



# Justice expenditure and employment in the U.S., 1979

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## Preliminary report

The 1979 survey of public expenditure and employment for civil and criminal justice activities in the United States showed that expenditure in Fiscal Year 1979 amounted to \$26 billion, an increase of \$1.8 billion (7.4 percent) over Fiscal Year 1978. Increases in direct expenditure occurred at all levels of government, with State governments registering a 9.8 percent increase over 1978, followed by local governments (up 6.8 percent) and the Federal Government (up 4.7 percent). Over half, \$14 billion, of the Nation's total justice expenditure was for police protection, and close to one-fourth, \$6 billion, was for corrections. The balance was distributed as follows: \$3.4 billion or 13.1 percent for judicial activities, \$1.7 billion or 6.4 percent for prosecution and civil legal services, \$0.6 billion or 2.3 percent for public defense,<sup>1</sup> and \$0.5 billion or 1.8 percent for other criminal justice activities.

All six of the major justice functions included in the survey showed increases: Public defense expenditure led with a 13.6 percent increase, followed by legal services and prosecution (up 13.1 percent), judicial (up 10.5 percent), corrections (up 8.6 percent), other criminal justice (up 7.0 percent) and police protection (up 5.3 percent).

As shown in table A, overall justice expenditure in the United States rose 146 percent from 1971 to 1979 (without adjustment for inflation). The rate of increase from 1978 to 1979, 7.4 percent, was the lowest registered since 1971 when the survey was initiated. During the 9-year period, the State governments showed the largest percent increase in justice direct expenditure (174 percent), followed by the Federal Government (169 percent) and local governments (131 percent).

<sup>1</sup>Over two-fifths of this amount consisted of payments by the Federal Government to the Legal Services Corporation for counseling indigent persons in civil matters.

In October 1979, there were 1,175,520 justice employees on a full-time equivalent basis. As seen in table B, this was only 1.6 percent more than in October 1978, the smallest gain recorded in justice employment for all governments since 1971. While State government full-time equivalent employment increased by about 5 percent, the estimate of full-time equivalent employment at the local government level was only 0.3 percent higher than the estimate for the previous year. Federal full-time equivalent employment declined by 0.5 percent.

During the 1971-79 period, there was a 36 percent increase in full-time equivalent justice employment in the United States. While this cumulative increase was shared by all levels of government, the State governments have experienced the largest increase—59 percent, followed by the Federal Government with an increase of 33 percent, and local governments with an increase of 29 percent.

As in the past, local governments accounted for more expenditure and employment in the civil and criminal justice field than the Federal and State governments combined. Of the Nation's \$26 billion expenditure for criminal justice purposes in 1979, 59 percent was expended by local governments. In addition, 63 percent of total civil and criminal justice full-time equivalent employment was in local justice activities. Reflecting the fact that law enforcement is essentially a responsibility of local governments, \$10 billion (64.8 percent) of their direct expenditure and 488,878 (65.6 percent) of their full-time equivalent employment were for police protection activities.

State governments spent close to half (47.5 percent) of their \$7.3 billion direct expenditure in the corrections field. In addition, 49.2 percent of their full-time equivalent justice employment was in correctional activities.

Table A. Total justice direct expenditure and percent change, by level of government, fiscal years 1971 to 1979

Year	Total	Federal	State	Local
Amount (millions of dollars)				
1971.....	10,517	1,215	2,681	6,621
1972.....	11,732	1,502	2,948	7,281
1973.....	13,007	1,651	3,304	8,052
1974.....	14,842	1,859	3,900	9,092
1975.....	17,249	2,188	4,612	10,449
1976.....	19,681	2,450	5,204	12,027
1977.....	21,574	2,779	5,812	12,983
1978.....	24,132	3,122	6,688	14,322
1979.....	25,917	3,269	7,346	15,302
Percent increase or decrease (-)				
1971 to 1972.....	11.6	23.6	10.0	10.0
1972 to 1973.....	10.9	9.9	12.1	10.6
1973 to 1974.....	14.2	12.6	18.0	12.9
1974 to 1975.....	16.2	17.7	18.3	14.9
1975 to 1976.....	14.1	12.0	12.8	15.1
1976 to 1977.....	9.6	13.4	11.7	7.9
1977 to 1978.....	11.9	12.3	15.1	10.3
1978 to 1979.....	7.4	4.7	9.8	6.8
1971 to 1979.....	146.4	169.1	174.0	131.1

Note: Because of rounding, detail may not add to total.

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**Survey methodology**

The data in this report were collected by the U.S. Bureau of the Census for the Bureau of Justice Statistics using two collection methods: Field compilation and mail canvass. Data collection was performed between October 1979 and June 1980 in accordance with definitions noted below. Response for field-compiled units was 100 percent; for mail canvass units: 91 percent.

Data were collected for the Federal, State, and county governments, all municipal governments (and townships in the New England and Middle Atlantic States) having a 1977 population of 10,000 or more, and for a sample of the remaining municipalities and townships with a 1977 population of less than 10,000. Local government totals are therefore subject to sampling error.

The data in this report are preliminary and subject to change. A more complete discussion of data findings and survey methodology will be contained in the forthcoming issue of Expenditure and Employment Data for the Criminal Justice System, 1979. Data in that report will be presented in greater geographical, functional, and financial detail for all six categories of justice activity: Police protection, judicial, legal services and prosecution, public defense, corrections, and other criminal justice activities.

**Definitions of terms**

Expenditure is all amounts of money paid out (net of any correcting transactions) other than for retirement of debt (including interest), investment in securities, extensions of loans, or agency transactions. It includes only external cash payments and excludes any intragovernmental transfers and noncash transactions, such as the provision of meals or housing of employees. It also includes any payments financed from borrowing, fund balances, intergovernmental revenue, and other current revenue.

Expenditure is divided into two major categories by character:

1. *Direct expenditure* is all expenditure except that classed as intergovernmental.
2. *Intergovernmental expenditure* is payments from one government to another, including grants-in-aid, shared revenues, payments in lieu of taxes, and amounts for services performed by one government for another on a reimbursable or cost-sharing basis (for example, payments by one government to another for boarding prisoners).

*Full-time equivalent employment* is the total number of employees discounted by applying average full-time earning rates. This is calculated by dividing the total payroll

(full-time plus part-time) by the full-time payroll and multiplying the result by the number of full-time employees.

*Police protection* is the function of enforcing the law, preserving order, and apprehending those who violate the law.

*Judicial activities* encompass all civil and criminal courts and activities associated with courts.

*Legal services and prosecution* includes the civil and criminal justice activities of the attorneys general, district attorneys, State's attorneys, and their variously named equivalents; corporation counsels, solicitors, and legal departments with various names.

*Public defense* includes legal counsel and representation in either criminal or civil proceedings as provided by public defenders and other government programs that pay the fees of court-appointed counsel.

*Corrections* is that function of government involving the confinement and rehabilitation of adults and juveniles convicted of offenses against the law and the confinement of persons suspected of a crime awaiting adjudication. Data for institutions with authority to hold prisoners beyond arraignment (usually 48 hours or more) are included in this sector. Data for lockups or "tanks" holding prisoners less than 48 hours are included in "Police Protection."

*Other criminal justice activities* include expenditure or employment data that are not elsewhere classified, that cut across more than one category, or that are not allocable to separate categories, e.g., the operation of State criminal justice planning agencies, crime commissions, etc.

**Table 1. Distribution of expenditure for the justice system, by level of government, fiscal year 1979**  
(Dollar amounts in thousands)

Activity	Amount				Percent distribution		
	All governments <sup>1</sup>	Federal Government <sup>2</sup>	State governments	Local governments <sup>1</sup>	Federal Government <sup>2</sup>	State governments	Local governments <sup>1</sup>
Total justice system <sup>3</sup> .....	25,916,999	3,950,686	8,424,300	15,465,901	(X)	(X)	(X)
Direct expenditure.....	25,916,999	3,269,381	7,346,048	15,301,570	12.6	28.3	59.0
Intergovernmental expenditure.....	( <sup>3</sup> )	681,305	1,078,252	320,861	(X)	(X)	(X)
Police protection <sup>3</sup> .....	13,817,073	1,949,899	2,114,545	9,922,896	(X)	(X)	(X)
Direct expenditure.....	13,817,073	1,948,268	1,952,282	9,916,523	14.1	14.1	71.8
Intergovernmental expenditure.....	( <sup>3</sup> )	1,631	162,263	110,216	(X)	(X)	(X)
Judicial <sup>3</sup> .....	3,388,922	369,509	1,328,778	1,903,631	(X)	(X)	(X)
Direct expenditure.....	3,388,922	369,509	1,205,866	1,813,547	10.9	35.6	53.5
Intergovernmental expenditure.....	( <sup>3</sup> )	-	122,912	102,770	(X)	(X)	(X)
Legal services and prosecution <sup>3</sup> .....	1,650,739	275,897	455,133	958,088	(X)	(X)	(X)
Direct expenditure.....	1,650,739	265,898	430,337	954,504	16.1	26.1	57.8
Intergovernmental expenditure.....	( <sup>3</sup> )	9,999	24,796	4,428	(X)	(X)	(X)
Public defense <sup>3</sup> .....	595,198	240,232	125,973	239,066	(X)	(X)	(X)
Direct expenditure.....	595,198	240,232	116,041	238,925	40.4	19.5	40.1
Intergovernmental expenditure.....	( <sup>3</sup> )	-	9,932	1,916	(X)	(X)	(X)
Corrections <sup>3</sup> .....	5,996,332	392,589	3,777,292	2,198,172	(X)	(X)	(X)
Direct expenditure.....	5,996,332	353,961	3,486,474	2,155,897	5.9	58.1	36.0
Intergovernmental expenditure.....	( <sup>3</sup> )	38,628	290,818	77,715	(X)	(X)	(X)
Other criminal justice <sup>3</sup> .....	468,735	722,560	622,579	244,048	(X)	(X)	(X)
Direct expenditure.....	468,735	91,513	155,048	222,174	19.5	33.1	47.4
Intergovernmental.....	( <sup>3</sup> )	631,047	467,531	23,816	(X)	(X)	(X)

- Represents zero or rounds to zero.

X Not applicable.

<sup>1</sup>Local governments data are estimates subject to sampling variation; see text for data limitations.

<sup>2</sup>Federal Government data are for the fiscal period beginning October 1, 1978 and ending September 30, 1979.

<sup>3</sup>The total line for each sector, and for the total Justice System, excludes duplicative intergovernmental expenditure amounts. This was done to avoid the artificial inflation which would result if an intergovernmental expenditure amount for one government is tabulated and then counted again when the recipient government(s) ultimately expend(s) that amount. The intergovernmental expenditure lines are not totaled for the same reason.

**Table B. Total full-time equivalent justice employees and percent change, by level of government, October 1971 to October 1979**

Payroll period	Total	Federal	State	Local
Number of employees				
October 1971.....	861,776	77,523	205,859	578,394
October 1972.....	898,305	85,222	216,603	593,480
October 1973.....	945,309	87,139	232,299	625,871
October 1974.....	1,011,205	93,755	252,588	664,862
October 1975.....	1,050,503	96,136	263,208	691,159
October 1976.....	1,079,892	99,553	272,488	707,891
October 1977.....	1,131,780	100,088	298,571	733,121
October 1978.....	1,157,436	103,678	310,554	743,204
October 1979.....	1,175,520	103,214	326,670	745,636
Percent increase or decrease (-)				
October 1971 to October 1972	4.2	9.9	5.2	3.1
October 1972 to October 1973	5.2	2.2	7.2	4.9
October 1973 to October 1974	7.0	7.3	8.7	6.2
October 1974 to October 1975	3.9	2.5	4.2	4.0
October 1975 to October 1976	2.8	3.3	3.5	2.4
October 1976 to October 1977	4.8	0.5	9.3	3.6
October 1977 to October 1978	2.3	3.6	4.1	1.4
October 1978 to October 1979	1.6	-0.5	5.2	0.3
October 1971 to October 1979	36.4	33.1	58.7	28.9

**Table 2. Distribution of employment and payrolls for the justice system, by level of government, October 1979**  
(Dollar amounts in thousands)

Activity	All governments <sup>1</sup>	Federal Government	State governments	Local governments <sup>1</sup>	Percent distribution		
					Federal Government	State governments	Local governments <sup>1</sup>
Total justice system:							
Total employees.....	1,250,100	106,276	338,523	805,301	8.5	27.1	64.4
Full-time employees.....	1,148,558	102,428	321,584	724,646	8.9	28.0	63.1
Full-time equivalent employees.....	1,175,520	103,214	326,670	745,636	8.8	27.8	63.4
October payroll.....	1,657,397	192,773	440,436	1,024,188	11.3	26.6	61.8
Police protection:							
Total employees.....	699,097	75,519	97,244	526,334	10.8	13.9	75.3
Full-time employees.....	642,356	72,750	89,020	480,586	11.3	13.9	74.8
Full-time equivalent employees.....	651,819	73,152	89,789	488,878	11.2	13.8	75.0
October payroll.....	970,671	133,516	128,393	708,762	13.8	13.2	73.0
Judicial:							
Total employees.....	169,193	8,153	49,462	111,578	4.8	29.2	66.0
Full-time employees.....	146,118	8,051	45,672	92,395	5.5	31.3	63.2
Full-time equivalent employees.....	155,784	8,036	48,171	99,547	5.2	30.9	63.9
October payroll.....	192,416	16,108	68,471	107,837	8.4	35.6	56.0
Legal services and prosecution:							
Total employees.....	78,072	8,027	20,771	49,274	10.3	26.6	63.1
Full-time employees.....	69,608	7,576	19,244	42,788	10.9	27.7	61.5
Full-time equivalent employees.....	73,181	7,824	20,004	45,357	10.7	27.3	62.0
October payroll.....	113,637	15,985	31,613	63,066	14.1	27.8	58.1
Public defense:							
Total employees.....	9,532	562	3,788	5,182	5.9	39.7	54.4
Full-time employees.....	8,672	498	3,607	4,567	5.7	41.6	52.7
Full-time equivalent employees.....	9,030	520	3,659	4,881	5.7	40.4	53.9
October payroll.....	15,229	1,076	5,855	8,298	7.1	38.5	54.5
Corrections:							
Total employees.....	284,668	12,327	163,014	109,327	4.3	57.3	38.4
Full-time employees.....	272,923	12,087	159,876	100,960	4.4	58.6	37.0
Full-time equivalent employees.....	276,486	12,088	160,855	103,543	4.4	58.2	37.5
October payroll.....	352,973	22,996	200,502	129,475	6.5	56.8	36.7
Other criminal justice:							
Total employees.....	9,538	1,688	4,244	3,606	17.7	44.5	37.8
Full-time employees.....	8,981	1,466	4,165	3,350	16.3	46.4	37.3
Full-time equivalent employees.....	9,190	1,534	4,192	3,434	17.0	45.3	37.4
October payroll.....	12,441	3,092	5,599	3,750	24.9	45.0	30.1

<sup>1</sup>Local governments data are estimates subject to sampling variation; see text for data limitations.