0.1%
5	Indiana	114	-0.3%
6	Ohio	91	-0.2%
7	Maryland	91	-0.2%

PRISONS



Prison admissions

Rank	State	Rate (2016)	Rate change ('06-'16)
1	Kentucky	694	39%
2	West Virginia	302	30%
3	Ohio	300	-28%
4	Indiana	297	-29%
5	Pennsylvania	244	14%
6	Maryland	221	-19%
7	Virginia	216	-10%

Prison population

Rank	State	Rate (2018)	Rate change ('08-'18)
1	Kentucky	831	10%
2	Ohio	666	-1%
3	Virginia	662	-6%
4	Indiana	620	-6%
5	West Virginia	584	18%
6	Pennsylvania	569	-2%
7	Maryland	444	-25%

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.