



Jail Inmates in 2021 – Statistical Tables

SUMMARY | NCJ 34888

DECEMBER 2022

The number of persons held in local jails in the United States increased 16% from 2020 to 2021. Local jails held 636,300 persons on the last weekday in June 2021, up from 549,100 at midyear 2020. That population had decreased from 2019 to 2020 due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

Demographic data

The number of males confined in local jails increased 15% from 2020 to 2021, while the number of females increased 22%. The racial and ethnic composition of persons held in local jails remained stable from 2020 to 2021. At midyear 2021, about 49% of persons in local jails were white, 35% were black, and 14% were Hispanic. American Indians and Alaska Natives; Asians, Native Hawaiians, and Other Pacific Islanders; and persons of two or more races together accounted for 2% of the total jail population.

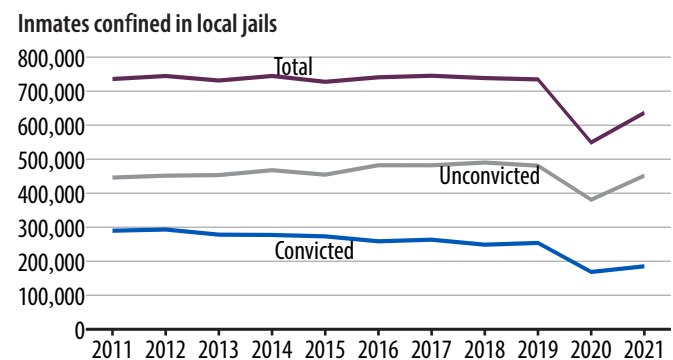
Legal status

At midyear 2021, about 29% of persons held in jail (185,000) were convicted, either serving a sentence or awaiting sentencing on a conviction, while 71% (451,400) were unconvicted, awaiting court action on a current charge or held in jail for other reasons. Unconvicted persons in jail accounted for 81% of the increase in the jail population from midyear 2020 to midyear 2021. Three-quarters (76%) of all persons incarcerated in local jails at midyear 2021 were held for felony offenses (485,700 persons) compared to 18% (114,000) for misdemeanors and 6% (36,600) for other types of offenses.

Occupancy rate

Based on the occupancy rate, jails were still less crowded than about a decade ago. At midyear 2021, about 70% of jail beds were occupied, which is higher

Number of inmates confined in local jails at midyear, by conviction status, 2011–2021



Note: Convicted inmates include those sentenced or awaiting sentencing on a conviction. Unconvicted inmates include those awaiting court action on a current charge or held in jail for other reasons. Source: Bureau of Justice Statistics, Annual Survey of Jails, 2011–2018, 2020, and 2021; and Census of Jails, 2019.

than the occupancy rate of 60% at midyear 2020 but lower than the rates from 2011 to 2019, which ranged from 81% to 85%.

Community supervision

At midyear 2021, local jails supervised 50,800 persons in various programs, such as electronic monitoring, home detention, day reporting, community service, alcohol or drug treatment programs, and other pretrial supervision and work programs outside of a jail facility. The number of persons supervised by local jails outside of a jail facility increased by 12,100 (31%) from midyear 2020 to midyear 2021.

The full report (*Jail Inmates in 2021 – Statistical Tables*, NCJ 304888), related documents, and additional information about the Bureau of Justice Statistics are available on the BJS website at bjs.ojp.gov.