



Probation and Parole in the United States, 2017-2018

SUMMARY | NCJ 252072

AUGUST 2020

In the United States, the adult population on probation or parole declined from 4,508,900 at the end of 2017 to 4,399,000 at the end of 2018. The total community-supervision population (those on either probation or parole, with those on both counted only once) decreased by an estimated 109,900 offenders (down 2%) from 2017 to 2018, and by 694,400 offenders (down 14%) from 2008 to 2018. The total community-supervision population in 2018 was at its lowest level since 1998. It has declined each year since 2007.

Portion of adults on community supervision

The portion of adults on community supervision fell 1.5% from 2016 to 2017, 3% from 2017 to 2018, and 22% from 2008 to 2018. The adult probation rate fell 25% from 2008 to 2018, while the adult parole rate fell 4%. An estimated 1 in 58 adults in the U.S. were under community supervision at the end of 2018, down from 1 in 45 in 2008. In 2018, the portion of adults on community supervision was at its lowest level since 1990.

Probation and parole populations

Adults on probation accounted for 80% of those under community supervision in 2018, while parolees made up 20%. (Those reported to be on both probation and parole made up less than 1%.) The adult probation population declined 3% from 2017 to 2018 and 17% from 2008 to 2018, while the adult parole population increased 0.3% from 2017 to 2018 and 6% from 2008 to 2018.

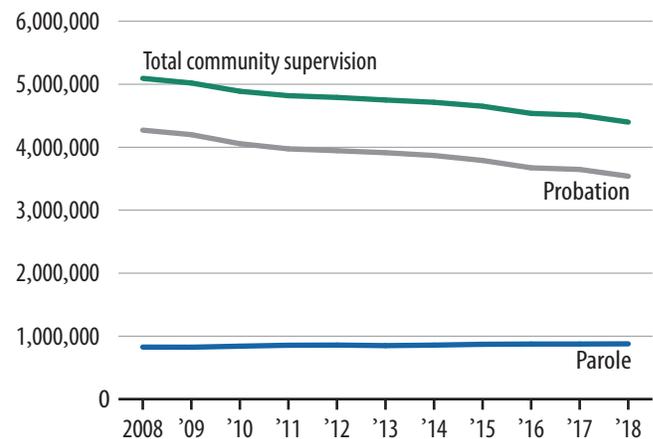
The probation population (3,540,000) has declined each year since 2007, when it peaked at 5,115,500. In comparison, the parole population increased 6% from 2008 to 2018, and 2018 marked its fifth consecutive year of growth.

Entries to and exits from probation and parole

Movements onto (entries) and off of (exits) probation decreased 8% from 2017 to 2018, from an estimated

Adults on probation or parole, 2008-2018

Year-end population



Source: Bureau of Justice Statistics, Annual Probation Survey and Annual Parole Survey, 2008-2018.

4,100,300 to an estimated 3,755,700. Probation entries decreased almost 10% in 2018, from an estimated 2,039,500 at year-end 2017 to an estimated 1,845,200 at year-end 2018. Probation exits decreased 7%, from an estimated 2,060,800 in 2017 to an estimated 1,910,500 in 2018. This was the first time since 1998 that entries to and exits from probation were each under 2 million movements.

In 2018, probation exits outpaced entries for the tenth consecutive year, while parole exits in 2017 exceeded entries for the first time since 2009. From 2017 to 2018, the number of offenders entering parole increased from an estimated 442,000 to 447,200 (up 5,200), while exits grew from 445,700 to 453,900 (up 8,200). This marked the first time that parole entries increased since 2015. While both entries to and exits from parole continued to decline from 2008 to 2018, entries exceeded exits eight times over that span.

The full report (*Probation and Parole in the United States, 2017-2018*, NCJ 252072), related documents, and additional information about the Bureau of Justice Statistics are available on the BJS website at www.bjs.gov.