



Probation and Parole in the United States, 2021

SUMMARY | NCJ 305589

FEBRUARY 2023

An estimated 3,745,000 adults were under community supervision at yearend 2021, a 4% decline from the 3,881,600 who were supervised in the community on January 1, 2021. This decline is attributed to a reduction in both the number of persons on probation, who made up 79% of the community supervision population, and the number on parole. During 2021, the number of persons on probation decreased from 3,032,400 to 2,963,000 (down 2%). The number of persons on parole fell from 864,200 to 803,200 (down 7%) during 2021, the largest annual change in the population in almost 30 years and its lowest point since 2006 (798,200).

Persons on probation

The rate of adults on probation at yearend 2021 was 1,143 per 100,000 adult U.S. residents, marking the fourteenth consecutive year of decline and the rate's lowest point in 36 years. During 2021, the probation population decreased in 31 states and the U.S. federal system and increased in 19 states and the District of Columbia.

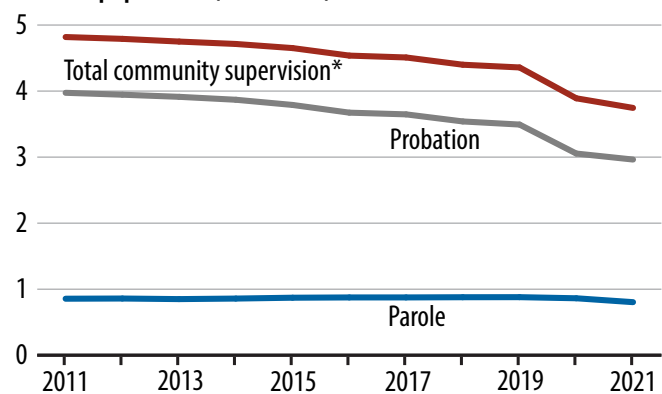
Females made up 24% of the probation population whose sex was reported in 2021, similar to the 25% in 2011. Of the 70% of adults on probation in 2021 whose race or ethnicity was known, 54% were white and 30% were black. Among adults on probation whose most serious offense was known, the percentage on supervision for a violent offense rose from 18% in 2011 to 26% in 2021. Most of this increase was among adults with a violent offense other than domestic violence or a sex offense. Similar percentages were on probation for drug offenses in 2011 and 2021 (about 25% each).

Persons on parole

The rate of persons on parole fell to 310 per 100,000 adult U.S. residents in 2021, after decreasing every year since 2015. During 2021, the parole population fell in

Adults on probation or parole, 2011–2021

Yearend population (in millions)



Note: Counts for 2020 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 21,275 adults on parole who were also on probation.

Source: Bureau of Justice Statistics, Annual Probation Survey and Annual Parole Survey, 2011–2021.

44 states, the District of Columbia, and the U.S. federal system's term of supervised release, while 6 states had an increase in the parole population.

Females made up a similar percentage of adults on parole whose sex was known in 2011 (11%) and 2021 (12%). Among adults on parole in 2021 with a known race or ethnicity, 44% were white, 37% were black, and 16% were Hispanic. Among adults on parole whose most serious offense was known, a larger percentage in 2021 (36%) than in 2011 (28%) had been incarcerated for a violent offense. A smaller share was on parole for a drug offense in 2021 (30%) than in 2011 (33%).

The full report (*Probation and Parole in the United States, 2021*, NCJ 305589), related documents, and additional information about the Bureau of Justice Statistics are available on the BJS website at bjs.ojp.gov.