



# Bureau of Justice Statistics Bulletin

## Jail Inmates 1982

February 1983

An estimated 210,000 persons were confined in the Nation's local jails on June 30, 1982. This number was a third higher than in February 1978, when the total jail population was last measured. This rate of increase matched that of the prison population over the same period.

Jails held one inmate for every two inmates held in State and Federal prisons. This ratio was about the same in 1978.

### 60% of jail inmates unconvicted

Three of every five persons who were in the Nation's local jails at midyear 1982 had not been convicted of an offense. This proportion of unconvicted inmates was somewhat higher than in 1978.

The unconvicted were waiting to be formally charged (arraignment), waiting for pretrial release (bail, release on own recognizance, etc.), or waiting for trial. The convicted were awaiting sentence, awaiting revocation hearings on a technical violation of parole or

This bulletin introduces a new survey developed by the Bureau of Justice Statistics to fill a major gap in statistics on correctional populations.

The first complete census of local jails in the history of the United States was conducted in 1970 by the National Criminal Justice Information and Statistics Service, the predecessor agency to the bureau. Subsequent censuses were conducted in 1972 and 1978. A jail census is planned for 1983 and every five years thereafter.

In the years between censuses, however, there has been no way to measure the impact of the changes in the criminal justice system on

local jails. The dramatic growth that has taken place in Federal and State prison populations strongly suggested that local jails had also been affected but the extent was unknown. It became clear that annual data on the jail population was a necessity.

In response, the Bureau of Justice Statistics, in conjunction with the U.S. Bureau of the Census, developed a sample survey to provide basic data for the national jail population on an annual basis. Presented here are the results of that first survey.

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probation, awaiting transfer to a prison or other correctional facility, or serving their sentences in jail. The statistics collected in June 1982 do not permit differentiation among these subgroups.

### Prison overcrowding and jail populations

The total number of persons in jails was last reported in the 1978 National Jail Census, but data collected annually

Table 1. Jail inmates by detention status, June 30, 1982

	Total	Male	Female
All inmates	209,582	195,730	13,852
Adult	207,853	194,153	13,700
Awaiting arraignment or trial	118,189	110,078	8,111
Convicted	89,664	84,075	5,589
Juvenile	1,729	1,577	152
Awaiting preliminary hearing or adjudication	1,274	1,145	129
Adjudicated	455	432	23

Table 2. Inmates of local jails, June 30, 1982

	All inmates	White <sup>1</sup>	Black <sup>1</sup>	Hispanic	Other <sup>2</sup>
Total	209,582	98,688	84,346	23,617	2,931
Adult	207,853	97,732	83,684	23,555	2,882
Male	194,153	91,721	77,750	22,075	2,607
Female	13,700	6,011	5,934	1,480	275
Juvenile	1,729	956	662	62	49
Male	1,577	859	635	47	36
Female	152	97	27	15	13

<sup>1</sup>Excludes persons of Hispanic origin.

<sup>2</sup>American Indians, Native Alaskans, Asians, and Pacific Islanders.

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from State prisons show that prison overcrowding has led to a backup in jails of persons sentenced to prison but for whom prison space was not available. In 1981, the latest date for which statistics are available, jails in 19 States were holding 6,900 inmates who would have been in prison except for lack of bedspace.

**Jail stay averages 11 days**

The estimated length of stay in jail averaged about 11 days. This average undoubtedly masks a wide range. In some States jail inmates may serve sentences of more than a year; at the other extreme, some inmates stay in jail only a few hours before obtaining release.

**Daily jail population averages 212,000**

During the year ending June 30, 1982, the average daily jail population was 212,000—virtually the same as the number held on the last day of the same period. However, during the 12 months ending on June 30, more than 7 million persons passed through the Nation's jails. A substantial proportion of these were probably repeaters, but if each of the 7 million had been a different individual, 3% of the population of the United States would have gone to jail between July 1, 1981, and June 30, 1982.

**Female inmates**

The proportion of females in jail (61½%) had not changed since 1978—nor was it substantially different from the proportion of women in prison.

**Racial composition**

About 58% of the jail inmates were white, 40% black, and 2% persons of other races. This is virtually identical to the 1978 jail distribution: 57% white, 41% black, and 2% other races. The number of Hispanics in jail also remained unchanged at roughly 10% between February 1978 and June 1982. The most recent racial distribution of the prison population (December 31, 1981) was 52% white, 46% black, 1% other races, and 1% not reported.

**Jail inmates with juvenile status**

Despite persistent efforts to remove juveniles from adult facilities, the estimated number of juveniles in adult jails in June 1982 (1,700) was unchanged from that reported more than 4 years earlier. Juvenile status is a legal concept denoting that the individual will appear before a juvenile court for

adjudication or placement rather than before an adult court. In most States, juveniles are persons who have not reached their 18th birthday, but in a few States juvenile status ends with the 16th birthday. In addition, most States allow juveniles to be tried as adults if circumstances warrant it. Consequently, it is possible for an inmate with adult status to be younger than some of the inmates with juvenile status.

**Estimated juvenile stay**

The average daily inmate population for juveniles was not reported for the year ending on June 30, 1982, nor was the average length of stay. If the average daily population approximates the number in jail on June 30 and if an assumption of an average stay of 2 days is made—an assumption considered reasonable by juvenile justice researchers—then more than 300,000 juveniles would have been held in jail at some time during the 12-month period.

**Number and functions of jails**

Of the approximately 3,500 local jails in the United States, 2,900 are county jails and in most cases are administered by an elected county sheriff. The other 600 are municipal jails.

Jails differ from lockups, drunk tanks, and similar holding facilities; the former are authorized to detain persons for more than 48 hours, but the latter are not. Jails differ from prisons in that jails hold unconvicted persons as well as convicted persons serving time for lesser offenses. Such offenses are usually misdemeanors that carry maximum sentences of no more than a year. The majority of prison inmates are serving maximum sentences of more than a year for the commission of felonies.

**Reported jail capacity**

Reporting jails were asked for their rated and operational capacities as of June 30, 1982. Both of these terms are imprecise, nonstandardized, and subject to various interpretations. **Rated capacity** carries the connotation of "official" capacity and is based on the determination of any State or local rating official; **operational capacity** is that capacity at which a jail can function from day to day. In any jail on any day there is always some space inoperative and therefore not available for use.

The rated capacity of all the

Table 3. 100 largest jails: Inmate population June 30, 1982, and percent change from 1978

Name/location	Inmate population 6/30/82	Percent change from 2/15/78	Name/location	Inmate population 6/30/82	Percent change from 2/15/78	Name/location	Inmate population 6/30/82	Percent change from 2/15/78
Maricopa County Jail: Minimum Security	644	58*	De Kalb County: Jail Decatur, Ga.	624	39	Nassau County Correctional Center Hicksville, N.Y.	813	44
Maximum Security Phoenix, Ariz.	512	6	Fulton County Jail Atlanta, Ga.	1,173	55	Suffolk County Correctional Facility Riverhead, N.Y.	677	69
Alameda County Jail Santa Rita, Calif.	1,563	16	Cook County Jail: No. 1	603	*	New York City: Adolescent Reception/ Detention Center Queens, N.Y.	1,440	58
Contra Costa County Detention Facility Martinez, Calif.	448	213	No. 2	1,215	22	Anna M. Cross Center East Elmhurst, N.Y.	1,765	***
Fresno County Jail Fresno, Calif.	730	27	No. 4	599	21	Bronx House of Detention Bronx, N.Y.	468	-8
Kern County Jail Bakersfield, Calif.	401	3	No. 5	976	**	Brooklyn House of Detention Brooklyn, N.Y.	748	-1
Lerdo Minimum Security Facility Lerdo, Calif.	450	24	No. 6	971	**	Correctional Institute for Men Queens, N.Y.	2,176	35
Los Angeles County: Biscailuz Center	908	58	Chicago, Ill.			Correctional Institute for Women East Elmhurst, N.Y.	800	176
Central Jail	6,174	34	Marion County Jail Indianapolis, Ind.	791	31	House of Detention for Men East Elmhurst, N.Y.	1,200	-24
Sybil Brand Institute Los Angeles, Calif.	949	43	Fayette County Jail Lexington, Ky.	407	43	Queens House of Detention Kew Gardens, N.Y.	482	-3
Wayside Ranch: Maximum Security	1,250	41	Jefferson City County Jail Louisville, Ky.	851	87	Cuyahoga County Jail Cleveland, Ohio	852	34
Wayside Ranch: Minimum Security	1,710	136	Caddo Parish Detention Center Keithville, La.	433	40	Franklin County Corrections Center Columbus, Ohio	651	70
Castaic, Calif.			Jefferson Parish Jail Gretna, La.	559	120	Hamilton County Corrections Institute Cincinnati, Ohio	853	159
Orange County Jail Santa Ana, Calif.	1,846	60	New Orleans: House of Detention	784	155	Oklahoma County Jail Oklahoma City, Okla.	441	47
Riverside County Jail Riverside, Calif.	419	18	Parish Prison	777	38	Allegheny County Prison Pittsburgh, Pa.	623	49
Sacramento County Jail: Main Jail	540	-13	Community Correctional Center New Orleans, La.	856	193	Delaware County Prison Thornton, Pa.	459	21
Sacramento, Calif.			East Baton Rouge Prison Scotlandville, La.	492	-4	Holmesburg Prison	1,243	76
Rio Consumnes Elk Grove, Calif.	808	65	Baltimore City Jail Baltimore, Md.	1,713	10	House of Correction Philadelphia Detention Center Philadelphia, Pa.	976	54
San Bernardino County Jail San Bernardino, Calif.	647	17	Montgomery County Detention Center Rockville, Md.	400	53	Shelby County: Correction Center	457	1
San Diego County Central Detention Facility San Diego, Calif.	888	16	Prince Georges County Detention Center Upper Marlboro, Md.	484	9	Justice Center Memphis, Tenn.	658	2
Santa Clara County: Main Jail	792	27	Middlesex County Jail and House of Correction Billerica, Mass.	554	42	Bexar County Jail San Antonio, Tex.	929	2
San Jose, Calif.			Kent County Correctional Facility Grand Rapids, Mich.	634	47	Dallas County Jail: New Old	962	2
Minimum Security Milpitas, Calif.	885	49	Oakland County Law Enforcement Center Pontiac, Mich.	553	1	Dallas, Tex.	473	16
Ventura County Jail Ventura, Calif.	501	96	Wayne County Jail Detroit House of Correction Detroit, Mich.	723	-3	El Paso County Jail El Paso, Tex.	524	26
San Francisco City Jail No. 3 San Francisco, Calif.	458	25	Hennepin County Corrections Facility Wayzata, Minn.	565	-6	Harris County Detention Center Humble, Tex.	1,919	35
Denver County Jail Denver, Colo.	755	37	Jackson County Jail Kansas City, Mo.	424	42	Harris County Jail Houston, Tex.	1,080	70
District of Columbia Detention Facility Washington, D.C.	1,860	32	St. Louis Medium Security Institution St. Louis, Mo.	459	-4	Jefferson County Jail Beaumont, Tex.	417	128
Dade County: Training/Treatment Center Jail	569	12	Bergen Co. Jail - Annex Hackensack, N.J.	483	-1	Tarrant County Jail Fort Worth, Tex.	811	74
Miami, Fla.	1,301	101	Essex County Jail Newark, N.J.	710	39	Salt Lake County Jail Salt Lake City, Utah	430	26
Deval County: Jail Correctional Institute Jacksonville, Fla.	417	7	Essex County Jail Annex Caldwell, N.J.	747	41	Fairfax County Adult Detention Center Fairfax, Va.	429	121
Hillsborough County: Jail Stockade	509	38	Hudson County Jail Jersey City, N.J.	515	33	Norfolk Municipal Jail Norfolk, Va.	453	51
Tampa, Fla.	440	22	Monmouth County Correctional Institute Freehold, N.J.	416	56	Richmond City Jail Richmond, Va.	746	27
Volusia County Correctional Facility Daytona Beach, Fla.	402	142	Passaic County Jail Paterson, N.J.	488	103	King County Jail - Main Seattle, Wa.	861	12

NOTE: The jails shown above were selected on the basis of size only; they do not necessarily represent all of the jails in the counties in which they are located.  
\*Reduced capacity of jail  
\*\*Not open in 1978  
\*\*\*Not fully operational in 1978

Nation's jails was estimated as 250,000. At this capacity, the June 30 jail population represented 84% occupancy. The overall operational capacity was 220,000, producing an occupancy rate of 95%.

**40% of all jail inmates in 100 largest jails**

The 100 largest jails in the United States held 40% of the total jail population. The relationships among

rated capacity, operational capacity, and inmate population are distinctly different for these large jails than for smaller ones. In the aggregate, they reported an operational capacity larger than their rated capacity, but half said

there was no difference in the two measures. By whatever measure used, the inmate population in these large jails exceeded capacity—by 4% for rated capacity and by 0.3% for operational capacity.

There is some indication that the large jails may pragmatically view their operational capacity as the number of inmates that they are required to house. Smaller jails appear to define their operational capacity as one with which they can manage more comfortably. They define themselves at 92% of their operational capacity and at 80% of their rated (official) capacity. In any case, it is clear that most unoccupied beds in the jail system are in the smaller facilities.

#### Methodology

The data in this report were gathered by a mail survey conducted for the Bureau of Justice Statistics by the Bureau of the Census. In all, 683 jurisdictions were surveyed, including each jurisdiction with an average daily inmate population of 100 or more based

on the 1978 National Jail Census. These jurisdictions numbered 285 and accounted for 70% of the 1982 population estimate.

The other 398 jurisdictions selected were chosen randomly from within four

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groups into which the remaining jurisdictions had been placed according to size. The likelihood of selection for any jurisdiction was proportional to the size group to which it belonged. Eliminated from eligibility were jurisdictions in the six States with combined prison/jail systems—Alaska, Connecticut, Delaware, Hawaii, Rhode Island, and Vermont—and the District of Columbia, which also has a combined system.

The estimate for the total jail population in this survey should differ by less than 2% from a full census.

#### Further reading

Profile of Jail Inmates:  
Sociodemographic Findings from the  
1978 Survey of Inmates of Local Jails,  
October 1980, NCJ-65412.

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