

Vera Institute of Justice

Criminal Justice Issues and Prisoners' Rights

<https://www.vera.org/blog/veras-incarceration-trends-state-fact-sheets>

Public Facing Advocacy Writing

This week we released *Incarceration Trends in Local Jails and State Prisons* [fact sheets](#) for each state.

For several years, Vera researchers have been working to advance the availability of county- and state-level incarceration data through projects such as the [Incarceration Trends](#) data tool and the [People in Prisons](#) report series. These fact sheets are a new resource that capture the best available jail and prison data in a single document for each state.

In addition to placing a states jail and prison data literally on the same page, we designed these documents so that people can easily see how their state compares to others. Mass incarceration manifests differently in each state, so the reform priorities in one state will likely not be the same as in another. We also present data broken down by race, gender, and geography to feature three aspects of incarceration that are at the core of Veras research and advocacy: racism as a central feature of mass incarceration, rapid growth in the number of women behind bars, and rising incarceration rates in smaller cities and rural counties.

To distill all this information into a four-page document, we made a number of decisions to aid readability and interpretation. Some of these decisions are not conventional but, in our view, many of the old conventions merit rethinking.

The data we used to create these fact sheets, along with detailed methodology whitepapers and a codebook, are maintained on Veras [Github](#) page. These fact sheets were created by directly linking Veras datasets to the Adobe Illustrator file that produced the designed reports, so any errors are due to mistakes state and local agencies made when submitting their data to the Bureau of Justice Statistics, which is the source of the data in these fact sheets.

We hope that you find these to be useful resources for your advocacy, research, and policymaking. If you are interested in the data for a particular county, rather than the state as a whole, you can find this detail on Veras [Incarceration Trends](#) data tool.

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