



Correctional Populations in the United States, 2021 – Statistical Tables

SUMMARY | NCJ 305542

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At yearend 2021, an estimated 5,444,900 persons were under the supervision of adult correctional systems in the United States, a decline of 1% (down 61,100 persons) from yearend 2020. About 1 in 48 adult U.S. residents (2%) were under some form of correctional supervision (incarcerated in prison or jail or supervised in the community on probation or parole) at the end of 2021, down from 1 in 47 in 2020.

Correctional population trends

The rate of persons on community supervision fell to a 21-year low in 2021 (1,440 per 100,000 adult U.S. residents), after declining each year since its peak in 2007 (2,240 per 100,000). The rate at which persons were in prison or jail increased for the first time since 2005, rising from 660 per 100,000 U.S. residents in 2020 to 680 per 100,000 in 2021, though it remained below the rate preceding the COVID-19 pandemic (810 per 100,000 in 2019). While the total community supervision population decreased 4% from yearend 2020 to yearend 2021, the incarcerated population increased 5% due to a 16% growth in the number of persons held in local jails.

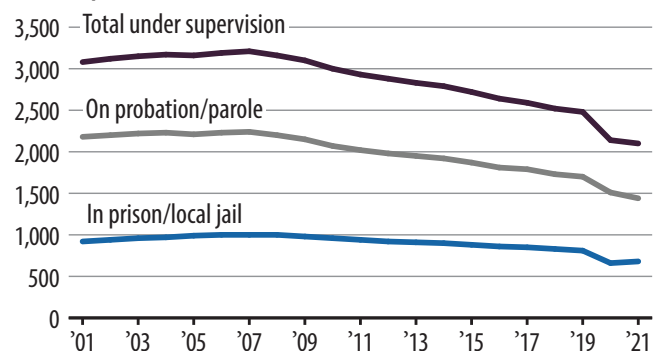
The number of persons under correctional supervision in the United States declined 22% during the past decade, from 6,994,500 in 2011 to 5,444,900 in 2021. A drop in the number of persons supervised in the community on probation accounted for 65% of this overall change, while decreases in the number of persons incarcerated in state and federal prison accounted for 26% of the change.

Person characteristics

From 2020 to 2021, the number of males in the total correctional population declined less than 1% (down 28,300), while the number of females decreased 3% (down 32,800). In the total correctional population, the number of black persons declined by 72,000 (4%) from 2020 to 2021, while the number of white persons

Persons under the supervision of adult correctional systems per 100,000 adult U.S. residents, December 31, 2001–2021

Persons per 100,000 adult U.S. residents



Note: All probation, parole, and prison rates are based on December 31 population counts, while jail rates use counts for the last weekday in June. Rates are rounded to the nearest 10 and may differ from previously published statistics due to updated reporting. Rates include a small number of persons age 17 or younger who were under adult correctional supervision and exclude persons with dual correctional statuses. Rates were calculated using U.S. Census Bureau estimates of the U.S. resident population of persons age 18 or older for January 1 of the following year.

Source: Bureau of Justice Statistics, Annual Probation Survey, Annual Parole Survey, and National Prisoner Statistics program, 2001–2021; Annual Survey of Jails, 2001–2004, 2006–2018, and 2020–2021; and Census of Jails, 2005 and 2019; and U.S. Census Bureau, postcensal estimated resident populations for January 1 of each year, 2002–2022.

increased by 20,000 (1%) and the number of Hispanic persons was stable. Compared to 2011, the number of males under correctional supervision in 2021 declined by 21% and females decreased 25%. Over that same decade, the number of black persons under correctional supervision decreased more than 27%, while the number of Hispanic persons declined 21% and whites declined 20%.

The full report (*Correctional Populations in the United States, 2021 – Statistical Tables*, NCJ 305542), related documents, and additional information about the Bureau of Justice Statistics are available on the BJS website at bjs.ojp.gov.