



Probation and Parole in the United States, 2020

SUMMARY | NCJ 303102

DECEMBER 2021

An estimated 3,890,400 adults were under community supervision at yearend 2020, which was down 276,500 (a 6.6% decline) from the 4,167,100 who were supervised in the community on January 1, 2020. The decline was solely driven by a reduction in people on probation, who made up the majority (79%) of the community supervision population. (The community supervision population excludes adults on parole who were also on probation to avoid double counting.) From 2005 to 2020, the community supervision rate decreased 32%, from 2,215 to 1,511 per 100,000 adult U.S. residents. Among all adult U.S. residents, 1 in 66 were supervised in the community at yearend 2020.

Probation and parole populations

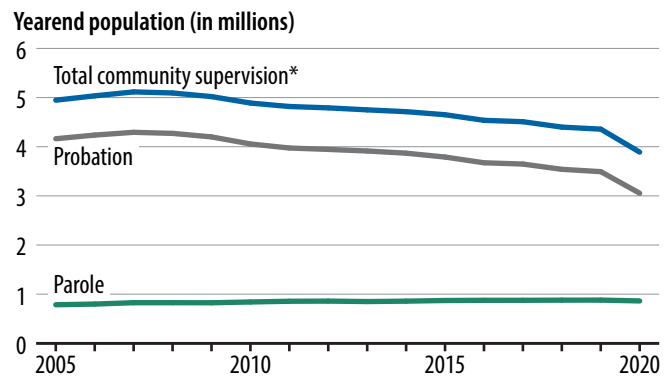
During 2020, the number of people on probation decreased from 3,330,200 to 3,053,700 (down 8.3%), the largest annual decline since the Bureau of Justice Statistics (BJS) began the probation collection in 1980. The number of adults on parole increased 1.3% during 2020, from 851,000 on January 1, 2020 to 862,100 at yearend 2020.

The adult probation rate (1,186 per 100,000 adult U.S. residents) at yearend 2020 was at its lowest point in 35 years (1,174 per 100,000 in 1986). The probation rate has decreased for 13 consecutive years, while the parole rate has decreased every year since 2015. Though the number of adults under parole supervision has increased in each of the last 3 years, the adult U.S. population has grown at a faster pace each year, leading to a decreasing rate of adults on parole in the United States over that time.

Changes by jurisdiction

During 2020, the probation population decreased in 42 states, the District of Columbia, and the U.S. federal system, for a total decline of 289,900 adults under

Adults on probation or parole, 2005–2020



Note: Counts for 2019 and earlier may differ from previously published statistics. Counts are for December 31 of each year.

*Details may not sum to totals because the community supervision counts were adjusted to exclude 25,400 adults on parole who were also on probation.

Source: Bureau of Justice Statistics, Annual Probation Survey and Annual Parole Survey, 2005–2020.

probation supervision. The probation population increased in seven states. During 2020, the parole population increased in 30 states and decreased in 19 states, the District of Columbia, and the U.S. federal system's term of supervised release.

Entries and exits

Movements onto (entries) and off of (exits) probation decreased substantially from 2019 to 2020, down 28% from an estimated 3,780,800 to an estimated 2,703,400. Probation movements fell 42% from the peak in 2007 (4,666,400). The last time probation movements were under 3,000,000 was in 1997. In 2020, total parole movements were below 800,000 for the first time since 1994.

The full report (*Probation and Parole in the United States, 2020*, NCJ 303102), related documents, and additional information about the Bureau of Justice Statistics are available on the BJS website at bjs.ojp.gov.