Vera Institute of Justice

Criminal Justice Issues and Prisoners' Rights

https://www.vera.org/publications/people-in-prison-in-2019

Policy Isssue Resources

Publication

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

Vera Institute of Justice (Vera) researchers collected data on the number of people who were incarcerated in state and federal prisons as of December 31, 2019, to provide timely information on how prison incarceration is changing in the United States. This report fills a gap until the Bureau of Justice Statistics releases its next annual reportlikely in early 2021. Vera collected updated data on people in prison at the end of the first quarter of 2020 to reflect any changes that had occurred as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic. Additional information on people in prison at the end of April is available as a supplementary data table.

Adjust arrows to view the four different combinations of population trends and incarceration rate. Select any state to see detailed data.

At the end of 2019, there were an estimated 1,435,500 people in state and federal prisons, down 2.2 percent from 2018. Population data collected from 44 states and the Federal Bureau of Prisons (BOP) in response to the COVID-19 pandemic showed only a 1.6 percent decrease during the first three months of 2020.

The prison incarceration rate at the end of 2019 was 437 people in prison per 100,000 residents, a 2.6 percent drop from 2018.

Data from 44 states and the BOP show that no system had moved with the urgency required to meet the recommendations of public health officials to reduce incarceration in response to the COVID-19 pandemic.

Between year-end 2018 and year-end 2019, prison incarceration rates fell in 41 states and grew in nine others.

PUBLICATION

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