

The Sentencing Project

Criminal Justice Issues and Prisoners' Rights

<https://www.sentencingproject.org/publications/private-prisons-united-states/>

Policy Issue Resources

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Harmful crime policies of the 1980s and beyond fueled a rapid expansion in the nations prison population. The resulting burden on the public sector led to the modern emergence of for-profit prisons in many states and the federal system. Of the 1.2 million people in federal and state prisons, 8%, or 99,754 people, were in private prisons as of yearend 2020.

States show significant variation in the use of private prisons. At one end of the spectrum, Montana incarcerates half of its prison population in privately run facilities, but in another 22 states, private prisons are not used at all. A total of 26 states and the federal government use private corporations like GEO Group, Core Civic, LaSalle Corrections, and Management and Training Corporation to run some of their corrections facilities.

Click here to view state data and read the [fact sheet](#).

Increase in U.S. jail & prison population in the last 40 years

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