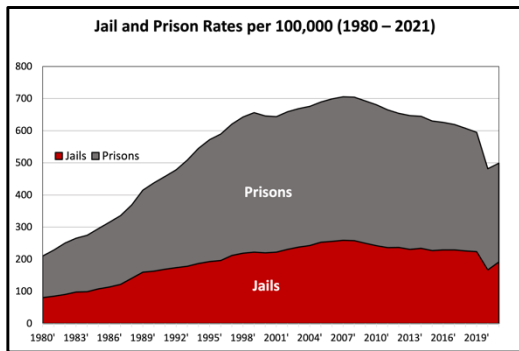


Jail Population Characteristics: State and National Comparisons

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Compared to prisons, less is known about the characteristics of jail confinement. For instance, many are often unaware that the population of a jail can be comprised of people who are serving a sentence, awaiting trial, waiting to be transferred, or waiting to be released. This Stat Sheet reviews characteristics of jail confinement in Nevada and across the United States.

Key Stats



Source: Council on Criminal Justice, 2023

Rates of Jail and Prison Incarceration (Figure 1)

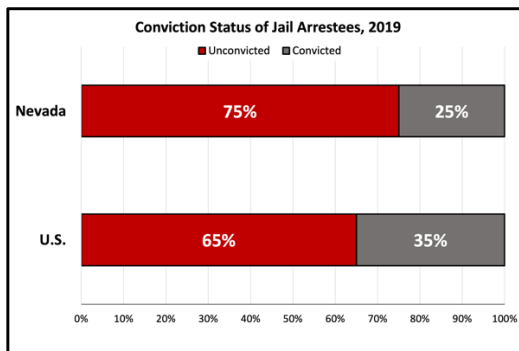
The extent of prison incarceration in the U.S. far outweighs that of jails. However, both have seen a steady decrease in their populations since the early 2000s. An even sharper decrease occurred during the COVID-19 pandemic. Only recently has there been an uptick in incarceration rates across jails and prisons, leveling back to pre-COVID rates.



Source: Census of Jails, 2019

Jail Incarceration Rates per State (Figure 2)

States vary widely in their use of jail incarceration. For example, Louisiana and Kentucky have the highest rates of jail incarceration, and New Hampshire and Alaska have the lowest. Nevada falls around the national average. Specific rates of jail incarceration for each state are provided on the back of this Stat Sheet.



Source: Census of Jails, 2019

Jail Conviction Rates for U.S. and Nevada, 2019 (Figure 3)

An unconvicted person in jail is an individual awaiting trial, transfer, or release. In both the United States and Nevada, a vast majority of people in jail are considered unconvicted. In fact, 75% of Nevada’s jail population are persons who fall within this unconvicted category.

Summary

Jails within the United States receive much less attention within the literature and research than prisons. This may be due, in part, to the very high turnover of jail populations. However, jails have become “catch all” facilities, functioning far beyond their intended purpose. Despite not having a consistent population like prisons, jails arguably encounter more people in the United States than prisons, and therefore need to be better studied.

Although not addressed here, there are additional factors that play a role in incarceration trends both in jails and prisons, such as demographic characteristics like gender and race/ethnicity, as well financial resources and state correctional policies.

Data Sources

The data used for this Stat Sheet were derived from a variety of sources. The data in Figure 1 is from the Council on Criminal Justice (2023). This data provides incarceration trends for jails and prisons from the 1980s to today. The data for the jail-specific table and figures (Table 1 and Figures 2 and 3) was derived from the Census of Jails (2019). This data source provides data on jail populations nationally, as well as within individual states, through June 28, 2019. Rates in Table 1 and Figure 2 were not included in the data from the Census of Jails (2019), but were calculated by the current author from Census population data for the year 2020.

References

Council on Criminal Justice. (2023). *The footprint: Tracking the size of America's criminal justice system*. <https://counciloncj.foleon.com/the-footprint-trends-in-crime-arrests-and-the-total-correctional-population/the-footprint/>

United States Department of Justice. (2019). Office of Justice Programs. Bureau of Justice Statistics. Census of Jails, 2019. Inter-university Consortium for Political and Social Research [distributor], 2022-03-30. <https://doi.org/10.3886/ICPSR38323.v1>

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Table 1: Jail Incarceration Rates per State

State	Jail Incarceration Rates per 100,000
1. Louisiana	700.0
2. Kentucky	581.0
3. Mississippi	484.8
4. Tennessee	451.1
5. Georgia	417.6
6. Virginia	328.6
7. Alabama	326.9
8. Arkansas	311.9
9. New Mexico	309.2
10. Indiana	300.9
11. West Virginia	285.2
12. Kansas	275.0
13. Wyoming	271.8
14. District of Columbia	271.3
15. Oklahoma	268.1
16. Florida	262.4
17. Pennsylvania	241.0
18. Texas	235.3
19. Nevada	231.7
20. Montana	230.9
21. Idaho	229.8
22. South Dakota	226.4
23. Colorado	224.7
24. South Carolina	223.5
25. Utah	222.3
26. Wisconsin	216.2
27. Nebraska	214.0
28. North Carolina	194.8
29. California	190.0
30. Arizona	188.6
31. North Dakota	188.6
32. Missouri	188.2
33. Ohio	174.4
34. Michigan	157.7
35. Iowa	157.3
36. Washington	151.6
37. Oregon	142.3
38. Maryland	139.1
39. Massachusetts	132.4
40. Illinois	129.0
41. Minnesota	119.8
42. Maine	118.8
43. New Jersey	103.0
44. New York	101.7
45. New Hampshire	101.6
46. Alaska	6.8
Connecticut, Delaware, Hawaii, Rhode Island, and Vermont	N/A