



Department of Justice



Office of Justice Programs

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
THURSDAY, NOV. 29, 2018, 12 P.M. ET
WWW.BJS.GOV

BUREAU OF JUSTICE STATISTICS
CONTACT: TANNYR WATKINS
(202) 532-3923; Tannyr.M.Watkins@ojp.usdoj.gov

MOST VIOLENT OFFENDERS RELEASED FROM STATE PRISON IN 2016 SERVED LESS THAN 3 YEARS

WASHINGTON — More than half (57 percent) of violent offenders who were released from state prison in 2016 served less than three years before their release, the Bureau of Justice Statistics announced today. About 1 in 25 violent offenders served 20 years or more before their release.

These findings are based on prisoner records from BJS's National Corrections Reporting Program and reflect 2016 releases. They are based on state prisoners' initial release after serving time for a given offense and exclude persons who had been released after serving time for an offense, returned to prison for violating community supervision and were released again.

The average time an offender served in state prison in 2016, from the date of first admission to initial release, was 2.6 years. The median amount of time served (the middle value in the range of time served, with 50 percent of offenders serving more and 50 percent serving less) was 1.3 years. Persons serving less than one year in state prison made up 40 percent of first releases in 2016.

Based on 2016 release data, the average time served before initial release by state prisoners who were sentenced for a violent offense was 4.7 years and the median time was 2.4 years. Offenders sentenced for murder or non-negligent manslaughter served an average of 15 years and a median time of 13 years in state prison before initial release. State prisoners sentenced for rape or sexual assault served an average of 6.2 years and a median time of 4.2 years before initial release.

An estimated 96 percent of violent offenders released in 2016, including 70 percent of those sentenced for murder or non-negligent manslaughter, served less than 20 years before initial release. Roughly 1 in 5 persons released in 2016 after being sentenced for rape or sexual assault served 10 or more years before initial release.

State prisoners serving time for drug offenses, including trafficking and possession, served an average of 22 months and a median time of 14 months before their initial release. About 3 in 5 offenders released after serving time for drug possession served less than one year before their initial release.

—MORE—

In general, state prisoners served an average of 46 percent of their maximum sentence before their first release. Violent offenders served 54 percent of their maximum sentence, property offenders served 42 percent, drug offenders served 41 percent and public order offenders served 45 percent. Persons in state prison for rape or sexual assault served an average of 62 percent of their maximum sentence before initial release. Those in prison for drug possession served an average of 38 percent of their maximum sentence length.

The report, [*Time Served in State Prison, 2016 \(NCJ 252205\)*](#), was written by BJS statistician Danielle Kaeble. The report, related documents and additional information about BJS's statistical publications and programs can be found on the BJS website at www.bjs.gov.

The Bureau of Justice Statistics of the U.S. Department of Justice is the principal federal agency responsible for collecting, analyzing and disseminating reliable statistics on crime and criminal justice in the United States. Jeffrey H. Anderson is the director.

The Office of Justice Programs, headed by Principal Deputy Assistant Attorney General Matt M. Dummermuth, provides federal leadership in developing the nation's capacity to prevent and control crime, administer justice and assist victims. OJP has six bureaus and offices: the Bureau of Justice Assistance; the Bureau of Justice Statistics; the National Institute of Justice; the Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention; the Office for Victims of Crime; and the Office of Sex Offender Sentencing, Monitoring, Apprehending, Registering and Tracking (SMART). More information about OJP and its components can be found at www.ojp.gov/.

###