



# Jail Inmates in 2019

SUMMARY | NCJ 255608

MARCH 2021

Local jails in the United States held about 734,500 inmates at midyear 2019, a decline of 6% from a peak of 785,500 inmates in 2008. The jail incarceration rate decreased 13% from 2008 to 2019, declining from 258 to 224 inmates per 100,000 U.S. residents.

## Demographic characteristics of jail inmates

At midyear 2019, there were 224 persons incarcerated in jail per 100,000 U.S. residents. Blacks were incarcerated at a rate (600 per 100,000) more than three times the rate for whites (184 per 100,000). Over the 11-year period from 2008 to 2019, the rate increased for whites (up 10%) and declined for blacks (down 27%) and Hispanics (down 36%).

The population of male inmates decreased 9% from 2008 to 2019, while the population of female inmates increased 11%. The number of juveniles confined in local jails declined 62%, from 7,700 inmates in 2008 to 2,900 in 2019.

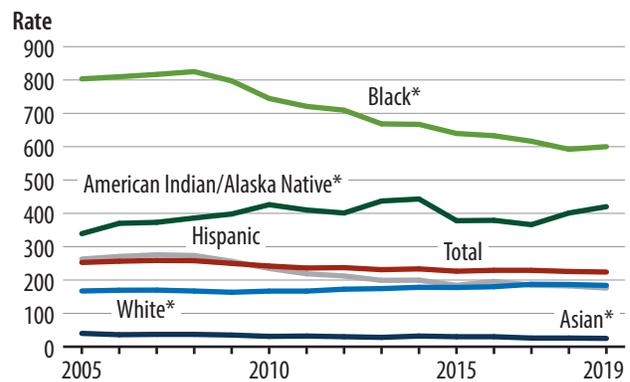
## Admissions, capacity, and staff at local jails

Local jails reported 10.3 million admissions in 2019, which was 24% lower than the 13.6 million admissions in 2008. About 81% of local jail beds were occupied at midyear 2019, down from 95% at midyear 2008. Local jails employed an estimated 237,500 full-time staff in 2019, the highest number in the period from 2013 to 2019. The inmate-to-correctional-officer ratio was 4 to 1 in 2019.

## Conviction status, average time in jail, and community supervision

In 2019, more than two-thirds (70%) of jail inmates were held for felony charges. About 65% (480,700) of jail inmates were awaiting court action on a current charge, while the remaining 35% (253,700) were serving a sentence or awaiting sentencing on a conviction. In 2019, the weekly inmate turnover rate in

## Jail incarceration rates at midyear, by race or ethnicity, 2005-2019



Note: Rates are based on the number of inmates held on the last weekday in June per 100,000 U.S. residents (for total) or per 100,000 U.S. residents of a given demographic group.

\*Excludes persons of Hispanic origin (e.g., “white” refers to non-Hispanic whites and “black” refers to non-Hispanic blacks).

Source: Bureau of Justice Statistics, Annual Survey of Jails, 2006-2018; and Census of Jails, 2005 and 2019.

local jails nationwide was 53%, with inmates spending an estimated average of 26 days in jail. On average, the weekly inmate turnover rate in jails with an average daily population (ADP) of 2,500 or more inmates was 39%, while the rate was 97% in jails with an ADP of less than 100 inmates.

In addition to the 734,500 confined inmates at midyear 2019, local jail authorities supervised 38,700 persons in programs outside of jail, including electronic monitoring, home detention, day reporting, community service, alcohol or drug treatment programs, and other pre-trial supervision and work programs. From 2008 to 2019, the number of persons supervised outside of jail declined 36%, the number of weekenders declined 47%, and the number of confined inmates declined 6%.

The full report (*Jail Inmates in 2019*, NCJ 255608), related documents, and additional information about the Bureau of Justice Statistics are available on the BJS website at [www.bjs.gov](http://www.bjs.gov).