Vera
INSTITUTE OF JUSTICE

Incarceration Trends Dataset

County-level jail data (1970-2024) and county-level prison data (1983-2019)

Codebook for 05-2025 Release

May 2025

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Introduction

This document provides detail on the sources used to create—and variables found in—the Incarceration Trends dataset, much of which can be visualized using the Incarceration Trends data tool (trends.vera.org). The data included in this release of the dataset (05-2025 release) aligns with the data visible in the Incarceration Trends data tool as of October 2024.

County-level data—specifically, data on how counties use their local jails and how many people the local courts send to state prisons—is fundamental to a thorough understanding of the criminal legal system. Yet the federal government does not provide comprehensive and comparable historical county-level information. As a result, research on incarceration has traditionally centered on state-level data: specifically, state prison populations or the statewide combined prison and jail population. Using the state as the unit of analysis is sufficient for understanding the broad contours of incarceration in the United States, but it does not provide the level of detail necessary to unpack its causes and consequences. This is because it is largely county officials—judges, prosecutors, and people who manage jails—who decide how communities use incarceration (i.e., who is sent to jail and prison and for how long). Therefore, county-level variability allows for more robust, theoretically grounded studies of the high rates of incarceration seen across the United States. In 2015, the Vera Institute of Justice (Vera) launched a project to address this gap by developing a dataset using the available federally collected data and expanding it to include other public data on incarceration.

Vera's Incarceration Trends Project (ITP) dataset provides county-level data on prison and jail incarceration and related measures over time for the entire United States. In May 2025, Vera released the third public version of the ITP dataset. This codebook describes the substantive changes in data collection and estimation approaches developed by Vera staff and applied to this third version of the ITP dataset.[1]

Vera assembled this dataset primarily using information collected by the U.S. Department of Justice Bureau of Justice Statistics (BJS) and supplemented it with data collected by Vera directly from state and local agencies when federal data was not available. The BJS data used in the ITP dataset run through 2019 for prisons and through 2023 for jails. Vera was able to extend the jail data through the first quarter of 2024 by collecting data directly from state and local government agencies.[2]

The BJS datasets include the following:

Prisons

- the **National Corrections Reporting Program (NCRP)**, which has collected individual-level data on prison admissions and releases from participating states since 1983; and
- The **National Prisoner Statistics (NPS)** program, which collects annual state and federal prison population data from all states and the federal Bureau of Prisons.

Jails

- the **Mortality in Correctional Institutions: Jail Populations (MCI)**, which provides facility-level jail population and admissions data, collected between 2000 and 2019;
- the **Census of Jails (COJ)**, which provides data on all counties since its first collection in 1970 and is conducted every five to eight years; and
- the **Annual Survey of Jails (ASJ)**, which has collected data for a sample of about one-third of jails since 1982—and includes nearly all the country's largest jails. The ASJ has been conducted in years where the COJ was not conducted.[3]

In addition to incarceration data, the dataset also includes the following:

- annual population estimates from the National Cancer Institute's Surveillance Epidemiology and End Results Program (SEER), created by the U.S. Census Bureau in partnership with the National Center on Health Statistics; and
- geographic information from the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) and the U.S. Census Bureau.

In compiling the data in the ITP dataset, Vera assigned jail data to the relevant jail jurisdiction and combined the jurisdictions into one dataset for estimation at the county level.

Since 2017, Vera has expanded its data collection efforts to supplement federal data on jails and prisons with data collected directly from local governments where available. This addresses delays in publication by some federal sources in recent years. With these supplemental data sources, Vera has increased its reporting granularity to quarterly as of this release.

If you have questions or comments about the dataset or this documentation, please write to trends@vera.org.

Project History

In December 2015, Vera released the Incarceration Trends data tool (trends.vera.org) and the companion publication *In Our Own Backyard: Confronting Growth and Disparities in American Jails*. This work employed two Bureau of Justice Statistics (BJS) data collections: the Census of Jails (COJ), which covers all jails and is conducted every five to eight years since 1970, and the Annual Survey of Jails (ASJ), which covers about one-third of jails—and includes nearly all of the largest jails—and has been conducted in non-census years since 1982. This project was funded by the Robert W. Wilson Charitable Trust.

Between 2016 and 2018, through a grant from the MacArthur Foundation Safety and Justice Challenge, Vera updated the data tool to include newly released data from the 2013 COJ and 2015 ASJ and developed four publications:

- Overlooked: Women and Jails in an Era of Reform,
- Out of Sight: The Growth of Jails in Rural America,
- Divided Justice: Trends in Black and White Incarceration 1990-2013, and
- The New Dynamics of Mass Incarceration.

In 2018, through the *In Our Backyards* grant from Google.org, Vera completed work on a companion county-level prison dataset, examined in *The New Dynamics of Mass Incarceration,* that drew on the BJS National Corrections Reporting Program (NCRP) data collection. Vera then merged this data with the original jails dataset to produce a first-in-kind national dataset—the ITP dataset—which can examine both jail and prison incarceration at the county level.

In January 2020, with additional support from Arnold Ventures, Vera produced an updated dataset (version 2.1), which included a cleaner version of the same data released in 2018 and incorporated 2016 ASJ and 2017 ASJ data, which had been released in the prior two years.

In September 2020, Vera produced an updated dataset (version 2.2) including 2018 ASJ data, which had been released in 2020. This version also included improved estimates for some earlier data.

In May 2025, Vera released a further revised and updated dataset (version 3.0, Incarceration Trends 05-2025 Release). This version of the dataset includes jail population and jail admissions data from the BJS Mortality in Correctional Institutions data series for 2000 through 2019; COJ data for 2019; ASJ data for 2020, 2021, 2022,

and 2023; and NCRP data for 2019. This dataset includes additional jail population data compiled by Vera from state and local sources as well as from others in the field. This version also includes improved estimates from prior releases.

Data Sources

Vera's dataset combines sources that are described in detail below. Vera merged data at the county level for every year for which it was collected, enabling an analysis of local-level change over time.

Local jail data

1. Bureau of Justice Statistics sources

1.1 Annual Survey of Jails

The Annual Survey of Jails (ASJ) series provides annual, county-level data on jail admissions, releases, and population estimates for a sample of jurisdictions identified from the Census of Jails. The sample includes all large jails above a certain threshold and a stratified random sample based on jail size and some other factors. Vera used ASJ data to estimate jail admission counts, jail population counts, jail populations by race and gender, and pretrial population counts at the county level in years during which MCI data was unavailable. Vera also used ASJ data to compare facility-level estimates from the MCI to county-level trends to check for data errors and account for discrepancies in reporting or data collection. The BJS has collected ASJ data since 1982, however the earliest years have not been made available in a public archive. Vera used the publicly available data from 1985 through 2023.

1.2 Census of Jails

The Census of Jails (COJ) series began in 1970 and is conducted every five to eight years. It collects data from all U.S. counties. The latest iteration of the census in 2019 included 2,637 local jail jurisdictions. Facility-level data includes confined and non-confined population counts, confined populations by gender and race, the average daily population, and number of admissions and releases.

1.3 Mortality in Correctional Institutions Series

The Mortality in Correctional Institutions Series (MCI), formerly known as the Death in Custody Reporting Program (DCRP), contains jurisdiction-level data on jail average daily populations, admissions, and single day population counts for the years 2000 to 2019. Vera used data from the jail portion of the MCI to compute total jail admission counts, total jail population counts, admissions and population estimates by race and gender, as well as total pretrial population counts and pretrial populations by gender for each county. The MCI data series was not continued by BJS in 2020 and formally ceased collection in 2021.

2. Data collected by Vera

To fill gaps in BJS data, in recent years, Vera has collected data from agencies that provide comprehensive reports on local jails in their states. Vera used this data for total jail population metrics. (For more information on Vera's data collection protocols see the methodology and source notes for People in Jail and Prison in 2024.)

2.1 State sources

Vera obtained comprehensive jail data for all county jails from 21 states. Vera obtained information from the 13 states where central agencies collect and publicly share timely data (monthly or weekly) on jails at the local-jurisdiction level: California, Colorado, Florida, Georgia, Kentucky, Massachusetts, Maryland, New York, Pennsylvania, Tennessee, Texas, Virginia, and West Virginia. Vera also obtained statewide data on local jails from Indiana, North Carolina, Ohio, Oklahoma, Oregon, and Wisconsin from agencies via public records request. The New Mexico Association of Counties provided data on jails in New Mexico. Vera collected data on jails in Louisiana in a variety of ways, but the sample included all jails in the state.

2.2 Additional sources

Vera collected data directly from several hundred more local government agencies through phone calls, public records requests, and sourced from jail websites where permissible. In two cases where key jurisdictions were not reachable by other means, Vera collected data on jail populations from third parties: the New York University Public Safety Lab's Jail Data Initiative for Pima County, Arizona, and from the MacArthur Foundation's Justice and Safety Challenge for Las Vegas, Nevada.[4]

When data was available from multiple sources, Vera used only one source for each metric, jail jurisdiction, and time period combination. Vera constructed the data to prefer the comprehensive state reports and then the BJS data (COJ or ASJ, and then MCI jail population data), except where manually collected sources were verified to be more accurate. Vera then used these to estimate county-level jail statistics, such as total jail population count, total jail admission count, and population and admission estimates by race and gender. More details on cleaning and processing can be found on page 8.

Prison data

National Corrections Reporting Program

The county-level prison variables found in the ITP dataset draw on the National Corrections Reporting Program (NCRP), which provides detailed, individual-level data on admissions and releases from state prison authorities, including county of commitment. Vera used the NCRP data to compute total prison population counts and total prison admission counts per year, aggregated at the county level, as well as population and admissions estimates by race and gender. The ITP dataset includes state-level data collected directly from state departments of correction when historical NCRP data was not available or was unreliable.

The NCRP source data underwent a major formatting change in 2000, impacting Vera's approach to calculating populations and admissions. The 2000 to 2019 data is available as individual-level terms of stay, allowing for counts of population and admissions in prison at the county level. The data covering 1983 to 1999 does not explicitly link at the individual level, and thus the population and admission figures provided in the

ITP dataset are estimates. For more details on Vera's methodology and other special cases required to process NCRP data, see *Reconstructing How Counties Contribute to State Prisons*.

National Prisoner Statistics

ITP's state-level dataset draws directly from the state-level National Prisoner Statistics (NPS) data published by BJS. For validation purposes, Vera compared NCRP data to NPS data to assess and account for data errors and missing values. Vera compared the combined total admissions per year for all counties within each state in the NCRP data to state-level admission totals in the NPS data to identify states that failed to report admissions figures for certain years. Vera interpolated the missing data at the county level within individual variables.

Population and geographic information

Population data

To calculate incarceration rates, Vera used population data derived from the U.S. Census Bureau. The decennial censuses and, in recent decades, the American Community Survey (ACS), provide more current population estimates for counties by racial, ethnic, sex, and age categories, but these are not available annually for small areas. The county-level "bridged race" population data used for Vera's analysis is publicly available data created by a partnership between the U.S. Census Bureau and the National Center for Health Statistics through the National Cancer Institute's Surveillance Epidemiology and End Results Program (SEER). SEER uses intercensal population estimates for individual years between 1970 and 2020, with postcensal estimates from 2023, all available online.[5] The data is broken down by age, sex, and race. Race categories also include a Hispanic/Latino ethnicity variable. Vera used this data to aggregate the estimated county populations of people between the ages of 15 and 64 by race and sex.

Geography

U.S. Department of Agriculture

The U.S. Department of Agriculture Economic Research Service first developed Commuting Zones (CZs) and Labor Market Areas (LMAs) in the 1980s to more accurately delineate the geographic boundaries of local economies. Vera used the 2000 version of the CZs to provide a metric for examining geographic variation in prison and jail incarceration.

U.S. Census Bureau

The U.S. Census Bureau collects data using a variety of geographic delineations. Geographic entities, or statistical areas, range from regions to census blocks. Vera used the Census Bureau definitions of region, urban versus rural, divisions, and metropolitan areas to provide additional metrics to examine geographic variation in prison and jail incarceration. In addition, Vera included land area in square miles to allow for the examination of population density.

Urbanicity

Vera's measure of urbanicity collapses the categories defined by the National Center for Health Statistics Urban-Rural Classification Scheme for Counties from six to four. Vera does so by combining medium with small metropolitan areas, and micropolitan (an urban area with a population of at least 10,000 but less than 50,000) with non-core areas (all other areas not considered metropolitan or micropolitan).[6] Vera counts the former as "Small and Mid Metros" and the latter as "Rural." Vera labels counties as "Large Metro, Urban" if

they are one of the core counties of a metropolitan area with a million or more people; Vera labels counties as "Large Metro, Suburban" if they are within that surrounding metropolitan area. Rural areas make up the most numerous category, with more than 1,900 counties.

Data Processing

Jail data cleaning

In order to develop this process, Vera reviewed the 1970 – 2018 COJ and ASJ data for data irregularities. Where they observed erroneous data, Vera researchers removed the data and linearly interpolated from the last data point available to the subsequent data point. If no subsequent data point existed, Vera researchers used the last available value in the most recent year. Vera applied this methodology to subsequent updates to the source datasets. A detailed description of this process is below.

The COJ and ASJ report data by individual jail facility in some years and by jail jurisdiction in others.[7] Vera developed a mapping of facility, jurisdiction, and county keys across sources and methods of reporting that allows for aggregation at each of these levels, while accounting for overlaps between granularities. First, they identified unique jail facilities in the data by comparing facility ID, state, county, jurisdiction ID, and jurisdiction type variables. They then assigned facility identifiers to every jail in the dataset so that jails could be compared over time. Vera then used the county FIPS code, jurisdiction type, and unit number to assign each facility a *jurisdiction* identifier—a unique number that tracks a legal jurisdiction within a county. In order to preserve the local-justice focus, Vera removed federal jail facilities, data for which was only collected in a limited number of years. Finally, for an initial mapped dataset, Vera researchers identified variables of interest that were consistently reported over the years, such as jail population, and created a document identifying what each variable was named in each year's datafile. Vera used this document to combine individual year datafiles into a single dataset.

In cases where data was collected using different scales over the years (for example, the COJ and ASJ sometimes collected variables such as admissions and release over a week period, over a 24-hour period, or over a whole year) Vera normalized the data to reflect annual counts. In the years 2006 and 2013, both ASJ and COJ collected data; Vera used the COJ data except in specific cases where a respondent's data was either cleaner or more comprehensive in the ASJ dataset. In some years, different wings of the same facility all reported data separately; Vera aggregated all data to the facility level.

To help identify data errors, Vera computed year-over-year change in every numerical variable for every jail and then looked at the distribution of these values for anomalies. Based on the distributions, Vera identified thresholds where the year-over-year change was outside a normal range. Then, Vera researchers manually reviewed data for each of these instances. Across all variables, the average threshold was a year-over-year change of 30 percent. In many variables, Vera reviewed more than 1,000 anomalous values by hand. Observations identified this way were often accurate and represented real changes in the jail populations. Vera researchers used a variety of methods to verify this data, including calling facilities to determine if the reported data was correct. However, for certain variables, such as the numbers of incarcerated men and women, the data was often reported incorrectly. For example, the jail reported the men's number in the women's field and vice versa. This same problem also often occurred in the variables describing incarceration by racial category. Vera researchers swapped reported numbers when the solution to the data error was obvious. For other erroneous data, Vera removed the data points from the dataset and replaced them with linear interpolation.

Vera aggregated the resulting dataset at the jurisdiction level by summing each variable for each facility in a jurisdiction within the specific year. Vera then interpolated this jurisdiction-level dataset to fill in values for years where the jurisdiction was not sampled or reported in either the COJ or ASJ. The researchers extended variable values from the last year that the jurisdiction reported to 2023, unless the most recent report was prior to the 2013 COJ.

Vera used the resulting jurisdiction-level jail dataset as the basis for a county-level dataset, which Vera obtained by summing variable values for each jurisdiction in a county within the specific year. This ensures more accurate, slightly higher county-level jail population estimates in states like Alabama, California, or Washington that frequently have both city jails and county jails in the same county, as the city jails tend not to be sampled in the ASJ.

Jurisdiction and county-level data

Vera computed jail population data using the ASJ, COJ, MCI, and Vera-collected data. The ASJ/COJ data is available for the period 1970 through 2023; MCI data is only available for the period 2000 through 2019. Vera-collected data is available from 2020 through spring 2024. While Vera compiled this data to the jurisdiction level in order to calculate county-level data, Vera does not include jurisdiction data in this release. If you are interested in jurisdiction-level files, please contact trends@vera.org.

Multi-jurisdictional jails

As of 2025, Vera estimates that 162 jail jurisdictions hold people for multiple counties. These multi-jurisdictional jails serve 467 total counties, covering about 7 percent of the jail population—counties that appear to have no jail apart from a temporary holding facility (such as a police lockup) and must therefore rely on another jurisdiction for pretrial detention or non-prison sentences of incarceration. Multi-jurisdictional jails may be more formal "regional jails"—such as those in Virginia and West Virginia, which are generally flagged as such in the BJS data collection—or they may not be identified in a formal way but provide jail beds to (often small_ neighboring counties. For instance, Vera researchers found that Liberty County (population 2,000) in Montana sends people to a jail run by adjacent Chouteau County (population 6,000). Consequently, in these cases, the number of people in multi-jurisdiction jails exceeds the number of people sent to the jail by the county where the jail is physically located. Without further adjustment, this would overstate the jail population for the county where the multi-jurisdiction jail is located.

Vera researchers addressed this problem by identifying the sending and receiving counties (meaning the counties that use and the counties that operate regional jails, respectively) and the year that the sending county last reported data to BJS. Then, Vera apportioned the multi-jurisdictional jail population, distributing jail data to the sending counties based on their share of the combined resident population. For example, if a regional jail held 100 people and served two counties—one with 90,000 residents and the other with 10,000 residents—this method would assume 10 people were from the smaller, sending county and 90 from the larger, receiving county.[8]

To identify these cases, Vera researchers used the 2005 COJ and reviewed all counties that did not have a respondent to the jail survey. Through internet research, Vera identified many of the nonrespondent counties as sending counties and paired them with their receiving counties that ran the multi-jurisdiction jail. For counties that Vera could not pair with a multi-jurisdiction jail through internet research, Vera placed telephone calls to sheriffs' departments in counties that do not operate a jail and asked whether they had any such arrangements in place. Most shared this information. Through follow up research (completed using information from the 2015 ASJ and updated based on the 2017 ASJ and the 2019 COJ), Vera determined that 162 counties contained a multi-jurisdictional (or regional) jail. Many of the counties with no respondents to the

COJ utilize a single multi-jurisdictional jail.[9] Vera weighted these counties by population and apportioned jail data from the receiving county as described above.

Census data

To calculate incarceration rates and enable other contextualized analyses, Vera includes census data in the dataset. Vera used census data in the following ways to harmonize it with incarceration-specific analysis.

Resident population, by age. To get a more accurate picture of incarceration rates, Vera removed people under the age of 15 and over 64 from the general population for the purposes of calculating incarceration and admission rates, since these groups are at very low risk of incarceration. Because the proportion of these groups varies greatly by county, keeping them in would skew rates and make comparisons between counties difficult. Note that this method differs from most other calculations of statewide and national incarceration rates, which use either the total resident population or the population aged 18 and older.[10]

Resident population, by race, ethnicity and by sex. Using the same age limits as above (15 through 64), Vera collected resident population numbers by racial, ethnic, and sex categories—available as single year estimates at the county level from the U.S. Census.[11] The federal Office of Management and Budget standards for the collection of data on race and ethnicity changed in 1977, 1997, and again in 2024.[12] In order to preserve comparability to the jails data, which have used a bridged race and ethnicity question since 1985 (see "Confined Population by Race and by Gender"), Vera researchers only use the census race data from 1990 onward, when it is first available using bridged ethnicity and race categories.

Variable Descriptions for Incarceration Metrics

Jails

Jail Admissions / Discharges

Total jail admissions (total_jail_adm) is an estimate of the number of admissions in each county in a given year. There is a similar variable for total jail discharges (total_jail_dis). Historically, BJS has most frequently measured jail admissions and discharges over the last week in June and multiplied those numbers to estimate annual counts, but this has changed over time. More recently, ASJ asks for a direct annual count, starting in July the year before and ending in June of the reference year. For instance, the 2020 admissions number refers to the year starting in July 2019 and ending in June 2020. Some BJS data provides an annual count broken down by gender. More information is available at *Incarceration Trends: Data and Methods for Historical Jail Populations in U.S. Counties, 1970-2018*.

Jail population

Due to rapid changes in the jail populations in recent years and more broadly available data on jails, Vera now produces jail population estimates (total_jail_pop) on a quarterly basis. Generally, this means Vera aims to measure the number of people in jail on or near these dates:

- Q1: March 31,
- Q2: June 30,
- Q3: September 30, and
- Q4: December 31.

Typically, BJS produces jail data measured at the middle of the year (Q2). BJS defines the jail population as the average daily number of people held in jail through December 31 of a given year. BJS also disaggregates the jail population estimates by race and gender as well as by jurisdiction. These disaggregated estimates are reported as a single day count at the end of June (except for 2015 and 2016 where the reference date was end of December), rather than an annual average, and thus do not necessarily sum to the total average daily population. Vera includes six race categories: Asian American/Pacific Islander, Black, Latinx, Native American, White, and Other. The total jail population, as well as race and gender estimates, include individual people held under federal and other authorities. Vera includes the jail population count for non-local authorities, including state prisons; other local jails; and various federal agencies such as Immigration and Customs Enforcement, U.S. Marshals Service, Bureau of Prisons, and the Bureau of Indian Affairs. These are also single day counts.

Pretrial population

BJS computes pretrial jail population estimates in the same way as the total jail population estimates, but only counts unsentenced people who are held in jail at the end of June (Q2) (except for 2015 and 2016 where the reference date was end of December).

Prisons

Prison population

Vera defines the prison population as a count of people sentenced to the state prison authority, aggregated by the county of commitment. Total prison population count is based on the number of people held in prison on December 31 of a given year. Vera disaggregates prison population counts by race and gender. Vera includes six race categories: Asian American/Pacific Islander, Black, Latinx, Native American, White, and Other racial categories.

Prison admissions

Total prison admissions (total_prison_adm) counts the number of times people are sent to prison from each county. For all counties, prison admissions exclude returns from court and transfers from other jurisdictions. Admissions with a sentence of less than 12 months are excluded from the figures for Arizona, Maryland, North Carolina, and South Carolina. Vera disaggregates prison admissions by race and gender, and includes six race categories: AAPI, Black, Latinx, Native American, White, and Other or unknown racial categories.

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Endnotes

[1] Further information on the protocols Vera employed to create jail variables using the ASJ and COJ in earlier versions of the Incarceration Trends dataset is available in Jacob Kang-Brown, Oliver Hinds, Eital Schattner-Elmaleh, and James Wallace-Lee, *Incarceration Trends: Data and Methods for Historical Jail Populations in U.S. Counties, 1970-2018* (New York: Vera Institute of Justice, 2020), https://github.com/vera-institute/incarceration_trends/blob/master/Methodology-for-Incarceration-Trends-Project.pdf. Further information on the earlier protocols Vera employed to create prison variables using the NCRP is available in Oliver Hinds, Olive Lu, James Wallace-Lee, and Jacob Kang-Brown, *Working paper: Reconstructing How Counties Contribute to State Prisons* (New York: Vera Institute of Justice, 2018), https://github.com/vera-institute/incarceration-trends/blob/main/Workingpaper_Reconstructing-How-Counties-Contribute-to-State-Prisons.pdf.

[2] Jacob Kang-Brown and Jessica Zhang, *People in Jail and Prison in 2024: Methodology and Source Notes* (New York: Vera Institute of Justice, 2024), https://vera-institute.files.svdcdn.com/production/downloads/publications/People-in-Jail-and-Prison-in-2024-Methodology-and-Source-Notes.pdf

[3] Data collections used: National Corrections Reporting Program, 2000-2019 (ICPSR 38047); Mortality in Correctional Institutions: Jail Population Distributions, 2000-2019 (ICPSR 38038); Annual Survey of Jails, 2023 (39202); Annual Survey of Jails, 2022 (ICPSR 38900); Annual Survey of Jails, 2021 (ICPSR 38573); Annual Survey of Jails, 2020 (ICPSR 38408); Census of Jails, 2019 (ICPSR 38323); Annual Survey of Jails, 2018 (ICPSR 37392); Annual Survey of Jails, 2017 (ICPSR 37373); Annual Survey of Jails, 2016 (ICPSR 37135); Annual Survey of Jails, 2015 (ICPSR 36760); Annual Survey of Jails, 2014 (ICPSR 36274); Census of Jails, 2013 (ICPSR 36128); Annual Survey of Jails, 2013 (ICPSR 35517); Deaths in Custody Reporting Program: Jail Populations, 2000-2013 (ICPSR 36560); Annual Survey of Jails: Jail-Level Data, 2012 (ICPSR 34884); Annual Survey of Jails: Jail-Level Data, 2011 (ICPSR 33722); Annual Survey of Jails: Jail-Level Data, 2010 (ICPSR 31261); Annual Survey of Jails: Jail-Level Data, 2009 (ICPSR 29081); Annual Survey of Jails: Jail-Level Data, 2008 (ICPSR 28281); Annual Survey of Jails: Individual Reporting-Level Data, 2007 (ICPSR 24641); Annual Survey of Jails: Jurisdiction-Level Data, 2006 (ICPSR 20368); Census of Jail people: Individual-Level Data, 2005 (ICPSR 20367); Annual Survey of Jails: Jurisdiction-Level Data, 2004 (ICPSR 20200); Annual Survey of Jails: Jurisdiction-Level Data, 2003 (ICPSR 4635); Annual Survey of Jails: Jurisdiction-Level Data, 2002 (ICPSR 4428); Annual Survey of Jails: Jurisdiction-Level Data, 2001 (ICPSR 3883); Annual Survey of Jails: Jurisdiction-Level Data, 2000 (ICPSR 3882); National Jail Census, 1999 (ICPSR 3318); Annual Survey of Jails: Jurisdiction-Level Data, 1998 (ICPSR 2682); Annual Survey of Jails: Jurisdiction-Level Data, 1997 (ICPSR 2313); Annual Survey of Jails: Jurisdiction-Level Data, 1996 (ICPSR 6856); Annual Survey of Jails: Jurisdiction-Level Data, 1995 (ICPSR 6784); Annual Survey of Jails: Jurisdiction-Level Data, 1994 (ICPSR 6538); National Jail Census, 1993 (ICPSR 6648); Annual Survey of Jails: Jurisdiction-Level and Jail-Level Data, 1992 (ICPSR 6395); Annual Survey of Jails: Jurisdiction-Level and Jail-Level Data, 1991 (ICPSR 6511); Annual Survey of Jails: Jurisdiction-Level Data, 1990 (ICPSR 9569); Annual Survey of Jails: Jurisdiction-Level Data, 1989 (ICPSR 9373); National Jail Census, 1988 (ICPSR 9256); Annual Survey of Jails: Jurisdiction-Level Data, 1987 (ICPSR 9074); National Survey of Jails: Jurisdiction-Level and Jail-Level Data, 1986 (ICPSR 8871); Annual Survey of Jails: Jurisdiction-level and Jail-level Data, 1985 (ICPSR 8687); National Jail Census, 1983 (ICPSR 8203); National Jail Census, 1978 (ICPSR 7737); National Jail Census, 1972 (ICPSR 7638); and, finally, National Jail Census, 1970 (ICPSR 7641). The Survey of Jails was also conducted in 1982 and 1984, but Vera did not include these in the Vera dataset because the results are not publicly available in digital format.

[4] See New York University Public Safety Lab, "Jail Data Initiative," https://jaildatainitiative.org/. See also Safety and Justice Challenge, "Measuring Progress: Jail Trends in SJC Sites," https://safetyandjusticechallenge.org/measuring-progress-jail-trends-in-sjc-sites/.

[5] Vera used the data available on the Surveillance, Epidemiology, and End Results (SEER) website of the National Cancer Institute, specifically the county-level population files for single-year age groups, both the "White, Black, Other" available from 1969-2023 and the "4 Expanded Races by Origin", from 1990 to 2023. All current postcensal and historical intercensal population estimates are available online at https://seer.cancer.gov/popdata/. Although prior years of data were calculated by the U.S. Census Bureau, the 2010-2019 intercensal estimates were calculated by Woods & Poole, on contract with the National Center for Health Statistics (NCHS), due to delays by the U.S. Census Bureau in releasing updated estimates and will be replaced by Census estimates when those are eventually released. See 2010 to 2019 Intercensal Estimates of County Population by Age, Sex, and Bridged Race for Vintage 2023 Postcensal Estimates, Woods & Poole Economics, Inc., Washington D.C. December 2024, available at https://seer.cancer.gov/popdata/.
[6] Deborah D. Ingram and Sheila J. Franco, *2013 NCHS Urban–Rural Classification Scheme for Counties* (Hyattsville, MD: U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, 2014), 2-5, https://perma.cc/J434-9NJ4.
[7] See footnote 3 for which years include individual jail facility data.
[8] While this approach does not account for jail-relevant factors like criminalization or police activity, it allows Vera researchers to apply a solution across the United States, especially in cases that would otherwise grossly over-state incarceration rates in counties. Vera adjusted this fix based on year. For instance, if a county reported jail numbers to BJS in the 1970s and 1980s but stopped in the 1990s, the database would start the apportionment in the 1990s only.
[9] A smaller number of cases, 41 counties, use various jails in more than one county. Of the 41 counties, over half were from 5 states: Nebraska (6), Minnesota (5), Kansas (4), Montana (4), and South Dakota (4). Some of these counties have data for earlier years, but in later years that they did not respond to BJS data collections, these split counties were not covered in this database because Vera researchers could not determine from which county to apportion jail information. Vera was unable to identify the current jail arrangements in place for about 100 small counties.
[10] For more detail on this approach, see Jacob Kang-Brown, Oliver Hinds, Jasmine Heiss, and Olive Lu, *The New Dynamics of Mass Incarceration* (New York: Vera Institute of Justice, 2018), p.12, https://www.vera.org/publications/the-new-dynamics-of-mass-incarceration.
[11] The following categories are available at the county level: ethnicity ("Hispanic" or "not Hispanic"), race ("American Indian/Alaska Native," "Asian/Pacific Islander," "Black," and "White") and sex. ("female" and "male").
[12] See Management and Budget Office, "Revisions to OMB's Statistical Policy Directive No. 15: Standards for Maintaining, Collecting, and Presenting Federal Data on Race and Ethnicity," *Federal Register* Vol. 89, no. 62 (March 29, 2024): 22182-22196, https://www.federalregister.gov/documents/2024/03/29/2024-06469/revisions-to-ombs-statistical-policy-directive-no-15-standards-for-maintaining-collecting-and.