

Vera Institute of Justice

Criminal Justice Issues and Prisoners' Rights

<https://www.vera.org/publications/people-in-jail-in-2019>

Policy Issue Resources

Publication

See our updated report, "*People in Jail and Prison in 2020*," [here](#).

Researchers from the Vera Institute of Justice, with support from [Google.org Fellows](#), collected data on the number of people in local jails at midyear in both 2018 and 2019 to provide timely information on how incarceration is changing in the United States. This report fills a gap until the Bureau of Justice Statistics releases its report on jail population statistics in 2019 likely in early 2021. Vera researchers estimated the national jail population and jail incarceration rate using a sample of 861 jail jurisdictions. The results are broken down by jurisdiction type and across years, showing diverging trends between urban, suburban, small/mid-sized metropolitan, and rural areas.

The estimated midyear jail population was 1.8 percent higher than in midyear 2017, part of a four-year increase in the total U.S. jail population. While jail incarceration rates have been increasing in rural jurisdictions, however, jail incarceration rates in urban areas have been declining.

In June 2019, there were 31,000 more people in jail than in the recent trough of 2015: a 4.3 percent increase.

Since 2013, jail incarceration rates have decreased by 22 percent in urban areas.

Since 2013, jail incarceration rates have increased by 26 percent in rural jurisdictions.

PUBLICATION

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